Prophet Salih (pbuh)

After the destruction of the Ad, the tribe of Thamud succeeded them in power and glory. They also fell to idol-worshiping. 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.

So Allah sent unto them His Prophet Salih (PBUH), 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." (Ch 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."
(CH 11:62 Quran).

They merely wanted to worship the same gods as their fathers had, with no reason, no proof, no thought. The proof of Salih's (PBUH) 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 Quranic commentators said that the people of Thamud gathered on a certain day at their meeting place, and the prophet Salih (PBUH) came and addressed them to believe in Allah, reminding them of the favors Allah had granted them.

Then pointing at a rock, they demanded: "Ask your Lord to make a she camel, which must be 10 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, to bringing forth a great ten month pregnant she camel. When their eyes set on it, they were amazed. They saw a great thing, a wonderful sight, a dazzling power and 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: We sent the she camel to Thamud as a clear sign, but they did her wrong. (Ch 17:59) and also:
Verily the dwellers of Al Hijr (the rocky tract) denied the Messengers. We gave them Our Signs, but they were averse to them.
(Ch 15:80-81 Quran)

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.

At first, the people of Thamud were greatly surprised when the she camel issued from the mountain rocks. It was a blessed camel, and 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 is 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." (Ch 11:64 Quran)

For awhile, 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 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 Masrai 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, Masarai 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.

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 3 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 3 days went out.

"Why 3 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 not you 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 till 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."

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 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."

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. We saved those who believed, and used to fear and obey Allah. (Ch 27:45-53 Quran)

They also plotted to kill Salih and his household as Almighty Allah stated: "So they plotted a plot, and We planned a plan, while they perceived not."
(Ch 27:50 Quran) Allah saved Salih and his followers from their wicked plans. Heavy hearted, they left the evil doers and moved to another place.

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.

Allah the Exalted said: 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 size you. 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 earthquakes 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 give you good advice but you like not good advisers." (Ch 7:73-79 Quran)

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

Ibn Umar narrated that while the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) 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 (PBUH) 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 no enter upon them."