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See also: FAMILY OF THE PROPHET; SUPPLICATION AND ANSWER.

## Abyssinia (Habasha)

See EMIGRANTS AND EMIGRATION

## ACQUISITION (KASB)

### Acquisitiveness

See AVARICE AND GREED

## ‘ĀD

Introduction; Qur’ānic References; Synopsis of the Narrative; Modern and Heterodox Views; Bibliography.

### Introduction

‘Ād were an ancient Semitic tribe who enjoyed great worldly blessings, but then rejected Allah’s prophet Hūd and were therefore annihilated by a ferocious wind (Q 69:6), and followed by a curse in this world as well as on the Day of Resurrection (Q 11:60). ‘Ād’s story highlights the dangers of polytheism and disbelief, of arrogance and ingratitude towards the Creator, and indicates the imperative to subordinate human actions to “moral considerations and restraint” (Asad, *The Message of the Qur‘ān*, sub26:128). Classical scholars broadly agreed that the tribe dwelt in Southern Arabia, amidst long, curved sand-dunes (*aḥqāf*, Q 46:21) between Oman and Yemen’s Hadramaut region. The former dwellings of ‘Ād were still known to the Arabs at the time

of the Prophet Muḥammad—Allah bless him and grant him peace—(Q 29:38), and the tribe often found mention among pre-Islamic Jāhili poets (e.g. Ṭarafa, Zuhayr). Classical Muslim historians consider ‘Ād as part of the ancient ethnic grouping of *al-‘Arab al-bā‘ida* (the extinct Arabs) or *al-‘Arab al-‘arība* (the aboriginal Arabs) (Ibn Šā‘id, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, 41; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, 2.1:34). The tribe is said to be named after an eponymous ancestor: ‘Ād, son of ‘Aws, son of Iram, son of Sām, son of Prophet Nūḥ. ‘Ād himself is said to have had copious offspring and been succeeded by three of his sons. The Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr (d. 613/1217) mentions that some people believed the Egyptian pyramids to be the tombs of ‘Ād and his sons (Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, 51). The adjective *‘Ādī*, meaning ‘ancient’ (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, sub<sup>s</sup>-w-d) is derived from the tribe’s name.

### Qur’ānic References

‘Ād is mentioned 23 times over 18 suras of the Qur‘ān. Their story is presented in extended narrative dialogue form in four passages (Q 7:65 ff., 11:50 ff., 26:123 ff., 46:21 ff.); the variance in detail reflects the Qur’ānic approach of mentioning only selected aspects of a story to fit a specific context and exhortatory thrust. Three shorter passages (Q 51:41-2, 54:18-20, 69:4 and 6) focus on the punishment they received for their rejection of Allah’s message. ‘Ād are often mentioned together with other perished nations, as an example from which the Qur’ānic audience (specifically those who reject or doubt the Prophet Muḥammad’s message) should take admonition (Q 9:70, 14:9, 22:42, 25:38, 29:38, 38:12, 40:31, 41:13, 50:13, 53:50, 89:6).

Q 23:31-41 describes an exchange between a prophet and his denying people, described only as *a generation raised up after (Nūḥ)*. Ibn ‘Abbās, Allah be well-pleased with him, and the majority of exegetes (Shawkānī, *Faḥḥ al-Qadīr*, sub 23:31) have understood this to refer to ‘Ād, since the tribe is described elsewhere as *successors after the people of Nūḥ* (Q 7:69), and because ‘Ād is often mentioned immediately after the people of Nūḥ in other verses and narrative sequences. Dissenters from this view would argue that the people described in 23:31-41 were annihilated by a *ṣayḥa* (shout), whereas the ‘Ād are known to have been annihilated by a wind (Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān* and Qurtūbī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-aḥkām al-Qur‘ān* sub Q 53:50). The counter-response is that it is conceivable that the wind could have been accompanied by a *ṣayḥa* (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wal-nihāya*,

1:128). However, it may be that 23:31-41 could refer to another prophet prior to Hūd (see Q 41:14, 46:21).

Iram, mentioned in conjunction with ʿĀd (89:7), is taken by most exegetes as the name of their city, while others understand the term as descriptive of their tent-poles, or of the tribe itself (Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, sub Q 89:6-8). It is attributed to Kaʿb al-Aḥbār (d. ca. 32/653) that Iram was a lavish city built to imitate and rival Heaven by Shaddād, son of ʿĀd, who refused to believe in Allah's message and so was annihilated before he could set foot therein (e.g. Rāzī, Qurṭubī and Ālūsī, sub 89:7). However, aside from the implausible nature of many of the story's details, hadith experts such as Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) have also judged its transmission to be inauthentic (see Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī* on Bukhārī, Tafsīr, *Sūrat al-Fajr*). The myths that this city is still intact (some even claiming it moves around, or that lost wanderers stumbled upon it) are certainly not to be given credence, as Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) and others have cautioned (see Ibn Kathīr sub 89:8; Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*).

### Synopsis of the Narrative

The tribe of ʿĀd was blessed with great physical stature and strength (Q 7:69). Reports attributed to some early exegetes (including Wahb, Qatāda and Ibn ʿAbbās) as well as some historians mention incredible details of their qualities, such as heights of 100 cubits, or the ability to break apart mountains by hand. Many exegetical works have quoted and even affirmed such details (e.g. Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr* and Qurṭubī, *Jāmiʿ*, both sub Q 7:69; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr*, 71). Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) are among those who omit most of these details, while Ālūsī (sub Q 7:69) observes that some people may find the reports difficult to believe. Ibn Khaldūn (*op. cit.*), and more recently the Egyptian historian Muḥammad Bayyūmī Maḥrān (*Dirāsāt tārikhiyya*, 249-50) observe that non-Qurʾānic, non-Prophetic narrations such as these are implausible exaggerations. To summarize: one suspects that such details are more the stuff of folklore and legends than historical or scriptural facts, although it is prudent not to completely rule out, in principle, that atypical manifestations of divine power might occasionally be encountered in this world.

ʿĀd used to build towers (as monuments or signposts) on every *rīʿ* ('high place,' in the preference of most exegetes; otherwise 'road' or 'valley'), needlessly, or for mere play, or in order to verbally or financially

harass travelers-by (Ālūsī, sub Q 26:129). They sought immortality through their *maṣāmiʿ* (buildings or reservoirs) (Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ*, sub Q 26:129-30). As a result of their power, which also allowed them to subjugate and oppress other peoples, they became arrogant and fixated on this material world. Thus they typify two dangerous human tendencies: to flaunt worldly power and strength in frivolous and cruel ways, and to unbridle creativity from spiritual and ethical footings, which led them, in a sense, to challenge the Creator. Hence their prophet criticized them for their construction activities, which would normally be permissible or even praiseworthy if done for the pleasure of Allah with genuine purpose and noble intentions (Ibn ʿAshūr, *al-Taḥrīr wal-tanwīr*, sub Q. 26:128). ʿĀd also enjoyed the bounties of livestock, gardens and springs (Q 26:132-3).

The Qurʾān makes it clear that ʿĀd were polytheists, and Ṭabarī (*Tārikh*, 1:110) details that they had three gods named Ṣadā, Ṣamūd and Habā/Hattār; one modern researcher has suggested that these may be identical with the Thamūdite triad of Ṣalm-Hubal-Raḍū (Jawād ʿAlī, *Tārikh al-ʿArab qabl al-Islām*, 1:243). According to some historians, ʿĀd worshipped the five idols (Q 71:23) of Nūḥ's people (Sevhārvī, *Qiṣaṣ al-Qurʾān*, 1:104).

Hūd, *their brother* and a *trustworthy messenger* (Q 7:65,68, 11:50, 26:124) is generally held to have been a descendant of the eponymous ʿĀd (Ṭabarī, *Tārikh*), although some maintain that he was not ʿĀdite but merely a 'brother' in humanity (Rāzī, sub Q 7:65). Hūd, peace be upon him, continued the tradition of earlier prophets by calling his people to the timeless message of monotheism, seeking no worldly reward for his mission. With reference to ʿĀd's worldly power, he warned them to stop oppressing others (26:130). He reminded them that Allah's favors upon them were great (7:69) and, appealing to their natural sense of gratitude, implored them to seek forgiveness and repent, promising that Allah would then send them rain and increase them in strength (11:52). Although some ʿĀdite chiefs apparently believed (Rāzī, sub Q 7:66), most of the tribe rejected the message of Hūd, peace be upon him, accusing him of foolishness and of being possessed (11:51, 26:127, 7:66, 11:54) and mockingly demanding that the divine punishment be hastened upon them (7:70, 46:22). He, in turn, faced their hostility and insults with mildness and patience, while firmly standing his ground on the urgency and

importance of his message.

‘Ād was destroyed by a barren, screaming, violently cold (Ṭabarī, sub Q 51:41, 41:16, 69:6), westerly wind (Bukhārī: Bad’ al-Khalq, *mā jā’ fī qawāl Allāh wa-Huwa alladhī arsala al-riyāh...*, Muslim: Istisqā’, *fī riḥ al-ṣabā wa al-dabūr*). Being in need of water, they rejoiced when they saw a cloud approaching, imagining it to be rain-bearing. In reality, it was a wind of chastisement that plagued them for seven nights and eight days, leaving things in ruins (51:42), *extracting people* from their homes, and leaving them fallen like *uprooted or hollow palm-trunks* (54:20, 69:7). The Prophet Muḥammad, Allah bless him and grant him peace, would remember the punishment of ‘Ād whenever there was a strong wind and when he saw clouds gathering, anxious lest it be a herald of Divine chastisement. He would pray for a good outcome, and would only feel at peace again after this was realized. Muslim scholars have explained this in light of the Prophet, peace be upon him, being a model for the rest of believers: though Allah had promised him that “Allah would not punish them while you (O Muḥammad) are amongst them” (Q 8:33), he nonetheless exemplified for his followers how one should never be complacent about one’s spiritual state or feel self-assured—and, moreover, how one should be reverently aware of the Creator’s signs in natural phenomena (Bukhārī: Tafsīr, *fa-lammā ra’awhu ‘arīdan...* and Tafsīr, *Sūrat al-Fajr*; Muslim, Istisqā’, *al-ta’awwudh ‘ind ru’yat al-ghaym wa al-maṭar*; Abū Dāwūd, Adab, *mā yuqālu idhā ḥajā al-riḥ*; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*).

‘Ād, *the first* (Q 53:50), is understood by most exegetes merely as a reference to ‘Ād being one of the earliest nations (Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, sub Q 53:50) but others have posited a second ‘Ād distinct from Hūd’s people: Thamūd, or the people of Iram, or tyrants in general, or a subset of ‘Ād who were living in Makka and escaped annihilation (see: Ṭabarī, *Ālūsī* sub Q 53:50). The last is suggested by a narration linked with the passage in Surat al-Aḥqāf stating that ‘Ād sent representatives to Makka to pray for rain to end their drought (Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:110 ff.). The delegation was distracted for a month listening to songstresses (“the Two Jarādas”), and when they eventually prayed, they were shown the cloud of chastisement headed for the valley of ‘Ād—but some of the delegation survived, among other ‘Ādites resident in Makka. A similar account is reported to have been narrated by a Ṣaḥābī in the presence of the Prophet Muḥammad, Allah bless him and grant him

peace (Aḥmad, *Musnad*, al-Makkiyyīn, *al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥassān al-Bakrī*, 5:400, 15953; Tirmidhī, Tafsīr, *Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt*; and others).

Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) points out that the Prophet’s words, “A people was chastised by wind, and a people saw the punishment and said, “This is a cloud bringing us rain,”” might suggest two distinct peoples, although Q 46:24 indicates otherwise (Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī* on Bukhārī *op. cit.*). Ibn Kathīr (*al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*, 1:128-130) observes that the ‘Ād mentioned in the story of the Jarādas (if authentic) could be the Second ‘Ād, for Makka was only built after Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, whereas Hūd, peace be upon him, was a pre-Abrahamic prophet. Yet, both Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Kathīr are ambivalent about the proposition of two ‘Āds. This highlights the fact that Qur’anic accounts omit historical details that are not central to the deeper messages being conveyed. Exegetes, as well as writers in the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* (“Stories of the Prophets”) genre, often attempted to supply such additional, background information from historical sources, it being understood that the proof of such details remained tentative. Some, such as Ibn Kathīr, made a point of critiquing extra-Qur’anic narrations where called for. It was in a similar spirit of rigor that Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī (d. 231/845) earlier complained about adulteration of the corpus of Arabic poetry through the uncritical acceptance of Arabic poetry purportedly dating back to ancient, extinct peoples such as ‘Ād (Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fihūl al-shu‘arā’*, 1:7-9).

### Modern and Heterodox Views

Within the last century, some Muslim academics and scholars have drawn on modern archaeological data to re-evaluate and seek to elucidate the identity, location and chronology of ‘Ād, positing that they were an Aramaic people who dwelt in Ḥisimā, Northwest Arabia, near the site of Thamūd, in the second millennium BC (Sevhārvī, *Qīṣaṣ*; Mahrān, *Dirāsāt tārikhiyya* 1:249; Jawād ‘Alī, *Tārīkh al-‘Arab qabl al-Islām*, 1:230-4; Mawdūdī, *The Meaning of the Qur’ān*, sub Q 7:65). It has been suggested that the ancient city of Ubar, whose 30-foot towers were unearthed in the Omani desert in 1993, is the ‘Ādite hub of Iram (Nādiya Ṭayyāra, *Mawsū‘at al-i’jāz al-Qur’ānī*, 2:382); the same has also been said of other sites elsewhere.

The Turkish historian Muḥammad ‘Alī Bishīḥālīq, in a radical historical meta-narrative, posits that humanity and civilization began in Caucasia, and

thence were spread worldwide by the Circassians, also known as Adiga, which became “‘Ād” in Arabic. He hypothesizes that Adam, peace be upon him, was a prophet sent to ‘Ād in Caucasia, and that the worldwide migrations began after Adam’s eating from the tree. ‘Alī Sakīf, in his curious narrative of early history which suggests that Nūḥ (peace be upon him) left the Earth and carried out cloning after the Flood, claims that ‘Ād first inhabited caves and mountains before being forced to emigrate by natural calamities. Khālīd Nabahān, although he has collected much interesting data, also makes several revisionist claims that cannot be taken seriously, among them that Hūd (peace be upon him) is the ancestor of the Jews, who expunged his name from the Bible to hide their Yemeni origins, and that the Egyptian pyramids are the Qur’ānic Iram. Aside from the dubiousness of many modern theories, it is clear that they have little or no bearing on the Qur’ānic kernel of the story and its enduring lessons for the human condition.

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SEE ALSO: HŪD, NŪḤ, THAMŪD, ARABS, WIND, REWARD AND PUNISHMENT, BEGUELEMENT, FEAR AND HOPE.

## ĀDAM (UPON HIM BE PEACE)

### Adhān

See CALL TO PRAYER

## ADOPTION (TABANNĪ)

## ADULTERY AND FORNICATION (ZINĀ)

## ADULTHOOD (KAHL)

## ADVICE (NAṢĪHA)

### Afterlife

See RESURRECTION; PARADISE; HELL; FIRE

### Afternoon

See DAY-TIME

## AGE OF IGNORANCE (JĀHILIYYA)