

Salih (pbuh)

Description of the People of Thamud

After the destruction of the Ad, the tribe of Thamud succeeded them in power and glory. They also fell to idol worshipping. As their material wealth increased so, too, did their evil ways while their virtue decreased. Like the people of Ad, they erected huge buildings on the plains and hewed beautiful homes out of the hills. Tyranny and oppression became prevalent as evil men ruled the land.

Description of Salih

So Allah sent unto them His Prophet Salih, a man from among them. His name was Salih Ibn 'Ubeid, Ibn Maseh, Ibn 'Ubeid, Ibn Hader, Ibn Thamud, Ibn Ather, Ibn Eram, Ibn Noah. He called his people to worship Allah alone, and to not associate partners with Him. While some of them believed him, the majority of them disbelieved and harmed him by both words and deeds. Salih directed them: "O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other Ilah (god) but Him." Surah 11: 61

Salih was known for his wisdom, purity and goodness and had been greatly respected by his people before Allah's revelation came to him. Salih's people said to him: "O Salih! You have been among us as a figure of good hope (and we wished for you to be our chief), till this new thing which you have brought, that we leave our gods and worship your God (Allah) alone! Do you (now) forbid us the worship of what our fathers have worshiped? But we are really in grave doubt as to that which you invite us to (monotheism)." Surah 11: 62

Salih's People Demand a Miracle

They merely wanted to worship the same gods as their fathers had, with no reason, no proof, no thought. The proof of Salih's message was evident, but despite this it was obvious that most of his people did not believe him. They doubted his words, thinking he was charmed, and they saw that he would not stop preaching. Fearing that his followers would increase, they tried to put him off by assigning him an important task: to prove that he was a messenger of Allah by performing a miracle. Let a unique she-camel issue from the mountains.

Allah granted Salih this miracle and a huge, unique she camel appeared from the direction of the mountain. The Qur'anic commentators said that the people of Thamud gathered on a certain day at their meeting place, and the prophet Salih came and addressed them to believe in Allah, reminding them of the favours Allah had granted them.

Then, pointing at a rock, they demanded: "Ask your Lord to make a she-camel - which must be ten months pregnant, tall and attractive - issue from the rock for us."

Salih replied: "Look now! If Allah sends you what you have requested, just as you have described, will you believe in that which I have come to you with, and have faith in the message I have been sent with?"

They answered: "Yes."

So he took a vow from them on this, then prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant their request. Allah ordered the distant rock to split asunder, bringing forth a great ten-month pregnant she-camel. When their set eyes on it, they were amazed. They saw a great thing, a wonderful sight, dazzling power, clear evidence!

A number of Salih's people believed, yet most of them continued in their disbelief, stubbornness and going astray. Allah the Almighty said: And We sent the she-camel to

Thamud as a clear sign, but they did her wrong. Surah 17: 59 Also: And verily, the dwellers of Al-Hijr (the rocky tract) denied the Messengers. And We gave them Our Signs, but they were averse to them. Surah 15: 80-81

Stories About the She-camel

There are a number of ancient accounts of this camel and its miraculous nature. It was said that the she-camel was miraculous because a rock in the mountain split open and it came forth from it, followed by its young offspring. Other accounts said that the she-camel used to drink all the water in the wells in one day, and no other animals could approach the water. Still others claimed that the she-camel produced milk sufficient for all the people to drink, on the same day that it drank all the water, leaving none for them

The Disbelievers' Hatred for Salih

At first, the people of Thamud were greatly surprised when the she-camel issued from the mountain rocks. It was a blessed camel, its milk sufficient for thousands of men, women and children. If it slept in a place, that place was abandoned by other animals. Thus it was obvious that it was not an ordinary camel, but one of Allah's signs. It lived among Salih's people, some of whom believed in Allah while the majority continued in their obstinacy and disbelief. Their hatred of Salih turned towards the blessed she-camel and became centered on it. A conspiracy started to be hatched against the camel by the disbelievers, and they secretly plotted against it.

Salih feared that they might kill the camel, so he warned them: "O my people! This she-camel of Allah is a sign to you, leave her to feed on Allah's earth, and touch her not with evil, lest a near torment will seize you." Surah 11: 64

For a while, Salih's people let the camel graze and drink freely, but in their hearts they hated it. However, the miraculous appearance of the unique camel caused many to become Salih's followers, and they clung to their belief in Allah.

The Disbelievers' Plot to Kill the She-Camel

The disbelievers now began complaining that this huge she-camel with its unusual qualities drank most of the water and frightened their cattle.

They laid a plot to kill the camel, and sought the help of their women-folk to tempt the men to carry out their commands. Saduq Bint of Mahya, who was from a rich and noble family, offered herself to a young man named Masra'i Ibn Mahraj on condition that he hamstring the camel. Aniza, an old woman, offered one of her daughters to a young man, Qudar Ibn Saluf, in return for killing the camel. Naturally these young men were tempted and set about finding seven others to assist them.

They watched the camel closely, observing all its movements. As the she-camel came to drink at the well, Masrai shot it in the leg with an arrow. It tried to escape but was hampered by the arrow. Qudar followed the camel and struck it with a sword in the other leg. As it fell to the ground, he pierced it with his sword.

Salih Warns of a Punishment

The killers were given a hero's welcome, cheered with songs and poetry composed in their praise. In their arrogance they mocked Salih, but he warned them: "Enjoy life for three more

days then the punishment will descend upon you." Salih was hoping that they would see the folly of their ways and change their attitude before the three days were out.

"Why three days?" they asked. "Let the punishment come as quickly as possible."
He pleaded with them: "My people, why do you hasten to evil rather than good? Why do you not ask pardon of Allah so that you may receive mercy?"

They replied: "We see your presence and that of your followers as bringing evil on us."
Almighty Allah related their story: And indeed We sent to Thamud their brother Salih, saying: "Worship Allah (Alone and none else)." Then look! They became two parties (believers and disbelievers) quarreling with each other.

He said: "O my people! Why do you seek to hasten the evil (torment) before the good (Allah's Mercy)? Why seek you not the Forgiveness of Allah, that you may receive mercy?" They said: "We augur ill omen from you and those with you." He said: "Your ill omen is with Allah; nay, but you are a people that are being tested." Surah 27: 45-47

The Disbelievers Plot Against Salih

And there were in the city nine men (from the sons of their chiefs), who made mischief in the land, and would not reform. They said: "Swear one to another by Allah that we shall make a secret night attack on him and his household, and afterwards we will surely say to his near relatives: 'We witnessed not the destruction of his household, and verily! We are telling the truth.'" Surah 27: 48-49

"So they plotted a plot, and We planned a plan, while they perceived not." Then see how was the end of their plot! Verily! We destroyed them and their nation, all together. These are their houses in utter ruin, for they did wrong. Verily, in this is indeed an Ayah (a lesson or a sign) for people who know. And We saved those who believed, and used to fear and obey Allah. Surah 27: 50-53

Allah saved Salih and his followers from their wicked plans. Heavy-hearted, they left the evil-doers and moved to another place.

The Punishment

Three days after Salih's warning, thunderbolts filled the air, followed by severe earthquakes which destroyed the entire tribe and its homeland. The land was violently shaken, destroying all living creatures in it. There was one terrific cry which had hardly ended when the disbelievers of Salih's people were struck dead, one and all, at the same time. Neither their strong buildings nor their rock-hewn homes could protect them.

Salih's Story - A Condensed Qur'anic Version

Allah the Exalted said: And to Thamud (people We sent) their brother Salih. He said: "O my people! Worship Allah, you have no other Ilah (god) but Him (none has the right to be worshiped but Allah). Indeed there has come to you a clear sign (the miracle of the coming out of a huge she-camel from the midst of a rock) from your Lord. This she-camel of Allah is a sign unto you; so you leave her to graze in Allah's earth, and touch her not with harm, lest a painful torment should seize you. And remember when He made you successors after 'Ad (people) and gave you habitations in the land, you build for yourselves palaces in plains, and carve out homes in the mountains. So remember the graces (bestowed upon you) from Allah, and do not go about making mischief on the earth."

The leaders of those who were arrogant among his people said to those who were counted weak - to such of them as believed: "Know you that Salih is one sent from his Lord." They said: "We indeed believe in that with which he has been sent." Those who were arrogant said: "Verily, we disbelieve in that which you believe in.

So they killed the she-camel and insolently defied the Commandment of their Lord, and said: "O Salih! Bring about your threats if you are indeed one of the Messengers (of Allah)." So the earthquake seized them, and they lay (dead), prostrate in their homes. Then he (Salih) turned from them, and said: "O my people! I have indeed conveyed to you the Message of my Lord, and have given you good advice but you like not good advisers." Surah 7: 73-79

All were destroyed before they realized what was happening. As for the people who believed in the message of Salih , they were saved because they had left the place.

Hadith About People of Thamud

Ibn Umar narrated that while the Prophet Muhammad was passing by Thamud's houses on his way to the battle of Tabuk, he stopped together with the people there. The people fetched water from the wells from which the people of Thamud used to drink. They prepared their dough (for baking) and filled their water-skins from it (the water from the wells). The Prophet of Allah ordered them to empty the water-skins and give the prepared dough to the camels. Then he went away with them until they stopped at the well from which the she-camel (of Salih) used to drink. He warned them against entering upon the people that had been punished, saying: "I fear that you may be affected by what afflicted them; so do not enter upon them."