

PROPHETS OF ISLAM SERIES



THE BIOGRAPHY OF  
**SALIH**

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ



SHAIKH MIR ASEDULLAH QUADRI

# **BIOGRAPHY OF SALIH (عليه السلام)**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على  
سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

## 1. THE PEOPLE OF THAMUD

The people of Thamud lived in the north-western part of Arabian Peninsula which is presently known as Mada'in Salih (the cities of Salih عليه السلام) in Saudi Arabia. The capital of the people of Thamud was Al-Hijr (the township carved out of rocks). The ruins of this township are near the modern city of Al-Ula between Madina and Tabuk. Al-Hijr was inhabited by over five hundred thousand people during the time of Salih (عليه السلام).

**Ibn Battuta (1304-1369)** was a Muslim Moroccan scholar and explorer who widely traveled the medieval world. It is reported that Ibn Battuta reached Mada'in al-Salih on his way to Makkah. He wrote, 'I have seen the buildings of Thamud carved into red mountains; the paintings look so bright as if they have been put on only recently. The rotten bones of human beings are found in them even today.'

After the destruction of the A'ad, the tribe of Thamud rose to power and glory in Arabian Peninsula. As has always been the case with the rich and powerful ancient tribes, they started worshipping idols. As their material wealth increased, their evil ways also increased. Tyranny and oppression became prevalent as evil men ruled the land. They erected huge buildings and carved beautiful homes out of the hills as a show of their wealth and glory.

**It is in Quran** - وَكَانُوا يَنْجُتُونَ - وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ آيَاتِنَا فَكَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ - وَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ الْحَجَرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ - [ The Companions of the 'Rocky Tract' (Al-Hijr) also rejected the Apostles. We had given them Our signs, but they disregarded them. They used to carve houses in the mountains (so that they) live in security.] (Al-Hijr - 80-82)

During Prophet Mohammad's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) time, Arab trade caravans used to pass through the ruins of Mada'in Salih. On his way to Tabuk expedition, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله ) directed Muslims to hastily move ahead of this place, as it was a reminder of Allah's wrath.

**It is in Hadith** - Ibn Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated that while the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was passing nearby Thamud's houses on his way to the expedition 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 (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) 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 عليه السلام) 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 (go near) their places'. **(Bukhari)**



It is strange to see that Wahhabis / Salafis who are in power in Arabian Peninsula for the past 100 years, have made Mada'in Salih a tourist center where people are encouraged to visit. Magnificent hotels and transport facilities have been built to facilitate tourists to visit that place. They call it their national heritage.

## 2. PROPHET SALIH (عليه السلام)

Prophet Salih (عليه السلام) belonged to the people whose ancestor was Thamud, the great grandson of Nooh (عليه السلام). This is the reason they are called the people of Thamud. Salih (عليه السلام) lived in the Kingdom which was established by Thamud.

Prophet Salih ibn Ubayd, ibn Maseh, ibn Ubayd, ibn Hader, ibn Thamud, ibn Ather, ibn Eram, ibn Nooh (عليه السلام) was sent to them as Allah's Prophet. He called them to worship Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) alone and not to associate partners with Him. However, very few people believed him. The rest were adamant in idol worship and harmed him by mockery and hateful deeds.

**It is in Quran** - وَالْإِلَى تَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ [ And to (the people of ) Thamud (We sent) Salih (عليه السلام), their brother. He said, 'O my people! Worship Allah. You have no other god besides Him. He brought you forth from the earth and made it your habitation. So, plead with Him for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently. My Lord is indeed near and answers the calls.] **(Hood - 61)**

Salih (عليه السلام) was known for his honesty, wisdom, and virtue among his people from his childhood. When he was commanded by Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) to convey His revelations to them, they said, '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 alone! You forbid us the worship of what our fathers have worshipped? We are in doubt about your intentions.

**It is in Quran** - قَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِينَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هَذَا أَتَنْهَانَا أَنْ نَعْبُدَ مَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا وَإِنَّنَا لَفِي شَكِّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ - قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأَتَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ يُنصِرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ - قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأَتَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ يُنصِرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ - قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأَتَانِي مِنْهُ رَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ يُنصِرُنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ عَصَيْتُهُ تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ [ They said : 'O Salih (عليه السلام), we expected it from you before ( that you will not like our ways because of your honesty). But now you seek to prevent us from worshiping what our forefathers used to worship? Indeed, we are in real doubt concerning what you call us to.' He said, 'O my people, have you considered that if my Lord has clearly shown me the way, and I have His blessings too, then who will save me from Allah if I disobey Him? You will only add to my ruin.] **(Hood - 62-63)**

Once they were all asked to gather at an open place where Prophet Salih (عليه السلام) addressed them and invited them to accept Islam. After listening to his sermon, they demanded a miracle from him as a proof of his Prophet-hood. The specifics of the miracle were also described by them. They said a She camel should appear for them miraculously who should give birth to a baby and its milk should be sufficient for many people.

Prophet Salih (عليه السلام) prayed Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) in front of them. Then, they were asked to turn their faces towards the mountain in front of them. As per their demand, a rock split into two and a she-camel appeared in front of them from the rock and gave birth to a baby. She was huge, and its milk was sufficient for thousands of people.

**It is in Quran** - مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُنَا فَأْتِ بِآيَةٍ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ - قَالَ هَلْذِهِ نَاقَةٌ لَهَا شِرْبٌ وَلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ [ (The people of Salih said) You are but a man like ourselves, so bring a sign (from God), if you should be of the truthful. Prophet Salih (عليه السلام) said, 'This is a she-camel. For her is a (time of) drink, and for you is a (time of) drink, (each) on a known day. And do not touch her with harm, lest you be seized by the punishment of a terrible day.] **(Ash-Shu'araa - 154-56)**

**It is in Quran** - وَأَتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا<sup>٥</sup> وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا [ We gave Thamud the she-camel as an eye-opener, but they wronged her. We do not send the signs except as deterrence.] (**Al-Isra - 59**)

Thus, they were fully aware that the she camel was a miracle. Despite that, many did not believe. However, they allowed the She Camel to graze freely for a while as per the instructions of Salih (عليه السلام).

The she camel used to drink all the water in the wells in one day, and no other animals could approach the water. The next day all animals could drink water and she would not drink. And it used to produce milk sufficient for thousands of people.

### 3. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PEOPLE OF THAMUD

The people of Thamud got used to the She Camel soon and started taking the miracle of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) for granted. Their hatred of Prophet Salih (عليه السلام) was turned towards the blessed she camel as they considered she belonged to him. They started to conspire to hurt it.

**It is in Quran** - وَيَا قَوْمِ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذُرُّوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوهَا بِسُوءٍ فَيَأْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيبٌ [ And O my people, this is the she-camel of Allah, for you a sign. Let her graze on Allah's earth and do not touch her with harm, or you will be taken by an impending punishment.] (**Hood - 64**)

They hatched a plan to kill the she camel. For this purpose, women in the town were provoked to tempt young men to carry out the killing. A young woman named Saduq bint Mahya, who was from a rich and noble family, offered herself to a young man named Masrai ibn Mahraj on condition that he hamstring the camel. Anizah, an old woman, offered one of her daughters to a young man, Qudar ibn Saluf, in return for killing the camel. Seven other men joined them in this conspiracy. They watched the she camel and her movements closely.

One day, as the she camel came to drink at the well, Masrai shot it in the leg with an arrow. The camel ran and tried to escape but was hampered by the arrow. Qudar followed the camel and struck it with a sword severing the other leg. As it fell to the ground, he pierced his sword into the body of the camel and killed it.



The news of the killing of the she-camel spread in the town. People were jubilant. The killers were accorded a hero's welcome, cheered with songs and poetry composed in their praise. In their arrogance they mocked Salih (عليه السلام).

**It is in Quran** - [ But they hamstrung her (by severing her legs), and then Salih (عليه السلام) said, enjoy life in your homes for three days. This is a threat that will not be belied.] (**Hood - 65**)

Salih (عليه السلام) informed them of the impending punishment and told them, they still have 3 days to repent for their evil deed. They were not deterred by the warning and mockingly asked Salih (عليه السلام), 'why three days, let the punishment come as quickly as possible'. He pleaded with them, ask Allah's pardon, you still have three days' time. Surely, He is Merciful, and He will forgive you, but to no avail.

There were nine young men in the city who were the sons of the heads of 9 clans. They were mostly responsible for the mischief in the land. They swore to one another to attack Salih (عليه السلام) house and killing all its inhabitants. For this purpose, they hatched a plan secretly.

**It is in Quran** - [ And in the town there were heads of nine clans who spread mischief in the land and did no good. They said to each other, 'Let us take an oath by Allah that we will kill him and his family tonight. Then we will say to his near relatives, 'we did not witness the destruction of his family, and we are truthful.' And so, they devised a plot, and indeed We put Our 'will' in force (to punish them for their deeds), while they were not aware.] (**An-Naml - 48-50**)

Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) saved Salih (عليه السلام) and his followers from their plots.

Three days after Salih's (عليه السلام) warning, thunderbolts filled the air, followed by massive earthquakes which destroyed the entire tribe and their homes. The land was violently shaken, destroying all living things in it. Finally, there was one terrific shriek and all five hundred thousand people fell dead.

As for the people who believed in the message of Salih (عليه السلام) they were saved because they had left that place within 3 days.

**It is in Quran** - [ فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رَسُولَ رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُحِبُّونَ النَّاصِحِينَ - Salih (عليه السلام) turned away from them and said, 'O my people, I conveyed to you the message of my Lord and warned you; but you do not like those who wish you well.'] (**Al-Araaf - 79**)

It is important to note that Prophet Salih (عليه السلام) addressed his people who were struck by the earthquake and were already dead. This proves that the dead can hear.

**It is in Hadith** - Abu Talha (رضي الله تعالى عنه) reported, 'on the day of the Battle of Badr, Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) ordered that the bodies of twenty-four leaders of the Quraish be thrown into one of the foul, abandoned wells of Badr. On the third day after the battle, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) called for his mount and saddled it. Then he set out, so his companions followed him. They said among themselves, "He must be going to something important."

When the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) arrived at the well, he stood at its edge and began addressing those therein by calling upon them by their names, "O so and so, Son of so and so; and You, so and so, Son of so and so! Would it not have been easier to have obeyed Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and His Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)? We have found that which our Lord promised us to be true. Did you find what your Lord promised you to be true?"

Thereupon Umar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) said, 'O Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), what are you saying to these bodies without souls?! Do they hear? For Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) says, 'verily, you cannot make the dead hear. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) answered, 'by Him in whose hand lies the soul of Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), you did not hear better than them what I just said.' (**Bukhari and Muslim**).

#### 4. THE DEATH OF SALIH (عليه السلام)

After the people of Thamud were destroyed, it is reported that Salih (عليه السلام) moved to Makkah and resided there with his followers until he died at the age of 58 years and was buried in Makka.