Stories from the Qur'an
Series 8

The City Turned Upside Down

The Story of Prophet Lut According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron
AK (Kelantan)
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 8

THE CITY TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

The Story of Prophet Lut According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

وَلَقَد تَّرَكْنَا مِنْهَآ ءَايَةًۢ بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

"And We have certainly left of it a sign as clear evidence for a people who use reason."

SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:35

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord who saved Lut and his family before dawn as a favour from Him, and who left the remains of the overturned city as a sign for people who use reason. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who prayed for mercy upon Lut and taught his nation to take heed, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah protect us, our descendants and our society from every immorality, apparent and concealed, make us people who correct wrong with wisdom, and not make us among those who "remain behind" with the destroyed. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being. It shows **scenery**: **a barren valley beside a calm, salt-crusted sea**, a moment before sunrise. The rocky cliffs on the right show **folded, tilted and overturned rock layers**, while **dark stones** are scattered along the shore. **An old road** runs along the sea, and dark clouds are drifting away.

The overturned rock layers are taken from the word of Allah: ***"We made the highest part [of the city] its lowest"*** (11:82). **The scattered dark stones** recall the ***"stones of layered hard clay"*** (11:82), ***"Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors"*** (51:34).

The light of dawn on the horizon recalls the words of the angels: ***"Is not the morning near?"*** (11:81). **The old road** by the sea recalls ***"those cities are [situated] on an established road"*** (15:76). The sea beside it is not named, because the exact location of the city is not stated in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. **The dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = archaeological note; blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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THE CITY TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

Series 7 ended with Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ pleading for the people of Lut before the angels: ***"Indeed, within it is Lot."*** This Series 8 tells what happened in that city: a prophet living alone among a people who had made immorality a norm, and a city that Allah in the end turned upside down.

This story needs to be told in modest, veiled language, just as the Qur'an itself tells it. The Qur'an never details the deeds of the people of Lut crudely; it calls it ***al-fāḥishah*** (immorality), and focuses on the lesson. This eBook follows the same manners.

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:74–75

وَلُوطًا ءَاتَيْنَٰهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَنَجَّيْنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلَّتِى كَانَت تَّعْمَلُ ٱلْخَبَٰٓئِثَ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَٰسِقِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

And to Lot We gave judgement and knowledge, and We saved him from the city that was committing wicked deeds. Indeed, they were a people of evil, defiantly disobedient.

وَأَدْخَلْنَٰهُ فِى رَحْمَتِنَآ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

And We admitted him into Our mercy. Indeed, he was of the righteous.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/21:74-75

Before telling of his people, the Qur'an introduces who Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was: ***"to Lot We gave judgement and knowledge"***, and ***"Indeed, he was of the righteous"***. In Surah Al-An'am he is mentioned with Isma'il, al-Yasa' and Yunus: ***"and all [of them] We preferred over the worlds"*** (6:86). This is the foundation to hold throughout the story: Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was a righteous, knowledgeable and honoured prophet.

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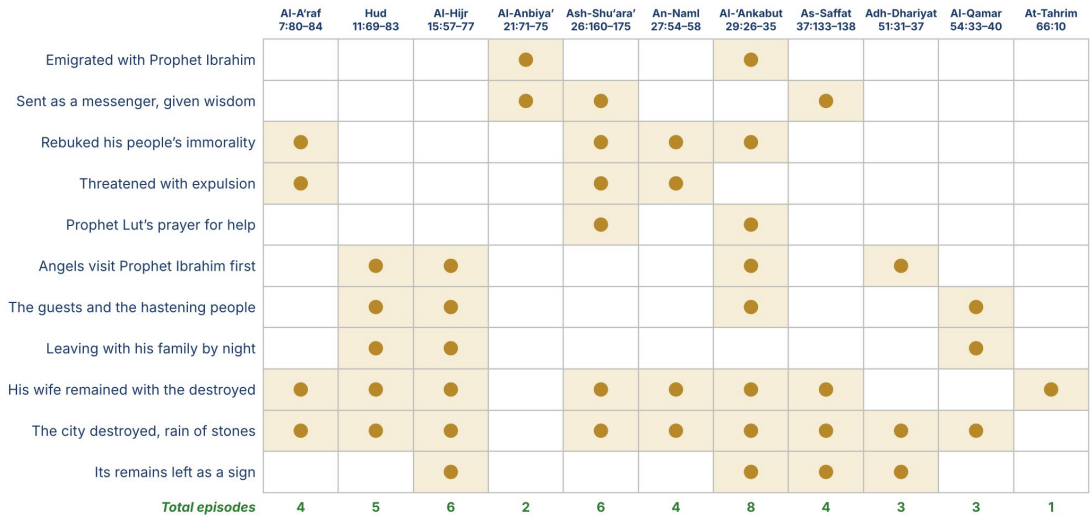


Figure 1: The episodes of the story of Prophet Lut in eleven surahs. The destruction of the city and the wife who remained behind are mentioned most often.

Figure 1 shows that the story of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is told in at least eleven surahs, besides brief mentions elsewhere (6:86; 9:70; 22:43; 38:13; 50:13; 53:53; 69:9). Each surah highlights a different angle. Surah Ash-Shu'ara' highlights his call; Surahs Hud and Al-Hijr detail the last night; Surah Al-'Ankabut links it to Prophet Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ; and Surah At-Tahrim makes his wife an example.

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in the Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.

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EMIGRATING WITH IBRAHIM

SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:26

فَـَٔامَنَ لَهُۥ لُوطٞۘ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّيٓۖ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلۡعَزِيزُ ٱلۡحَكِيمُ ٢٦

And Lot believed him. [Abraham] said, "Indeed, I will emigrate to [the service of] my Lord. Indeed, He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/29:26

Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ first appears in the Qur'an as one who believed in Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"And Lot believed him"***. When the whole people of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ rejected his call — even throwing him into the fire, as told in Series 6 — Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was among the few who believed. The commentators mention that Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was a relative of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ; Ibn Kathir calls him Ibrahim's nephew. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 29:26

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:71

وَنَجَّيۡنَٰهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ ٱلَّتِي بَٰرَكۡنَا فِيهَا لِلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٧١

And We delivered him and Lot to the land which We had blessed for the worlds.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/21:71

COMMENTARY — FROM STUDENT TO MESSENGER

First: Believing when others rejected. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not believe because many believed; he believed when almost no one was with Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Faith like this is born of conviction, not imitation.

Second: Emigrating together. Allah delivered both ***"to the land which We had blessed for the worlds"***. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ left his homeland for the sake of religion, together with his teacher.

Third: Sent to another people. Later Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was sent as a messenger to the people of another city. The Qur'an affirms: ***"And indeed, Lot was among the messengers"*** (37:133). He lived as an outsider among that people — and they later threw this at him when they threatened to expel him.

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The stories of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ remain linked to the end. The angels sent to destroy the people of Lut stopped first at the house of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to bring glad tidings of Ishaq, and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was the first to plead for Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ before them (Series 7, Section 6).

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A TRUSTWORTHY MESSENGER

SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA' 26:160–166

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

The people of Lot denied the messengers.

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطٌ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾

When their brother Lot said to them, "Will you not fear Allah?"

إِنِّى لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٦٢﴾

Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy messenger.

فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ﴿١٦٣﴾

So fear Allah and obey me.

وَمَآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ ۖ إِنْ أَجْرِىَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ رَبِّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

And I do not ask you for it any payment. My payment is only from the Lord of the worlds.

أَتَأْتُونَ ٱلذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٦٥﴾

Do you approach males among the worlds?

وَتَذَرُونَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُم مِّنْ أَزْوَٰجِكُم ۚ بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

And leave what your Lord has created for you as mates? But you are a people transgressing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/26:160-166

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 26:160–164 — THE SAME CALL

First: Denying one means denying all. ***"The people of Lot denied the messengers"***. Only one messenger came to them, yet the Qur'an says "messengers", because the message of the messengers is one. Whoever denies one messenger has denied them all. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 26:160

Second: He was their "brother". ***"When their brother Lot said to them"***. Though Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came from outside, the Qur'an calls him their brother. His call was the advice of a brother, not the hostility of a stranger.

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Third: The same call of the prophets. The words ***"So fear Allah and obey me"*** and ***"I do not ask you for it any payment"*** are repeated almost identically by Nuh, Hud, Salih, Lut and Shu'aib, peace be upon them, in Surah Ash-Shu'ara'. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ asked for no payment, position or wealth; he only wanted to save them.

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 26:165–166 — DEVIATING FROM THE FITRAH

After calling to piety, Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ named the particular sin of his people: ***"Do you approach males among the worlds?" "And leave what your Lord has created for you as mates?"*** Notice the order of this call: **tawhid and piety first, then the rebuke of sin**. The sin of the people of Lut was a branch of a more basic disease: not fearing Allah.

Verse 26:166 also shows that the lawful way was already available: the mates Allah created for them. Elsewhere the Qur'an describes marriage as one of the signs of Allah: ***"He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy"*** (30:21). The people of Lut abandoned that lawful and merciful way, and were described as ***"a people transgressing"***.

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AN IMMORALITY NEVER COMMITTED BEFORE

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:80–81

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِۦٓ أَتَأْتُونَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُم بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

And [We had sent] Lot when he said to his people, "Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds?"

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ ٱلرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّن دُونِ ٱلنِّسَآءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:80-81

SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:28–29

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِۦٓ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُم بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And [mention] Lot, when he said to his people, "Indeed, you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds."

أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ ٱلرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ ٱلسَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِى نَادِيكُمُ ٱلْمُنكَرَ ۖ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوا۟ ٱئْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

Indeed, you approach men and obstruct the road and commit in your meetings [every] evil." And the answer of his people was not but they said, "Bring us the punishment of Allah, if you should be of the truthful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/29:28-29

COMMENTARY — THREE LAYERS OF WRONGDOING

First: A sin never committed before. ***"such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds"***. The people of Lut did not merely sin; they **began** a new sin in human history. Ibn Kathir relates that this deed was not known among people before them. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 7:80

Second: Wrongdoing in public life. Surah Al-'Ankabut adds two more: ***"obstruct the road"*** and ***"commit in your meetings [every] evil"***. The commentators explain that they harassed and robbed

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passing travellers, and committed wrongdoing openly in their gatherings without shame. Private sin had become the culture of society. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 29:29

Third: Doing it knowingly. ***"Do you commit immorality while you are seeing?"*** (27:54). They were not ignorant of its evil; they saw it and knew it, yet still did it. Yet in the next verse they are described as ***"a people behaving ignorantly"*** — because one who knows but ignores the consequences is in truth ignorant.

SURAH AN-NAML 27:54–55

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِۦٓ أَتَأْتُونَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةَ وَأَنتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

And [mention] Lot, when he said to his people, "Do you commit immorality while you are seeing?"

أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ ٱلرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّن دُونِ ٱلنِّسَآءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنتُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

Do you indeed approach men with desire instead of women? Rather, you are a people behaving ignorantly.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:54-55

WHY HAS ALLAH FORBIDDEN IMMORALITIES?

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4634

حَدَّثَنَا حَفْصُ بْنُ عُمَرَ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ عَمْرٍو، عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ « لاَ أَحَدَ أَغْيَرُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، وَلِذَلِكَ حَرَّمَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ، وَلاَ شَيْءَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ الْمَدْحُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، لِذَلِكَ مَدَحَ نَفْسَهُ ». قُلْتُ سَمِعْتَهُ مِنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قُلْتُ وَرَفَعَهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه narrated that (the Prophet ﷺ) said: **"There is none more jealous (aghyar) than Allah; that is why He has forbidden immoralities (al-fawāḥish), both apparent and concealed. And nothing is more beloved to Allah than praise; that is why He has praised Himself."**

('Amr ibn Murrah asked Abu Wa'il:) "Did you hear it from 'Abdullah?" He said: "Yes." I asked: "And he attributed it to the Prophet ﷺ?" He said: "Yes."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hafs ibn 'Umar, from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from 'Amr ibn Murrah, from Abu Wa'il (Shaqiq ibn Salamah), from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

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REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah al-An'am, chapter {And do not approach immoralities — what is apparent of them and what is concealed} (6:151), Hadith No. 4634. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2760).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4634

This Hadith gives a very deep answer. Allah forbade ***al-fawāḥish*** because of His ***ghīrah*** (jealousy) over His servants and over the limits He has set. The prohibition is not to restrict people, but because Allah honours mankind and is not pleased for them to fall into disgrace. Allah says: ***"My Lord has only forbidden immoralities - what is apparent of them and what is concealed"*** (7:33).

This prohibition covers every immorality — including unlawful sexual intercourse, described as ***"ever an immorality and is evil as a way"*** (17:32). The Qur'an establishes that the lawful way is only within marriage, and ***"whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors"*** (23:7). This word "transgressors" is the same description given to the people of Lut (7:81; 26:166).

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PURITY TREATED AS A CRIME

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:82

وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوٓاْ أَخۡرِجُوهُم مِّن قَرۡيَتِكُمۡۖ إِنَّهُمۡ أُنَاسٞ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ ٨٢

But the answer of his people was only that they said, "Evict them from your city! Indeed, they are men who keep themselves pure."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:82

SURAH AN-NAML 27:56

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوٓاْ أَخۡرِجُوٓاْ ءَالَ لُوطٖ مِّن قَرۡيَتِكُمۡۖ إِنَّهُمۡ أُنَاسٞ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ ٥٦

But the answer of his people was not except that they said, "Expel the family of Lot from your city. Indeed, they are people who keep themselves pure."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:56

COMMENTARY — WHEN PURITY IS TREATED AS A FAULT

The reply of the people of Lut is shocking. They did not refute the argument of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, nor did they defend their deeds. They only said: ***"Expel the family of Lot from your city. Indeed, they are people who keep themselves pure"***. Qatadah, as related by Ibn Kathir, said: they reproached Lut and his followers with something that is no fault. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 7:82

This is the height of a society's corruption: **when purity becomes a reason for punishment, and immorality a defended norm.** In the eyes of that people, the only fault of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and his followers was that they would not take part. A healthy society makes those who keep themselves pure an example; a corrupt society makes them outcasts.

SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA' 26:167–169

قَالُواْ لَئِن لَّمۡ تَنتَهِ يَٰلُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلۡمُخۡرَجِينَ ١٦٧

They said, "If you do not desist, O Lot, you will surely be of those evicted."

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قَالَ إِنِّي لِعَمَلِكُم مِّنَ ٱلْقَالِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

He said, "Indeed, I am, toward your deed, of those who detest [it]."

رَبِّ نَجِّنِي وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

My Lord, save me and my family from [the consequence of] what they do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/26:167-169

Threats did not change his stance. When threatened: ***"you will surely be of those evicted"***, Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ answered firmly: ***"Indeed, I am, toward your deed, of those who detest [it]"***. Notice the precision of his words: he detested their **deed**. And he did not pray for their destruction, but for safety: ***"My Lord, save me and my family from [the consequence of] what they do"***.

SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:29–30

أَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ ٱلرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ ٱلسَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيكُمُ ٱلْمُنكَرَ ۖ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوا۟ ٱئْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

Indeed, you approach men and obstruct the road and commit in your meetings [every] evil." And the answer of his people was not but they said, "Bring us the punishment of Allah, if you should be of the truthful.

قَالَ رَبِّ ٱنصُرْنِي عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

He said, "My Lord, support me against the corrupting people."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/29:29-30

The final mockery. In Surah Al-'Ankabut, his people challenged: ***"Bring us the punishment of Allah, if you should be of the truthful"***. This is the same challenge spoken by 'Ad and Thamud before them (Series 4 and 5). Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ only prayed: ***"My Lord, support me against the corrupting people"***.

That prayer was answered.

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UNKNOWN GUESTS

The angels who had brought glad tidings to Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Series 7) continued their journey to the city of the people of Lut. They came in the form of men no one recognised.

SURAH HUD 11:77–80

وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيٓءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

And when Our messengers, [the angels], came to Lot, he was anguished for them and felt for them great discomfort and said, "This is a trying day."

وَجَآءَهُۥ قَوْمُهُۥ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِن قَبْلُ كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ ۚ قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ بَنَاتِى هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ ۖ فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِى ضَيْفِىٓ ۖ أَلَيْسَ مِنكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَّشِيدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾

And his people came hastening to him, and before [this] they had been doing evil deeds. He said, "O my people, these are my daughters; they are purer for you. So fear Allah and do not disgrace me concerning my guests. Is there not among you a man of reason?"

قَالُوا۟ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِى بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ ﴿٧٩﴾

They said, "You have already known that we have not concerning your daughters any claim, and indeed, you know what we want."

قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِى بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ ءَاوِىٓ إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾

He said, "If only I had against you some power or could take refuge in a strong support."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/11:77-80

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 11:77–80 — A TRYING DAY

First: Guests who became a burden. For most people, guests are a blessing. For Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, their arrival meant that he ***"was anguished for them and felt for them great discomfort"***, and said: ***"This is a trying day"***. He knew what his people would do, and he had no power to stop them.

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Second: A people hastening. ***"And his people came hastening to him"***, ***"and before [this] they had been doing evil deeds"***. Surah Al-Hijr adds that they came ***"rejoicing"*** (15:67). Evil done with rejoicing shows a heart that has died.

Third: Offering the lawful way. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said: ***"O my people, these are my daughters; they are purer for you"***. Ibn Kathir and many commentators explain that what is meant is **the women of his people**, since a prophet is like a father to his nation; and what was offered was **lawful marriage**, as is clear in Surah Al-Hijr: ***"if you would be doers [of lawful marriage]"*** (15:71). Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was calling them back to the fitrah and the Shari'ah. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:78

Fourth: Pleading by Allah's name and by honour. ***"So fear Allah and do not disgrace me concerning my guests"***, then: ***"Is there not among you a man of reason?"*** In the whole city, not one man stood up to support him.

Fifth: The lament of a lone man. ***"If only I had against you some power or could take refuge in a strong support"***. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was an outsider in that city, with no tribe to defend him. This lament received an answer from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ thousands of years later.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3375

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو اليَمَانِ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الزِّنَادِ، عَنِ الأَعْرَجِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ {يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لِلُوطٍ إِنْ كَانَ لَيَأْوِي إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ}.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"May Allah forgive Lut; he was indeed taking refuge in a very strong support."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman, from Shu'aib ibn Abi Hamzah, from Abu az-Zinad, from al-A'raj, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter {And [We sent] Lot, when he said to his people…}, Hadith No. 3375. Similar wording is in Nos. 3372 and 4694, and in Sahih Muslim (No. 151).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3375

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COMMENTARY — A VERY STRONG SUPPORT

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ answered the lament of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ with great tenderness: in truth Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ **was already** taking refuge in ***rukn shadīd*** — the strongest support, namely Allah. The scholars, including Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bari*, explain that the words "may Allah forgive Lut" are a customary expression of prayer and respect, not an indication that Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ had sinned. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said it under great pressure and concern for his guests, while at that very moment Allah's help was already inside his house.

The lesson is very close to our lives: **when feeling most alone, a believer is never truly alone.** Allah's help may come in a form we do not recognise — just as Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not recognise that his guests were angels.

SURAH AL-QAMAR 54:37

وَلَقَدْ رَٰوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِۦ فَطَمَسْنَآ أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا۟ عَذَابِى وَنُذُرِ ﴿٣٧﴾

And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes, [saying], "Taste My punishment and warning."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/54:37

The Qur'an mentions that the people ***"had demanded from him his guests"***, so ***"We obliterated their eyes"***. The first punishment struck the eyes that looked at what was forbidden, before a greater punishment struck the whole city. Surah Al-Hijr describes their state: ***"indeed they were, in their intoxication, wandering blindly"*** (15:72).

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IS NOT THE MORNING NEAR?

SURAH HUD 11:81

قَالُوا۟ يَٰلُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَن يَصِلُوٓا۟ إِلَيْكَ ۖ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ ٱلَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا ٱمْرَأَتَكَ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ مُصِيبُهَا مَآ أَصَابَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ ٱلصُّبْحُ ۚ أَلَيْسَ ٱلصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ ﴿٨١﴾

The angels said, "O Lot, indeed we are messengers of your Lord; [therefore], they will never reach you. So set out with your family during a portion of the night and let not any among you look back - except your wife; indeed, she will be struck by that which strikes them. Indeed, their appointment is [for] the morning. Is not the morning near?"

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/11:81

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 11:81 — INSTRUCTIONS ON THE LAST NIGHT

First: The secret revealed. ***"O Lot, indeed we are messengers of your Lord"***, and ***"they will never reach you"***. The anguish of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ turned to calm.

Second: Leaving by night. ***"So set out with your family during a portion of the night"***. Surah Al-Hijr adds a detail: ***"follow behind them"*** — Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ walked behind his family, like a shepherd making sure no one was left behind — and ***"continue on to where you are commanded"***.

Third: Do not look back. ***"let not any among you look back"***. Ibn Kathir explains that the meaning is so that they would not halt or be shaken on hearing the sound of the punishment striking that people. The lesson is broad too: true emigration is leaving wrongdoing without looking back at it. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:81

Fourth: Except your wife. ***"except your wife; indeed, she will be struck by that which strikes them"***. The decision about her had been made, as mentioned in Surah Al-Hijr: ***"Allah decreed that she is of those who remain behind"*** (15:60). Her story is explained in Section 8.

Fifth: "Is not the morning near?" ***"Indeed, their appointment is [for] the morning"***. ***"Is not the morning near?"*** These words give this section its title because they carry two meanings at once: for the wrongdoing people, morning is the moment of destruction; for the wronged, morning is the moment of release.

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Figure 2: The sequence of events of the last night of the people of Lut as mentioned in the verses of the Qur'an.

SURAH AL-QAMAR 54:34–35

إِنَّآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ حَاصِبًا إِلَّآ ءَالَ لُوطٖۖ نَّجَّيۡنَٰهُم بِسَحَرٖ ٣٤

Indeed, We sent upon them a storm of stones, except the family of Lot - We saved them before dawn.

نِّعۡمَةٗ مِّنۡ عِندِنَاۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجۡزِي مَن شَكَرَ ٣٥

As favor from us. Thus do We reward he who is grateful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/54:34-35

Surah Al-Qamar mentions that the family of Lut was saved ***"before dawn"*** — ***bi-saḥar***, the time of sahur — ***"As favor from us. Thus do We reward he who is grateful"***. Their salvation is described as a reward for **gratitude**: they thanked Allah for His blessings through obedience, while the whole people denied them.

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THE CITY TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

SURAH HUD 11:82–83

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ أَمۡرُنَا جَعَلۡنَا عَٰلِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمۡطَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهَا حِجَارَةٗ مِّن سِجِّيلٖ
مَّنضُودٖ ٨٢

So when Our command came, We made the highest part [of the city] its lowest and rained upon them stones of layered hard clay, [which were].

مُّسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَۖ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٖ ٨٣

Marked from your Lord. And Allah's punishment is not from the wrongdoers [very] far.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/11:82-83

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 11:82–83

First: Turned upside down. ***"We made the highest part [of the city] its lowest"*** — in Arabic ***ja'alnā 'āliyahā sāfilahā***. A people who overturned the fitrah had their city overturned. The recompense matched the kind of sin.

Second: Marked stones. ***"rained upon them stones of layered hard clay"***, ***"Marked from your Lord"***. Not one fell at random; every stone had its target decreed. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:82

Third: A warning for every age. ***"And Allah's punishment is not from the wrongdoers [very] far"***. This verse does not stop at the people of Lut. It is a warning to anyone who commits the same wrongdoing, at any time. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 11:83

SURAH AL-HIJR 15:73–77

فَأَخَذَتۡهُمُ ٱلصَّيۡحَةُ مُشۡرِقِينَ ٧٣

So the shriek seized them at sunrise.

فَجَعَلۡنَا عَٰلِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمۡطَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ حِجَارَةٗ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ٧٤

And We made the highest part [of the city] its lowest and rained upon them stones of hard clay.

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَأٓيَٰتٖ لِّلۡمُتَوَسِّمِينَ ٧٥

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Indeed in that are signs for those who discern.

وَإِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيلٍ مُّقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

And indeed, those cities are [situated] on an established road.

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

Indeed in that is a sign for the believers.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/15:73-77

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 15:73–77 — A SIGN FOR THOSE WHO DISCERN

Surah Al-Hijr adds that the punishment began with ***"the shriek seized them at sunrise"***, then the city was overturned and rained with stones. Then the Qur'an mentions three groups who can take a lesson:

Those who discern. ***"Indeed in that are signs for those who discern"*** — in Arabic ***al-mutawassimīn***, those who read signs with insight. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 15:75

Those who pass along its road. ***"those cities are [situated] on an established road"***. The remains of the city are not hidden; they lie on a road people travel. In Surah As-Saffat, Allah rebukes the Quraish: ***"And indeed, you pass by them in the morning" "And at night. Then will you not use reason?"*** (37:137–138).

The believers. ***"Indeed in that is a sign for the believers"***. People passing the same place can see different things: one sees stones and soil, another sees a warning from Allah.

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SURAH ADH-DHARIYAT 51:31–37

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا ٱلْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

[Abraham] said, "Then what is your business [here], O messengers?"

قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّآ أُرْسِلْنَآ إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

They said, "Indeed, we have been sent to a people of criminals."

لِنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

To send down upon them stones of clay.

مُّسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

Marked in the presence of your Lord for the transgressors.

فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

So We brought out whoever was in the cities of the believers.

فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims.

وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَآ ءَايَةً لِّلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ ٱلْعَذَابَ ٱلْأَلِيمَ ﴿٣٧﴾

And We left therein a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/51:31-37

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 51:35–37 — ONLY ONE HOUSE

The most moving verse in this story: ***"And We found not within them other than a [single] house of Muslims"***. In the whole city, only **one house** — the house of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ himself, and even that without his wife. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ called for years, and the result was only a few members of his family. Yet Allah does not judge His messengers by the number of followers; He calls Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ ***"of the righteous"*** (21:75). Tafsir Ibn Kathir 51:36

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SURAH AN-NAJM 53:53–54

وَٱلْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَىٰ ﴿٥٣﴾

And the overturned towns He hurled down.

فَغَشَّىٰهَا مَا غَشَّىٰ ﴿٥٤﴾

And covered them by that which He covered.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/53:53-54

Surahs An-Najm and Al-Haqqah call those cities ***al-mu'tafikāt*** — "the overturned towns" (53:53; 69:9). The name alone has become a warning.

SURAH AL-QAMAR 54:38–40

وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُم بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣٨﴾

And there came upon them by morning an abiding punishment.

فَذُوقُوا۟ عَذَابِى وَنُذُرِ ﴿٣٩﴾

So taste My punishment and warning.

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا ٱلْقُرْءَانَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِن مُّدَّكِرٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/54:38-40

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3376

حَدَّثَنَا مَحْمُودٌ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أَحْمَدَ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، عَنِ الأَسْوَدِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَرَأَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم {فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَّكِرٍ}.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said: **The Prophet ﷺ recited: {Fahal min muddakir} — "so is there any who will remember?"** (54:40).

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Mahmud ibn Ghailan, from Abu Ahmad az-Zubairi, from Sufyan ath-Thawri, from Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, from al-Aswad ibn Yazid, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter {And when the messengers came to the family of Lot, he said: Indeed, you are people unknown}, Hadith No. 3376.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars. Imam al-Bukhari placed it in the chapter on the story of Prophet Lut.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3376

The story of the people of Lut in Surah Al-Qamar closes with a call repeated four times in that surah: ***"so is there any who will remember"***? Imam al-Bukhari placed the Hadith about the Prophet's ﷺ recitation of this verse in the chapter on the story of Prophet Lut, as if reminding us that the purpose of telling this story is to take heed, not merely to know what happened.

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THE WIFE WHO REMAINED BEHIND

SURAH AT-TAHRIM 66:10

ضَرَبَ ٱللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ ٱمۡرَأَتَ نُوحٖ وَٱمۡرَأَتَ لُوطٖۖ كَانَتَا تَحۡتَ
عَبۡدَيۡنِ مِنۡ عِبَادِنَا صَٰلِحَيۡنِ فَخَانَتَاهُمَا فَلَمۡ يُغۡنِيَا عَنۡهُمَا مِنَ ٱللَّهِ شَيۡـٔٗا
وَقِيلَ ٱدۡخُلَا ٱلنَّارَ مَعَ ٱلدَّٰخِلِينَ ١٠

Allah presents an example of those who disbelieved: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants but betrayed them, so those prophets did not avail them from Allah at all, and it was said, "Enter the Fire with those who enter."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/66:10

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 66:10 — A BOND THAT DID NOT SAVE

First: Under the care of a prophet. The wife of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ lived ***"under two of Our righteous servants"*** — together with the wife of Prophet Nuh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (Series 3). She heard the call every day, saw the character of a prophet every day, yet her heart stayed with her people.

Second: The meaning of "betrayed". ***"but betrayed them"***. Ibn Kathir relates the explanation of Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما that their betrayal was **in religion, not in honour**; the wife of a prophet never committed immorality. According to tafsir reports, the wife of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ told her people about her husband's guests. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 66:10

Third: Ties cannot save. ***"so those prophets did not avail them from Allah at all"***. Family ties with the righteous cannot replace one's own faith.

In Surahs Ash-Shu'ara' and As-Saffat she is not called a "wife", but ***"an old woman among those who remained behind"*** (26:171; 37:135). The Arabic word ***al-ghābirīn*** means "those who remained behind". She stayed behind — not because she had no time to leave, but because her heart chose to stay with her people.

SURAH ASH-SHU'ARA' 26:170–175

فَنَجَّيۡنَٰهُ وَأَهۡلَهُۥٓ أَجۡمَعِينَ ١٧٠

So We saved him and his family, all.

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إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي ٱلْغَٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

Except an old woman among those who remained behind.

ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا ٱلْءَاخَرِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

Then We destroyed the others.

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّطَرًا ۖ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ ٱلْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾

And We rained upon them a rain [of stones], and evil was the rain of those who were warned.

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٤﴾

Indeed in that is a sign, but most of them were not to be believers.

وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٧٥﴾

And indeed, your Lord - He is the Exalted in Might, the Merciful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/26:170-175

WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS ARE PRESENT IN A SOCIETY

When the angels told Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ of the destruction of the people of Lut, Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said: ***"Indeed, within it is Lot"*** (29:32). The answer: ***"We are more knowing of who is within it. We will surely save him and his family"***. The righteous are saved, but their presence does not prevent punishment from falling on the rest. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained this principle in a Hadith:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3346

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُرْوَةَ بْنِ الزُّبَيْرِ، أَنَّ زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةَ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَتْهُ عَنْ أُمِّ حَبِيبَةَ بِنْتِ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ، عَنْ زَيْنَبَ ابْنَةِ جَحْشٍ ـ رضى الله عنهن أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا فَزِعًا يَقُولُ « لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ، وَيْلٌ لِلْعَرَبِ مِنْ شَرٍّ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ فُتِحَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ رَدْمِ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مِثْلُ هَذِهِ ». وَحَلَّقَ

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بِإِصْبَعِهِ الإِبْهَامِ وَالَّتِي تَلِيهَا. قَالَتْ زَيْنَبُ ابْنَةُ جَحْشٍ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَنَهْلِكُ وَفِينَا الصَّالِحُونَ قَالَ « نَعَمْ، إِذَا كَثُرَ الْخُبْثُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنها narrated that the Prophet ﷺ came in to her in a state of alarm, saying: **"There is no god but Allah. Woe to the Arabs from an evil that has drawn near. Today an opening has been made in the barrier of Ya'juj and Ma'juj like this,"** and he made a circle with his thumb and the finger next to it. Zainab bint Jahsh said: I said: "O Messenger of Allah, shall we be destroyed while there are righteous people among us?" He said: **"Yes, when filth (al-khabath) becomes abundant."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukair, from al-Laith ibn Sa'd, from 'Uqail ibn Khalid, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubair, from Zainab bint Abi Salamah, from Umm Habibah bint Abi Sufyan, from Zainab bint Jahsh رضى الله عنهن.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter on the story of Ya'juj and Ma'juj, Hadith No. 3346. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2880).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3346

COMMENTARY — "WHEN FILTH BECOMES ABUNDANT"

The Mother of the Believers Zainab رضى الله عنها asked the same question as Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: will a society be destroyed while there are righteous people in it? The answer of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: ***"Yes, when filth becomes abundant."*** The scholars explain that ***al-khabath*** includes sins and immoralities. When it becomes abundant and widespread, destruction may fall on a society as a whole, even though there are righteous people in it.

That is why Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not stay silent even when alone. A righteous person who only guards himself is not the same as a righteous person who strives to reform his society. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ rebuked, advised, offered the lawful way, pleaded by the name of Allah — and only when all of that was rejected was he commanded to leave.

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WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The story of the people of Lut is also found in the Book of Genesis (Torah), and many tales from it entered storybooks. Guided by the Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not make them part of the story we believe in. And some of them **must be rejected** because they contradict the Qur'an.

POPULAR TALES AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

THE POPULAR TALE	WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY
The Book of Genesis (19:30–38) accuses Prophet Lut of drunkenness and a shameful act with his daughters.	MUST BE REJECTED. The Qur'an describes Lut as righteous, given judgement and knowledge, and preferred over the worlds (21:74–75; 6:86). The prophets are protected from major sins.
Lut's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt.	The Qur'an only says she was among those who remained behind and were destroyed (7:83; 15:60; 66:10).
Lut parted from Ibrahim over a quarrel between herdsmen, and chose fertile land.	The Qur'an says Lut believed and emigrated with Ibrahim (29:26; 21:71), then was sent as a messenger (37:133).
Ibrahim bargained with Allah: if there were 50 righteous people, then 45, down to 10.	The Qur'an only says Ibrahim pleaded for the people of Lut and said "Indeed, within it is Lot" (11:74; 29:32).
Jibril lifted the city on the tip of his wing up to the sky until the inhabitants of heaven heard dogs barking.	This report comes from some of the Tabiʿin in books of tafsir, not from an authentic marfuʿ Hadith. The Qur'an only says the city was overturned and brought down (11:82; 53:53).
The names of the cities were Sodom, Gomorrah and three other towns.	The Qur'an does not name them; it only calls them "the overturned towns" (al-mu'tafikat, 9:70; 69:9).
The Dead Sea was formed by the destruction of the people of Lut.	Not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. The Qur'an only says their remains lie on a road people travel (15:76).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: WHERE WAS THE CITY OF THE PEOPLE OF LUT?

The Qur'an says the remains of the city ***"are [situated] on an established road"*** (15:76), and that the Quraish passed by them morning and night (37:137–138) — that is, on their trade route to Sham. Many commentators, including Ibn Kathir, mention that the place was near the lake now known as **the Dead Sea** (also called Bahr Lut). But **its exact location is not stated** in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith.

On the plain south-east of the Dead Sea, in Jordan, are two **Early Bronze Age** sites excavated scientifically: **Bab edh-Dhraʿ** and **Numeira**. Excavations by the *Expedition to the Dead Sea Plain* (led by Walter Rast and

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R. Thomas Schaub, 1975–1990) found fortified towns from the late fourth to the third millennium BCE, and one of the largest ancient cemeteries ever excavated in the Levant.

Some scholars have suggested that these sites are connected with the cities in the Genesis story. But that suggestion is **not confirmed**; there is no inscription or evidence naming those sites. It is noted here only as an archaeological fact about the region, **not as evidence** of the location of the city of the people of Lut.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: TALL EL-HAMMAM AND THE "METEOR AIRBURST" — THE STUDY HAS BEEN RETRACTED

In 2021, a paper in the journal ***Scientific Reports*** (Bunch and colleagues) claimed that the city of **Tall el-Hammam** in the Jordan Valley, north of the Dead Sea, was destroyed by a cosmic airburst around 1650 BCE, and suggested it may have been the origin of the Sodom story. The claim spread widely in the media and on social media.

The paper was then heavily criticised. Its authors issued a correction in 2022 after many images were found to have been edited; the journal published an editor's note in February 2023; and in **April 2025, Scientific Reports retracted the paper**, stating that the concerns raised undermined its conclusions. The authors disagreed with the retraction.

Therefore the Tall el-Hammam claim is **not included** as evidence. Readers are advised not to spread it as "scientific proof of the story of Prophet Lut".

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: "SULPHUR BALLS" AND "ASH CITIES" — NO ACADEMIC PUBLICATION

Videos and pictures of "sulphur balls" and "ruins of cities turned to ash" near the Dead Sea are often shared as proof of the story of the people of Lut. These claims come from amateur researchers and have never been published in peer-reviewed archaeological or geological journals. We found no academic publication confirming them; so they are **not included**.

The truth of this story rests on revelation. The Qur'an itself states that the remains of the city were left as ***"a sign as clear evidence for a people who use reason"*** (29:35) — a sign to reflect on, not material for sensation.

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A SIGN FOR THOSE WHO DISCERN

A righteous prophet lived among a people who had made immorality a norm and purity a fault. He rebuked them tirelessly, offered the lawful way, pleaded by the name of Allah, and was patient when mocked and threatened. On the last night he felt alone — while in truth he was taking refuge in the strongest support. And when morning came, a city was overturned, while one house was saved.

A BRIEF COMPARISON

THE STANCE OF THE PEOPLE OF LUT	THE STANCE OF PROPHET LUT AND HIS BELIEVING FAMILY
Began an immorality never committed before (7:80)	Called to piety and offered the lawful way (26:163; 11:78)
Committed wrongdoing openly in their gatherings (29:29)	Detested the deed, not the people (26:168)
Mocked those who kept themselves pure (7:82; 27:56)	Prayed for safety and help (26:169; 29:30)
Challenged for the punishment to be brought (29:29)	Patient though alone (11:80; Sahih al-Bukhari 3375)
Came hastening and rejoicing to sin (15:67)	Left before dawn without looking back (11:81; 15:65)
The wife: stayed with the people though under a prophet's care (66:10)	The believing family: saved as a reward for gratitude (54:34–35)

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: Da'wah begins with tawhid and piety. Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ called to piety first, then rebuked the sin (26:161–166).

Second: Allah forbade immoralities because He honours mankind. "There is none more jealous than Allah" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4634; 7:33).

Third: Detest the deed, and pray for safety. "Indeed, I am, toward your deed, of those who detest [it]" (26:168).

Fourth: Beware when purity begins to be mocked. It is the sign of a society heading towards destruction (7:82; 27:56).

Fifth: When feeling most alone, Allah is the strongest support. (11:80; Sahih al-Bukhari 3375).

Sixth: Leave wrongdoing without looking back. True emigration is leaving sin with the heart, not only with the feet (11:81).

Seventh: Family ties do not replace faith. Even a prophet's wife remained behind with the destroyed (66:10).

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Eighth: The righteous must be reformers. Destruction may come "when filth becomes abundant" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3346).

CONCLUSION

The story of the people of Lut is not merely the history of a vanished city. The Qur'an says that the punishment ***"is not from the wrongdoers [very] far"*** — it is a mirror for every age. Whenever purity is mocked, immorality is boasted of, and correction is treated as a nuisance, this story becomes relevant again. Yet it also carries hope: Allah never leaves those who guard themselves alone, even if only one house remains.

May Allah protect us and our descendants from every immorality, make our homes like the saved house of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and not make us among those who remain behind. ***Rabbi najjinī wa ahlī mimmā ya'malūn — "My Lord, save me and my family from [the consequence of] what they do"*** (26:169). Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** continues with the story of Prophet Shu'aib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and the people of Madyan, with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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HADITH AND COMMENTARIES

Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim — Arabic text, chains of narration and narrator pages. https://sunnah.com

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ADDITIONAL HADITH CITED IN THE TEXT

Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (neither affirm nor deny the People of the Book). https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4485

Sahih al-Bukhari 3372 and 4694; Sahih Muslim 151 (other wordings of the Hadith about Prophet Lut). https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3372

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

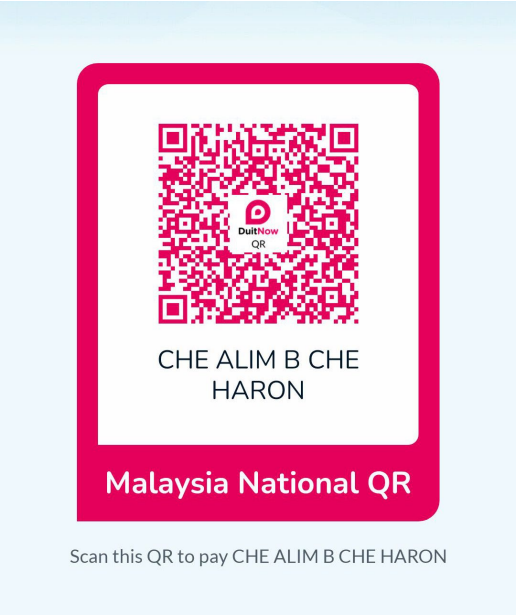
CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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