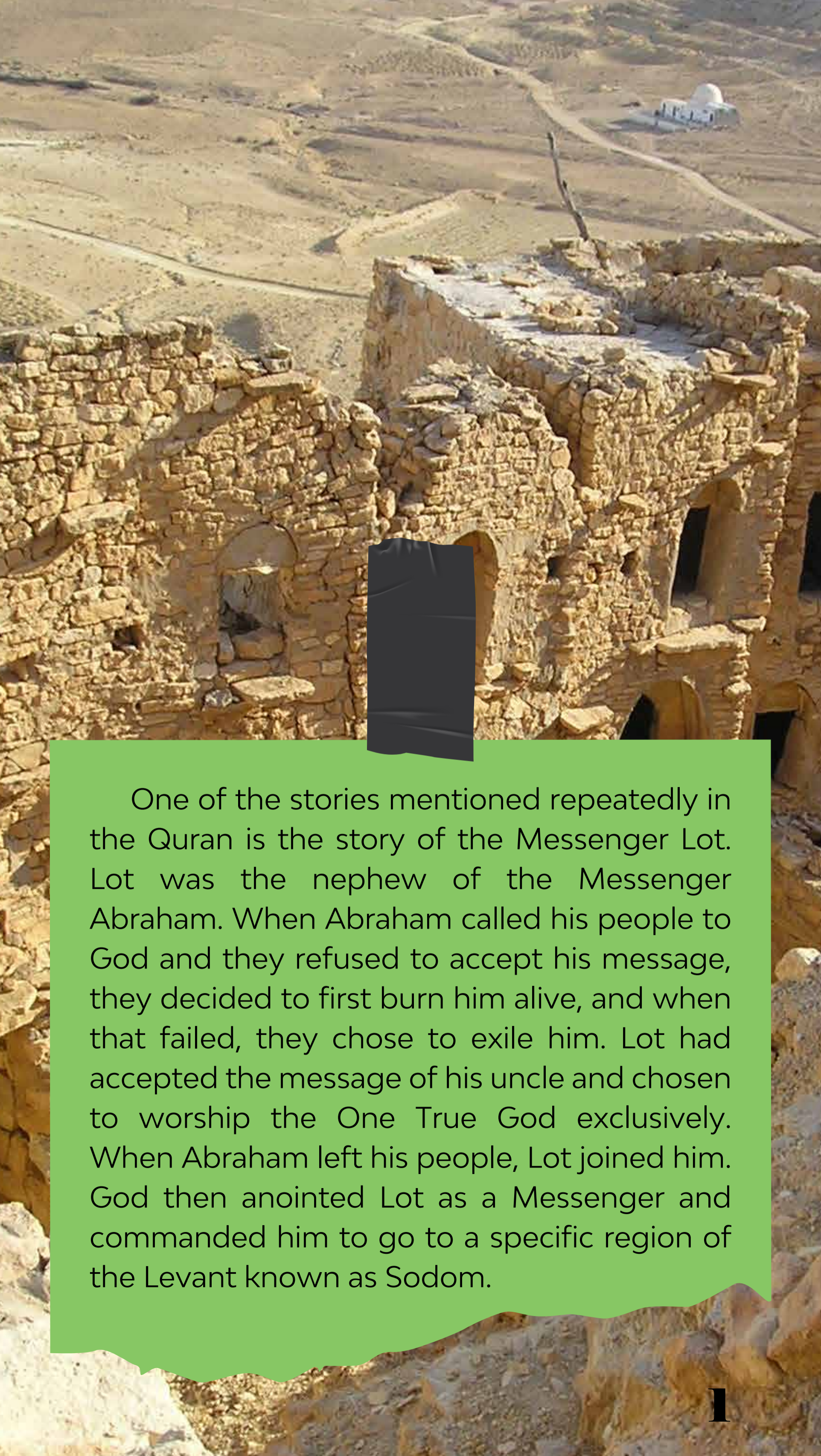




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The Story of the Messenger Lot



One of the stories mentioned repeatedly in the Quran is the story of the Messenger Lot. Lot was the nephew of the Messenger Abraham. When Abraham called his people to God and they refused to accept his message, they decided to first burn him alive, and when that failed, they chose to exile him. Lot had accepted the message of his uncle and chosen to worship the One True God exclusively. When Abraham left his people, Lot joined him. God then anointed Lot as a Messenger and commanded him to go to a specific region of the Levant known as Sodom.



Sodom and Its People

The city of Sodom was on the western shore of the Dead Sea. The city of Sodom was corrupt and full of immorality. The people had no shame. Criminals and criminal activity abounded, and those passing through the town of Sodom risked robbery and physical abuse. The overall atmosphere of the town was not that of an upright society. The people of Lot were without morality, without ethical values and without shame.

The greatest sin of the people of Sodom was their disbelief and rejection of God's commands. They refused to accept the worship of the One True God. They contravened God's explicit command prohibiting sodomy and homosexual practices. In fact anal intercourse and homosexual practices, sodomy, are attributed to this town as they invented this practice which was not known to humans prior. They encouraged vice, immorality and debauchery. It was to this town and its people that God sent the Messenger Lot.

Lot Calls the People to God

The message of Lot was the same as that of all the Messengers who preceded and succeeded him. It was a simple call to worship the One True God exclusively. Imbedded within that worship of God alone is the command to obey Him and His commandments and to curb the base desires that contradict purity. God tells us that Lot said to his people,

“Will you not fear God and obey Him? Verily! I am a trustworthy Messenger to you. So fear God and obey me. No reward do I ask of you for it (my Message). My reward is only from the Lord of all that exists.” (26:161-164)

He told them to refrain from the practices that God had prohibited, “Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among humanity? Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people.”

The Response of the People of Sodom

The people of Sodom rejected Lot and God's message to them. They would become annoyed with Lot's words and reminders. They would commit their evil acts in public and private without shame. Instead of adhering to Lot's instructions and reminders, they threatened him and told him that he would be driven out. They said, "If you cease not, O Lot! Verily, you will be one of those who are driven out!" (26:167)

Lot's Guests

God sent three angels in the form of handsome men to Abraham. They went to give him glad tidings of a second son, Isaac. They then told Abraham that they would next go to Sodom to bring about God's punishment upon the transgressors. They said to Abraham, "We have been sent to a people who are criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, and sinners." (15:58) Abraham was worried for Lot and the few believers with him, so he said, "But Lot is there!" The angels replied, "We know better who is there; we will verily save him and his family, except his wife, who will be among those who remain behind." [29:32].

When the guests arrived at Lot's house, he wanted to keep them hidden from the townspeople. The wife of Lot, who was not a believer, went and told the people of the arrival of three handsome men. When the townspeople appeared at the door of Lot's house, he addressed them saying, "O my people! Here are my daughters (i.e. the daughters of town); they are purer for you (if you marry them lawfully). So fear God and degrade me not as regards my guests! Is there not among you a single right-minded man?" (11:78) They replied, "Surely you know that we have neither any desire nor in need of your daughters, and indeed you know well what we want!" (11:79)

The Destruction of Sodom

The three angels told Lot that he had no need to fear. They had come with God's commands. They instructed Lot to leave town that very night with his family and whoever was with him and not to look back. As he left that night, Lot's wife refused to accompany him, instead choosing to remain with the people, and thus she too was destroyed as they were.

God sent down a shower of stones upon the people of the town, and caused the city of Sodom to be raised up, turned upside down, and thrown back to the earth. God says, "So We saved him and his family, all except an old woman (his wife) among those who remained behind. Then, afterward, We destroyed the others. And We rained on them a rain (of torment). And how evil was the rain of those who had been warned. Verily, in this is indeed a sign, yet most of them are not believers." (26:170-174)





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