

The *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat Al-Burūj* **(Chapter - 85)**

Which was revealed in Makkah

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The Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Burūj (Chapter - 85)

Which was revealed in Makkah

سُورَةُ الْبُرُوجِ ٥٩٠

سُورَةُ الْبُرُوجِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ① وَالْيَوْمِ الْوَعْدِ ② وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ ③
 قِيلَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْدُدِ ④ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوُفُودِ ⑤ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا ⑥
 قُعُودٌ ⑦ وَهُمْ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ⑧ وَمَا نَقَمُوا ⑨
 مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ⑩ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ⑪ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
 فَنَتُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ
 عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ⑫ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ
 جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ ⑬ إِنَّ بَطْلَانَ
 رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ ⑭ إِنَّهُ هُوَ بَدِئُ وَبَعِيدٌ ⑮ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْودُودُ ⑯
 ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ ⑰ فَاعْلَمْ أَيُّهَا الْيَهُودُ ⑱ هَلْ أَنْتُمْ حَدِيثُ الْحُنُودِ
 ⑲ فِرْعَوْنَ وَنُوحٌ ⑳ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ ㉑ وَاللَّهُ مِنْ
 وَرَاءِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ ㉒ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْءَانٌ مَجِيدٌ ㉓ فِي رُوحٍ مُخْفُوظٍ ㉔

سُورَةُ الطَّارِقِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

﴿وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ① وَالْيَوْمِ
الْوَعْدِ ② وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ ③ قِيلَ
أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْدُدِ ④ النَّارِ ذَاتِ
الْوُفُودِ ⑤ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ ⑦ وَهُمْ
عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ⑧
وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ
الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ⑩ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
شَهِيدٌ ⑪ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَنَتُوا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَتُوبُوا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ ⑫﴾

﴿1. By the heaven
holding the Buruj.﴾

﴿2. And by the
Promised Day.﴾

﴿3. And by the Witness and by the Witnessed.﴾

﴿4. Cursed were the People of the Ditch.﴾

﴿5. Of fire fed with fuel.﴾

﴿6. When they sat by it.﴾

﴿7. And they witnessed what they were doing against the

believers.﴾

﴿8. And they had no fault except that they believed in Allāh, the Almighty, Worthy of all praise!﴾

﴿9. To Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth! And Allāh is Witness over everything.﴾

﴿10. Verily, those who put into trial the believing men and believing women, and then do not turn in repentance, then they will have the torment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the burning Fire.﴾

The Interpretation of the Word *Burūj*

Allāh swears by the heaven and its *Burūj*. The *Burūj* are the giant stars, as Allāh says,

﴿نَبَارَكُ الَّذِي جَمَعَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا يَرِينَا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا﴾

﴿Blessed is He Who has placed in the heaven *Burūj*, and has placed therein a great lamp (the sun), and a moon giving light.﴾ (25:61)

Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk, Al-Ḥasan, Qatādah and As-Suddi, all said, "*Al-Burūj* are the stars."^[1] Al-Minhāl bin 'Amr said,

﴿وَالسَّمَاءُ ذَاتُ الْبُرُوجِ﴾

﴿By the heaven holding the *Burūj*.﴾ "The beautiful creation."^[2] Ibn Jarīr chose the view that it means the positions of the sun and the moon, which are twelve *Burūj*. The sun travels through each one of these "*Burj*" (singular of *Burūj*) in one month. The moon travels through each one of these *Burj* in two-and-a-third days, which makes a total of twenty-eight positions, and it is hidden for two nights.^[3]

The Explanation of the Promised Day and the Witness and the Witnessed

Allāh says,

[1] Al-Qurṭubi 19:200.

[2] Al-Qurṭubi 19:283.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:332.

﴿وَالْيَوْمِ الْوَعْدِ﴾ وَشَاهِدٍ وَشَهْوَةٍ

﴿And by the Promised Day. And by the Witness, and by the Witnessed.﴾

Ibn Abi Hātim recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«﴿وَالْيَوْمِ الْوَعْدِ﴾ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ ﴿وَشَاهِدٍ﴾ يَوْمُ الْجُمُعَةِ، وَمَا طَلَعَتْ شَمْسٌ وَلَا غَرَبَتْ عَلَى يَوْمٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ، وَفِيهِ سَاعَةٌ لَا يُوَاقِقُهَا عَبْدٌ مُسْلِمٌ يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ فِيهَا خَيْرًا إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ إِيَّاهُ، وَلَا يَسْتَعِيدُ فِيهَا مِنْ شَرٍّ إِلَّا أَعَادَهُ. ﴿وَشَهْوَةٍ﴾ يَوْمُ عَرَفَةَ»

﴿And by the Promised Day.﴾ This refers to the Day of Judgement. ﴿And by the Witness.﴾ This refers to Friday, and the sun does not rise or set on a day that is better than Friday. During it there is an hour that no Muslim servant catches while asking Allāh from some good except that Allāh will give it to him. He does not seek refuge from any evil in it except that Allāh will protect him. ﴿And by the Witnessed.﴾ This refers to the day of 'Arafah (in Hajj).^[1]

Ibn Khuzaymah also recorded the same Ḥadīth. It has also been recorded as a statement of Abu Hurayrah and it is similar (to this Ḥadīth).^[2]

It has been reported from Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Abbās, Al-Ḥasan bin 'Alī, Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, Sa'īd bin Al-Muṣayyib, Mujāhid, Ikrimah and Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk that they all said that here the Witnessed refers to the Day of Judgement.

Al-Baghawī said, "The majority considers the Witness to be Friday, and the Witnessed to be the day of 'Arafah."^[3]

The Oppression of the People of the Ditch against the Muslims

Concerning Allāh's statement,

﴿قِيلَ لِّلْأَنْصَابِ الْإِنْدَادُ﴾

﴿Cursed were (Qutila) the People of the Ditch (Ukhdūd).﴾

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24 :332.

[2] Ibn Khuzaymah 3 :116.

[3] Al-Baghawī 4 :466.

meaning, the companions of the *Ukhdūd* were cursed. The plural of *Ukhdūd* is *Akhādīd*, which means ditches in the ground.

This is information about a group of people who were among the disbelievers. They went after those among them who believed in Allāh and they attempted to force them to give up their religion. However, the believers refused to recant, so they dug a ditch for them in the ground. Then they lit a fire in it and prepared some fuel for it in order to keep it ablaze. Then they tried to convince them (the believers) to apostate from their religion (again), but they still refused them. So they threw them into the fire. Thus, Allāh says,

﴿قِيلَ اصْحَبُوا الْاُخْدُوْدَ ۝ اِنَّآ نَا۟رُ الْوُقُوْدِ ۝ اِذْ هَرَّ عَلَيَّهَا قَوْمٌ ۝ وَهُمْ عَلٰى مَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ شُهُودٌ ۝﴾

﴿Cursed were the People of the Ditch. Of fire fed with fuel.
When they sat by it. And they witnessed what they were doing
against the believers.﴾

meaning, they were witnesses to what was done to these believers. Allāh said,

﴿وَمَا نَقَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ اِلَّا اَنْ يُؤْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّزِّ الْحَمِيْدِ ۝﴾

﴿And they had no fault except that they believed in Allāh, the
Almighty, Worthy of all praise!﴾

meaning, they did not commit any sin according to these people, except for their faith in Allāh the Almighty, Who does not treat unjustly those who desire to be with Him. He is the Most Mighty and Most Praiseworthy in all of His statements, actions, legislation, and decrees. He decreed what happened to these servants of His at the hands of the disbelievers - and He is the Most Mighty, the Most Praiseworthy - even though the reason for this decree is unknown to many people.

Then Allāh says,

﴿اَلَّذِيْ لَمْ يَلِكْ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۝﴾

﴿To Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth!﴾

Among His perfect Attributes is that He is the Owner of all of the heavens, the earth, whatever is in them, and whatever is between them.

﴿وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾

﴿And Allāh is Witness over everything.﴾

meaning, nothing is concealed from Him in all of the heavens and the earth, nor is anything hidden from Him.

The Story of the Sorcerer, the Monk, the Boy and Those Who were forced to enter the Ditch

Imām Aḥmad recorded from Ṣuhayb that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«كَانَ فِيمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ مَلِكٌ وَكَانَ لَهُ سَاجِرٌ، فَلَمَّا كَبِرَ السَّاجِرُ قَالَ لِلْمَلِكِ: إِنِّي قَدْ كَبِرَ بَنِي وَحَضَرَ أَجْلِي، فَادْفَعْ إِلَيَّ غُلَامًا لِأَعْلَمَهُ السَّحْرَ، فَدَفَعَ إِلَيْهِ غُلَامًا فَكَانَ يُعَلِّمُهُ السَّحْرَ، وَكَانَ بَيْنَ السَّاجِرِ وَبَيْنَ الْمَلِكِ رَاهِبٌ فَأَتَى الْغُلَامُ عَلَى الرَّاهِبِ فَسَمِعَ مِنْ كَلَامِهِ فَأَعْجَبَهُ نَعْوُهُ وَكَلَامُهُ، وَكَانَ إِذَا أَتَى السَّاجِرَ ضَرَبَهُ وَقَالَ: مَا خَسَكَ؟ وَإِذَا أَتَى أَهْلَهُ ضَرَبُوهُ وَقَالُوا: مَا خَسَكَ؟ فَشَكَا ذَلِكَ إِلَى الرَّاهِبِ فَقَالَ: إِذَا أَرَادَ السَّاجِرُ أَنْ يَضْرِبَكَ فَقُلْ: خَسِنِي أَهْلِي، وَإِذَا أَرَادَ أَهْلُكَ أَنْ يَضْرِبُوكَ فَقُلْ: خَسِنِي السَّاجِرُ، قَالَ: فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ إِذْ أَتَى عَلَى دَابَّةٍ فَطِيعَةٍ عَظِيمَةٍ قَدْ خَسِبَ النَّاسُ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ أَنْ يَجُوزُوا. فَقَالَ: الْيَوْمَ أَعْلَمُ أَمْرَ الرَّاهِبِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ اللَّهُ أَمْ أَمْرُ السَّاجِرِ؟ قَالَ: فَأَخَذَ حَجَرًا فَقَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ أَمْرُ الرَّاهِبِ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكَ وَأَرْضَى مِنْ أَمْرِ السَّاجِرِ فَاقْتُلْ هَذِهِ الدَّابَّةَ حَتَّى يَجُوزَ النَّاسُ، وَرَمَاهَا فَتَقَلَّتْهَا وَمَضَى النَّاسُ.

«Among the people who came before you, there was a king who had a sorcerer, and when that sorcerer became old, he said to the king, "I have become old and my time is nearly over, so please send me a boy whom I can teach magic." So, he sent him a boy and the sorcerer taught him magic. Whenever the boy went to the sorcerer, he sat with a monk who was on the way and listened to his speech and admired them. So, when he went to the sorcerer, he passed by the monk and sat there with him; and on visiting the sorcerer the latter would thrash him. So, the boy complained about this to the monk. The monk said to him, "Whenever you are afraid of the sorcerer, say to him: 'My people kept me busy.' And whenever you are afraid of your people, say to them: 'The sorcerer kept me busy.' " So the boy

carried on like that (for some time). Then a huge terrible creature appeared on the road and the people were unable to pass by. The boy said, "Today I shall know whether the sorcerer is better or the monk is better." So, he took a stone and said, "O Allāh! If the deeds and actions of the monk are liked by You better than those of the sorcerer, then kill this creature so that the people can cross (the road)." Then he struck it with a stone killing it and the people passed by on the road.

فَاخْبَرَ الرَّاهِبَ بِذَلِكَ فَقَالَ: أَيُّ بَنِي، أَنْتَ أَفْضَلُ مِنِّي وَإِنَّكَ سَتَبْتَلَى، فَإِنْ ابْتَلَيْتَ فَلَا تَذُلْ عَلَيَّ، نَكَانَ الْعَلَامُ يُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَسَائِرَ الْأَدْوَاءِ وَيَشْفِيهِمْ، وَكَانَ لِلْمَلِكِ جَلِيسٌ فَعَمِيَ فَسَمِعَ بِهِ فَأَتَاهُ بِهَدَايَا كَثِيرَةٍ فَقَالَ: أَشْفِنِي وَلَكَ مَا هَهُنَا أَجْمَعُ، فَقَالَ: مَا أَنَا أَشْفِي أَحَدًا، إِنَّمَا يَشْفِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، فَإِنْ آمَنْتَ بِهِ دَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ فَشَفَاكَ، فَأَمَّنَ فَدَعَا اللَّهَ فَشَفَاهُ.

The boy came to the monk and informed him about it. The monk said to him, "O my son! Today you are better than I, and you have achieved what I see! You will be put to trial. And in case you are put to trial, do not inform (them) about me." The boy used to treat the people suffering from congenital blindness, leprosy, and other diseases. There was a courtier of the king who had become blind and he heard about the boy. He came and brought a number of gifts for the boy and said, "All these gifts are for you on the condition that you cure me." The boy said, "I do not cure anybody; it is only Allāh who cures people. So, if you believe in Allāh and supplicate to Him, He will cure you." So, he believed in and supplicated to Allāh, and Allāh cured him.

ثُمَّ أَتَى الْمَلِكَ فَجَلَسَ مَعَهُ نَحْوَ مَا كَانَ يَجْلِسُ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ: يَا فَلَانُ، مَنْ رَدَّ عَلَيْكَ بَصْرَكَ؟ فَقَالَ: رَبِّي. فَقَالَ: أَنَا؟ قَالَ: لَا، رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ، قَالَ: وَلَكَ رَبٌّ غَيْرِي؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ، فَلَمْ يَزَلْ يُعَذِّبُهُ حَتَّى دَلَّ عَلَى الْعَلَامِ، فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ: أَيُّ بَنِي بَلَغَ مِنْ سِحْرِكَ أَنْ تُبْرِئَ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَدْوَاءُ! قَالَ: مَا أَشْفِي أَحَدًا إِنَّمَا يَشْفِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، قَالَ: أَنَا؟ قَالَ: لَا. قَالَ: أَوَلَيْكَ رَبٌّ غَيْرِي؟ قَالَ: رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ، فَأَخَذَهُ أَبْصًا بِالْعَذَابِ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ بِهِ حَتَّى دَلَّ عَلَى الرَّاهِبِ فَأَتَى بِالرَّاهِبِ فَقَالَ: ارْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِكَ فَأَبِي، فَوَضَعَ الْمِشْشَارَ فِي مَفْرَقِ

رَأْسِهِ حَتَّى وَقَعَ شِقَاءَهُ، وَقَالَ لِلْأَعْمَى: ازْجِعْ عَن دِينِكَ، فَأَبَى، فَوَضَعَ الْمُنْشَارَ فِي مَفْرَقِ رَأْسِهِ حَتَّى وَقَعَ شِقَاءَهُ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ. وَقَالَ لِلْغُلَامِ: ازْجِعْ عَن دِينِكَ، فَأَبَى، فَبَعَثَ بِهِ مَعَ نَفَرٍ إِلَى جَبَلٍ كَذَا وَكَذَا وَقَالَ: إِذَا بَلَغْتُمْ ذُرْوَتَهُ فَإِنْ رَجَعَ عَن دِينِهِ وَإِلَّا فَذَهَبُوا، فَذَهَبُوا بِهِ فَلَمَّا عَلَوْا بِهِ الْجَبَلَ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيهِمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ، فَزَجَفَ بِهِمُ الْجَبَلَ فَذَهَبُوا أَجْمَعُونَ، وَجَاءَ الْغُلَامُ يَتَلَمَّسُ حَتَّى دَخَلَ عَلَى الْمَلِكِ فَقَالَ: مَا فَعَلَ أَصْحَابُكَ؟ فَقَالَ: كَفَانِيهِمُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، فَبَعَثَ بِهِ مَعَ نَفَرٍ فِي قُرْقُورٍ فَقَالَ: إِذَا لَجَجْتُمْ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَإِنْ رَجَعَ عَن دِينِهِ، وَإِلَّا فَعَرِّقُوهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ، فَلَجَجُوا فِي الْبَحْرِ فَقَالَ الْغُلَامُ: اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيهِمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ، فَعَرِّقُوا أَجْمَعُونَ.

Later, the courtier came to the king and sat at the place where he used to sit before. The king said, "Who gave you back your sight?" The courtier replied, "My Lord." The king then said, "I did?" The courtier said, "No, my Lord and your Lord - Allāh." The king said, "Do you have another Lord beside me?" The courtier said, "Yes, your Lord and my Lord is Allāh." The king tortured him and did not stop until he told him about the boy. So, the boy was brought to the king and he said to him, "O boy! Has your magic reached to the extent that you cure congenital blindness, leprosy and other diseases?" He said, "I do not cure anyone. Only Allāh can cure." The king said, "Me?"^[1] The boy replied, "No." The king asked, "Do you have another Lord besides me?" The boy answered, "My Lord and your Lord is Allāh." So, he tortured him also until he told about the monk. Then the monk was brought to him and the king said to him, "Abandon your religion." The monk refused and so the king ordered a saw to be brought which was placed in the middle of his head and he fell, sawn in two. Then it was said to the man who used to be blind, "Abandon your religion." He refused to do so, and so a saw was brought and placed in the middle of his head and he fell, sawn in two. Then the boy was brought and it was said to him, "Abandon your religion." He refused and so the king sent him to the top of such and such mountain with some people. He told the people, "Ascend up the mountain with him till you reach its peak, then

^[1] This statement of the king is only in the version with Aḥmad.

see if he abandons his religion; otherwise throw him from the top." They took him and when they ascended to the top, he said, "O Allāh! Save me from them by any means that You wish." So, the mountain shook and they all fell down and the boy came back walking to the king. The king said, "What did your companions (the people I sent with you) do?" The boy said, "Allāh saved me from them." So, the king ordered some people to take the boy on a boat to the middle of the sea, saying, "If he renounces his religion (well and good), but if he refuses, drown him." So, they took him out to sea and he said, "O Allāh! Save me from them by any means that you wish." So they were all drowned in the sea.

وَجَاءَ الْغُلَامُ حَتَّى دَخَلَ عَلَى الْمَلِكِ فَقَالَ: مَا فَعَلَ أَصْحَابُكَ؟ فَقَالَ: كَفَّانِيهِمْ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ثُمَّ قَالَ لِلْمَلِكِ: إِنَّكَ لَسْتَ بِقَاتِلِي حَتَّى تَفْعَلَ مَا أَمُرُكَ بِهِ، فَإِنْ أَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ مَا أَمُرُكَ بِهِ قَتَلْتَنِي، وَإِلَّا فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَسْتَطِيعُ قَتْلِي، قَالَ: وَمَا هُوَ؟ قَالَ: تَجْمَعُ النَّاسَ فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ ثُمَّ تَضْلِبُنِي عَلَى جِذْعٍ وَتَأْخُذُ سَهْمًا مِنْ كِتَانِي، ثُمَّ قُلْ: بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْغُلَامِ. فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ قَتَلْتَنِي. فَفَعَلَ وَوَضَعَ السَّهْمَ فِي كَبِدِ قَوْسِهِ ثُمَّ رَمَاهُ وَقَالَ: بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْغُلَامِ، فَوَقَعَ السَّهْمُ فِي صُدْغِهِ، فَوَضَعَ الْغُلَامُ يَدَهُ عَلَى مَوْضِعِ السَّهْمِ وَمَاتَ، فَقَالَ النَّاسُ: أَمَّا بِرَبِّ الْغُلَامِ. فَقِيلَ لِلْمَلِكِ: أَرَأَيْتَ مَا كُنْتَ تَحْذَرُ؟ فَقَدْ وَاللَّهِ نَزَلَ بِكَ، قَدْ آمَنَ النَّاسُ كُلُّهُمْ، فَأَمَرَ بِأَنْفُوهِ السَّكِّ، فَخُذَّتْ فِيهَا الْأَخَادِيدُ وَأَضْرَمَتْ فِيهَا النَّيْرَانُ، وَقَالَ: مَنْ رَجَعَ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَدَعُوهُ، وَإِلَّا فَأَقْبَحُوهُ فِيهَا، قَالَ: فَكَانُوا يَتَعَادُونَ فِيهَا وَيَتَدَفَعُونَ، فَجَاءَتْ امْرَأَةٌ بَابِنَ لَهَا تُرْضِعُهُ، فَكَأَنَّهُا تَفَاعَسَتْ أَنْ تَقَعَ فِي النَّارِ فَقَالَ الصَّبِيُّ: اضْبِرِّي يَا أُمَاءُ فَإِنَّكَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ

Then the boy returned to the king and the king said, "What did your companions do?" The boy replied, "Allāh, saved me from them." Then he said to the king, "You will not be able to kill me until you do as I order you. And if you do as I order you, you will be able to kill me." The king asked, "And what is that?" The boy said, "Gather the people in one elevated place and tie me to the trunk of a tree; then take an arrow from my quiver and say: 'In the Name of Allāh, the Lord of the boy.' If you do this, you will be able to kill me." So he did this, and

placing an arrow in the bow, he shot it, saying, "In the Name of Allāh, the Lord of the boy." The arrow hit the boy in the temple, and the boy placed his hand over the arrow wound and died. The people proclaimed, "We believe in the Lord of the boy!" Then it was said to the king, "Do you see what has happened? That which you feared has taken place. By Allāh, all the people have believed (in the Lord of the boy)." So he ordered that ditches be dug at the entrances to the roads and it was done, and fires were kindled in them. Then the king said, "Whoever abandons his religion, let him go, and whoever does not, throw him into the fire." They were struggling and scuffling in the fire, until a woman and her baby whom she was breast feeding came and it was as if she was being somewhat hesitant of falling into the fire, so her baby said to her, "Be patient mother! For verily, you are following the truth!"^[1]

Muslim also recorded this Ḥadīth at the end of the Ṣaḥīḥ.^[2] Muḥammad bin Ishāq bin Yasār related this story in his book of Sīrah in another way that has some differences from that which has just been related.

Then, after Ibn Ishāq explained that the people of Najrān began following the religion of the boy after his murder, which was the religion of Christianity, he said, "Then (the king) Dhū Nuwās came to them with his army and called them to Judaism. He gave them a choice to either accept Judaism or be killed, so they chose death. Thus, he had a ditch dug and burned (some of them) in the fire (in the ditch), while others he killed with the sword. He made an example of them (by slaughtering them) until he had killed almost twenty thousand of them. It was about Dhū Nuwās and his army that Allāh revealed to His Messenger ﷺ:

﴿قِيلَ انصَبْ الْاَحْدَثُ ۚ اِنَّكَ ذَاكَ الْوَقْدُ ۚ اِذْ هَرَّ عَلَيَّا قُودٌ ۖ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ۚ وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ اِلَّا اَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللّٰهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ۚ الَّذِیْ لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۝﴾

﴿Cursed were the People of the Ditch. Of fire fed with fuel.

^[1] Aḥmad 6:16.

^[2] Muslim 4:2299. It was also recorded by At-Tirmidhi in the Book of Tafsīr.

When they sat by it. And they witnessed what they were doing against the believers. And they had no fault except that they believed in Allāh, the Almighty, Worthy of all praise! To Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth! And Allāh is Witness over everything.﴾ (85:4-9)"

This is what Muḥammad bin Ishāq said in his book of *Sīrah* – that the one who killed the People of the Ditch was Dhū Nuwās, and his name was Zur'ah. In the time of his kingdom he was called Yūsuf. He was the son of Tubān As'ad Abi Karib, who was the Tubba' who invaded Al-Madīnah and put the covering over the *Ka'bah*.^[1] He kept two rabbis with him from the Jews of Al-Madīnah. After this some of the people of Yemen accepted Judaism at the hands of these two rabbis, as Ibn Ishāq mentions at length.

So Dhū Nuwās killed twenty thousand people in one morning in the Ditch. Only one man among them escaped. He was known as Daws Dhū Tha'labān. He escaped on a horse and they set out after him, but they were unable to catch him. He went to Caesar, the emperor of Ash-Shām. So, Caesar wrote to An-Najāshi, the King of Abyssinia. So, he sent with him an army of Abyssinian Christians, who were lead by Aryāt and Abrahah. They rescued Yemen from the hands of the Jews. Dhū Nuwās tried to flee but eventually fell into the sea and drowned. After this, the kingdom of Abyssinia remained under Christian power for seventy years. Then the power was divested from the Christians by Sayf bin Dhi Yazin Al-Ḥimyari when Kistrā, the king of Persia sent an army there (to Yemen). He (the king) sent with him (Sayf Al-Ḥimyari) those people who were in the prisons, and they were close to seven hundred in number. So, he (Sayf Al-Ḥimyari) conquered Yemen with them and returned the kingdom back to the people of Ḥimyar (Yemenis). We will mention a portion of this – if Allāh wills – when we discuss the *Tafsīr* of the *Sūrah*:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ﴾

﴿Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the Owners of the Elephant?﴾^[2] (105:1)

[1] Ibn Hishām 1 :36.

[2] See volume nine, the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrat Ad-Dukhān* (44 :37).

The Punishment of the People of the Ditch

Allāh said,

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا الصَّالِحِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ﴾

﴿Verily, those who put into trial the believing men and believing women,﴾

meaning, they burned (them). This was said by Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk, and Ibn Abzā.^[1]

﴿ثُمَّ لَا يَبُوءُوا﴾

﴿and then do not turn in repentance,﴾

meaning, 'they do not cease from what they are doing, and do not regret what they had done before.'

﴿فَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابُ الْحَرِيقِ﴾

﴿then they will have the torment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the burning Fire.﴾

This is because the recompense is based upon the type of deed performed. Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣri said, "Look at this generosity and kindness. These people killed Allāh's *Awliyā'* and He still invites them to make repentance and seek forgiveness."

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ الثَّوَرُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿١١﴾ إِنَّ بَلَدَ رَمَكٍ لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ إِنَّهُمْ هُوَ يُبْدِئُ وَيُعِيدُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْودُودُ ﴿١٤﴾ ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْجَبَدُ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالُوا لَنَا بِرَبِّهِ ﴿١٦﴾ هَلْ أَنْتَ حَدِيثُ الْجَنَّاتِ ﴿١٧﴾ فِرْعَوْنُ وَشُودُ ﴿١٨﴾ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِيبٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ ﴿٢١﴾ فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾

﴿11. Verily, those who believe and do righteous good deeds, for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow. That is the supreme success.﴾

﴿12. Verily, the punishment of your Lord is severe and painful.﴾

﴿13. Verily, He it is Who begins and repeats.﴾

﴿14. And He is Oft-Forgiving, Al-Wadūd.﴾

﴿15. Owner of the Throne, Al-Majīd (the Glorious).﴾

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:343, 344.

- ﴿16. Doer of what He intends.﴾
 ﴿17. Has the story reached you of the hosts.﴾
 ﴿18. Of Fir'awn and Thamūd?﴾
 ﴿19. Nay! The disbelievers (persisted) in denying.﴾
 ﴿20. And Allāh encompasses them from behind!﴾
 ﴿21. Nay! This is a Glorious Qur'ān,﴾
 ﴿22. In Al-Lawh Al-Mahfūz!﴾

The Reward of the Righteous, and the Harsh Seizing of the Disbelieving Enemies of Allāh

Allāh informs about His believing servants that

﴿لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ﴾

﴿for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow.﴾

This is the opposite of what he has prepared for His enemies of Fire and Hell. Thus, He says,

﴿ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ﴾

﴿That is the supreme success.﴾ Then Allāh says,

﴿إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيدٌ﴾

﴿Verily, the punishment of your Lord is severe and painful.﴾

meaning, indeed His punishment and His vengeance upon His enemies, who have rejected His Messengers, and opposed His command, is severe, great and strong. For verily, He is the Owner of power, Most Strong. He is the One that whatever He wants, then it will be however He wants it to be, in the matter of a blinking of an eye, or even swifter. Thus, Allāh says,

﴿إِنَّهُ هُوَ بَٰدِئُ الْمَخْلُوقَاتِ﴾

﴿Verily, He it is Who begins and repeats.﴾

meaning, from His perfect strength and power is that He begins the creation, and He repeats it just as He began it, without opposition or resistance.

﴿وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الْذَرُودُ﴾

﴿And He is Oft-Forgiving, Al-Wadūd.﴾ meaning, He forgives the sin of whoever repents to Him and humbles himself before Him,

no matter what the sin may be. Ibn 'Abbās and others have said about the name Al-Wadūd, "It means Al-Ḥabīb (the Loving)."^[1]

﴿ذُو الْعَرْشِ﴾

﴿Owner of the Throne,﴾ meaning, the Owner of the Mighty Throne that is above all of the creation. Then He says,

﴿الْمَجِيدُ﴾

﴿Al-Majīd (the Glorious).﴾ This word has been recited in two different ways: either with a *Dhammah* over its last letter (Al-Majīdu), which is an attribute of the Lord, or with a *Kasrah* under its last letter (Al-Majīd), which is a description of the Throne. Nevertheless, both meanings are correct.

﴿فَسَالِ لَنَا بِرُحْمَةٍ﴾

﴿Doer of what He intends.﴾ meaning, whatever He wants He does it, and there is no one who can counter His ruling. He is not asked about what He does due to His greatness, His power, His wisdom and His justice. This is as we have related previously from Abu Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq, that it was said to him during the illness of (his) death, "Has a doctor seen you?" He replied, "Yes." They said, "What did he say to you?" He replied, "He said, 'I am the Doer of whatever I intend.'"^[2]

Concerning Allāh's statement,

﴿هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْجُمُودِ ۚ فِرْعَوْنَ وَثَمُودَ﴾

﴿Has the story reached you of the hosts. Of Fir'awn and Thamūd?﴾

meaning, has the news reached you of what Allāh caused to befall them of torment, and that He sent down upon them the punishment that no one was able to ward off from them? This is the affirmation of His statement,

﴿إِنْ يَكُنْ رَيْكَ لَسَدِيدٌ﴾

﴿Verily, the punishment of your Lord is severe and painful.﴾

meaning, when He seizes the wrongdoer, He seizes him with a

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 24:346.

[2] Al-Qurṭubī 19:297.

severe and painful punishment. It is the seizing punishment of One Most Mighty, and Most Powerful. Then Allāh says,

﴿بَلِّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي تَكْذِبٍ﴾

﴿Nay! The disbelievers (persisted) in denying.﴾

meaning, they are in doubt, suspicion, disbelief and rebellion.

﴿وَاللَّهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ مُحِيطٌ﴾

﴿And Allāh encompasses them from behind!﴾

meaning, He has power over them, and is able to compel them. They cannot escape Him or evade Him.

﴿بَلِّ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَجِيدٌ﴾

﴿Nay! This is a Glorious Qur'ān.﴾ meaning, magnificent and noble.

﴿فِي لَوْحٍ مَحْفُوظٍ﴾

﴿In Al-Lawḥ Al-Mahfūz!﴾ meaning, among the most high gathering, guarded from any increase, decrease, distortion, or change.

This is the end of the Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Burūj, and all praise and blessings are due to Allāh.