

Surah 13. Ar-Ra'd

Asad: Have, then, they [who deny the truth] never yet seen how⁷⁹ We visit the earth [with Our punishment], gradually depriving it of all that is best thereon?⁸⁰ For, [when] God judges, there is no power that could repel His judgment: and swift in reckoning is He!

Malik: Do they not see that We are gradually reducing the land in their control through curtailing its borders? When Allah commands, there is none to reverse His command and He is swift in taking accountability.

Pickthall: See they not how We visit the land, reducing it of its outlying parts? (When) Allah doometh there is none that can postpone His doom, and He is swift at reckoning.

Yusuf Ali: See they not that We gradually reduce the land (in their control) from its outlying borders? (Where) Allah commands there is none to put back His command: and He is swift in calling to account. ¹⁸⁶⁵

Transliteration: Awalām yaraw annā natee alardā nanqusuḥā min atrafiḥā waAllāhu yahkumu lā muAAaqqiba lihukmihi wahuwa sareeAAu alḥisabi

Khatab:

Do they not see that We gradually reduce their land from its borders? Allah decides—none can reverse His decision. And He is swift in reckoning.

Author Comments

79 - Lit., "that".

80 - Or: "curtailing it from [all] its sides" (min atrapha) - depending on whether one understands by atraf the "sides" or "extremities" or "outlying parts" (of a concrete body or land) or, alternatively, the "outstanding men" - i.e., the great leaders, scholars and thinkers (Taj al-'Arus) - and "the best of the [earth's] inhabitants and fruits" (ibid). Many commentators, taking the primary meaning of atraf, are of the opinion that the above sentence relates to the struggle between the early Muslim community at Medina and the pagans of Mecca, and interpret it thus: "Do they [i.e., the pagans of Mecca] not see that we are visiting [with Our punishment] the land [held by them], gradually curtailing it from [all] its sides?" - which would imply a prophecy of the gradual conquest of all Arabia by the Muslims. Other commentators, however, prefer the secondary meaning of atraf and - without denying its relevance to the early history of Islam - interpret this passage in a more general sense, similar to the rendering adopted by me. Thus, for instance, Razi: "Have they [i.e., the deniers of the truth] never yet seen the turns of fortune (ikhtilafat) that take place in this world - destruction after prosperity, death after life, humiliation after glory, deficiency after perfection?... Hence, what makes those deniers of the truth so sure that God will not render them abject after they had been mighty, and subjected [by others] after they had been rulers?" Thus, in its widest sense, the phrase "gradually depriving it of all that is best in it" may be taken to relate not merely to physical and social catastrophes but also to the loss of all ethical values - and, thus, to the loss of all worldly power - which

"those who are bent on denying the truth" are bound to suffer in the end.

1865 - In the Prophet's ministry at Makkah, the most stiff-necked opposition came from the seat and centre of power in Makkah. The humbler people-the fringe of Makkan society-came in readily, as also did some tribes round about Makkah. After the Hijrat there was a hard struggle between Makkah and Madinah and at last the bloodless conquest of Makkah in A.H. 8 made the Pagan structure finally collapse, though it had already been sapped to its foundations. So, generally, Truth finds easiest entrance through the humble and lowly, and not in the beginning at the headquarters of power, but in the fulness of time it makes its way everywhere with irresistible force.

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