## Stories from the Qur'an

### Series 25

# A Good Land

*The Story of the People of Sheba and the Flood of the Dam According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith*



**Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron**
**AK (Kelantan)**
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

### SERIES 25

# A GOOD LAND

*The Story of the People of Sheba and the Flood of the Dam According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith*

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ ءَايَةٌ ۖ جَنَّتَانِ عَن يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ ۖ كُلُوا۟ مِن رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ لَهُۥ ۚ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ

"There was for [the tribe of] Saba' in their dwelling place a sign: two [fields of] gardens on the right and on the left. [They were told], "Eat from the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him. A good land [have you], and a forgiving Lord."."

SURAH SABA' 34:15

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who gives a good land and is a forgiving Lord; who increases His favour for the grateful, and whose punishment is severe for those who deny. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who taught us to look at those below us so that we do not belittle the favour of Allah, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

**ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF**;

my dear children,

**MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA** and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

**FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL** and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah make our land a good land, make us servants who are patient and grateful, and keep us far from ingratitude. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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## ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being. It shows the **scenery** of a **fertile valley** between rocky mountains in the morning, with **green gardens on the right and the left** of a wadi, and water flowing calmly.

The scene is taken from the words of Allah: ***"two [fields of] gardens on the right and on the left"*** (34:15). It recalls ***"A good land [have you], and a forgiving Lord"*** before that blessing was taken away.

The cover does not depict the flood, a broken dam or any figure. The **dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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*Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = archaeological note; blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.*

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# A GOOD LAND

In Series 24, the Queen of Sheba submitted with Prophet Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to Allah. This series takes us to ***the people of Saba' (Sheba) themselves***, in the surah named after them — Surah Saba'. The Qur'an does not say when these events took place; what it highlights is ***their lesson***.

This is the story of a land that was given everything — fertile gardens, safe journeys, and a forgiving Lord — yet its people ***turned away***. Then came a devastating flood, and their name became ***a story on people's lips***.




*Figure 1: The flow of the story of the people of Sheba — from two gardens to total dispersion.*

*Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The translations of the Hadith are our own, from the Arabic text. The grade of each Hadith is stated in its Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.*

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# TWO GARDENS

**SURAH SABA' 34:15**

لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكَنِهِمْ ءَايَةٌ ۖ جَنَّتَانِ عَن يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ ۖ كُلُوا۟ مِن رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ لَهُۥ ۚ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ ﴿١٥﴾

There was for [the tribe of] Saba' in their dwelling place a sign: two [fields of] gardens on the right and on the left. [They were told], "Eat from the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him. A good land [have you], and a forgiving Lord."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:15*

## EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:15 — A SIGN OF ALLAH'S GENEROSITY

**First: A sign.** ***"There was for [the tribe of] Saba' in their dwelling place a sign"***. Prosperity itself is an ***ayah***, a sign that should have led them to Allah.

**Second: Two gardens.** ***"two [fields of] gardens on the right and on the left"***. The commentators mention that the gardens were so many that they looked like two continuous gardens on both sides of the valley. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:15

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2742**

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ أَبِي مَسْلَمَةَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا نَضْرَةَ، يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِنَّ الدُّنْيَا حُلْوَةٌ خَضِرَةٌ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مُسْتَخْلِفُكُمْ فِيهَا فَيَنْظُرُ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ فَاتَّقُوا الدُّنْيَا وَاتَّقُوا النِّسَاءَ فَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ فِتْنَةِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَانَتْ فِي النِّسَاءِ ». وَفِي حَدِيثِ ابْنِ بَشَّارٍ « لِيَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُونَ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Indeed, this world is sweet and green, and Allah has made you successors in it to see how you will act. So beware of (the trial of) this world, and beware of (the trial of) women, for the first trial of the Children of Israel was in women."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna and Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Muhammad ibn Ja'far (Ghundar), from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Abu Maslamah Sa'id ibn Yazid, from Abu Nadrah al-Mundhir ibn Malik, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Heart-Softeners (Kitab al-Riqaq), Hadith No. 2742.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2742

A world that is "sweet and green" — like the gardens of Sheba — is ***a test***: Allah sees how we act with it.

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# "EAT AND BE GRATEFUL"

## EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:15 — ONE COMMAND, TWO PROMISES

**First: Blessing and command.** ***"Eat from the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him"***. Allah only asked for ***gratitude***.

**Second: Two perfect qualities.** ***"A good land [have you], and a forgiving Lord"***. ***Baldatun ṭayyibatun wa rabbun ghafūr***.

**Third: The rule of gratitude.** ***"If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe"*** (14:7).

One way of gratitude is ***to look at those below us***:

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2963**

وَحَدَّثَنِي زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو كُرَيْبٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لَهُ - حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، وَوَكِيعٌ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « انْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلاَ تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكُمْ فَهُوَ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لاَ تَزْدَرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ ». قَالَ أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ « عَلَيْكُمْ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Look at those who are below you, and do not look at those who are above you, for that is more likely to keep you from belittling the favour of Allah upon you."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, Zuhayr ibn Harb and Abu Kurayb, from Abu Mu'awiyah, Waki' ibn al-Jarrah and Jarir ibn 'Abd al-Hamid, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Abu Salih Dhakwan al-Samman, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism (Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq), Hadith No. 2963. Also narrated by al-Bukhari (No. 6490) with similar wording.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2963

# BUT THEY TURNED AWAY

**SURAH SABA' 34:16**

فَأَعۡرَضُواْ فَأَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ سَيۡلَ ٱلۡعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلۡنَٰهُم بِجَنَّتَيۡهِمۡ جَنَّتَيۡنِ ذَوَاتَيۡ أُكُلٍ خَمۡطٖ وَأَثۡلٖ وَشَيۡءٖ مِّن سِدۡرٖ قَلِيلٖ ١٦

But they turned away [refusing], so We sent upon them the flood of the dam, and We replaced their two [fields of] gardens with gardens of bitter fruit, tamarisks and something of sparse lote trees.

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/34:16

## EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:16 — ONE WORD THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

**First: "Fa-a'raḍū".** ***"But they turned away [refusing]"***. One word in the Qur'an sums up the whole cause of their ruin: ***turning away from the command to be grateful***.

**Second: Turning away from what?** The commentators mention that they turned away from tawhid and from the call of the messengers sent to them, and used Allah's blessings without remembering the Giver. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:16

**Third: The blessing was not the problem.** The same blessing can be a path to Paradise for the grateful, and a path to ruin for those who turn away.

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# THE FLOOD OF AL-'ARIM

## EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:16 — WATER THAT GIVES LIFE, WATER THAT DESTROYS

**First: The punishment.** ***"so We sent upon them the flood of the dam"***. In the Arabic text: ***sayl al-'arim***.

**Second: The meaning of "al-'arim".** The commentators mention several meanings: ***a dam*** that held back water, ***a very powerful flood***, or ***the name of the valley*** through which the water flowed. Many commentators, including Ibn Kathir, mention that they had a great dam holding the rainwater from the mountains, and that the dam burst. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:16

**Third: A deep lesson.** The water that had made their gardens fertile became the means of their ruin. ***The same source of blessing can become a source of disaster*** when the Giver is forgotten.

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# BITTER FRUIT AND SPARSE LOTE TREES

**SURAH SABA' 34:17**

ذَٰلِكَ جَزَيْنَٰهُم بِمَا كَفَرُوا۟ ۖ وَهَلْ نُجَٰزِىٓ إِلَّا ٱلْكَفُورَ ﴿١٧﴾

[By] that We repaid them because they disbelieved. And do We [thus] repay except the ungrateful?

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/34:17

## EXPLANATION OF VERSES 34:16–17 — A BITTER EXCHANGE

**First: Gardens replaced.** ***"We replaced their two [fields of] gardens with gardens of bitter fruit, tamarisks and something of sparse lote trees"***. They still had "two gardens" — but what grew in them had changed.

**Second: The reason for the recompense.** ***"[By] that We repaid them because they disbelieved. And do We [thus] repay except the ungrateful?"*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:17

**Third: When evil becomes abundant.** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned that ruin can come even when there are righteous people, if evil becomes abundant:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3346**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، أَنَّ زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةَ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَتْهُ عَنْ أُمِّ حَبِيبَةَ بِنْتِ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، عَنْ زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةِ جَحْشٍ ـ رضى الله عنهن أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا فَزِعًا يَقُولُ « لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ، وَيْلٌ لِلْعَرَبِ مِنْ شَرٍّ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ فُتِحَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ رَدْمِ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مِثْلُ هَذِهِ ». وَحَلَّقَ بِإِصْبَعِهِ الإِبْهَامِ وَالَّتِي تَلِيهَا. قَالَتْ زَيْنَبُ ابْنَةُ جَحْشٍ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنَهْلِكُ وَفِينَا الصَّالِحُونَ قَالَ « نَعَمْ، إِذَا كَثُرَ الْخُبْثُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Zaynab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها narrated that the Prophet ﷺ came in to her alarmed, saying: **"Lā ilāha illallāh! Woe to the Arabs from an evil that has drawn near. Today an opening has been made in the barrier of Gog and Magog like this"** — and he made a circle with his thumb and index finger. Zaynab said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, shall we be destroyed while there are righteous people among us? He said: **"Yes, when evil becomes abundant."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth ibn Sa'd, from 'Uqayl ibn Khalid, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, from Zaynab bint Abi Salamah, from Umm Habibah bint Abi Sufyan, from Zaynab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets (Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya'), chapter on the story of Gog and Magog, Hadith No. 3346. Also narrated as No. 7059, and by Muslim (No. 2880).

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3346

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## CITIES IN SAFETY

**SURAH SABA' 34:18**

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ ٱلْقُرَى ٱلَّتِى بَـٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرًى ظَـٰهِرَةً وَقَدَّرْنَا فِيهَا ٱلسَّيْرَ ۖ سِيرُوا۟ فِيهَا لَيَالِىَ وَأَيَّامًا ءَامِنِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

And We placed between them and the cities which We had blessed [many] visible cities. And We determined between them the [distances of] journey, [saying], "Travel between them by night or day in safety."

*Translation: Sahih International* — quran.com/34:18

### EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:18 — THE BLESSING OF SECURITY

**First: A chain of cities.** ***"And We placed between them and the cities which We had blessed [many] visible cities"***. The commentators explain that the blessed cities were those of al-Sham.

**Second: Easy journeys.** ***"And We determined between them the [distances of] journey"***. Travellers did not need to carry large provisions; they could stop from one city to the next.

**Third: Safety.** ***"Travel between them by night or day in safety"***. Safety on the road is ***a blessing that is often forgotten***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:18

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# "LENGTHEN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN OUR JOURNEYS"

**SURAH SABA' 34:19**

فَقَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَا بَـٰعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَـٰهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَزَّقْنَـٰهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَـَٔايَـٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿١٩﴾

But [insolently] they said, "Our Lord, lengthen the distance between our journeys," and wronged themselves, so We made them narrations and dispersed them in total dispersion. Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:19*

## EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:19 — WEARY OF BLESSINGS

**First: A strange request.** ***"Our Lord, lengthen the distance between our journeys"***. They grew weary of ease and asked for hardship. The commentators mention that they wanted long journeys so that only the rich could trade, and so they could ***boast*** of their wealth.

**Second: Wronging themselves.** ***"and wronged themselves"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:19

People often do not value a blessing until it is gone. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ reminded us of two blessings most often forgotten:

**HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6412**

حَدَّثَنَا الْمَكِّيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ ـ هُوَ ابْنُ أَبِي هِنْدٍ ـ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم « نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ ». قَالَ عَبَّاسٌ الْعَنْبَرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا صَفْوَانُ بْنُ عِيسَى، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي هِنْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِثْلَهُ.

**TRANSLATION:**

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **"There are two blessings in which many people are deceived: health and free time."**

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Makki ibn Ibrahim, from 'Abdullah ibn Sa'id ibn Abi Hind, from his father, Sa'id ibn Abi Hind, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Heart-Softeners (Kitab al-Riqaq), chapter "There is no life except the life of the Hereafter", Hadith No. 6412.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6412

# MADE INTO NARRATIONS

## EXPLANATION OF VERSE 34:19 — FROM A GOOD LAND TO A STORY

**First: Becoming a story.** ***"so We made them narrations and dispersed them in total dispersion"***. The dispersal of Sheba became so famous that the Arabs made it a proverb: ***"tafarraqū aydī Saba'"*** — "they scattered like the people of Sheba". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:19

**Second: For whom is this lesson?** ***"Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful"***. ***Ṣabbār*** and ***shakūr*** — two qualities the people of Sheba lacked.

**Third: A similar example.** Allah gives a similar parable: ***"a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it denied the favors of Allah. So Allah made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear"*** (16:112).

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## IBLIS CONFIRMED HIS ASSUMPTION

**SURAH SABA' 34:20**

وَلَقَدۡ صَدَّقَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ إِبۡلِيسُ ظَنَّهُۥ فَٱتَّبَعُوهُ إِلَّا فَرِيقٗا مِّنَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ٢٠

And Iblees had already confirmed through them his assumption, so they followed him, except for a party of believers.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:20*

**SURAH SABA' 34:21**

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُۥ عَلَيۡهِم مِّن سُلۡطَٰنٍ إِلَّا لِنَعۡلَمَ مَن يُؤۡمِنُ بِٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ مِمَّنۡ هُوَ مِنۡهَا فِي شَكٖۗ وَرَبُّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٍ حَفِيظٞ ٢١

And he had over them no authority except [it was decreed] that We might make evident who believes in the Hereafter from who is thereof in doubt. And your Lord, over all things, is Guardian.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:21*

### EXPLANATION OF VERSES 34:20–21 — IBLIS' POWER IS ONLY A TEST

**First: Iblis' assumption.** ***"And Iblees had already confirmed through them his assumption, so they followed him"***. Iblis had sworn to mislead the children of Adam, and assumed that most of them would not be grateful.

**Second: The exception.** ***"except for a party of believers"***.

**Third: Iblis cannot compel.** ***"And he had over them no authority except [it was decreed] that We might make evident who believes in the Hereafter"***. Iblis only whispers; ***the choice remains in human hands***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 34:20

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## WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The story of the people of Sheba is adorned with many added tales. Following Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not add outside details.

### THE POPULAR STORY AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

| THE POPULAR STORY | WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY |
|---|---|
| The dam burst because rats dug into its foundations. | The Qur'an only mentions "the flood of the dam" (34:16). The rat story is not established. |
| A female soothsayer predicted the flood, and a king fled. | Not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. Jinn and soothsayers do not know the unseen (34:14). |
| The flood happened in a particular year. | The Qur'an does not give its date. Historians differ. |
| The Queen of Sheba in Series 24 lived at the time of the flood. | Not stated. The Qur'an tells the two stories in two different surahs. |

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: THE GREAT DAM OF MARIB

The **Great Dam of Marib** in Yemen is one of the greatest engineering achievements of the ancient world, and part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site (2023). The most reliable sources date it to about the **8th century BCE**. It irrigated about **100 km²** of farmland — matching the picture of "two gardens" on the right and the left of the valley.

Ancient inscriptions record **several breaches and repairs** of the dam (including in 449–450 CE and 542–548 CE), before it **collapsed and was abandoned around 570–575 CE**.

**Claim not included.** Some scholars link the flood in verse 34:16 to a breach around 145 BCE, and others to the final collapse in the 6th century CE. Since the date is **uncertain**, the claim that any particular breach was "the flood of al-'Arim" is **not included**.

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## PATIENCE AND GRATITUDE

The story of the people of Sheba is a story of ***ingratitude***. They were not ruined for being poor, but for being rich and ungrateful. Allah closes the story by naming who will take the lesson: ***everyone patient and grateful***.

### A BRIEF COMPARISON

| | Before: Blessings | After: Ingratitude |
|---|---|---|
| Gardens (34:15–16) | Two gardens on the right and on the left | Gardens of bitter fruit, tamarisks and sparse lote trees |
| Travel (34:18–19) | Visible cities; travel by night or day in safety | "Lengthen the distance between our journeys" — then dispersed |
| Name (34:15, 19) | "A good land" | "We made them narrations" |
| Attitude (34:15–17) | Called: "be grateful to Him" | "They turned away" — repaid as the ungrateful are repaid |

*Figure 2: The land of Sheba before and after ingratitude.*

### LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

**First: Prosperity is a sign that should lead to Allah.** (34:15).

**Second: A sweet and green world is a test of deeds.** (Sahih Muslim 2742).

**Third: Gratitude increases blessings; denial invites punishment.** (14:7).

**Fourth: Look at those below you so as not to belittle blessings.** (Sahih Muslim 2963).

**Fifth: A source of blessing can become a source of disaster when the Giver is forgotten.** (34:16).

**Sixth: Ruin comes when evil becomes abundant.** (34:17; Sahih al-Bukhari 3346).

**Seventh: Value safety, health and free time.** (34:18–19; Sahih al-Bukhari 6412).

**Eighth: Ingratitude leads to dispersion.** (34:19; 16:112).

**Ninth: Iblis only whispers; the choice is in human hands.** (34:20–21).

### CONCLUSION

Each of us lives in a "good land" of our own — a home, a family, health, security. The story of Sheba invites us to ask: are we grateful, or are we "turning away" without realising it?

May Allah make us ***ṣabbār*** and ***shakūr***, and make our land ***baldatun ṭayyibatun wa rabbun ghafūr***. Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** will continue with the next story — with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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## ADDITIONAL HADITH CITED IN THE TEXT

Sahih al-Bukhari 6490 (look at those below you). https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6490

Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (neither believe nor disbelieve the People of the Book). https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4485

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**SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261**

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261*

**SURAH SABA' 34:39**

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

*Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39*

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

**CHAIN OF NARRATION:** Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

**HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

**TRANSLATION:**

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

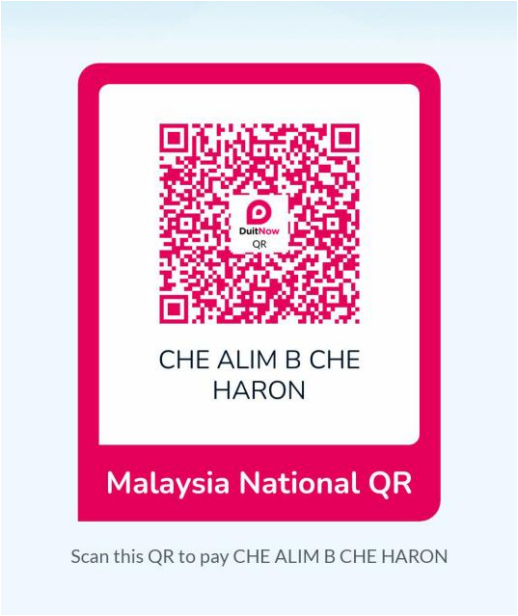
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**REFERENCE:** Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

**GRADE:** SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

*Source:* https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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