STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 31

A MERCY FROM MY LORD

The Story of Dhul-Qarnayn According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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SERIES 31

A MERCY FROM MY LORD

The Story of Dhul-Qarnayn According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

قَالَ هَٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّي ۖ فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي جَعَلَهُ دَكَّاءَ ۖ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّي حَقًّا

"[Dhul-Qarnayn] said, "This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the promise of my Lord comes, He will make it level, and ever is the promise of my Lord true."."

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:98

HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who gives authority to whom He wills and takes it from whom He wills. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who told us of Gog and Magog and the signs of the Hour, 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 every authority entrusted to us — at home, at work and in society — a way to act justly and build goodness. 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 two **towering mountains**, with a **solid metal wall** closing the pass between them.

The scene is taken from the words of Allah: ***"when he reached [a pass] between two mountains"*** (18:93) and ***"Bring me sheets of iron"*** (18:96). The Qur'an does not name the location of the wall, so the cover does not depict any actual site.

The cover does not depict Dhul-Qarnayn, Gog and Magog 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 MERCY FROM MY LORD

In Series 30, we saw a man who was given two gardens and said "I". This series, the fourth and last story in Surah Al-Kahf, takes us to one who was given ***authority on the earth*** — and said, ***"This is a mercy from my Lord."***

Surah Al-Kahf gathers four trials: the trial of religion (the Companions of the Cave), the trial of wealth (the owner of the two gardens), the trial of knowledge (Prophet Moses and al-Khidr) and the trial of ***power*** — the story of Dhul-Qarnayn. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:83

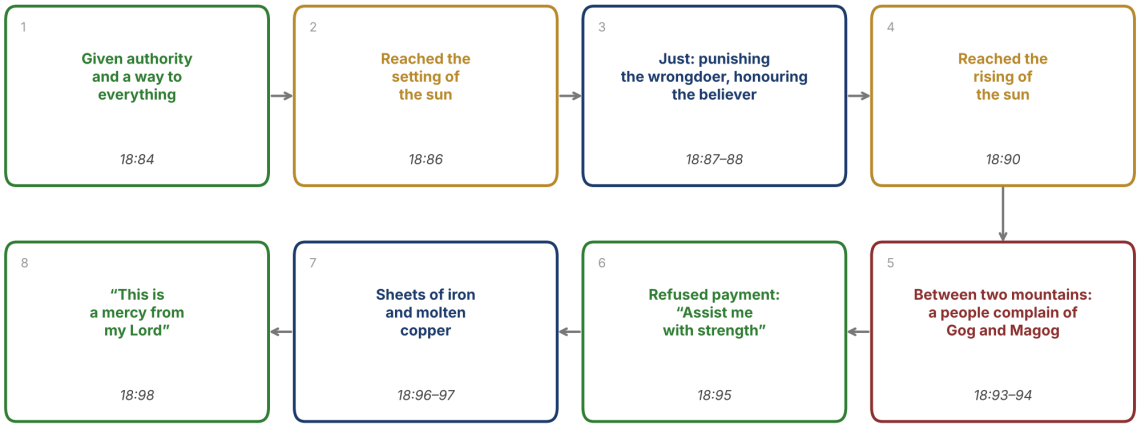


Figure 1: The flow of the story of Dhul-Qarnayn — from being given authority to "This is a mercy from my Lord".

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in the Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.

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THEY ASK YOU ABOUT DHUL-QARNAYN

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:83

وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَن ذِى ٱلْقَرْنَيْنِ ۖ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا۟ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾

And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about Dhul-Qarnayn. Say, "I will recite to you about him a report."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:83

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:84

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُۥ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَءَاتَيْنَـٰهُ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٤﴾

Indeed We established him upon the earth, and We gave him to everything a way.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:84

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 18:83–85 — A REPORT ABOUT HIM

First: An answer from revelation. ***"And they ask you, [O Muhammad], about Dhul-Qarnayn"***, and Allah commanded: ***"Say, "I will recite to you about him a report"***. Only "a report" — enough for the lesson, not to satisfy curiosity. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:83

Second: Authority from Allah. ***"Indeed We established him upon the earth, and We gave him to everything a way"***. His authority was not of his own making, but a gift from Allah.

Third: Using the means. ***"So he followed a way"***. He was given a way, and he truly travelled it — reliance on Allah does not mean abandoning effort.

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THE SETTING OF THE SUN

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:86

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغۡرِبَ ٱلشَّمۡسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغۡرُبُ فِي عَيۡنٍ حَمِئَةٖ وَوَجَدَ عِندَهَا قَوۡمٗاۗ قُلۡنَا يَٰذَا ٱلۡقَرۡنَيۡنِ إِمَّآ أَن تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّآ أَن تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمۡ حُسۡنٗا ٨٦

Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it [as if] setting in a spring of dark mud, and he found near it a people. Allah said, "O Dhul-Qarnayn, either you punish [them] or else adopt among them [a way of] goodness."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:86

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:87

قَالَ أَمَّا مَن ظَلَمَ فَسَوۡفَ نُعَذِّبُهُۥ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِۦ فَيُعَذِّبُهُۥ عَذَابٗا نُّكۡرٗا ٨٧

He said, "As for one who wrongs, we will punish him. Then he will be returned to his Lord, and He will punish him with a terrible punishment."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:87

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 18:86–88 — THE JUSTICE OF A RULER

First: What he saw. ***"Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it [as if] setting in a spring of dark mud"***. Ibn Kathir explains that this is ***what his eyes saw*** at the end of his journey west — as a person on the shore sees the sun as if sinking into the sea. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:86

Second: Given a choice, he chose justice. ***"As for one who wrongs, we will punish him"***, while ***"as for one who believes and does righteousness, he will have a reward of Paradise, and we will speak to him from our command with ease"***.

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THE RISING OF THE SUN

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:90

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطۡلِعَ ٱلشَّمۡسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطۡلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوۡمٖ لَّمۡ نَجۡعَل لَّهُم مِّن دُونِهَا سِتۡرٗا ٩٠

Until, when he came to the rising of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had not made against it any shield.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:90

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:91

كَذَٰلِكَۖ وَقَدۡ أَحَطۡنَا بِمَا لَدَيۡهِ خُبۡرٗا ٩١

Thus. And We had encompassed [all] that he had in knowledge.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:91

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 18:89–91 — A PEOPLE WITHOUT SHELTER

First: A journey east. ***"Then he followed a way"***.

Second: An exposed people. ***"he found it rising on a people for whom We had not made against it any shield"***. The commentators mention that they had no buildings or trees to shelter them from the heat of the sun. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:90

Third: Allah knows all. ***"And We had encompassed [all] that he had in knowledge"***. The Qur'an does not detail what he did there — it is enough for us to know that Allah knows everything.

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BETWEEN TWO MOUNTAINS

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:93

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ ٱلسَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَّا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾

Until, when he reached [a pass] between two mountains, he found beside them a people who could hardly understand [his] speech.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:93

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:94

قَالُوا۟ يَٰذَا ٱلْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰٓ أَن تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾

They said, "O Dhul-Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog are [great] corrupters in the land. So may we assign for you an expenditure that you might make between us and them a barrier."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:94

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 18:92–94 — THE COMPLAINT OF A WEAK PEOPLE

First: A people hard to understand. ***"Until, when he reached [a pass] between two mountains, he found beside them a people who could hardly understand [his] speech"***.

Second: A complaint of corruption. ***"O Dhul-Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog are [great] corrupters in the land"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:94

Third: An offer of payment. ***"So may we assign for you an expenditure that you might make between us and them a barrier"***. A weak people came to a powerful man — and the test for the powerful is how he treats them.

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"ASSIST ME WITH STRENGTH"

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:95

قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّي فِيهِ رَبِّي خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِي بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٥﴾

He said, "That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer], but assist me with strength; I will make between you and them a dam."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:95

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 18:95–97 — BUILDING TOGETHER

First: Refusing payment. ***"That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer]"***. Just as Prophet Solomon عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ refused the gift of the Queen of Sheba (27:36, Series 24).

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:95

Second: Involving the community. ***"but assist me with strength; I will make between you and them a dam"***. He did not make them dependent on him; he built ***with*** them.

Third: Knowledge and technology. ***"Bring me sheets of iron"*** — then heated, ***"until when he had made it [like] fire, he said, "Bring me, that I may pour over it molten copper"***. Heated iron coated with molten copper made the wall extremely strong.

Fourth: A perfect result. ***"So Gog and Magog were unable to pass over it, nor were they able [to effect] in it any penetration"***.

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"THIS IS A MERCY FROM MY LORD"

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 18:98 — HUMILITY AFTER SUCCESS

First: The words after success. ***"This is a mercy from my Lord"***. Compare this with the owner of the two gardens (Series 30), who said, "I am greater than you in wealth."

Second: No structure lasts forever. ***"but when the promise of my Lord comes, He will make it level, and ever is the promise of my Lord true"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:98

Third: The wall has begun to open. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3347

حَدَّثَنَا مُسْلِمُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، حَدَّثَنَا وُهَيْبٌ، حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ طَاوُسٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « فَتَحَ اللَّهُ مِنْ رَدْمِ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مِثْلَ هَذَا ». وَعَقَدَ بِيَدِهِ تِسْعِينَ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Allah has opened in the barrier of Gog and Magog this much,"** and he made a ring with his fingers (the sign for ninety).

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muslim ibn Ibrahim, from Wuhayb ibn Khalid, from 'Abdullah ibn Tawus, from his father, Tawus ibn Kaysan, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter on the story of Gog and Magog, Hadith No. 3347. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2881).

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:3347

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GOG AND MAGOG AT THE END OF TIME

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:99

۞وَتَرَكۡنَا بَعۡضَهُمۡ يَوۡمَئِذٖ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعۡضٖۖ وَنُفِخَ فِي ٱلصُّورِ فَجَمَعۡنَٰهُمۡ جَمۡعٗا ٩٩

And We will leave them that day surging over each other, and [then] the Horn will be blown, and We will assemble them in [one] assembly.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:99

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:96

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فُتِحَتۡ يَأۡجُوجُ وَمَأۡجُوجُ وَهُم مِّن كُلِّ حَدَبٖ يَنسِلُونَ ٩٦

Until when [the dam of] Gog and Magog has been opened and they, from every elevation, descend.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/21:96

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 18:99 AND 21:96 — ONE OF THE MAJOR SIGNS

First: They will come out. ***"And We will leave them that day surging over each other"***, and ***"Until when [the dam of] Gog and Magog has been opened and they, from every elevation, descend"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 21:96

Second: One of ten signs. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ named the emergence of Gog and Magog among the major signs before the Hour:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2901

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو خَيْثَمَةَ، زُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ وَإِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَابْنُ أَبِي عُمَرَ الْمَكِّيُّ - وَاللَّفْظُ لِزُهَيْرٍ - قَالَ إِسْحَاقُ أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ بْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ، عَنْ فُرَاتٍ الْقَزَّازِ، عَنْ أَبِي الطُّفَيْلِ، عَنْ حُذَيْفَةَ بْنِ أَسِيدٍ الْغِفَارِيِّ، قَالَ اطَّلَعَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ نَتَذَاكَرُ فَقَالَ « مَا تَذَاكَرُونَ ». قَالُوا نَذْكُرُ السَّاعَةَ. قَالَ « إِنَّهَا لَنْ تَقُومَ حَتَّى تَرَوْنَ قَبْلَهَا عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ ». فَذَكَرَ الدُّخَانَ وَالدَّجَّالَ وَالدَّابَّةَ وَطُلُوعَ الشَّمْسِ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا وَنُزُولَ عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَيَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ وَثَلاَثَةَ خُسُوفٍ خَسْفٌ بِالْمَشْرِقِ

وَخَسْفٌ بِالْمَغْرِبِ وَخَسْفٌ بِجَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ وَآخِرُ ذَلِكَ نَارٌ تَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْيَمَنِ تَطْرُدُ النَّاسَ إِلَى مَحْشَرِهِمْ.

TRANSLATION:

Hudhayfah ibn Asid al-Ghifari رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ came upon us while we were discussing. He asked: **"What are you discussing?"** They said: We are mentioning the Hour. He said: **"It will not come until you see ten signs before it,"** and he mentioned: the smoke, the Dajjal, the beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Jesus son of Mary ﷺ, ***Gog and Magog***, three landslides — one in the east, one in the west and one in the Arabian Peninsula — and the last of them a fire that will come out of Yemen and drive people to their place of gathering.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Khaythamah Zuhayr ibn Harb, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim and Ibn Abi 'Umar al-Makki, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Furat al-Qazzaz, from Abu al-Tufayl, from Hudhayfah ibn Asid al-Ghifari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Tribulations and Portents of the Last Hour, chapter on the signs before the Hour, Hadith No. 2901.

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

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2901a

Third: Worship will continue. Terrible as it is, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told us that the House will still be visited:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1593

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ، عَنِ الْحَجَّاجِ بْنِ حَجَّاجٍ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي عُتْبَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « لَيُحَجَّنَّ الْبَيْتُ وَلَيُعْتَمَرَنَّ بَعْدَ خُرُوجِ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ ». تَابَعَهُ أَبَانُ وَعِمْرَانُ عَنْ قَتَادَةَ. وَقَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ شُعْبَةَ قَالَ « لاَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى لاَ يُحَجَّ الْبَيْتُ ». وَالأَوَّلُ أَكْثَرُ، سَمِعَ قَتَادَةُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ أَبَا سَعِيدٍ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The House will certainly continue to be visited for Hajj and 'Umrah after the emergence of Gog and Magog."** (Al-Bukhari then mentions supporting narrations of this hadith.)

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Hafs, from his father, Hafs ibn ‘Abdullah, from Ibrahim ibn Tahman, from al-Hajjaj ibn Hajjaj, from Qatadah, from ‘Abdullah ibn Abi ‘Utbah, from Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Hajj, chapter on the words of Allah: “Allah has made the Ka‘bah, the Sacred House, standing for the people”, Hadith No. 1593.

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:1593

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A TERRIBLE DAY AND THE HOPE OF THIS UMMAH

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:100

وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْكَٰفِرِينَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

And We will present Hell that Day to the Disbelievers, on display.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:100

SURAH AL-KAHF 18:101

ٱلَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِى غِطَآءٍ عَن ذِكْرِى وَكَانُوا۟ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾

Those whose eyes had been within a cover [removed] from My remembrance, and they were not able to hear.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/18:101

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 18:100–101 — EYES THAT WERE COVERED

First: Hell is displayed. ***"And We will present Hell that Day to the Disbelievers, on display"***.

Second: Who are they? ***"Those whose eyes had been within a cover [removed] from My remembrance"***. Dhul-Qarnayn saw the hand of Allah in every success; they saw nothing at all. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 18:101

Third: Hope for this ummah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ mentioned Gog and Magog when describing the Day of Resurrection, then gave glad tidings to his ummah:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3348

حَدَّثَنِي إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ نَصْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَا آدَمُ. فَيَقُولُ لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ وَالْخَيْرُ فِي يَدَيْكَ. فَيَقُولُ أَخْرِجْ بَعْثَ النَّارِ. قَالَ وَمَا بَعْثُ النَّارِ قَالَ مِنْ كُلِّ أَلْفٍ تِسْعَمِائَةٍ وَتِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ، فَعِنْدَهُ يَشِيبُ الصَّغِيرُ، وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا، وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَى، وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَى، وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ». قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَأَيُّنَا ذَلِكَ الْوَاحِدُ قَالَ « أَبْشِرُوا فَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ، وَمِنْ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ

أَلْفٌ ». ثُمَّ قَالَ « وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، إِنِّي أَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونُوا رُبُعَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ». فَكَبَّرْنَا. فَقَالَ « أَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونُوا ثُلُثَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ». فَكَبَّرْنَا. فَقَالَ « أَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونُوا نِصْفَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ ». فَكَبَّرْنَا. فَقَالَ « مَا أَنْتُمْ فِي النَّاسِ إِلاَّ كَالشَّعَرَةِ السَّوْدَاءِ فِي جِلْدِ ثَوْرٍ أَبْيَضَ، أَوْ كَشَعَرَةٍ بَيْضَاءَ فِي جِلْدِ ثَوْرٍ أَسْوَدَ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Allah the Exalted will say: O Adam!**

He will say: Here I am at Your service, and all good is in Your hands. Allah will say: Bring out the people of the Fire. He will say: How many are the people of the Fire? Allah will say: From every thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine. At that time the young will turn grey, every pregnant woman will miscarry, and you will see people as if drunk while they are not drunk, but the punishment of Allah is severe." They said: O Messenger of Allah, which of us is that one? He said: **"Rejoice, for from you will be one, and from Gog and Magog a thousand."** Then he said: **"By Him in whose hand is my soul, I hope that you will be a quarter of the people of Paradise."** We said takbir. He said: **"I hope that you will be a third of the people of Paradise."** We said takbir. He said: **"I hope that you will be half of the people of Paradise."** We said takbir. He said: **"You among mankind are only like a black hair on the skin of a white ox, or a white hair on the skin of a black ox."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ishaq ibn Nasr, from Abu Usamah Hammad ibn Usamah, from Sulayman al-A'mash, from Abu Salih Dhakwan, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter on the story of Gog and Magog, Hadith No. 3348. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 222).

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:3348

WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The Qur'an itself says it recites only ***"a report"*** about him (18:83). 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
Dhul-Qarnayn was Alexander of Macedon.	The Qur'an does not give his real name. Ibn Kathir rejects this view, since the Dhul-Qarnayn of the Qur'an was a believer, while Alexander of Macedon was a polytheist.
The meaning of "two horns" in his name, and whether he was a prophet.	Not explained in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. The scholars differ and nothing is established with certainty.
The sun really sets into a spring of dark mud.	The verse describes what he "found" (18:86), i.e. what his eyes saw, as Ibn Kathir explains.
The physical appearance of Gog and Magog: huge ears, extraordinary height and the like.	Not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. What is established is that they are of human descent (Sahih al-Bukhari 3348).
The exact location of the wall.	The Qur'an only says "between two mountains" (18:93). Its location is not mentioned.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: WALLS LINKED TO DHUL-QARNAYN

The **Great Wall of Gorgan** in northern Iran — known locally as ***Sadd-i Iskandar*** ("Alexander's Barrier") — runs for nearly 200 km. Radiocarbon and OSL dating show it was built around the **5th century CE** by the Sasanian empire, of **red brick** (Nokandeh et al., 2006).

The **Derbent fortifications** in Dagestan, on the passage between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, were built by the Sasanian empire in the **6th century CE** of **stone** (Gadjiev, 2008). The **Dariali Gorge** — the "Caspian Gates" of classical sources — was fortified around the late 4th century CE (Sauer, 2020).

Claim not included. The claim that any of these walls is the wall of Dhul-Qarnayn is **not included**. These walls are built of brick and stone, while the Qur'an speaks of ***iron coated with molten copper*** (18:96) — and revelation does not name its location.

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AUTHORITY THAT PROSTRATES

The story of Dhul-Qarnayn shows how ***great power*** can become a path of good when its holder always attributes everything to Allah: just to the weak, free of greed, building together with the community, and humble after success.

DHUL-QARNAYN ACCORDING TO REVELATION

	What Revelation Says	Lessons
Authority	"Indeed We established him upon the earth" (18:84)	Authority is a trust from Allah
Justice	Punishing the wrongdoer, honouring the believer (18:87–88)	Just to all, gentle to the obedient
Wealth	"That in which my Lord has established me is better" (18:95)	Not greedy, not exploiting the weak
Cooperation	"Assist me with strength" (18:95)	Building together with the community
After success	"This is a mercy from my Lord" (18:98)	Success is attributed to Allah

Figure 2: Dhul-Qarnayn according to the Qur'an — what revelation says and its lessons.

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: The Qur'an tells what is beneficial, not every detail. (18:83).

Second: Authority is a trust from Allah. (18:84).

Third: Reliance on Allah goes with effort and knowledge. (18:85, 96).

Fourth: A just ruler punishes the wrongdoer and honours the obedient. (18:87–88).

Fifth: Do not exploit the weak. (18:94–95).

Sixth: Build with the community, not only for it. (18:95).

Seventh: Every success is a mercy from Allah. (18:98).

Eighth: No human structure lasts forever. (18:98; Sahih al-Bukhari 3347).

Ninth: Gog and Magog are a major sign of the Hour; prepare for it. (18:99; Sahih Muslim 2901; Sahih al-Bukhari 1593, 3348).

CONCLUSION

The four stories of Surah Al-Kahf end with one sentence: ***"This is a mercy from my Lord."*** Whether we are tested with religion, wealth, knowledge or power, the path of safety is the same — attributing everything to Allah. May Allah protect us from the trial of Gog and Magog and every trial of the end of time. Amin.

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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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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."

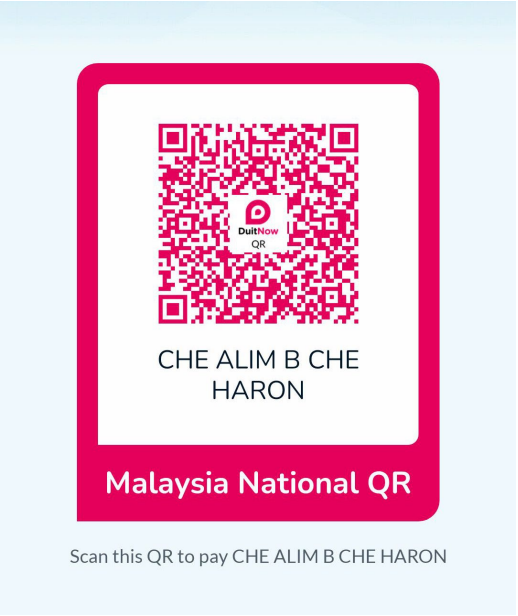
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

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

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