

Surah 11. Hud

Asad: And [so Noah] set himself to building the ark; and every time the great ones of his people passed by him, they scoffed at him. [Thereupon] he said: "If you are scoffing at us - behold, we are scoffing at you [and your ignorance], just as you are scoffing at us."⁶¹

Malik: So he started to build the ark; and whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him they laughed at him. He said: "Laugh at us now if you will, soon the time is going to come when we too will laugh at you as you are laughing at us.

Pickthall: And he was building the ship, and every time that chieftains of his people passed him, they made mock of him. He said: Though ye make mock of us, yet we mock at you even as ye mock;

Yusuf Ali: Forthwith he starts constructing the Ark: every time that the Chiefs of his People passed by him they threw ridicule on him. They threw ridicule on him. He said: "If ye ridicule us now we (in our turn) can look down on you with ridicule likewise!"^{1531 1532}

Transliteration: WayaṣnaAAu alfulka wakullama marra AAalayhi malaon min qawmihi sakhirroo minhu qala in taskharoo minna fainna naskharu minkum kama taskharoona

Khatab:

So he began to build the Ark, and whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him. He said, "If you laugh at us, we will soon laugh at you similarly.

Author Comments

61 - Since it is obviously impossible to attribute to a prophet the levity of scoffing (Baghawi), the meaning of the above phrase seems to be this: "If you consider us ignorant because of what we believe and are doing, we consider you ignorant because of your refusal to acknowledge the truth and your readiness to expose yourselves to God's punishment" (Zamakhshari and, in a shorter form, Baghawi). Hence my interpolation of the words "and your ignorance".

1531 - The ridicule of the sinners, from their own point of view, was natural. Here was a Prophet turned carpenter! Here was a plain in the higher reaches of the Mesopotamian basin, drained by the majestic Tigris, over 800 to 900 miles from the sea Arabian Gulf in a straight line! Yet he talks of a flood like the Sea! All material civilisations pride themselves on their Public Works and their drainage schemes. And here was a fellow relying on Allah! But did not their narrow pride seem ridiculous also to the Prophet of Allah! Here were men steeped in sin and insolence! And they pit themselves against the power and the promise of Allah! Truly a contemptible race is man!

1532 - The Arabic Aorist may be construed either by the present tense or the future tense, and both make good sense here. Following Zamakhshari, I construe in the present tense, because the future is so tragic for the sinners. For the time being the worldly ones looked down on the Believers as they always do: but the Believers relied on Allah, and pitied their critics for knowing no better!-for their arrogance was really ridiculous.

[View Page](#)

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