

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surah An-Nasr

The Divine Support · Madani · 3 ayat — reflections on
surah 110 of the Qur'an

QURAN

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Surah An-Nasr

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النصر — An-Nasr, “The Divine Support”. Surah 110 of 114, revealed in Madinah, 3 ayat. The full text and a recitation are on the web edition at deen2u.com/quran/110/.

ONE

The surah in brief

When Allah's help and the conquest of Makkah come and people enter His religion in crowds, the Prophet ﷺ is told to respond not with pride but with praise, glorification, and seeking forgiveness — a gentle sign that his mission was nearing its end.

An-Nasr foretells the victory and the conquest of Makkah, when people would enter God's religion in crowds. It was among the last passages revealed; Ibn Abbas reported that Umar understood it as a subtle announcement of the Prophet's approaching death — his mission complete. Rather than commanding celebration, God directs him to respond to triumph with humility: glorify your Lord's praise and seek His forgiveness, for He is ever-accepting of repentance. Success in this surah is the occasion for turning back to God, not for pride.

TWO

Its themes

- Victory and conquest
- People entering Islam in crowds
- Humility in success
- Glorification and repentance
- Completion of the mission

THREE

Key verses

When comes the Help of Allah, and Victory,

Qur'an 110:1

'When the help of God and the victory come' — triumph is named as God's help first, never a human achievement.

And thou dost see the people enter Allah's Religion in crowds,

Qur'an 110:2

Seeing people embrace faith in throngs is the fruit of patient da'wah, reminding us that hearts turn only by God's leave.

Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and pray for His Forgiveness: For He is Oft-Returning (in Grace and Mercy).

Qur'an 110:3

At the peak of success comes the command to glorify and seek forgiveness — the sign of a servant who fears shortcomings even in victory.

FOUR

Reading it closely

Context & character

An-Nasr — 'The Divine Help' — is a Madani surah of three verses, and among the last passages of the Qur'an to be revealed. It is closely tied to the conquest of Mecca and the great waves of Arabs who entered Islam in its aftermath. Ibn 'Abbas reported that 'Umar would ask the senior Companions about this surah, and Ibn 'Abbas understood it as a sign of the approaching end of the Prophet's life ﷺ — that when the mission's triumph was complete, his task on earth was nearing its close.

Its character is bittersweet and profound. On the surface it announces victory; underneath, it prepares for a parting. It is a surah of triumph that responds to triumph not with celebration but with humility — glorification, praise, and seeking forgiveness. This quiet, inward response to the greatest external success is what gives the surah its extraordinary depth.

How the surah unfolds

The surah opens with a conditional looking to a moment about to arrive: When the help of Allah has come, and the victory (110:1) — nasr Allah wal-fath. The 'victory' (al-fath) is understood by the commentators primarily as the conquest of Mecca, the turning point after which the tide ran decisively in Islam's favour. The help is attributed entirely to Allah — nasr Allah — before any human effort is mentioned.

The second sign follows: and you see the people entering the religion of Allah in crowds (110:2) — *afwajan*, in droves, whole tribes and communities embracing Islam together once the resistance of Quraysh had broken. The lonely early years in Mecca, when believers came one by one under persecution, give way to a flood. This is the outward completion of the mission.

Then comes the command — and it is the heart of the surah: So glorify the praise of your Lord and seek His forgiveness; indeed He is ever ready to accept repentance (110:3). At the very summit of success, the response required is not a victory speech but *tasbih* (glorifying Allah's transcendence), *hamd* (praising Him), and *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness). The surah that began with victory ends on the believer's knees. This inversion — the greater the triumph, the deeper the humility — is the surah's entire message compressed into a single instruction.

The major themes, in depth

Victory as a gift, not an achievement. The surah is careful in its very first words to name the triumph 'the help of Allah' before naming the victory. After more than two decades of struggle, sacrifice, and patience, the moment of success is credited not to strategy or endurance but to God. This is a corrective against the natural human tendency to feel that success is earned and owned. Al-Sa'di draws out that attributing the victory to Allah keeps the heart safe from the arrogance that so often follows winning. The believer who conquers is taught to see the hand that granted the conquest.

Humility at the summit. The surah's most searching lesson is its command to seek forgiveness precisely when everything has gone right. Why should the Prophet ﷺ, and the believers, seek forgiveness at the hour of victory? The scholars offer complementary answers: that no human effort, however great, is free of shortcoming, so completion is the moment to ask pardon for whatever fell short; that success is a spiritual danger, breeding pride and heedlessness, so it must be met with the humility of istighfar; and that the greatest of servants met the greatest of gifts with the greatest of humility. The Prophet ﷺ after this surah increased in saying 'Subhanaka Allahumma wa bi-hamdika, Allahumma-ghfir li' in his prayers, embodying its command.

The completion that signals a farewell. Ibn 'Abbas's insight — shared, he reports, by 'Umar — reads the surah as a gentle announcement that the Prophet's work was done. When the help had come, the victory was won, and the people were entering the religion in crowds, the mission for which he was sent had reached its fulfilment, and the servant would soon be called home to the honour of his Lord. This is why the surah's response is glorification and seeking forgiveness — the fitting preparation of a soul at the end of its task. What looks like a coronation is, more deeply, a leave-taking, and the Prophet ﷺ met it with worship.

Points of reflection

An-Nasr overturns the instinct that success is a time to relax, boast, or take credit. It teaches that the hour of victory is spiritually the most dangerous hour, and that the believer's

response to any triumph — a goal reached, a hardship overcome, a prayer answered — should be to turn back to Allah in praise and to ask forgiveness for the flaws even one's best efforts carried. Success handled with humility is preserved; success handled with pride is corrupted.

There is also a tender lesson in mortality. The surah reminds us that even the completion of a great and blessed work is a signpost that our time is finite, and that the wise soul reads the milestones of life as calls to prepare to meet Allah. To glorify, praise, and seek forgiveness at every summit is to keep the heart ready — grateful for the gift, humble before the Giver, and unattached to the triumph itself.

FIVE

Carrying it

1. Meet success with humility, praise, and seeking forgiveness, not arrogance.
2. Attribute every victory to God's help rather than your own effort.
3. Remember that the end of a life's work is a time to draw nearer to God.
4. Increase in istighfar as accomplishments increase.

Where this reading draws from. Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, al-Sa'di. A summary is not a tafsir: for the verse-by-verse treatment go to the works themselves, or to the close studies at deen2u.com/tadabbur/.