



# The People of 'Ad and Thamud

## Hud; Salih and the She-Camel

From the writings of Muhammad and Bahá'u'lláh

## Hud; Salih and the She-Camel

*from "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh" vol 4 by Adib Taherzadeh*

. . . Hud and Salih were prophets of God who appeared before Abraham, but they are not mentioned in the Old or the New Testament. The people of 'Ad and Thamud inhabited a large tract of country in Southern Arabia. Tradition has it that 'Ad was a fourth-generation descendant of Noah. His people, who are said to be of a tall race, were idolators and aggressive people. In the Qur'án it is stated that the People of both 'Ad and Thamud were fine builders, gifted with intelligence and skills, but that they were guided by the Evil One, Satan.

God chose Hud to be a prophet to the people of 'Ad. He too is said to be a fourth-generation descendant of Noah, and therefore a cousin of 'Ad. Hud proclaimed to his people that God had chosen him as a prophet, and preached to them the one true God and the

destruction of their idols. But they rejected him and only a few became his followers. When the people did not respond to his preaching, he warned them of an impending calamity. This took place, and all perished except Hud and his followers. The nature of this calamity is given in the Qur'án:

... and 'Ad were destroyed by a roaring and furious wind; which God caused to assail them for seven nights and eight days successively: thou mightest have seen people, during the same, lying prostrate, as though they had been the roots of hollow palm-trees, and couldst thou have seen any of them remaining?'

According to tradition Hud is buried in Hadhramaut, in the south of the Arabian peninsula.

The people of Thamud were the successors to the culture and civilization of 'Ad. Tradition has it that they were a younger branch of the same tribe and lived in the same regions of the Arabian peninsula. Thamud himself is also said to be a descendant of Noah. The people of Thamud were skilful in carving stone. They are reputed to have made buildings out of solid rock. Like the people of 'Ad, they were idolators. According to the Qur'án, God had bestowed upon them skills: they had plenty of cornfields and date farms, but they were unholy, oppressive and unkind to the poor.

Then God sent Salih to them as a prophet. He was one of the people of Thamud like Hud, he exhorted people to believe in God and stop worshipping idols. He argued with them for a long time, but they said that they could not find in him the signs of prophethood. Thereupon God brought forth a she-camel as a sign. Tradition has it that the she-camel came out of a rock. Salih asked the people to take care of the she-camel and to drink of her milk, but they did not. And when she came to drink of their water, which was scarce in that land and therefore vital to their existence, they raised great objections and

eventually they hamstrung the she-camel and killed her.

Salih repeatedly warned the people that if they did not respond to his message they would be struck by a calamity and would be seized by God with a grievous punishment. When the sign from God, the she-camel, had no effect on the people and the animal was killed, an earthquake wiped them out, all except Salih and his followers, who were saved. The Qur'án describes this episode in this way:

Then they hamstrung the she-camel, and insolently defied the order of their Lord, saying: 'O Salih, I bring about thy threats, If thou art an apostle.' --So the earthquake took them unawares, and they lay prostrate in their homes in the morning.

The versions we have given in these pages are based on the verses of the Qur'án. However, there are further details derived from various traditions other than the Qur'án, but these seem to be unreal and pure fantasy.

The stories of Hud and Salih are somewhat similar to the story of Noah, the flood and the Ark. They are all symbolic. In the Bahá'í Writings we find explained the significance of such terms as Noah's Ark, the flood, the she-camel and other incidents. For example, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a Tablet explains that the she-camel was symbolic of the holy spirit of Salih, and the milk was symbolic of the spiritual food which his spirit offered to the people. The significance of the she-camel being hamstrung is the suffering inflicted by the wicked people on that holy soul, Salih. The spring of water which the people denied to the she-camel signifies life on this earth. The people were so attached to earthly things that they could not recognize the gifts of God to them, and so they rose up in opposition to Salih, and when he departed from their midst they became deprived of his spiritual influence. His absence was the calamity which caused them to be deprived of the bounties of God and consequently they perished

spiritually. There is a chapter in the Qur'án known as the Surah of Hud. It tells the story of all the Prophets including Hud and Salih. It describes how they were all denied, opposed and persecuted by their own people. Bahá'u'lláh refers to this in the Kitáb-i-Iqán:

To them that are possessed of true understanding and insight the Surah of Hud surely sufficeth. Ponder a while those holy words in your heart, and, with utter detachment, strive to grasp their meaning. Examine the wondrous behaviour of the Prophets, and recall the defamations and denials uttered by the children of negation and falsehood, perchance you may cause the bird of the human heart to wing its flight away from the abodes of heedlessness and doubt unto the nest of faith and certainty, and drink deep from the pure waters of ancient wisdom, and partake of the fruit of the tree of divine knowledge.

He also dwells briefly upon the story of Hud and Salih in these words:

And after Noah the light of the countenance of Hud shone forth above the horizon of creation. For well-nigh seven hundred years, according to the sayings of men, He exhorted the people to turn their faces and draw nearer unto the Ridván of the divine presence. What showers of afflictions rained upon Him, until at last His adjurations bore the fruit of increased rebelliousness, and His assiduous endeavours resulted in the wilful blindness of His people. 'And their unbelief shall only increase for the unbelievers their own perdition.' [1]

[1 Qur'án 35:9]

And after Him there appeared from the Ridván of the Eternal, the Invisible, the holy person of Salih, Who again summoned the people to the river of everlasting life. For over a hundred years He admonished them to hold fast unto the commandments of God and eschew that which is forbidden. His admonitions, however, yielded

no fruit, and His pleading proved of no avail. Several times He retired and lived in seclusion. All this, although that eternal Beauty was summoning the people to no other than the city of God. Even as it is revealed: 'And unto the tribe of Thamud We sent their brother Salih. 'O my people,' said He, 'Worship God, ye have none other God beside Him....' They made reply: 'O Salih, our hopes were fixed on thee until now; forbiddest thou us to worship that which our fathers worshipped? Truly we misdoubt that whereunto thou callest us as suspicious.'[1] All this proved fruitless, until at last there went up a great cry, and all fell into utter perdition.

[1 Qur'án 11:61 and 11:62.]

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh v 4, p. 424)

### *From the Koran (Chapter 7 The Heights)*

And to the tribe of 'Ad We sent their kinsman Hud. He said: 'Serve God, my people, for you have no god but Him. Will you not guard yourselves against evil?'

The unbelievers among the elders of his tribe said: 'We can see you are a foolish man, and, what is more, we think that you are lying.'

'Foolish I am not, my people,' he replied. 'I am sent forth by the Lord of the Worlds to make known to you His will and to give you honest counsel. Do you think it strange that an admonition should come to you from your Lord through a mortal like yourselves and that he should warn you? Remember that He has made you the heirs of Noah's people and endowed you with greater power than He has given to other men. Remember God's favours, so that you may prosper.'

They said: 'Would you have us serve God only and renounce the gods which our fathers worshipped? Bring down the scourge you threaten us with, if what you say be true.'

He answered: 'Your Lord's punishment and wrath have already visited you. Would you dispute with me about mere names which you and your fathers have invented, and for which God has revealed no sanction? Wait if you will; I too am waiting.'

7:70 We delivered him and those who were with him through Our mercy, and annihilated those that disbelieved Our revelations. They were unbelievers all.

And to Thamud We sent their kinsman Salib. He said:

'Serve God, my people, for you have no god but Him. A veritable proof has come to you from your Lord. Here is God's she-camel: a sign for you. Leave her to graze at will in God's own land and do not molest her, lest a woeful scourge should take you.'

Remember, He has made you the heirs of 'Ad, and provided you with dwellings in the land. You have built mansions on its plains and hewed out houses on the mountains. Remember God's favours and do not corrupt the earth with wickedness.'

The haughty elders of his people said to the believers who were oppressed: 'Do you really believe that Salih is sent forth from his Lord?'

They answered: 'We believe in the message he has been sent with.' The haughty elders said: 'We deny all that you believe in.' They slaughtered the she-camel and defied the commandment of their Lord, saying to Salih: 'Bring down the scourge you threaten us with, if you truly are an apostle.'

Thereupon the earthquake felled them, and when morning came they were crouching lifeless in their dwellings. He left them, saying: 'I conveyed to you, my people, the message of my Lord and gave you good counsel; but you had no love for those who give good counsel.'

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Whenever We sent a prophet to a city We afflicted its people with calamities and misfortunes so that they might abase themselves.

Then We changed adversity to good fortune, so that when they had multiplied they said: 'Our fathers also had their sorrows and their joys.' And in their heedlessness We suddenly smote them.

Had the people of those cities believed and kept from evil, We would have showered upon them blessings from heaven and earth. But they disbelieved, and We punished them for their misdeeds.

Were the people of those cities secure from Our power when it overtook them in the night while they were sleeping?

Were the people of those cities secure from Our power when it overtook them in the morning at their play? Did they feel themselves secure from God's cunning? None feels secure from God's cunning except the losers.

Is it not plain to the present generation that if We pleased, We could punish them for their sins and set a seal upon their hearts, leaving them bereft of hearing?

We have recounted to you the history of those nations. Their apostles came to them with veritable proofs, yet they persisted in their unbelief. Thus God seals up the hearts of the unbelievers.



(The Qur'an, s07-heights\_dawood)

*From the Koran (Chapter 11 Hud)*

To 'Ad We sent their kinsman Hud. He said: 'Serve God, my people; you have no god but Him. False are your inventions. I demand of you no recompense, my people, for none can reward me except my Creator. Will you not understand?

'My people, seek forgiveness of your Lord and turn to Him in penitence. He will send from the sky abundant rain upon you; He will add strength to your strength. Do not turn away from Him with wrongdoing.'

They replied: 'Hud, you have given us no proof. We will not forsake our gods at your behest, nor will we believe in you. We can only suppose that our gods have afflicted you with evil.'

He said: 'God is my witness, and you are my witnesses too: I disown your idols. Scheme against me if you will, and give me no respite. I have put my trust in God, my Lord and your Lord. There is not a living creature on the earth whose destiny He does not govern. Straight is the path of my Lord.

'If you pay no heed, I have made known to you my message, and my Lord will replace you by other men. You will in no way harm Him. My Lord is watching over all things.'

And when Our judgement came to pass, We delivered Hud through Our mercy, together with those who shared his faith.

11:60 We delivered them from a horrifying scourge. Such were 'Ad. They denied the revelations of their Lord, disobeyed His apostles, and did the bidding of every headstrong reprobate. Cursed were

they in this world, and cursed they shall be on the Day of Resurrection.

'Ad denied their Lord. Gone are 'Ad, the people of Hud.

And to Thamud We sent their kinsman Salih. He said:

'Serve God, my people; you have no god but Him. It was He who brought you into being from the earth and gave you means to dwell upon it. Seek forgiveness of Him, and turn to Him in penitence. My Lord is near at hand and answers all.'

'Salih,' they replied, 'great were the hopes we placed in you. Would you now forbid us to serve the gods our fathers worshipped? Truly, we strongly doubt the faith to which you call us.'

He said: 'Do but consider, my people! If my Lord has revealed to me His will and bestowed on me His grace? who would protect me from God if I rebelled against Him? You would surely aggravate my ruin.

11:64 'My people, here is God's she-camel, a sign for you. Leave her to graze at will in God's own land, and do not molest her lest an instant scourge should fall upon you.'

Yet they slew her. He said: 'You have but three days to take your ease in your dwellings. This prophecy shall not prove false.'

And when Our judgement came to pass, We delivered Salih through Our mercy from the ignominy of that day, together with those who shared his faith. Mighty is your Lord and all-powerful.

The Cry took the evil-doers, and when morning came they were crouching lifeless in their dwellings, as though they had never prospered there.

Thamud denied their Lord. Gone are the people of Thamud. (The Qur'an, s11-hud\_dawood)

*From the Koran (Chapter 26 The Poets)*

26:120 (Of Noah) We delivered him and those who were with him in the laden ark, and overwhelmed the others with the Flood. Surely in that there was a sign; yet most of them did not believe.

Your Lord is the Mighty One, the Merciful.

'Ad, too, disbelieved the apostles. Their kinsman Hud had said to them:

'Will you not fear God? I am indeed your true apostle. Fear God, then, and follow me. For this I demand of you no recompense; none can reward me except the Lord of the Worlds. '

'Will you erect a monument on every hill? Vain is your work. You build strong fortresses, hoping that you may last for ever.

26:130 'When you exercise your power, you act like cruel tyrants. Have fear of God, and follow me.

'Fear Him who has given you all the things you know. He has given you flocks and children, gardens and fountains. Beware the torment of a fateful day.'

They replied: 'We care nothing whether or not you preach to us. That with which you threaten us is but an ancient myth. Surely we shall not be punished.'

They rejected him, and thus We utterly destroyed them. Surely in that there was a sign; yet most of them did not believe.

26:140 Your Lord is the Mighty One, the Merciful. Thamud, too, disbelieved the apostles.

Their kinsman Salih had said to them:

'Will you not fear God? I am indeed your true apostle. Fear God and follow me. For this I demand of you no recompense; none can reward me except the Lord of the Worlds.

Are you to be left secure in this land, amidst gardens and fountains, cornfields and palm-trees laden with fine fruit, hewing your dwellings in the mountains and leading a wanton life?

26:150 Have fear of God and follow me.

Do not obey the bidding of transgressors who perpetrate corruption in the land and do no good at all.'

They replied: 'Surely you are bewitched. You are but a mortal like ourselves. Show us a sign, if what you say be true.'

'Here,' he said, 'is this she-camel. She shall have her share of water as you have yours, each drinking on an appointed day. Do not molest her, or the scourge of a fateful day shall take you.'

Yet they slew her, and then repented of their deed. The scourge took them. Surely in that there was a sign. Yet most of them did not believe. Your Lord is the Mighty One, the Merciful.

(The Qur'an, s26-poets\_dawood)

*From the Koran (Chapter 17 The Night Journey)*

Nothing hinders us from giving signs except that the ancients disbelieved them. To Thamud We gave the she-camel as a visible

sign, yet they laid violent hands on her. We give signs only by way of warning. -- (The Qur'an, s17-night-journey\_dawood)

*From the Koran (Chapter 54 The Moon)*

We have made the Koran easy to remember: but will any take heed? 'Ad, too, did not believe. How grievous was My scourge, and how clear My warning!

54:20 On a day of unremitting woe, We let loose on them a howling wind which snapped them off like trunks of uprooted palm trees. How grievous was My scourge, and how clear My warning!

We have made the Koran easy to remember: but will any take heed?

Thamud, too, disbelieved Our warnings. They said: 'Are we to follow a mortal who stands alone among us? That would surely be error and madness. Did he alone among us receive the admonition? He is indeed a foolish liar.'

To him We said: 'Tomorrow they shall learn who the foolish liar is. We are sending to them the she-camel, that We may put them to the proof. Observe them closely and have patience. Tell them that they must share their drink with her, and that for every draught they must attend in person.'

They called their friend, who took a knife and slew her.

54:30 How grievous was My scourge, and how clear My warning! A single cry was heard, and they became like the dry twigs of the sheep-fold builder.

We have made the Koran easy to remember: but will any take heed?

All their deeds are in their books: every action, small or great, is noted down. The righteous shall dwell in gardens watered by running brooks, honourably seated in the presence of a Mighty King. -- (The Qur'an, s54-moon\_dawood)

*From Koran (Chapter 91 The Sun)*

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

91:1 By the sun and his midday brightness; by the moon, which rises after him; by the day, which reveals his splendour; by the night, which veils him!

By the heaven and Him that built it; by the earth and Him that spread it; by the soul and Him that moulded it and inspired it with knowledge of sin and piety;

91:9 Blessed shall be the man who has kept it pure, and ruined he that has corrupted it!

In their presumptuous pride the people of Thamud denied their apostle when their arch-sinner rose against him.

God's apostle said: 'This is God's own she-camel. Let her drink.'

They disbelieved him, and slaughtered her.

And for that crime their Lord let loose His scourge upon them and razed their city to the ground. He did not fear the consequences. -- (The Qur'an, s91-sun-journey\_dawood)

*From the Koran (Chapter 25 Al-Furqan)*

25:40 The tribes of 'Ad and Thamud were also destroyed, and so

were those who dwelt at Rass, and many generations in between. To each of them We gave examples, and each of them We exterminated.

They must surely have passed by the city which was destroyed by the fatal rain: have they never seen its ruins? -- (The Qur'an, s25-furqan\_dawood)

*From the Koran (Chapter 27 The Ant)*

To Thamud We sent their kinsman Salih. He said:

'Serve none but God.' But they divided themselves into two discordant factions.

'My people,' he said, 'why do you wish to hasten evil rather than good? If you seek forgiveness of God, you may be shown mercy.'

They said: 'We presage evil from you and from your followers.'

He replied: 'The evil you presage can come only from God; you are a people put to the proof.'

27:50 In the town there was a band of nine men, who did evil in the land and nothing that was good. They said: 'Let us swear in the name of God to kill him in the night, together with all his household.

We will say to his next of kin: "We were not even present when they were slain. It is the truth we are telling."

Thus they plotted: but We too plotted, without their knowledge. And behold the consequences of their plots! We destroyed them utterly, together with all their people. Because they sinned, their dwellings are desolate ruins. Surely in this there is a sign for prudent men.

Yet We delivered the true believers and those who kept from evil.

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Say: 'Roam the earth and see what was the end of the guilty.' Do not grieve for them, nor be distressed at their intrigues.

And they ask: 'When will this promise be fulfilled, if what you say be true?' Say: 'A part of what you challenge may well be near at hand.'

Surely your Lord is bountiful to men: yet most of them do not give thanks. Your Lord surely knows what their bosoms hide and what they say in public. There is no secret in heaven or earth but is recorded in a glorious book.

(The Qur'an, s27-ant\_dawood)

If they pay no heed, say: 'I have given you warning of a thunderbolt, like the thunderbolt which struck 'Ad and Thamud. When their apostles came to them from before them and from behind them, saying: "Serve none but God," they answered:

"Had it been our Lord's will He would have sent down angels. We will never believe in your message. As for 'Ad, they conducted themselves with arrogance and injustice in the land. 'Who is mightier than we?' they used to say. Could they not see that God, who had created them, was mightier than they? Yet they denied Our revelations.

So, over a few ill-omened days We let loose on them a howling gale, to make them taste a shameful scourge in this nether life; but more shameful still will be the scourge of the life to come. They shall have none to help them.

As for Thamud, We offered them Our guidance, but they preferred



blindness to guidance.

Therefore the thunderbolt of a humiliating scourge struck them for their misdeeds; and We delivered those who believed and those who feared God.

Forewarn them of the day when the enemies of God will be brought together and led into the Fire, so that when they enter it, their ears, their eyes, and their very skins will testify to their misdeeds.

41:20 'Why did you speak against us?' they will say to their skins, and their skins will reply:

'God, who gives speech to all things, has made us speak. It was He who in the beginning created you, and to Him shall you be recalled. You did not hide yourselves, so that your ears and eyes and skins could not be made to testify against you. Yet you thought that God did not know much of what you did. It was the thoughts you entertained about your Lord that ruined you, so that you are now among the lost.'

(The Qur'an, s41-revelations\_dawood)

*From the Koran (Chapter The Winds)*

In the fate of 'Ad there was another-sign. We let loose on them a blighting wind, which pounded into dust all that it swept before it.

And in Thamud. They were allowed to take their ease awhile; but they disobeyed the commandments of their Lord. The thunderbolt struck them as they looked on; they could not rise up from their fall, nor did they gain their end.

And the people of Noah before them. They too were impious men.

We built the heaven with Our might, giving it a vast expanse, and stretched the earth beneath it. Gracious is He who spread it out. And all things We have made in pairs, so that you may take thought.

Therefore seek God. I come from Him to warn you plainly. Set up no other deity besides God. I come from Him to warn you plainly.

Thus whenever an apostle came to those that flourished before them they cried: 'Sorcerer!' or 'Madman!' Have they handed down this cry from one generation to the next? Surely they are transgressors all. Pay no heed to them; you shall incur no blame. Exhort them; exhortation helps the true believers. -- (The Qur'an, s51-winds\_dawood)

69:1 The Catastrophe: and what is the Catastrophe? Would that you knew what the Catastrophe is!

Thamud and 'Ad denied the Last Judgement. By a deafening shout was Thamud destroyed, and 'Ad by a howling, violent gale which He let loose on them for seven nights and eight successive days: you might have seen them lying dead as though they had been hollow trunks of palm-trees. Can you see even one of them still alive? -- (The Qur'an, s69-catastrophe\_dawood)

89:1 By the Dawn and the Ten Nights; by that which is dual, and that which is single; by the night, when it comes!

Is there not in this a mighty oath for a man of sense?

Have you not heard how your Lord dealt with 'Ad? The people of the many-columned city of Iram, whose like has never been built in the whole land?

And with Thamud, who hewed out their dwellings among the rocks of the valley? -- (The Qur'an, s89-dawn dawood)

