

Yaqīn in the Last Day: The Day Every Promise Becomes Reality

Part I

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

"When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake,

وَأُخْرِجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَنْقَالَهَا

And the earth discharges its burdens,

وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا

And man says, 'What is [wrong] with it?'

يَوْمَئِذٍ تُخْبِتُ أَخْبَارَهَا

That Day, it will report its news,

بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا

Because your Lord has commanded it."

(Qur'an 99:1–5)

In Sūrah al-Zalzalah, Allah begins His description of the Last Day not with mankind, but with the earth itself.

The Last Day is not presented in the Qur'an as a distant possibility, nor as a philosophical concept open to human speculation. It is a certainty whose knowledge belongs exclusively to Allah.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَلُهَا ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي ۖ لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَفْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ تَقُلْتُ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمُ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً ۖ يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ

"They ask you as if you have good knowledge of it, Say: The Knowledge of it is with Allah alone, but most of mankind know not."

(Qur'an 7:187)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ

"Indeed, Allah alone has knowledge of the Hour..."

(Qur'an 31:34)

Ibn Kathīr explains that Allah alone possesses complete knowledge of the Hour and that its concealment from creation reminds mankind to remain prepared rather than be preoccupied with determining its arrival.

Belief in the Last Day is one of the six Articles of Īmān. Throughout the Qur'an, Allah returns repeatedly to this certainty, describing its realities through numerous names, scenes and reminders. Each passage is revealed within its own context, and together they call the believer to certainty in what Allah has promised.

The Certainty of the Hour

The Qur'an repeatedly affirms that the Last Day will certainly come, while its appointed time remains known only to Allah.

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَأَتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

"Indeed, the Hour is coming—there is no doubt about it—but most of mankind do not believe."

(Qur'an 40:59)

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ ءَاتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَىٰ

"Indeed, the Hour is coming; I almost conceal it so that every soul may be recompensed for what it strives for."

(Qur'an 20:15)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ

"Indeed, Allah alone has knowledge of the Hour..."

(Qur'an 31:34)

When questioned concerning the Hour, the Prophet ﷺ was repeatedly instructed to direct mankind back to Allah.

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

"The people ask you concerning the Hour... Say: Its knowledge is only with Allah."

(Qur'an 33:63)

Likewise,

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَلُهَا

فِيمَ أَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا

إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ مُنْتَهَىٰ

"They ask you concerning the Hour, when will be its appointed time? What can you tell of it? To your Lord belongs its finality."

(Qur'an 79:42–44)

Al-Ṭabarī explains that these verses affirm that knowledge of the Hour belongs exclusively to Allah, and that neither prophet nor angel possesses independent knowledge of its appointed time. The Prophet ﷺ was commanded to convey this reality rather than speculate concerning what Allah had withheld.

Thus, the believer begins not by seeking the unseen through conjecture, but by accepting Allah's exclusive knowledge of it.

When the Hour Comes

Having established the certainty of the Last Day, the Qur'an directs attention to the transformation of creation itself.

إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ

"When the sun is folded up.

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ

When the stars fall, dispersing.

وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ

When the mountains are made to move."

(Qur'an 81:1–3)

إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْفَطَرَتْ

"When the sky breaks apart.

وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْتَثَرَتْ

When the stars fall, scattering.

وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ فُجِّرَتْ

When the seas are burst forth.

وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعْثِرَتْ

When the graves are overturned.

عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ

A soul will know what it has sent ahead and left behind."

(Qur'an 82:1–5)

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

"When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake..."

(Qur'an 99:1)

The Qur'an itself describes these scenes with remarkable clarity. The heavens, the earth, the mountains, the seas and the stars—all respond to the command of their Creator.

Ibn Kathīr, commenting upon these passages, explains that these are among the tremendous events that will occur when Allah brings the present order of creation to its appointed end before resurrection and judgment.

The Qur'an repeatedly reminds mankind that the stability of creation exists only by Allah's command. On the Last Day, that same creation will bear witness to His absolute power.

Resurrection and Gathering

The Qur'an repeatedly reminds mankind that death is not the end.

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ

"And the Horn will be blown; and at once they will come forth from the graves to their Lord."

(Qur'an 36:51)

قَالُوا يٰوَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِن مَّرْقَدِنَا ۚ ۖ هَٰذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ

"They will say, 'Woe to us! Who has raised us from our sleeping place?' This is what the Most Merciful had promised, and the Messengers spoke the truth."

(Qur'an 36:52)

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

"And [warn of] the Day We shall move the mountains, and you will see the earth laid bare, and We shall gather them together and leave none of them behind."

(Qur'an 18:47)

لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّعَابِنِ

"The Day of Gathering is the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain."

(Qur'an 64:9)

The Qur'an also reminds those who doubted resurrection:

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّنْ نَجْمَعُ عِظَامَهُ
بَلَىٰ قَدِيرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُسَوَّىٰ بَنَانُهُ

"Does man think that We will not assemble his bones? Rather, We are Able even to proportion his fingertips."

(Qur'an 75:3–4)

Ibn Kathīr explains that Allah's mention of the fingertips demonstrates His perfect power to recreate mankind completely after death. Nothing of His creation is beyond His ability to restore.

Al-Qurṭubī likewise observes that resurrection is among the unseen realities affirmed repeatedly throughout the Qur'an, leaving no room for doubt regarding Allah's power over creation and re-creation.

The resurrection is therefore not presented as a new act independent of creation, but as another manifestation of Allah's absolute power over all things.

The Qur'an repeatedly calls mankind to reflect upon this certainty, reminding them that the One who created them the first time is fully capable of bringing them back to life.

كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ ۖ وَعَدًا عَلَيْنَا ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ

"As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. A promise binding upon Us. Indeed, We shall do it."

(Qur'an 21:104)

The Qur'an has established the certainty of the Last Day, described the transformation of creation, and reminded mankind of resurrection and gathering. The journey now moves to the very reason every soul has been gathered: accountability before Allah, His perfect justice, and the final recompense awaiting every human being.