

Prophets in the Quran: Adam

This is the first article in a series about the Prophets and Messengers (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them) mentioned in the Noble Quran. But first What is the difference between a Prophet and a Messenger?

In Islamic theology, both prophets and messengers are chosen individuals tasked by Allah to guide humanity, but there are distinct differences between the two roles.

A Prophet is someone Allah chooses to convey His guidance and reinforce existing teachings of divine law. Prophets do not bring new scriptures or laws but call their people to adhere to the established religious teachings and moral values taught by a previous messenger.

A Messenger is a prophet assigned a specific mission to deliver a new message, scripture, or divine law to their people. Messengers are sent to reform humanity when existing teachings have been corrupted or forgotten. Their mission often involves confronting significant resistance and disbelief.

Adam (pbuh) was a Prophet while Musa (Moses, pbuh) was a Prophet and a Messenger. Musa (Moses) received the Tora and was given Judaism as his “Sharia Law!” Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a messenger who brought the Qur’an, the final divine revelation and established Islam as the comprehensive and universal faith.

Every messenger is also

a prophet, but not every prophet is a messenger. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is both a prophet and a messenger, as he was given the Qur’an and charged with delivering a universal message for all humanity.

Not all Prophets were mentioned in the Qur’an. The Qur’an says, “**And, indeed We have sent Messengers before you (O Muhammad); of some of them We have related to you their story and of some We have not related to you their story, and it was not given to any Messenger that he should bring a sign (miracle) except by the will of Allah. So, when comes the Commandment of Allah, the matter will be decided with truth, and the followers of falsehood will then be lost.**” [Quran 40: 78].

We shall talk today about the Prophet Adam. We have talked about Adam and Eve before (SNP 5/11 and 5/18 2024). In these two articles, we mainly talked about Adam and Eve in heaven. Today we talk about their life on earth.

Adam was warned that Satan wanted Adam and Eve out of the paradise of Eden and that if they left the paradise, Adam (alone!) would suffer. The Qur’an says, “**Then We said: ‘O Adam! Verily, this [Satan] is an enemy to you and to your wife. So let him not get you both out of Paradise, so that you [Adam] be distressed in misery.**” [Quran



Guest Column

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20: 117]. Adam was meant to be the distressed one as he would have to work to fend for himself and his wife, Eve.

In the early days after their expulsion from Eden, Adam and Eve established their dwelling place on earth. Their first children were twins: Cain, a boy, and his sister. Subsequently, Eve gave birth to another set of twins: Abel and his sister. As the children grew older and approached marriageable age, God issued a divine decree through Adam. The instruction was clear: Abel was to marry Cain’s sister, while Cain was to marry Abel’s sister. This arrangement was meant to prevent incest and maintain familial harmony.

However, Cain defied the divine order. He claimed that he should be allowed to marry his own twin sister, opposing both his father’s authority and God’s word. Adam remained strong, urging that they obey God’s specific commands without doubt. He had previously learned this valuable lesson.

To resolve the conflict, God proposed a test of faith. He instructed Adam to have the brothers offer sacrifices. Cain,

being a farmer, brought an offering of his finest crops. Abel, a shepherd by trade, prepared to sacrifice his most beloved sheep.

When the moment of offering arrived, a miraculous sign of divine approval unfolded. Fire descended from the heavens, dramatically consuming Abel’s sacrifice — a clear indication of God’s acceptance of his offering and, by extension, his obedience.

Witnessing the divine manifestation, Adam reinforced the original divine mandate. He told Cain that the marriage arrangement was not a matter of personal preference but a direct commandment from God. Cain was left with no room to argue or refuse the predetermined order.

But Cain harbored a different plan. The decision to kill his brother emerged from a complex emotional landscape of rejection, jealousy, and rage. It is interesting to think about the origin of Cane’s thinking. How did he know there was something called killing? What was the origin of this idea?

Cain may have potentially learned about life-taking through animal slaughtering practices. Cain, witnessing the routine slaughter of animals by his brother Abel and likely his father Adam, might have internalized killing as a transactional act — a method of resolving conflicts or removing obstacles. Most

probably through the fact that after killing the corpse loses all powers to move or to do. The process of animal sacrifice, which involved selecting an animal, ending its life, and using its body for food, could have desensitized Cain to the sanctity of life. He might have psychologically transformed the killing of animals for food into a potential solution for his human conflict.

This narrative represents a pivotal moment in human moral development — the first recorded premeditated murder, symbolizing humanity’s capacity to deviate from divine guidance and succumb to destructive emotional impulses like jealousy, resentment, and vengeance.

The ambiguity surrounding Cain’s motivation invites deeper reflection on the origins of violence, the nature of human free will, and the moral choices that define our humanity.

Cane did not know what to do with his brother’s body. Another point to think deeply about here is: how did he know that he had to do something with his brother’s body? And if he was affected by animals’ slaughtering, how come he did not think of dismembering his brother’s body? More questions one can think of!

The Quran has summarized Cane and Abel’s story in the following verses: “**(27) And (O Muhammad SAW) recite to**

them (the Jews) the story of the two sons of Adam [Habil (Abel) and Qabil (Cain)] in truth; when each offered a sacrifice (to Allah), it was accepted from the one but not from the other. The latter said to the former: “I will surely kill you.” The former said: “Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are Al-Muttaqun (the pious) (28) f you do stretch your hand against me to kill me, I shall never stretch my hand against you to kill you, for I fear Allah; the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists). (29) Verily, I intend to let you draw my sin on yourself as well as yours, then you will be one of the dwellers of the Fire, and that is the recompense of the Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers). (30) So the Nafs (self) of the other (Cane’s) encouraged him and made fair-seeming to him the murder of his brother; he murdered him and became one of the losers. (31) Then Allah sent a crow who scratched the ground to show him to hide the dead body of his brother. He (the murderer) said: “Woe to me! Am I not even able to be as this crow and to hide the dead body of my brother?” Then he became one of those who regretted [it].” [Quran 5: 27-32]

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Oldest known stone tablet inscribed with the Ten Commandments sells for over \$5M

NEW YORK – The oldest known stone tablet inscribed with the Ten Commandments sold for more than \$5 million at an auction on Wednesday.

Sotheby’s said the 155-pound marble slab was acquired by an anonymous buyer who plans

to donate it to an Israeli institution.

The New York-based auction house said the final price exceeded the presale estimate of \$1 million to \$2 million and followed more than 10 minutes of “intense bidding” during the global competition.

The tablet dates from 300 to 800 A.D. and is inscribed with the commandments in Paleo-Hebrew script — the only complete example of its kind from antiquity, according to Sotheby’s.

It was unearthed during railroad excavations along the southern

coast of Israel in 1913 and was not recognized as historically significant at first.

Sotheby’s said the tablet was used as a paving stone at a local home until 1943 when it was sold to a scholar who grasped its significance.

“A tangible link to an-

cient beliefs that have profoundly shaped global religious and cultural traditions, it serves as a rare testament to history,” the auction house said.

The text inscribed on the slab follows the Biblical verses familiar to Christian and Jewish

traditions but omits the third commandment against taking the name of the Lord in vain. It includes a new directive to worship on Mount Gerizim, a holy site specific to the Samaritans, Sotheby’s said.

—AP

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Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.



Isaiah 49:13

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