

These verses are addressed to the Israelite community that existed at the time when the Qur'an was revealed; the deeds referred to were committed by their forebears, but were attributed to them for several reasons, such as the following:

- They used to boast about and praise themselves, claiming that they were superior to Muhammad (ﷺ) and those who believed in him. By referring to the attitude of their predecessors, which was well known to them, Allah explained to each of them that they were not people of patience, high morals or good deeds. If this is how their ancestors were, when it is expected that the ancestors would be of a higher status and had a better attitude than those who came after them, then how about those who are addressed here?
- The blessings of Allah that were bestowed upon their predecessors also reached the later generations; a blessing for the fathers is also a blessing for the sons, which is why they are addressed here, because they were also included in the blessing.
- It is addressed to them as if they were the ones who did those deeds, which indicates that members of a community that follows one religion support one another and help one another with regard to that which serves the common interest, so that it is as if the earlier and later generations all lived at the same time. The action of one of them is like the action of all of them, because what some of them do of good deeds will benefit all of them, and what some of them do of evil deeds will bring harm to all of them.
- The latter generation did not denounce most of their predecessors' deeds, and the one who approves of sin is a partner in it.

And there are other reasons which are known only to Allah.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says, differentiating between various groups of the People of the Book: