

A Christian's guide to the Koran, Lesson 23, No questions allowed.

(Audio and pdf available on this website.)

Today we cover Sura 5, called "The Table"

As we move on, please take note here that so far, except for those few verses of Sura 1, everything you have heard, up to and including today's portion, was composed in Medina, and therefore, for the most part, has not been abrogated. That is, these things are still in effect for Muslims of our day.

Chapter 5 opens with rules and regulations, some of which seem to be from Arab paganism, and others copied directly from the law of Moses, e.g., that which dies of itself, blood, pork, meat sacrificed to idols, etc, all are forbidden to the good Muslim.

Repeated is the notion that Muhammad has come to clear up what the Jews and Christians had perverted and were hiding.

Re-enforced is the worst of the heresies, verse 17: "Infidels indeed are those who said 'Surely Allah is the Christ, son of Mary.'" He is so bold here as to add that if he, Allah, wants to destroy the Christ along with his mother, and in fact everyone on the planet, that is his business since "he creates what he wills."

Muhammad has trouble understanding why those who say they are sons of God, namely Jews and Christians, are punished for their sins. But in the next breath he says that Allah forgives whom he wills and "torments" whom he wills.

We would add that the true God "wills" to punish His own children to perfect them and bring them to glory. He "wills" to forgive all who ask Him for that forgiveness. In other words, the true God of Heaven is not capricious and disconnected from his creation to the point where He does not feel or care. It is this "distance" of Allah that literally sets him apart from Jehovah.

A couple of Bible stories follow. The first, about the 12 spies, their report, and Israel's 40 year punishment, is relatively in order. The next is not. It begins with two sons of Adam, unnamed here, and how one murdered the other. Then comes a raven to the murderer to show him how to bury the murdered. This tale is thought to have originated from an ancient Jewish legend.

He goes on to say that if you kill one person, you have killed an entire people. If you preserve one person, you have preserved all. Again ancient Jewish sources are used, but Muhammad has Allah saying that this doctrine is "inscribed" by the approved messengers and is to be believed.

Though Jesus also goes from lesser to greater in His explanations of sin, the way this is stated seems a bit over the top. Jesus says that lust in the heart equals adultery, and hate in the heart equals murder. But He never seems to place universal guilt on a soul for one sin committed. He seems to be as concerned for the one victim as He is for the group, and for the sin as it stands as opposed to any implications beyond the obvious.

To men and women caught in and accused of sin, our God simply says, "Go. And sin no more." With Allah the guilt is overwhelming, crushing.

Those listeners/readers who may have heard that in Islam a thief is to have his hands removed will find proof of that in verse 38. "And the male thief and the female thief, so cut off their hands..."

In Christ, a simple word is enough: "Let him that stole, steal no more." The Christian ex-thief is admonished to put his hands to work in honest employment. The Muslim ex-thief can never have a chance to work again with his hands after that theft has been rewarded. Once again, the comparison of Christ to Allah is startling, and to us, refreshing.

Verse 68 commands Muslim people of Muhammad's day to obey the Torah and the Gospel of Jesus. This must mean that the writings available in Muhammad's day were in order after all. But herein is an impossible thing for a Muslim. He cannot obey the Torah and the Gospel and the Koranic writings all at the same time. The Scriptures indicated are worlds apart. Muhammad seems to be clueless about even the distance from Moses to Jesus.

Once more in verse 69 we are told that Jews, idol-worshipping Sabians, and Christians are in good shape if they believed in Allah and did good works. Yet he has already said in 3:85 (remember?) that Islam is the only religion. Either this is another blatant contradiction, or we must be led to believe that Muhammad considers all these other groups to be a part of Allah's religion. Quite a stretch.

In verses 93ff, Muhammad seems to abrogate what he said about dietary rules. Here, if a person was a good-deed-doer, he feared, he believed, well, for him all laws are suspended. He can eat what he wills.

Verse 96 specifically okays all seafood, though the Torah of his day truly came against much of it (Deuteronomy 14:10).

A singular Islamic principle is espoused beginning in verse 101. It is the hallmark of all authoritarian governments, without which they will fall. Essentially it says, don't ask questions! The answers, says the merciful Allah, "would be harmful to you." Well, the answers would be harmful to Islam, this is certain. The entire structure would - and will - fall like a house of cards, when its false foundations are exposed.

Is Jesus restrictive to our questioning? How often are the teachings of Jesus interrupted by questions? How often was His response negative?

"We don't know where You are going. How can we know the way?"

"Lord, show us the Father, and we'll be satisfied."

"Lord, how is it You will manifest yourself to us and not to the world?"

"What is this that He says to us, 'A little while'? We cannot tell what He is saying!"

"Lord, show us the parable of the tares."

"Lord, teach us to pray."

"I will not believe unless I see the print of the nails in His hands!"

Our God can handle our questions. There may be a few answers that indeed would not be good for us to know, but never would He therefore shut down our inquiries altogether. Good teachers love to be asked. Jesus is a good teacher.

Muhammad on the other hand seems constantly threatened.

Next are the procedures to be in place when making a will. Two witnesses are needed. But if it turns out they have committed a serious sin, they are to be replaced by two others who will swear by Allah that their testimony is better than the former ones. Trouble is, Muslims are

permitted, by other Koranic principles that we studied, to speak one thing with their mouth and another with their heart. Can such witnesses be trusted in the matter of a will?

Allah then reminds Jesus of Allah's grace on him, including the power of the holy spirit that caused him to speak with a man's voice from his cradle, to make flying birds out of clay, to heal the blind and the leper, even raise the dead.

Muhammad's faith allows him to believe so much about Jesus, from sources that are both good and evil. He has picked and chosen the stories he needed, created a Jesus of his own, and thrust that Jesus on the nations, fulfilling prophecies of the real Jesus and his followers about vicious wolves that would come to destroy the flock of God.

Our present chapter receives its name from a story told only in Koran about a table that is to descend on the disciples from Heaven. On this table is to be a feast. Perhaps this is Muhammad's understanding of the Lord's table. It is to be a "sign", says Muhammad. Here, then, perhaps he gives a nod to the Roman Mass so as to include that religion in his growing assemblage. He warns that anyone who becomes an infidel after such a great sign as this will be tormented with "a torment [with which] I will not torment any one of the worlds." He seems to love reminding his people about the coming torment...

Also in keeping with Catholic theology is the following segment of "truth" from Allah. Isa (Jesus) is accused of saying to the people, "Take me and my mother as two gods, other than Allah." Jesus flatly denies such a statement. In one swoop here, Muhammad says that it is Christian belief that Jesus and Mary are divine! And that Jesus denied such divinity, not only for His mother, but for Himself!" Touche!

But that truth will not stand. Even the true Romanist will deny that Mary is divine, though that people certainly do seem to be involved in worshiping her. And as for the Deity of Jesus Christ, I challenge any open-minded person to read carefully only three chapters of Scripture and deny that Jesus claimed to be One with the Father: John 14, 15, and 16. You may not agree with Jesus' conclusions, but you must agree that that is what Jesus taught.

We are becoming accustomed to contradictions in the Koran by now. But as "Jesus" continues his speech in verse 117, he seems to deny what we learned in the last sura, that Allah raised Jesus up to be with him as opposed to allowing his death here. Here are the exact words:

"...I was a witness among them as long as I was with them. *So when you caused me to die, you were the watcher over them...*"

Did he or didn't he? Thankfully, we "Nasara" have a sure word about this. He both died *and* was resurrected by the Father, then caught up in the heavenlies from which He will descend one day, maybe soon, to take vengeance on all His enemies, and to catch us up to be with Him forever. And nothing that anyone else says about this will take away this certain knowledge He has placed in our hearts by His Spirit.

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