

Chapter 11, Hood (Hud) (part 2 of 2)

Description: A brief commentary of Chapter 11 (verses 61-123) of the Holy Quran. They discuss the stories of great Prophets such as Lot, Abraham and Moses, and the consequences of those who rejected their message.

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Verses 61-68 Story of Salih

The dwelling places of Salih's people, Thamud, are situated somewhere between Hijaz and Syria in the southeastern part of Madyan which is situated east of the Gulf of Aqaba. Chiseled out of stone, their dwellings are still preserved.

Salih's message was similar to that of Noah and Hud. In addition, he produced a female camel from the neighboring hills to prove that he was God's true prophet but warned people not to harm it. Nevertheless, they killed it, thereby inviting God's wrath in the form of a heavenly scream that left them dead, face down in their homes.

Verses 69-76 Story of Abraham

Born in Iraq, Abraham settled in the city of Ur. He traveled to Harran in the north of the Arabian Peninsula and then to Palestine with his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot. Due to a drought, he then moved to Egypt. Lot returned with Abraham from Egypt, but parted ways because the land was not enough for both their herds. Lot settled towards the Dead Sea near Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham had three beautiful character traits: forbearing, repentant, and soft-hearted.

He was quick to serve unannounced guests - angels of God - who brought two bits of news. One, destruction was forthcoming to the people of Lot. As for the second, the birth of Abraham's son, Isaac, from Sarah, his aged wife, and his grandson, Jacob. Abraham makes a futile attempt to turn away the angels from Lot.

Verses 77-83 Story of Lot

As hospitable as his uncle, Lot is distressed to see young, attractive guests who people immediately wanted to sodomize. Lot tries to reason with the people by pointing to available women for marriage and not to disgrace him. Feeling powerless to protect his guests, the angels comfort Lot that he will be unharmed. He was to leave town at nightfall with his family except his wife who would stay behind as she had informed people of the angelic guests. God destroys them by lifting up the city, throwing it upside down, and raining them with stones due to their wickedness.

Verses 84-95 Story of Shu'ayb

He was sent to the people of Madyan who lived in the land of Hijaz, next to Syria and east of the Gulf of Aqaba. According to some historians, that land is the site of the modern Saudi city of Tabuk.

Shu'ayb's message:

- Worship God.
- Give full measure, do not give people less than what they pay for.
- Do not spread corruption on earth.
- Seek forgiveness from the Most Merciful, Most Loving Lord.
- Fear the punishment of a Day that will surround all.

The disbelievers made fun of Prophet Shu'ayb's prayer, saying does *it* instruct him that they should leave ancestral gods or change how they dispose of their money.

Shu'ayb reminds them that he only wishes reformation and God is his strength on Whom he relies. His compassionate pleading to look at the ruins of Noah, Hud, Salih, and Lot does not convince them. Shu'ayb and fellow believers are rescued when a scream destroys them as if they never existed.

Verses 96-99 Story of Moses

Moses left Egypt, and traveling through Sinai, he headed towards Madyan. On his way he met his wife, the daughter of Shu'ayb. On their return journey, God spoke to Moses at Mt. Tur (Mt. Horeb in Sinai) and thereafter, Moses returns to Egypt.

God sent Moses with clear proofs to Pharaoh and his ministers, but the latter followed the misguided orders of their ruler instead. Cursed in both worlds, just as they followed him in the cold water that drowned them, they will follow him into the Fire.

Verses 100-102 Injustice

They wronged themselves, God did not wrong them. The gods they called upon besides God were of no use to them.

Verses 103-109 Scenes from the Day of Resurrection and divine solace to the Prophet

The above narratives of the prophets are 'signs' related to Prophet Muhammad for the benefit of those who fear the punishment of the afterlife.

God will gather all the people on the Last Day, no one will be able to hide himself, and everyone will receive their full share. On that Day a soul will speak only by God's permission. The unfortunate ones will enter the Hellfire on that Day for eternity. The

fortunate ones will be in Paradise forever.

Verses 110-111 Warning against casting doubt in the books of God

People treat their prophets the same. Some accept their call, and others reject it. Casting doubt, people denied Moses and the Torah like the pagans of Mecca denied Prophet Muhammad. Those who rejected the prophets shall face the same fate.

Verses 112-115 Means of achieving success in the world and the Hereafter

Prophet Muhammad and the repentant believers with him are instructed by God to remain determined, establish regular prayer, and exercise patience. Do not cross the boundaries and do not become partners with wrongdoers or else the Fire will touch you.

Verses 116-119 God's way in destroying unjust nations

God does not unjustly destroy cities while the residents are trying to reform. Had God wanted, He could have made people follow a single religion, but He did not intend so for reasons known to Him. Thus, people will continue to have differences except those upon whom the Lord has mercy: who follow the teachings of the prophets. As for the rest, i.e. those who reject the message of God, He will punish them in Hell.

Verse 120 The objectives of Quranic stories

1. Consoling Prophet Muhammad.
2. Sending truth to Prophet Muhammad.
3. Advice and a reminder to the believers.

Verses 121-123 Practical benefits from the stories of messengers

1. God has absolute and complete knowledge of time and space - what is observable and what is hidden in the heavens and the earth and of the past and the present.
2. Everything returns to God in the life to come. The creation cannot interfere in it.
3. Therefore, God must be worshipped and relied upon.
4. God knows our actions and our statements. The good works of the obedient shall not go to waste and the rejection of the stubborn will not be forgotten.

Chapter 11, Hood (Hud) (part 1 of 2)

Description: A brief commentary of Chapter 11 (verses 1-60) of the Holy Quran. They discuss the stories of Prophet Noah and Hud, and the consequences of those who rejected their message.

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Introduction

The history of the Prophet Hud is referred to in this chapter. While the last chapter dealt mostly with abstract questions related to the truth of revelation, this chapter illustrates the truth of those questions by referring to the histories of former prophets. Thus, it deals with the histories of Noah, Hud, Salih, Abraham, Lot and Shu'ayb (peace be upon them all). A cruel and persecuting enemy is warned of the fate that befell previous people. This chapter was revealed in Mecca during the last four years of the Prophet's life and consists of 123 verses.



Once Abu Bakr said to Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, "Of late I have been noticing that you are getting older. What is the cause of it?" Prophet Muhammad replied that Surah Hud and similar chapters (56-Waqi'ah, 77-Mursalat, 78-Naba', and 99-Takwir) hastened old age on him (*Tirmidhi*).

An attentive reading of this chapter will make you feel the effect of its stern warnings. God warns us through the different stories of the prophets, where those who put their faith in the outward appearance of the worldly life and rejected the message of the prophets were met with dire consequences. When God passes His judgment on people, He does not spare anyone, even the closest relative of a prophet. Only the prophet and his followers are saved.

Verses 1-7 Message of God

These verses discuss the Quran and the attitude of the polytheists towards it and resurrection.

The verses of the Quran have been explained clearly. The message of the Quran is to worship God and seek forgiveness from Him. Prophet Muhammad warns of God's punishment and at the same time he brings good news of Paradise. God will judge mankind according to the deeds they did in this life. Some people try to hide from God, but God knows their innermost secrets.

God is responsible for sustaining every living creature. God created the heavens and the earth in six days to test man if he realizes God's power and is thankful to Him. Those

who deny resurrection consider the Quran to be magic because of its convincing power.

Verses 8-11 Polar attitude towards God's favors

The verses compare the attitude of the believers and the polytheists towards favors and hardships.

Do not be deceived by God's postponement of punishment as it can come at any time. Also, do not lose hope and become ungrateful if God withdraws some of His favors. At the same time, do not become arrogant if God makes you taste His bounty. People have this attitude, except the patient ones who do good deeds. They will be forgiven and have an immense reward.

Verse 12 Prophet Muhammad's dealing with pagans

The verse describes Prophet's feeling of discomfort because of the behavior of the polytheists.

Verses 13-14 Authenticity of the Quran

The authenticity of the Quran is proven to those who claim Prophet Muhammad fabricated it. God challenges the experts of the Arabic language to bring ten chapters similar to it. Their inability to respond should make you certain that the Quran is from God, there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, and you should submit to Him as Muslims.

Verses 15-16 Future consequences of present behavior

The consequence for those desiring solely the reward of this world is that they will receive their wages in this life, but Fire will be their lot in the life to come. After all, they worked only for worldly objectives.

Verses 17-24 The two parties

Archangel Gabriel, God's witness, confirms the Quran. A person who follows the Quran and Moses' book (i.e. Torah which foretold the coming of Prophet Muhammad) believes in it. The Fire is for those who reject it. Cursed are those losers who attribute lies to God, prevent others from God's path " Islam " and reject life after death.

Those who have faith and do good deeds will reside in Paradise.

Verses 25-49 Story of Noah

The people of Noah lived in southern Iraq, not too far from present day city of Kufah. Noah's message to his people was:

- Worship God.
- Fear the punishment of a painful Day.

But the leaders of his nation considered him to be a mere human followed by people of

low status. They rejected his answers and invited him to bring on the destruction he promised. God instructed Noah to patiently bear their mockery and build the ark.

Tenderness of a father could not save Noah's disbelieving son from drowning with the rest. The ark, carrying Noah, fellow believers, and animals landed on Judi, which is said to be a mountain facing Ibn Umar Island at the junction of the Syrian and Turkish borders, on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, visible from the Syrian town of Ain Diwar.

Verses 50-60 Story of Hud

The people of 'Ad, to whom Hud was sent, lived in an area of curved sand hills in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. They worshiped a number of idols: *wudd*, *suwa*, *yaguth*, *ya'uq*, and *nasr*.

Summary of Hud's message to his people:

- Worship God.
- I don't ask you for any reward for my preaching, it is with my Creator.
- Seek forgiveness from God, He will send rain and give you strength.
- I rely on God, my Lord and your Lord.
- God has full control of every creature.
- My Lord can substitute you with better people if you turn away.
- You won't harm God by not worshipping Him.

The people rejected his message. God's punishment which lasted for 8 days and 7 nights destroyed them for rejecting God and disobeying His prophets. Hud and fellow believers were saved by God's mercy.

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