

## Sūrah 54: al-Qamar

### Period of Revelation

The incident of the shaqq-al-Qamar (splitting of the moon) that has been mentioned in this Sūrah, determines its period of revelation precisely. The traditionists and commentators are agreed that this incident took place at Mina in Makkah about five years before the Prophet's Hijra (migration) to Madinah.

### Theme and Subject Matter

In this Sūrah the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned for their stubbornness which they had adopted against the invitation of the Prophet. The amazing and wonderful phenomenon of the splitting of the Moon was a manifest sign of the truth that the Resurrection, of which the Prophet was giving them the news, could take place and that it had approached near at hand. The great sphere of the Moon had split into two distinct parts in front of their very eyes. The two parts had separated and receded so much apart from each other that to the on-lookers one part had appeared on one side of the mountain and the other on the other side of it. Then, in an instant the two had rejoined. This was a manifest proof of the truth that the system of the Universe was neither eternal nor immortal, it could be disrupted. Huge stars and planets could split asunder, disintegrate, collide with each other, and everything that had been depicted in the Qur'ān in connection with the description of the details of Resurrection, could happen. Not only this: it was also a portent that the disintegration of the system of the Universe had begun and the time was near when Resurrection would take place. The Prophet invited the people's attention to this event only with this object in view and asked them to mark it and be a witness to it. But the disbelievers described it as a magical illusion and persisted in their denial. For this stubbornness they have been reproached in this Sūrah.

At the outset it has been said: "These people neither believe in the admonition, nor learn a lesson from history, nor affirm faith after witnessing manifest signs with their eyes. Now they would believe only when Resurrection has taken place and they would be rushing out of their graves towards the Summoner on that Day." Then, the stories of the people of Noah and of 'Aad and Thamūd and of the peoples of Lot and the Pharaoh have been related briefly and they have been reminded of the terrible punishments that these nations suffered when they belied and disregarded the warnings given by the Prophets of God. After the narration of each story the refrain that has been provided is: "This Qur'ān is an easy means of admonition, which if a nation takes to heart and thereby takes the Right Way, the torment that descended on the former nations could be avoided. But it would indeed be a folly if instead of heeding the admonition through this easy means, one persisted in heedlessness and disbelieved until one was overtaken by the torment itself."

Likewise, after citing admonitory precedents from the history of the former nations, the disbelievers at Makkah have been addressed and warned to this effect: "If you too adopt the same attitude and conduct for which the other nations have already been punished, why will you not be punished for it? Are you in any way a superior people that you should be treated differently from others? Or, have you received a deed of amnesty that you will not be punished for the crime for which others have been punished? And if you feel elated at your great numbers, you will soon see that these very numbers of yours are put to rout (on the battlefield) and on the Day of Resurrection you will be dealt with even more severely." In the end, the disbelievers have been told that God does not need to make lengthy preparations to bring about Resurrection. No sooner does He give a simple command for it than it will take place immediately. Like everything else the Universe and mankind also have a destiny. According to this destiny everything happens at its own appointed time. It cannot be so that whenever somebody gives a challenge, Resurrection is brought about in order to convince him. If you adopt rebellion because you do not see it coming, you will only be adding to your own distress and misfortune. For your record which is being prepared by Divine agents, has not left any misdeed of yours, great or small, unrecorded.

**Sūrah 54: al-Qamar**<sup>1467</sup>

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,  
the Most Merciful

1. The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two].<sup>1468</sup>
2. And if they see a sign [i.e., miracle], they turn away and say, "Passing magic."<sup>1469</sup>
3. And they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.
4. And there has already come to them of information that in which there is deterrence -
5. Extensive wisdom - but warning does not avail [them].
6. So leave them, [O Muhammad]. The Day the Caller<sup>1470</sup> calls to something forbidding,
7. Their eyes humbled, they will emerge from the graves as if they were locusts spreading,
8. Racing ahead toward the Caller. The disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult Day."
9. The people of Noah denied before them, and they denied Our servant and said, "A madman," and he was repelled.
10. So he invoked his Lord, "Indeed, I am overpowered, so help."
11. Then We opened the gates of the heaven with rain pouring down
12. And caused the earth to burst with springs, and the waters met for a matter already predestined.
13. And We carried him on a [construction of] planks and nails,
14. Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied.
15. And We left it as a sign, so is there any who will remember?
16. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.<sup>1471</sup>
17. And We have certainly made the Qur'ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?
18. 'Aad denied; and how [severe] were My punishment and warning.
19. Indeed, We sent upon them a screaming wind on a day of continuous misfortune,
20. Extracting the people<sup>1472</sup> as if they were trunks of palm trees uprooted.
21. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.
22. And We have certainly made the Qur'ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?

<sup>1467</sup> *Al-Qamar*: The Moon.

<sup>1468</sup> This was a sign given by God to Prophet Muhammad when the Quraysh challenged him to show them a miracle.

<sup>1469</sup> Or "continuing magic."

<sup>1470</sup> Said to be an angel announcing the account and judgement.

<sup>1471</sup> To those after them, who were expected to derive a lesson from previous occurrences.

<sup>1472</sup> From their hiding places.

23. Thamūd denied the warning
24. And said, “Is it one human being<sup>1473</sup> among us that we should follow? Indeed, we would then be in error and madness.
25. Has the message been sent down upon him from among us? Rather, he is an insolent liar.”
26. They will know tomorrow who is the insolent liar.
27. Indeed, We are sending the she-camel as trial for them, so watch them and be patient.<sup>1474</sup>
28. And inform them that the water is shared between them,<sup>1475</sup> each [day of] drink attended [by turn].
29. But they called their companion,<sup>1476</sup> and he dared<sup>1477</sup> and hamstrung [her].
30. And how [severe] were My punishment and warning.
31. Indeed, We sent upon them one shriek [i.e., blast from the sky], and they became like the dry twig fragments of an [animal] pen.
32. And We have certainly made the Qur’ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?
33. The people of Lot denied the warning.
34. Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones, except the family of Lot - We saved them before dawn
35. As favor from Us. Thus do We reward he who is grateful.
36. And he had already warned them of Our assault, but they disputed the warning.
37. And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes, [saying], “Taste My punishment and warning.”
38. And there came upon them by morning an abiding punishment.
39. So taste My punishment and warning.
40. And We have certainly made the Qur’ān easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?
41. And there certainly came to the people of Pharaoh warning.
42. They denied Our signs, all of them, so We seized them with a seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability.
43. Are your disbelievers better than those [former ones], or have you immunity in the scriptures?
44. Or do they say, “We are an assembly supporting [each other]”?
45. [Their] assembly will be defeated, and they will turn their backs [in retreat].<sup>1478</sup>

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<sup>1473</sup> i.e., the Prophet Salih.

<sup>1474</sup> This and the following verse are an address to Salih.

<sup>1475</sup> i.e., between the tribe of Thamūd and the she-camel – a day for each to drink.

<sup>1476</sup> i.e., the worst and most despicable among them.

<sup>1477</sup> Or “he took,” referring to his sword or to the she-camel.

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<sup>1478</sup> This foretold event took place on the day of Badr.

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46. But the Hour is their appointment [for due punishment], and the Hour is more disastrous and more bitter.
47. Indeed, the criminals are in error and madness.<sup>1479</sup>
48. The Day they are dragged into the Fire on their faces [it will be said], “Taste the touch of Saqar.”<sup>1480</sup>
49. Indeed, all things We created with predestination.
50. And Our command is but one, like a glance of the eye.
51. And We have already destroyed your kinds,<sup>1481</sup> so is there any who will remember?
52. And everything they did is in written records.
53. And every small and great [thing] is inscribed.
54. Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers,
55. In a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability.

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<sup>1479</sup> Or “in blazing fires.”

<sup>1480</sup> One of the proper names of Hell.

<sup>1481</sup> i.e., those similar to you in attitude and behaviour when they rejected God’s messengers.