If Allah wills to show mercy to a people, He takes the soul of their prophet before them, thus making him a forerunner and an intercessor for them

Abu Mūsa al-Ashʻari (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "If Allah wills to show mercy to a people, He takes the soul of their prophet before them, thus making him a forerunner and an intercessor for them. Whereas, if He wills to destroy a people, He punishes them whilst their prophet is alive, witnessing their destruction, thus, consoling him by their destruction as they disbelieved in him and disobeyed his orders."

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim]

As indicated by the Hadīth, if Allah, the Almighty, wills good for a certain people, He causes their prophet to die before them, and thus he gets to Paradise ahead of them and becomes their intercessor. A similar meaning was expressed in another Hadīth, in which the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: “I shall be there at the Basin before you.” In other words, I will be there before you so as to get the water for you. “And if He wills to destroy a people, He punishes them whilst their prophet is alive, witnessing their destruction.” This is similar to what had befallen the people of Prophet Nūh and other prophets (peace be upon them). It is as if Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) wanted to tell them about the favor and kindness of their Lord who sent him as a source of mercy for this Muslim Ummah. In the Qur’an, He says: {And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds} [Sūrat al-Anbiyā': 107] Allah, the Almighty, promised the Muslims that He would not punish them while the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was still alive among them, and He even bestowed more of His favor and bounty upon them. He says: {But Allah would not punish them while you are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness.} [Sūrat al-Anfāl: 33]

http://www.sunnah.global/hadeeth/en/show/3667