

Sura 34: Saba (Sheba)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

This is a Meccan Sura. It deals with the fundamentals of the doctrine: the belief in the Oneness of God, the belief in God's revelation, and the belief in the resurrection. In addition, it establishes some of the basic values which emanate from the doctrine, indicating that the belief in God and doing good deeds, and not wealth and children, are the ways for salvation. It also stresses the fact that none could provide protection against God's wrath.

Verses 1 to 9:

1. *Praise be to God, to whom belong all things in the heavens and on earth; and praise be to Him in the Hereafter. He is the Wise, the Totally-Aware.*
2. *He knows that which goes into the earth and that which comes forth from it and that which descends from the heaven and that which ascends into it. He is the Giver of Mercy, the All-Forgiving.*
3. *The disbelievers say, "The Hour will never come upon us." Say, "Yes indeed, by my Lord, it will come upon you. (He is) the Knower of the unseen. Not an atom's weight or less than that or greater, escape His knowledge in the heavens or in the earth. All are in a clear Record.*
4. *That He may reward those who believe and do good deeds; those will have forgiveness and a generous provision.*
5. *But those who strive against Our revelations, seeking to undermine them, for them will be a torment of painful suffering.*
6. *And those who were given knowledge see that the (Revelation) sent down to you from your Lord is the truth, and that it guides to the path of the Eminent, the Praised.*
7. *The disbelievers say, "Shall we show you a man who will tell you that when you are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that you shall (then be raised) in a new creation?"*
8. *Has he fabricated a lie against God, or is he mad?" Indeed, those who do not believe in the Hereafter are in torment and great error.*
9. *Did they not see that which is before them and that which is behind them of the sky and the earth? If We will, We can make the earth swallow them, or cause pieces of the sky to fall on them. In that surely is a sign for every servant who turns back to God in repentance. (34: 1 – 9)*

The Sura starts by singing God's praise. God is praised even if His servants do not praise Him. The universe and all His creation sing His praise. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. None can claim a share in His kingdom, and this is the cornerstone of the belief in the Oneness of God, "*Praise be to God, to whom belong all things in the heavens and on earth.*"

"Praise be to Him in the Hereafter." He is praised in the Hereafter; this is an intrinsic praise. Those who disbelieved in life will see the truth in the Hereafter and will sing His praise as well. He is Totally-Aware of everything, "*He is the Wise, the Totally aware.*" He is the Wise who does everything wisely. He manages the affairs of this life as well as the Hereafter wisely, and He controls the universe wisely. His knowledge encompasses everything.

A glimpse of the extent of God's knowledge is then given, "*He knows that which goes into the earth and that which comes forth from it and that which descends from the heaven and that which ascends into it.*" When a person stands in front of these few words, one sees a vast

collection of things, movements, shapes, images, and meanings which are beyond our imagination. How many things come out from the earth in one moment? How many things go into it? How many things come down from the sky? And how many things go into the sky? Can we count the number of seeds, the worms, and the insects that go into the earth each second? It is only God the Giver of Mercy, the All-Forgiving who can encompass these things, *“He is the Giver of Mercy, the All-Forgiving.”*

“The disbelievers say, ‘The Hour will never come upon us.’ Say, ‘Yes indeed, by my Lord, it will come upon you. (He is) the Knower of the unseen.’” The disbelievers reject faith because they are unable to understand God’s wisdom and to appreciate God’s power. God has not created humankind in jest. They will be tested, some will do good deeds and some will do evil deeds. They will not receive their recompense immediately, but some or all of the reward and punishment will be deferred to the Hereafter. It is thus essential that there will be a Hereafter to fulfill God’s promise. The disbelievers do not appreciate this and therefore they say, *“The Hour will never come upon us.”* The response was immediate and unequivocal, *“Yes indeed, by my Lord, it will come upon you.”* There is no doubt because the One who confirms the coming of the Hour is, *“the Knower of the unseen.”* Then the extent of God’s knowledge is described in a profound way, *“Not an atom’s weight or less than that or greater, escape His knowledge in the heavens or in the earth. All are in a clear Record.”* Nothing will escape His knowledge. The expression, *“clear Record,”* may mean God’s knowledge which encompasses everything.

We may comment on the expression, *“an atom’s weight or less than that or greater.”* It is only recently that we came to know that the atom is not the smallest body in the universe and there are bodies which are smaller than the atom. This certainly shows that the Quran could not have been written by a human being.

The Hour will definitely come so that, *“He may reward those who believe and do good deeds; those will have forgiveness and a generous provision.”* There is a rationale behind the coming of the Hour. God will forgive the sins of those who believed and did good deeds; in addition, He will award them a generous provision. But those who, *“strive against Our revelations, seeking to undermine them,”* they will be held accountable for what they committed and, *“for them will be a torment of painful suffering.”*

“And those who were given knowledge see that the (Revelation) sent down to you from your Lord is the truth, and that it guides to the path of the Eminent, the Praised.” It has been reported that the term, *“those who were given knowledge,”* refers to the people who were given the Scripture before. They recognized the truth of the Quran from the knowledge they were given in their Scripture. However, the verse applies to all those who were given knowledge at all times and in every place. Their knowledge should guide them to the truth. The Quran indeed provides guidance; the Quran *“guides to the path of the Eminent, the Praised.”* The path of the Eminent, the Praised is the path that God has chosen for people living on earth. It guides humankind to the correct perspective for his relationship with the rest of God’s creation and his role in this universe. It guides humankind to the correct way of thinking to discover the nature, the properties, and the laws of the universe so that people can live in harmony with the universe. It guides humankind to an optimum training program so that people can live together in peace and harmony. It guides people to the laws that best organize their lives on earth. This is the path that Quran leads to.

The disbelievers were astonished by the mere suggestion that human beings will be resurrected after death. They even joked about it, *"The disbelievers say, 'Shall we show you a man who will tell you that when you are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that you shall (then be raised) in a new creation?'"* They even wondered about why the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned it, *"Has he fabricated a lie against God, or is he mad?"* Had they reflected a little on their creation in the first place, they would not have found the notion of resurrection to be difficult to accept, but they were lost, *"Indeed those who do not believe in the Hereafter are in torment and great error."* The verse may be referring to the torment in the Hereafter. But, it may also be referring to torment in this life. Those who are misguided suffer. Those who have no faith have no hope in God's mercy or justice. People face trials and adverse situations in life and the only support one can get in facing these difficulties is through faith. The belief in the Hereafter is a bounty from God. God bestows this bounty only on those who deserve it, those who are devout, and those who strive hard to find the truth.

Perhaps a reminder of a tremendous cosmic scene would evoke in the disbelievers the interest in finding the truth, *"Did they not see that which is before them and that which is behind them of the sky and the earth? If We will, We can make the earth swallow them, or cause pieces of the sky to fall on them. In that surely is a sign for every servant who turns back to God in repentance."* These events occurred in the past to earlier generations; later generations must have read or heard about them. The verse reminds people that this could also happen to them. But only those whose hearts make them turn back to God in repentance will heed such warning.

Verses 10 to 21:

10. *And We certainly bestowed on David from Our grace. We said, "Mountains and birds, echo his psalms of the praise of God." And We made the iron pliable for him.*
11. *Saying, "Make coats of armor, and measure the links well; and do good deeds. I see everything you do."*
12. *And (We subjected) the wind for Solomon. Its outward journey was one month, and its return journey was one month; and We made a fountain of molten brass to flow for him; and some of the jinn worked under his control with the leave of his Lord, and if any of them deviated from our command, We made him taste the torment of the blazing Fire.*
13. *They made for him what he desired: sanctuaries, statues, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places). "House of David, work in gratitude." A few of My servants are grateful.*
14. *Then, when We decreed death for him, nothing showed them the sign of his death except a little worm of the earth, which kept (slowly) gnawing away at his staff. And when he fell down, the jinn saw plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in the humiliating torment.*
15. *There was indeed a sign for Sheba in their dwelling-place: two gardens, one on the right side and another on the left side. Eat of the provision of your Lord and give thanks to Him, a fair land and an All-Forgiving Lord.*
16. *But they turned away (from God), and We sent against them the flood from the dams, and We converted their two gardens into "gardens" producing bitter fruit, and tamarisks, and some few Lote-trees.*
17. *We punished them because they disbelieved. Do We punish except those who disbelieve?*

18. *And We set, between them and the towns which We had blessed, towns easy to be seen, and We made the travel between them easy, (saying), "Travel in them safely both by night and day."*
19. *But they said, "Our Lord, lengthen the distances of our journeys." And they wronged themselves, so We made them history and We dispersed them all in scattered fragments. Verily in this are signs for each perseverant, grateful one.*
20. *And Iblis indeed found his conjecture true concerning them, for they followed him, all save a group of the believers.*
21. *But he had no authority over them, except that We might discriminate between those who believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt concerning it. And your Lord is the All-Preserver of all things. (34: 10 – 21)*

"And We certainly bestowed on David from Our grace. We said, 'Mountains and birds, echo his psalms of praise.' And We made the iron pliable for him. Saying, 'Make coats of armor, and measure the links well; and do good deeds. I see everything you do.'" David (PBUH) was a servant who turned back often to God in repentance. God bestowed on him of His bounty, *"Mountains and birds, echo his psalms of praise."* It was narrated that David (PBUH) had an extremely beautiful voice. He used to praise God and sing his psalms. The verse indicates that God gave David (PBUH) such a pure spirit that he was able to communicate with other creatures of God and made the mountains and the birds join him in singing the praise of God. God also gave him the ability to fashion iron into shapes without taking recourse to the conventional methods for shaping iron. He used iron to make innovative armors. It is said that before this, the armors used to be made from solid steel plate which were very heavy and hampered the fighter's ability to maneuver his body. God inspired David (PBUH) to make the armor from closely connected links. The armors that David (PBUH) made were light in weight and allowed better movement for the fighters. This is what is implied by, *"measure the links well."* David (PBUH) was commanded to do good deeds and to remember that God sees everything.

God also bestowed His bounties on Solomon (PBUH), *"And (We subjected) the wind for Solomon. Its outward journey was one month, and its return journey was one month."* This was one of the miracles that God bestowed on Solomon (PBUH). However, there are no more authentic details given about it, except that the wind journey was to the Holy Land as was mentioned in Surat Al-Anbyaa (Chapter 21). Another miracle that was given to Solomon (PBUH) was, *"and We made a fountain of molten brass to flow for him."* A third one was, *"and some of the jinn worked under his control with the leave of his Lord, and if any of them deviated from our command, We made him taste the torment of the blazing Fire. They made for him what he desired: sanctuaries, statues, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places)."* Jinn is one of the creations of God. They cannot be seen and we have no knowledge of their nature. Some of them were subjugated to work for Prophet Solomon (PBUH). It is interesting to note that some of the Arab idolaters used to worship jinn. They will be treated the same way the jinn who deviate from God's commands will be treated, *"and if any of them deviated from our command, We made him taste the torment of the blazing Fire."* They used to work for Prophet Solomon (PBUH) making whatever he wanted them to make. This verse ends with a command to the House of David (PBUH), *"House of David, work in gratitude."* God has bestowed all these bounties on them, so they should show their gratitude. But, *"A few of My servants are grateful."*

The favors of God are limitless. How can a human being with a limited power thank God enough for His favors? *“And if you should count the favor of God, you could not enumerate it.”* (14: 34) The following verse describes the scene of Solomon’s (PBUH) death. The jinn did not realize that he died and they continued working hard at the tasks that he commanded them to do until a worm ate his staff, *“Then, when We decreed death for him, nothing showed them the sign of his death except a little worm of the earth, which kept (slowly) gnawing away at his staff. And when he fell down, the jinn saw plainly that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in the humiliating torment.”* It was narrated that he was standing up leaning on his staff when he died. He remained in that position until a worm ate at his staff. The weakened staff gave way under Solomon’s (PBUH) weight, so he fell. The jinn did not realize that he was dead until he fell down and all this time they were working very hard performing the tasks that they were given. People who seek the jinn’s help in knowing the unseen should know that the jinn are incapable of helping them.

The previous verses narrated the story of the House of David as an example of human beings who show their gratitude to God. The following verses give an example of human ingratitude, the story of the people of Sheba. The narration starts with a description of the favors which God bestowed on them, *“There was indeed a sign for Sheba in their dwelling-place: two gardens, one on the right side and another on the left side. Eat of the provision of your Lord and give thanks to Him, a fair land and an All-Forgiving Lord.”* The people of Sheba used to live in what is now Yemen. Their land was fertile and they used to get an abundance of rain. They had the knowledge and skill to control their water resources. They established a natural water reservoir enclosed between two mountains and they erected a dam which can be opened and closed to allow the amount of water they need to pass through. This dam was known as the “Maarib Dam.” They had gardens bearing fruits and providing them with abundant food. The verse reminded them to eat of what God provided and be grateful to Him. But they were ungrateful and they were punished, *“But they turned away (from God), and We sent against them the flood from the dams, and We converted their two gardens into “gardens” producing bitter fruit, and tamarisks, and some few Lote-trees.”* They were ungrateful and they refused to do good deeds and behave kindly, so God took away the favor that brought them His generous provision. God sent a tremendous flood that destroyed the dam and rendered the land barren. Instead of their fertile gardens the land produced only thorny trees. They were punished for their ingratitude, *We punished them because they disbelieved. Do We punish except those who disbelieve?*

They had lost most of their food resources, yet they were still living in their homes. They had villages around them and the roads from Yemen to Mecca and Jerusalem were safe and populated routes. The travel was easy and safe, *“And We set, between them and the towns which We had blessed, towns easy to be seen, and We made the travel between them easy, (saying), ‘Travel in them safely both by night and day.’”* They did not appreciate this blessing and asked God to change this. God accepted their prayer and destroyed them for their ingratitude, *“But they said, ‘Our Lord, lengthen the distances of our journeys.’ And they wronged themselves so We made them history and We dispersed them all in scattered fragments. Verily in this are signs for each perseverant, grateful one.”*

The following verses present the rationale behind the divine plan and the lessons to be learnt from these stories, *“And Iblis indeed found his conjecture true concerning them, for they*

followed him, all save a group of the believers.” In each community there are those who fall an easy prey to Satan’s temptation. Satan has no power over them but it is they who choose to turn away from the truth and follow Satan. There is also another group of people whose strong faith will help them to resist Satan’s temptation. Falling prey to Satan provides a mechanism to discriminate between the two groups so that each group gets its due recompense from God, “But he had no authority over them, except that We might discriminate between those who believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt concerning it. And your Lord is the All-Preserver of all things.”

Verses 22 to 27:

22. *Say, “Call upon those whom you set up beside God.” They do not possess even the weight of an atom either in the heavens or in the earth, nor do they have any share in either, nor does He have an assistant among them.*
23. *No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission. Yet, when fear is banished from their hearts, they say, “What was it that your Lord said?” They say, “The Truth.” And He is the Most High, the Great.*
24. *Say, “Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?” Say, “God. And indeed, we or you are either rightly guided or in manifest error.”*
25. *Say, “You shall not be asked about our sins, nor shall we be asked about what you do.”*
26. *Say, “Our Lord will gather us together and will in the end decide the matter between us with truth and justice. And He is the One to decide, the Omniscient.”*
27. *Say, “Show me those whom you associated with Him as partners. By no means (can you); He is God, the Eminent, the Wise.” (34: 22 – 27)*

The following verse presents a challenge to the disbelievers, “Say, ‘Call upon those whom you set up beside God.’ They do not possess even the weight of an atom either in the heavens or in the earth, nor do they have any share in either, nor does He have an assistant among them.” The challenge is posed to the disbelievers to call upon those whom they associate with God. Do they claim ownership of anything, even as minute as an atom, in the heavens or in the earth? Nor do they share in the ownership of either. God does not need any help from them. This seems to be an answer to those who claimed that the angels were God’s daughters. The disbelievers said that they worshiped idols because they will intercede on their behalf. This claim is refuted as well, “No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission.” No one will be able to intercede on their behalf except by God’s permission. The scene in which people will need the intercession is then depicted. It is a scene of a difficult day, fear will fill the hearts, “Yet, when fear is banished from their hearts, they say, ‘What was it that your Lord said?’ They say, ‘The Truth.’ And He is the Most High, the Great.” They will ask each other what did God say? It is not clear who will answer this question. It may be that they were able themselves to answer each other; or it may come from the angels. Either way, the answer is that God said the truth. This is the absolute and ever existing truth which comes only from God. The question is asked, “Say, ‘Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?’” Say, ‘God. And indeed, we or you are either rightly guided or in manifest error.’” Provision is something that everyone recognizes. It is part of our lives. Provision comes from the sky in the form of rain, heat, light. Provision comes from the earth in the form of plants, animals, springs, minerals, and metals. This is what people are used to see but everyday a new type of provision is discovered. They could not argue about who provides. It is God who provides. The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to tell the disbelievers that one of them is wrong and the other is right.

It is a prudent way to engage them into thinking.

A fundamental principle regarding the personal responsibility of human beings is stated, “Say, *‘You shall not be asked about our sins, nor shall we be asked about what you do.’*” This may have been a response to the disbelievers’ accusation that those who believed in Muhammad (PBUH) left the religion of their forefathers. Each one is responsible for his/her deeds. God will judge, “Say, *‘Our Lord will gather us together and will in the end decide the matter between us with truth and justice. And He is the One to decide, the Omniscient.’*” God will gather the two groups and then He will judge between them.

The challenge is posed again, “Say, *‘Show me those whom you associated with Him as partners. By no means (can you); He is God, the Eminent, the Wise.’*” The challenge which is posed in the form of a rhetorical question is meant to rebuke them for their folly. The response came swift and unequivocal: they will not be able to produce those whom they claimed to be partners of God. God has no partners. He is, “*the Eminent, the Wise.*”

Verses 28 to 42:

28. *We indeed have sent you to all humankind, to give them glad tidings, and to warn them, but most people do not know.*
29. *They say, "When will this promise (fulfilled) if you are telling the truth?"*
30. *Say, "For you is the appointment of a Day (which) you cannot postpone nor hasten by an hour."*
31. *The disbelievers say, "We shall neither believe in this Book nor in (any) that (came) before it," but if you could see, when the wrongdoers are brought before their Lord, how they cast the blame one to another; those who were oppressed (in the earth) will say to those who were arrogant, "If it were not for you, We would have been believers."*
32. *The arrogant ones will say to those who had been oppressed, "Was it we who kept you back from guidance after it had reached you? No, it was you who were guilty."*
33. *Those who had been oppressed will say to the arrogant ones, "No, it was your scheme which you schemed day and night. You ordered us to disbelieve in God and to associate partners with Him." They will confide (their) regret when they see the torment. We shall put yokes on the necks of the disbelievers. Why should they be rewarded for anything other than what they have done?*
34. *And We never sent a warner to a population, but to have the wealthy ones among them say, "We do not believe in that which you have been sent with."*
35. *They said, "We have more wealth and children, and we will not be tormented."*
36. *Say, "Verily my Lord expands and restricts the provision to whom He pleases, but most people do not know."*
37. *It is neither your wealth nor your children that will bring you nearer to Us, but it is (being one of) those who believe and do good deeds. They will be given twice the reward and they will be secure in their dwellings in the highest places.*
38. *Those who strive against Our revelations seeking to undermine them, they will be brought to the torment.*

39. Say, "Verily my Lord expands and restricts the provision to whom He pleases, and He will replace whatever you spend. He is the best of the Providers."
40. On the day when He will gather them all together, and He will say to the angels, "Was it you that these people used to worship?"
41. They will say, "Glory be to You, You are our Guardian, not them. No, they worshipped the jinn; most of them were believers in them."
42. So on that day none of you will have the power to benefit or harm each other. We will say to the wrongdoers, "Taste the torment of Fire which you used to deny." (34: 28 – 42)

The following verse outlines the Prophet's (PBUH) task, "*We indeed have sent you to all humankind, to give them glad tidings, and to warn them, but most people do not know.*" He was sent to all people. His duty is limited only to two tasks: to deliver the glad tidings and to warn. Most people do not understand the limits of the Prophet's (PBUH) function. They challenged the Prophet (PBUH) to bring about the promised punishment, "*They say, 'When will this promise (fulfilled) if you are telling the truth?'*" They did not understand the nature of the Prophet's (PBUH) role. His role is only to deliver the message. He could not bring about the threats that are mentioned in the message nor does he know when it will happen. So, the Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to respond, "*Say, 'For you is the appointment of a Day (which) you cannot postpone nor hasten by an hour.'*" God has decreed an appointed time for each thing, and when it comes no one will be able to change it.

The disbelievers were stubborn in their rejection of the message, "*The disbelievers say, 'We shall neither believe in this Book nor in (any) that (came) before it.'*" They insisted that they will not believe in the Quran nor will they believe in the previously revealed Scriptures which supported the Quran. This was what they said in their life. What if they can see what will happen to them on the Day of Judgment, "*but if you could see, when the wrongdoers are brought before their Lord, how they cast the blame one to another; those who were oppressed (in the earth) will say to those who were arrogant, 'If it were not for you, We would have been believers.'*" On that Day they will exchange the blame among themselves. The followers will accuse their leaders who led them astray, but in the meantime, the leaders will lay the blame on their followers, "*The arrogant ones will say to those who had been oppressed, 'Was it we who kept you back from guidance after it had reached you? No, it was you who were guilty.'* Those who had been oppressed will say to the arrogant ones, "*No, it was your scheme which you schemed day and night. You ordered us to disbelieve in God and to associate partners with Him.'*" They will soon realize that they will gain nothing by blaming each other. They were all guilty and each will taste his/her share of the torment. This realization will fill their hearts with painful sorrow, "*They will confide (their) regret when they see the torment.*" They will be tied, "*We shall put yokes on the necks of the disbelievers.*" But did they expect that they would be recompensed any differently, "*Why should they be rewarded for anything other than what they have done?*" They were all wrongdoers. The arrogant were guilty of oppressing their followers and the followers were guilty when they followed those who led them astray blindly. They gave up their freedom, the ability to choose, and the integrity that God bestowed on them.

The response of the chiefs of Quraish to the Prophet (PBUH) when he called them to Islam was exactly the same response that each of God's messengers received from the chiefs of his people, "*And We never sent a warner to a population, but to have the wealthy ones among them say, 'We do not believe in that which you have been sent with.'*" The power and the wealth that the chiefs

had spoiled them and corrupted their initial natural disposition which God placed in the psyche of each and every human being to guide them to the right path. They thought that their wealth and power will be reasons for exemption from God's punishment, *"They said, 'We have more wealth and children, and we will not be tormented.'"* The Quran then sets the record straight and corrects their misunderstanding. God's provision is not a measure of God's approval of a person's action. Expanding or restricting provision follows God's law, *"Say, 'Verily my Lord expands and restricts the provision to whom He pleases, but most people do not know.'"* Some people may get deluded by this misunderstanding. They get confused when they see evil people enjoying great wealth while the believers who are doing good deeds are suffering from lack of provision. This verse explains that expanding or restricting provision follows God's law. He distributes His provision as He wishes and according to His Wisdom, *"It is neither your wealth nor your children that will bring you nearer to Us, but it is (being one of) those who believe and do good deeds. They will be given twice the reward and they will be secure in their dwellings in the highest places."* Expanding or restricting provision may be a test for people to see how they will behave. The test has to do with how one accepts the decreed provision and how one spends his/her provision. Those who spend their provision for the sake of God will be rewarded greatly. But those who challenged God's revelations will be brought to justice on the Day of Judgment, *"Those who strive against Our revelations seeking to undermine them, they will be brought to the torment."* The criterion for expanding and restricting provision is reiterated again, *"Say, 'Verily my Lord expands and restricts the provision to whom He pleases, and He will replace whatever you spend. He is the best of the Providers.'"* God promised to replace whatever is spent in His way.

"On the day when He will gather them all together, and He will say to the angels, 'Was it you that these people used to worship?'" On the Day of Judgment, the angels will be asked about those who worshipped them. The angels will express their innocence of the disbelievers, they will sing God's praise to emphasize their rejection of this evil deed, *"They will say, 'Glory be to You, You are our Guardian, not them. No, they worshipped the jinn; most of them were believers in them.'"* The fundamental truth is then expressed, *"So on that day none of you will have the power to benefit or harm each other."* No one will have the power to benefit or harm anyone else and the wrongdoers will be doomed, *"We will say to the wrongdoers, 'Taste the torment of Fire which you used to deny.'"*

Verses 43 to 54:

43. *When Our clear revelations are recited to them, they say, "This is only a man who wishes to hinder you from the (worship) which your fathers practiced." And they say, "This is only a fabricated lie." Those who disbelieve say of the truth when it comes to them, "This is nothing but evident magic."*
44. *But We had not given them scriptures which they could study, nor did We send any warner to them before you.*
45. *And their predecessors denied (the truth) - these people have not attained a tenth of what We had granted their predecessors yet they denied My messengers, so how terrible was My disapproval?*
46. *Say, "I do exhort you on one point: that you do stand-up before God in pairs, or individually and reflect. Your companion is not possessed. He only came to warn you before the advent of severe torment."*

47. Say, "No reward do I ask of you. It is (all) in your interest. My reward is only due from God. He is Witness to all things."
48. Say, "Verily my Lord projects the truth. He has full knowledge of the unseen."
49. Say, "The Truth has arrived, and falsehood neither creates anything new, nor restores anything."
50. Say, "If I err, I only err to my own loss; but if I am guided, it is because of what my Lord inspires me. He is the All-Hearing, and He is (ever) near."
51. If you could only see when they are terrified with no escape, and they are seized from a nearby place.
52. And they will say, "We do believe (now) in the (Truth);" but how could they receive (Faith) from a distant place?
53. They rejected faith (entirely) before, and they made conjectures about the unseen from a distant place.
54. And they were barred from what they desire, as was done to people of their kind before. They were deep in doubt. (34: 43 – 54)

The true message which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought posed a threat to the old traditions that the disbelievers were entrenched in. They tried to refute the clear and simple truth that the Quran embodied but their arguments were weak and shaky. All they could come up with is to say, "This is only a man who wishes to hinder you from the (worship) which your fathers practiced." This was not a convincing argument, so they added an accusation, "And they say, 'This is only a fabricated lie.' " But those who listened to the Quran were impressed with the way Quran addressed and evoked deep feelings in the hearts. So the disbelievers tried to counteract the effect of the Quran by saying, "This is nothing but evident magic." They launched a series of baseless accusations against the Quran. They tried very hard to deter people from listening and believing in it. The Quran exposed their ignorance and bias, "But We had not given them scriptures which they could study, nor did We send any warner to them before you." The Quran continued to remind them of the fate of those who rejected guidance before them. They had more power and wealth than them but could not escape God's punishment, "And their predecessors denied (the truth) - these people have not attained a tenth of what We had granted their predecessors yet they rejected My messengers, so how terrible was My disapproval?"

The Prophet (PBUH) was commanded to extend a sincere invitation to the disbelievers, an invitation to examine the message with the sole intention of reaching the truth, "Say, 'I do exhort you on one point: that you do stand-up before God in pairs, or individually and reflect. Your companion is not possessed. He only came to warn you before the advent of severe torment.' " He asked them to stand up in front of God, after they had freed their hearts of their biases, their desires, and their worldly interests. This was an invitation to rid themselves of the influence of their useless traditions and to examine the message in an objective way. The verse defines a methodology which if followed sincerely would lead directly to the straight path. It also reminded them that they have known the Prophet (PBUH) for a long time and they never suspected his sanity and wisdom before. They better heed what he told them because he came to warn them of the dire consequences of disobeying God.

After outlining a rational approach for conducting their investigation, the Prophet (PBUH) reminded them that he did not expect any worldly compensation from them, adding sarcastically that they can keep whatever they thought he was after, "Say, 'No reward do I ask of you. It is

(all) in your interest. My reward is only due from God. He is Witness to all things.” God has given me the task and He will reward me. God is a Witness over everything.

“Say, *Verily my Lord projects the truth. He has full knowledge of the unseen.*” This was the third message that Prophet (PBUH) delivered: what I brought you is the truth from God. Who could stand against God’s truth? The truth came to erase the falsehood, “Say, *The Truth has arrived, and falsehood neither creates anything new, nor restores anything.*” Falsehood will be completely eliminated by the truth. It could no longer survive nor will it be resurrected again.

“Say, *If I err, I only err to my own loss; but if I am guided, it is because of what my Lord inspires me. He is the All-Hearing, and He is (ever) near.*” This is again a reminder of the individual responsibility for guidance. God is He who guides and He is All-Hearing and ever near.

The final verses describe dynamic scenes from the scenes of the Day of Judgment, “*If you could only see when they are terrified with no escape, and they are seized from a nearby place. And they will say, ‘We do believe (now) in the (Truth);’ but how could they receive (Faith) from a distant place? They rejected faith (entirely) before, and they made conjectures about the unseen from a distant place. And they were barred from what they desire, as was done to people of their kind before. They were deep in doubt.*” If only you could see them when they will be terrified by the horror of that Day, they will not be able to escape. They will then try to avoid the torment by declaring, “*We do believe (now) in the (Truth),*” but it will be too late. How could they believe now? They should have done that in their life on earth. They rejected faith before on the basis of conjectures, but now they are certain of the result of their deeds. So, their request will be denied.