

## **A Christian's guide to the Koran, lesson 19, Of Love, Lies, and War.**

Blog and pdf of the following lesson are available at this website.

Today we present Lesson 19, continuing Sura 2, "the cow", verses 208-257

208. "O you who have believed, enter completely into Islam, and do not follow the steps of Satan." In case anyone listening to or reading this series has not figured this out yet, true Muslims consider all non-Muslims to be of Satan and therefore worthy of judgment.

Allah grieves in this passage about all the signs he gave to Israel in exchange for their unbelief. Nevertheless, "surely the victory of Allah is near." That victory is not one of truth and morality, but the purely human victory of war.

216. "War is decreed to you, and it is hated by you." Indeed. Everyone hates war. But Muhammad's god reminds them that there are many things that we hate to do that we must do anyway. In fact, they will even be asked to wage war in the "forbidden" month. This would seem to point to Ramadan, but other scholars see this as one of the four months out of the year when it is forbidden for Muslims to kill other Muslims.

Whatever, the fact remains that Allah values his Koranic truth more than the worry over a forbidden month, or human lives. Those who "performed jihad for the sake of Allah, those hope for Allah's mercy." Words like these do not lend themselves to many interpretations. I think you know what Muhammad is saying.

Mercifully, the subject changes abruptly in verse 219. Suddenly we are talking about wine and gambling. Though it is allowed that there are benefits in both, "their sin is bigger than their benefits." In this rather difficult passage he goes on to say that it is all right to spend what you can spare on such things. Nevertheless, it is quite clear in 5:90 that both vices are forbidden to the Muslim. Here the Scripture is a bit more lenient, allowing medicinal wine when nothing else works. And one wonders what the "benefits" of gambling might be. Certainly ill-gotten profits are not pleasing to a holy God who has promised to provide for His own out of His Heavenly abundance.

But let's move on to some marriage laws. Men, you cannot marry a polytheist until they submit to your religion. That term "polytheist" includes Christians. The directive goes on to say that it is better to marry a Muslim slave than a free polytheist.

Islam, as Moses, forbids marital intimacy during the monthly time of the woman.

223. Here Muhammad compares wives to a field. Men are told that they can enter that field whenever they please. The Christian mutual respect of and for husband and wife is a thing unknown to the Koran. Pity the woman who must be thought of as the personal real estate of a man.

225. Perhaps in keeping with the marriage subject at hand, but also as a general rule, Muhammad next explains that "Allah will not hold you responsible for your mere utterance in an oath..." That is what it says! Only what you meant in your heart matters. The ramifications of such a teaching are shattering. Contracts, marriage vows, oaths of office. None of them must be taken at face value when heard from a true Muslim. In his heart he harbors the truth of what he has just said. In your ears is one thing, inside the person is another. How can one ever do business with such a person?

226. Divorce. The only stipulation given by Allah is that they wait for the divorce, four months after their last intimacy, to be sure their wives are not pregnant. If they are, and want to be reconciled, it is strongly advised that the man comply. It seems to me they would know long before four months, but be that as it may, waiting is the only regulation.

Here is given a certain amount of compassion and justice for the woman, but disregard for the state of marriage, which is not to be broken by man at all, according to the God of the Bible. We readily admit that Moses allowed divorce, but according to Jesus it was because of the hardness of heart, and not according to the heart of God. Here is one after Moses, and after the upgrade by Jesus, saying he is God, pulling mankind back into the hardness of humanity against the ways of God. Once more we see Allah going in the wrong direction.

In 230, the complicated divorce, re-marriage process is spelled out, but this time in contradiction even to Moses. If a man divorces then remarries the same woman, then divorces her yet again, he is not to take her back until she has *had marital relations with another man*. And whatever you do, says Allah, don't keep your spouse in "unfairness", to do them some harm. Better to divorce them.

Odd. But according to the author, "This is the most virtuous for you and most pure. And Allah knows, and you do not know." Perhaps statements like this are added occasionally as listeners are invisibly scratching their heads at what they hear, even as we do. So much better to hear Jesus say, "...the two shall become one flesh...therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate." Yes, there is unfaithfulness. But call it that, and put aside all the elaborate rules to allow for sin.

233. Breastfeeding is now enjoined on the mother. And the father, even if divorced, has the right to demand such for two years, as long as he provides the necessary clothing etc. Once more we have here a rule that allows for divorce and provides for it, rather than agreeing with the higher teachings of Jesus. More provisions regarding divorce follow, and we will pass them by, except to mention that it is suggested in this passage, that Muslims are permitted more than one wife at a time, and not just allowed a series of divorces. This topic will reappear with more specificity later.

244. Now a quick reminder to "engage in war for the sake of Allah," followed by a supposedly Biblical example of such. Of this example we can only say, Muhammad made a very serious mistake.

If you know your Bible, and here we can authoritatively question whether that was true of Muhammad, you know that the early people of Israel came to the prophet Samuel and asked him for a king. So begins verse 246. No problem. But what is Samuel's response, per Muhammad? He tells them that they must wage war if they want a king. Well, not exactly. But anyway, this so discouraged them that many of them turned back.

Now if you are thinking, wait! that sounds like the Gideon story, your thinking will soon be confirmed. Samuel tells the Israelites that, in connection with the ensuing battle, the ark will now be brought back to Israel by angels. Actually, the ark had already been sent back to Israel. By Philistines who suddenly did not want it. The ark incident had nothing to do with their desire for a king.

Nevertheless, here suddenly is Saul, ready to go out to battle. He gathers his troops together and tells them that God will now test them at a river. Whoever drinks the water from the river is not of God. No, they must scoop by their hand and drink it...

And again you meekly suggest, Gideon? Isn't this the story of Gideon? And you are right. The scene quickly changes to David killing Goliath, facts which do seem to be in order.

Both of these stories are related, however incorrectly, to make a point. If you want to be on God's side, you have to wage war: "Allah gives conquest to some people over others."

The far greater and more significant truth for the Christian is that we don't fight against people, but against demons who rule this present world. It is an awful thing to miss this point. Rome missed it. Some Protestant groups missed it. The Mormons missed it. And definitely, this prophet we study now, who claimed to be God's final messenger to the world, missed it.

We can categorically say that any group that thinks that political or military power is necessary to champion righteousness in the world has already been defeated. The most powerful person who ever lived on this planet had a handful of disciples, and resolutely refused political power and the strength of weapons. Yet look at His following today, and read of His following tomorrow. The entire world will be His forever.

Of course, Muhammad and all who are taught by him cannot believe such a thing. In the very next section, the Koran tells again of the coming of the prophets, and "Isa". Though Isa is given a special place, still there is no indication that He is anything other than a special prophet. He was given the "proofs", miracles, and the support of the Holy Spirit, still Allah does what he wants and now speaks new truths. About what? About war, for one. Yes, "...if Allah willed, they[followers of Isa] would not engage in war." But those days are passed. Allah wills war now.

Finally today, the verse that many Muslims quote to show Christians that they do not force their religion on anyone, even after the long passage about waging war! The simple words of verse 256: "No compulsion in religion. Indeed, the right way is made distinct from the error." Muhammad says, we don't need to force the issue. The truth speaks for itself.

Nevertheless, there is a further truth than this in the Koran. Some would say that this verse is even abrogated altogether by that further truth. For example, in 9:5, merciless slaughter of all polytheists is commanded. What of the self-obvious truth of Islam there? Are we to believe that the merciful, the knowing Allah, is merciful no more after a certain point? If we Christians don't get it, kill us? That's what my Koran says.

My Bible surely allows for a judging God. But also, a God for whom the death of the wicked is not a pleasant thing. How His heart yearns for all to be saved!

Thank you for listening. Next time, in lesson 20, sura 2 concludes with a look at some interesting stories about Abraham, a discussion of alms and interest, and then we can enter into Sura 3.

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