

Qur'an

- Date** ■ 610–632
- Place** ■ Mecca, Arabia
- Type of Source** ■ Religious text (original in Arabic)
- Author** ■ Recorded by the prophet Muhammad
- Historical Context** ■ Beginning in 610, Muhammad received revelations that would become the *Qur'an*. The *Qur'an* (or *Koran*) translates as *something to be recited* and is the sacred book of Islam. Muslims believe the *Qur'an* is the word of God. As he became more self-assured, Muhammad and his followers threatened the social structure of polytheist Mecca. The *Night Journey* describes Muhammad's physical and spiritual voyage that took place in 621, which connected him to the monotheist traditions of Judaism and Christianity.
- Internal Context** ■ *The Night Journey* tells of a voyage Muhammad took over an evening. He travels on a flying horse to a distant mosque where he meets other prophets. Then he ascends to heaven and talks with God before returning to Earth.

Chapter 17—The Night Journey, Children of Israel

Glorified be **He** who carried **His servant** by night from the **Inviolable Place of Worship** to the **Far distant place of worship** the neighborhood whereof **We** have blessed, that We might show him of Our tokens! Lo! He, only He, is the Hearer, the Seer.

We gave unto Moses the Scripture, and We appointed it a guidance for the children of Israel, saying: Choose no guardian beside Me.

[They were] the seed of those whom We carried [in the ship] along with Noah. Lo! he was a grateful slave.

And We decreed for the Children of Israel in the Scripture: Ye **verily** will work corruption in the earth twice, and ye will become great tyrants.

So when the time for the first of the two came, We roused against you slaves of Ours of great might who ravaged [your] country, and it was a threat performed.

Then We gave you once again your turn against them, and We aided you with wealth and children and made you more in soldiery.

[Saying]: If ye do good, ye do good for your own souls, and if ye do evil, it is for them [in like manner]. So, when the time for the second [of the judgments] came [We roused against you others of Our slaves] to ravage you, and to enter the Temple even as they entered it the first time, and to lay waste all that they conquered with an utter wasting.

It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you, but if ye repeat [the crime] We shall repeat [the punishment], and We have appointed hell a dungeon for the disbelievers, a prison for those who reject [all Faith].

Lo! this Qur'an guideth unto that which is straightest, and giveth tidings unto the believers who do good works that theirs will be a great reward.

He
God (Allah in Arabic)

His servant
Muhammad, founder of Islam

Inviolable Place of Worship
sacred mosque in Mecca

Far distant place of worship
Also translated as the "Farthest Mosque" (Masjid al Aqsa), traditionally the site of the old Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

We
God is speaking here. Plural personal pronouns were often used by kings and other rulers.

verily
truly

Qur'an

And that those who believe not in the Hereafter, for them We have prepared a painful doom.

Man prayeth for evil as he prayeth for good, for man was ever hasty.

And We appoint the night and the day two **portents**. Then We make dark the portent of the night, and We make the portent of the day sight-giving, that ye may seek bounty from your Lord, and that ye may know the computation of the years, and the **reckoning**; and everything have We **expounded** with a clear expounding.

And every man's **augury** have We fastened to his own neck, and We shall bring forth for him on the **Day of Resurrection** a book which he will find wide open.

[And it will be said unto him]: Read thy Book. Thy soul sufficeth as reckoner against thee this day.

Whosoever goeth right, it is only for [the good of] his own soul that he goeth right, and whosoever **erreth**, erreth only to its hurt. No laden soul can bear another's load, We never punish until we have sent a messenger.

And when We would destroy **a township** We send commandment to its folk who **live at ease**, and afterward they commit abomination therein, and so the Word [of doom] hath effect for it, and we annihilate it with complete annihilation.

How many generations have We destroyed since Noah! And Allah sufficeth as Knower and Beholder of the sins of His slaves.

Whoso desireth that [life], which **hasteneth away**, We hasten for him therein what We will for whom We please. And afterward We have appointed for him hell; he will endure the heat thereof, condemned, rejected.

And whoso desireth the Hereafter and striveth for it with the effort necessary, being a believer; for such, their effort findeth favor (with their Lord).

portents
signs of warning

reckoning
judging

expounded
explanation

augury
fate

Day of Resurrection
Judgement Day

erreth
errs, makes mistakes

a township
This paragraph is probably a reference to the Biblical story of Sodom.

live at ease
live in comfort and sin

hasteneth away
only lasting temporarily

Source: Muhammad, "Qur'an," University of Southern California Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement, 2010, <<http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/quran/017.qmt.html>> (June 2, 2011).