

SURAH 75 (AL-QIYAMAH)

FAITH: Islam | TEXT: The Holy Qur'an | VOLUME: The Meaning of the Holy Quran | AUTHOR: Rashad Khalifa (Translator)

OVERVIEW

Surah 75, titled 'Al-Qiyamah' (The Resurrection), is a forceful eschatological discourse that confronts human skepticism regarding life after death. The text opens with a divine oath swearing by the Day of Resurrection and the 'blaming soul' (conscience), asserting God's power to reconstruct the human body down to the fingertips. It vividly depicts the cosmic cataclysms of the End Times, including the eclipsing of the moon and the crashing of celestial bodies. The central theological thrust is the absolute isolation of the individual before God; the text declares that humans will be their own judges, fully aware of their deeds with no excuses accepted. It includes a parenthetical instruction to the Prophet (verses 16-19) regarding the reception and preservation of the revelation, asserting that God Himself is responsible for the collection and explanation of the Quran. The Surah concludes by contrasting the 'happy faces' looking at their Lord with the 'miserable faces' of those who realized too late that they neglected charity and prayer (Salat), using the biological process of embryonic development as a rational proof for God's ability to revive the dead.

KEY FIGURES

God (Allah), The Human Being (The Skeptic/Sinner), The Prophet (Recipient of Revelation), The Blaming Soul (Al-Nafs Al-Lawwama)

DOCTRINES ANALYZED

1. PHYSICAL RESURRECTION

Assertion: God will reconstruct the human body entirely, including the fingertips, after death.

"Does the human being think that we will not reconstruct his bones? Yes indeed; we are able to reconstruct his fingertip." (Surah 75:3-4)

Evangelical Comparison: Both traditions affirm a literal, physical resurrection of the dead. However, the Quranic emphasis here is on the reconstruction of the earthly body for the purpose of facing judgment based on deeds. Evangelical theology teaches a resurrection unto a 'glorified body' (1 Corinthians 15:42-44) similar to Christ's, where the believer is raised to life not for a trial, but because they have already passed from death to life through faith (John 5:24).

2. SELF-JUDGMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY

Assertion: On Judgment Day, the human being will be his own witness and judge, with full knowledge of his deeds.

"The human being will be his own judge. No excuses will be accepted." (Surah 75:14-15)

Evangelical Comparison: This text presents a forensic scenario where the accused (the human) acts as the witness against themselves with no defense attorney. In Evangelical theology, while the books are opened (Revelation 20:12), the believer has an Advocate, Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1), who has already paid the penalty. The Quranic view here leaves the sinner utterly exposed and alone, bearing the full weight of their own record without a mediator.

3. DIVINE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE

Assertion: God Himself is responsible for collecting, reciting, and explaining the Quran.

"It is we who will collect it into Quran. Once we recite it, you shall follow such a Quran. Then it is we who will explain it." (Surah 75:17-19)

Evangelical Comparison: This doctrine asserts that the Quran is not merely a human record of inspiration but a text actively compiled and preserved by God. This creates a direct conflict with Sola Scriptura, as it introduces a post-biblical text claiming superior divine authority and preservation. It implies that the Quran is the final, clarified word of God, superseding previous revelations.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Divergence Status: Yes

Theological Gap: The fundamental gap lies in the mechanism of salvation. Surah 75 presents a courtroom drama where the defendant (the human) stands alone, judged by their own record of charity and prayer. There is no mention of grace, forgiveness, or a redeemer. The 'happy faces' are those who performed well; the 'miserable faces' are those who failed to perform. This is the antithesis of the Evangelical doctrine of Sola Fide, where the believer stands justified solely by the merit of Christ. The text's Christology is non-existent, leaving the human to bear the crushing weight of their own 'blaming soul.'

Shared Values:

Belief in One Creator God; Certainty of Physical Resurrection; Accountability for earthly deeds; Reality of Judgment Day

Friction Points:

- 1. [Critical] Sola Scriptura – The text claims God is compiling a new book (Quran) that supersedes previous revelation.
- 2. [Critical] Sola Fide – Salvation/Damnation is predicated on the performance of charity and Salat (v31) and self-judgment.
- 3. [Critical] Christology (Mediator) – The text asserts the human is their own judge (v14), denying the need for or existence of a Mediator.

Semantic Warnings:

"Looking at their Lord"

In Text: A reward for the righteous on Judgment Day (Beatific Vision).
Evangelical: While similar to the Christian hope (1 John 3:2), the context differs. Here it is a reward for works; in Christianity, it is the result of glorification through Christ.
Example: *In Surah 75:23, looking at the Lord is the outcome of a life of Salat and charity. In Revelation 22:4, seeing His face is the privilege of those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

"Salat (Contact Prayers)"

In Text: Specific ritualized Islamic prayer.
Evangelical: Prayer in the Bible is relational communication, not a ritualized merit-earning requirement for salvation.
Example: *The text implies in v31 that missing Salat is a primary cause of damnation.*

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Defined: Escaping the 'miserable' fate, having a 'happy face,' and looking at the Lord.
How Attained: By believing in the Hereafter, performing Salat (contact prayers), and giving charity.
Basis of Assurance: There is no assurance offered in the text; the tone is warning and threat. The human is left to 'expect the worst' (v25) if they have failed.
Comparison to Sola Fide: Explicitly rejected. Verse 31 cites the lack of works (charity/prayer) as the reason for judgment, whereas Romans 3:28 states a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

Explicit Commands:

- 1. Do not move your tongue to hasten the revelation (v16)
- 2. Follow the Quran when it is recited (v18)

Implicit Obligations:

- 1. Believe in the physical resurrection
- 2. Prepare for the Day of Judgment
- 3. Acknowledge God's power in creation (embryology)

Ritual Requirements:

1. Perform Contact Prayers (Salat) (v31)
2. Give Charity (v31)

EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

Discovery Questions:

1. The text says in verse 14 that the human being will be his own judge. If you had to judge yourself based on your secret thoughts and deeds, would you declare yourself innocent?
2. Verse 2 mentions the 'blaming soul.' Do you feel that inner voice blaming you when you do wrong? How do you silence that voice?
3. The text describes people 'looking at their Lord' (v23). The Bible says no one can see God and live because of our sin. What makes a person pure enough to survive looking at God?

Redemptive Analogies:

1. The Blaming Soul (Al-Nafs Al-Lawwama) – This is the God-given conscience that convicts us of sin. It is the internal witness that we are not righteous. The Gospel answers the 'blaming soul' not with more rules, but with the blood of Christ that 'cleanses our conscience' (Hebrews 9:14). [Hebrews 9:14, Romans 2:15]
2. The Desire for Escape – The text correctly identifies the human need for an escape from judgment. The Gospel provides that escape, not through fleeing, but through a Refuge. Jesus is the 'escape' provided by God. [Hebrews 6:18 (fled for refuge)]

Spiritual Weight:

1. Uncertainty/Fear [Severe] – The text creates a terrifying image of standing alone before God with one's own soul acting as the prosecutor. There is no promise of mercy, only the cold reality of one's record.
2. Performance Pressure [Moderate] – The believer must maintain Salat and charity perfectly to avoid the 'miserable face' outcome. The fear of invalidating one's faith through negligence is high.
3. Isolation [Severe] – The text emphasizes individual accountability ('human being will be his own judge'). This creates a spiritual isolation where the believer cannot rely on community, family, or a mediator.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge Source: Revelation (The Quran) and Rational Observation (Nature/Embryology).

Verification Method: Adherents are asked to observe biological origins (semen/embryo) to logically deduce the possibility of resurrection (v37-40).

Evangelical Contrast: While the Bible also uses nature to point to God (Psalm 19, Romans 1), it posits that special revelation (Scripture) is necessary for salvation. This text implies that observation of nature should lead to fear of judgment, but relies on the Quranic revelation for the specifics of that judgment.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Dating: Meccan Period (Early)

Authorship: Attributed to Muhammad (Divine Revelation via Gabriel according to tradition).

Textual Issues: Verses 16-19 are considered by some critical scholars as a parenthetical insertion or an interruption addressing the Prophet's anxiety about memorization, breaking the flow of the eschatological narrative.