SAMPLE

Aad: The People of the Wind

The Story of the People of Hud (هُود) in the Quran

Aira Aurora

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Introduction

The Quran tells the stories of nations — peoples who received prophets, rejected or accepted the message, and were destroyed or saved. Each story is a warning, a mirror, and a lesson. The first book in this series covered Qawm Nuh — the first destroyed nation. This book covers the second: Aad, the people of Hud.

Aad were a people of extraordinary power. The Quran describes them as "tall in stature" (7:69), builders of lofty monuments, possessors of strength and wealth unmatched in their region. They were the successors of Nuh's people — the descendants of the survivors of the flood — and they inherited the earth after the destruction. But they did not inherit the lesson. Qawm Nuh had no precedent to learn from; Aad did. The destruction of the first nation was known to the second, and still the second rejected.

Allah sent Hud to Aad — a man from among them, calling them to worship Allah alone and abandon the idols they had adopted. Hud's message was the message of every prophet: tawhid (the oneness of God) and accountability (the Day of Judgment). Aad's response was the response of every rejecter: mockery, arrogance, and denial. They pointed to their wealth, their power, their monuments, and said: "Who is greater than us in strength?" (41:15). They forgot that the God who gave them strength was the God who could take it away.

The destruction of Aad was unlike the destruction of Nuh's people. Nuh's people were destroyed by water — the flood that rose from the earth and fell from the sky. Aad were destroyed by wind — a howling, barren wind that tore through their cities for seven nights and eight days (69:7), leveling everything in its path. The Quran describes the wind: "It left nothing of what it came upon but that it made it like decay" (51:42). The people who prided themselves on their strength were destroyed by something they could not see, could not touch, and could not fight.

The story of Aad appears in several surahs of the Quran: Al-A'raf (7), Hud (11), Al-Mu'minun (23), Ash-Shu'ara (26), Fussilat (41), Al-Ahqaf (46), Al- Qamar (54), Al-Haqqah (69), and Al-Fajr (89). Each surah adds a detail — the preaching, the mockery, the cloud, the wind, the ruins. Together, they form a complete picture of a nation that had everything and lost everything.

This book — Aad: The People of the Wind — follows the same structure as the first: the people before the destruction, the prophet's preaching, the warning and the response, the destruction itself, the few who believed and were saved, the aftermath, the connections to the broader Quranic narrative, the lessons,

and the reflections for the present. The story of Aad is the story of power without gratitude — the nation that had everything and forgot who gave it.

Chapter 1: The People of Aad — Power and

Pride

Aad were the descendants of the survivors of the flood. After the waters receded and the ark rested on Mount Judi, humanity began again — and Aad were among the first nations to rise. The Quran says:

"And remember when He made you successors after the people of Nuh"

(7:69).

The word "successors" (khulafa') is significant: Aad inherited the earth after the destruction. They had the example of Qawm Nuh before them — they knew (or could have known) what happened to a nation that rejects a prophet. The first nation had no precedent; the second did. The responsibility of the second is greater: they knew the consequences and still chose the path of rejection.

The Quran describes Aad as a people of extraordinary physical stature and strength:

"And We produced a people after them stronger than them in power" (46:27). The Quran also says: "As for Aad, they were arrogant in the land without right and said: Who is greater than us in strength?" (41:15).

Aad were not merely strong — they were proud of their strength. The question "Who is greater than us in strength?" is not an inquiry; it is a boast. The people of Aad measured themselves by their power, and their power was real. They were tall, muscular, formidable — the kind of people who intimidate by their presence alone. The Quran alludes to their stature: "And remember when He made you successors after the people of Nuh and increased you in stature and physical power" (7:69).

The physical power of Aad is emphasized because it is the source of their arrogance. A people that is strong is a people that believes it does not need God. The strength becomes the idol — the thing the people worship instead of the One who gave it. Aad did not worship their strength in a temple; they worshipped it in their lives. They trusted in what they could do, what they could build, what they could conquer. The strength was real; the trust was misplaced.

Aad were builders. The Quran mentions their construction in the words of their prophet:

"As for Aad, they were arrogant in the land without right and said: Who is greater than us in strength? Did they not see that Allah who created them —

He is greater than them in strength?" (41:15).

The Quran also references the legendary city of Iram — the city of Aad:

"Iram of the pillars, the likes of which had not been created in the land" (89:7-8).

Iram was the capital of Aad — a city of monumental architecture, lofty pillars, and impressive scale. The phrase "the likes of which had not been created in the land" means that Iram was unprecedented — no city before it matched its grandeur. The pillars suggest temples, palaces, public buildings — the architecture of a civilization that measured its worth by what it could build.

The buildings of Aad were the expression of their identity. They were a people who built because building was proof of power. The monument is the message: we are here, we are strong, we are permanent. But the monuments that Aad built to declare their permanence are gone — destroyed by the same wind that destroyed the people who built them. The ruins that remain are not a testament to the builders but a warning to those who build without God.

The Quran indicates that Aad were a wealthy people. Their prophet reminded them:

"Will you build on every elevation a monument for amusement and take for yourselves palaces and fortresses that perhaps you may abide forever?" (26:128-129).

The verse reveals the priorities of Aad: monuments for amusement, palaces for luxury, fortresses for permanence. The people who built monuments for fun were a people of leisure — a people with the resources to build not for necessity but for pleasure. The wealth was not the problem; the attitude was. The people who used their wealth for amusement rather than gratitude were a people who forgot the source of their wealth.

Hud also said: "And when you strike, you strike as tyrants" (26:130). The phrase "you strike as tyrants" (tabiruna tabbara) suggests that Aad were not merely wealthy — they were violent. The people who had wealth used it to oppress, and the people who had power used it to dominate. The combination of wealth and violence is the profile of a civilization that has lost its moral compass: it has the resources to do good and chooses to do harm.

Aad were idolaters. The Quran does not name their specific idols as it does for

Qawm Nuh, but the call of Hud was clear: abandon the idols and worship Allah alone. The Quran records Hud saying:

"O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him" (7:65, 11:50).

The idolatry of Aad was the idolatry of tradition — the worship of what their fathers worshipped, without questioning. The Quran captures this pattern: the people say to the prophet: "Have you come to us that we may worship Allah alone and leave what our fathers worshipped?" (7:70). The argument is not theological; it is ancestral. The people do not defend their idols because they are true; they defend them because they are inherited. The tradition is the authority — and the prophet challenges the tradition.

Like Qawm Nuh, Aad had a social structure divided between the elite and the common. The leaders of Aad — the wealthy, the powerful, the builders — were the first to reject Hud. The Quran says:

"The eminent among his people who disbelieved said: We see you in foolishness, and indeed we think you are of the liars" (7:66).

The accusation of "foolishness" is the elite's dismissal of the prophet: the prophet who challenges the power structure is not a threat to be debated but a fool to be dismissed. The elite who control the wealth and the monuments do not engage with the message; they delegitimize the messenger. If Hud is a fool, his message can be ignored. If Hud is a liar, his message can be rejected. The strategy is the same as the strategy used against Nuh: discredit the prophet, and the message dies with the reputation.

Aad followed the pattern set by Qawm Nuh — but with a difference. The first nation had no precedent; the second did. The Quran says:

"As for Aad, they were arrogant in the land without right and said: Who is greater than us in strength?" (41:15).

The arrogance "without right" is the key: Aad had no right to be arrogant because they had the example of Qawm Nuh before them. They knew (or could have known) that a nation that rejects a prophet is a nation that will be destroyed. The first nation could claim ignorance; the second could not. The second nation had the precedent of the first — and the precedent made the rejection not merely wrong but inexcusable.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

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Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

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