

A Christian's guide to the Koran, Lesson 31, Personal morality and Muhammad's child bride

(Audio and pdf available on this website.)

Today we cover suras 21-24

Chapter 21 is known as "the prophets" because of its mention of many of them. The references to Bible and non-Bible men are a bit confused in this chapter, very difficult for the ordinary man to figure out.

I do note much repetition in the sura, such as the familiar railing against the Deity of Jesus, the misinformation about the solar system, the judgments on infidels, and the scales of justice. In regards to the latter, Allah promises that he is so very just that every detail, even if it were the weight of a tiny seed, will be placed on those scales. Man will get exactly what he deserves.

Unknown to Muslim thinking is the concept that a man who breaks even the least of God's laws is guilty of all. And that a man who claims and clings to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, purchased with His blood on Calvary, is innocent of all, forgiven of all. Islam, and all organized religions with it, seeks to create a system whereby one can earn what God has freely given.

Sura 22, "the Pilgrimage," takes us ahead once more to Medina. A biology lesson starts things out, letting us know that God created us first from dirt, then that semen/breastmilk fluid, then a clot, and then some flesh.

The Muslim belief in the resurrection of the body is in verse 7, a discussion that rapidly turns to "the torment of the fire" for those who disagree with Allah.

In verses 26 and following are the customs surrounding the supposed discovery of Mecca by Abraham. Dakdok suggests that these customs about pilgrimage to Mecca were already in use by the pagans, who had their own history of what Mecca was all about.

The text moves from there to dietary laws. You may know that in Leviticus 11:4, the camel is specifically forbidden for consumption by the people of God because of its "unclean" status. Evidently this is one of the many thousands of verses that were "corrupted", because in the Koran, camels are commanded to be offered for sacrifices, then eaten.

Before this series of verses is finished, we are back on the subject of warfare. This is after all Medina. "Permission is given to those who wage war because they were wronged, and surely Allah is capable to give them victory." He even boasts of the number of villages he has destroyed until now.

We understand that cursed nations were destroyed by God. We know that bloody vengeance is coming later. But God's people are on a special mission at present. Preach. Baptize. Teach. Cast out demons. Heal the sick. Raise the dead. This program of announcing the Kingdom of God began hundreds of years before Muhammad appeared, and will continue until Jesus returns. We know that God is not bringing us back to the days of Moses and Joshua and physical conquest of the world. Not now.

Again quoting translator Usama Dakdok, to whom I owe a great debt already, chapter 53 of the Koran contained at one time what were known as the "Satanic" verses. They were

taken out, acknowledged to be false, and replaced with other verses. Here in sura 22 Muhammad wants it to be made known that God had a good reason for allowing Satan to mess with the text. You see, it helped to harden the hearts of those who were already opposed to Allah. The familiar judgments follow this explanation...

Once more is repeated the encouragement to the warring Muslims that God is going to provide wonderful things for martyrs of the faith.

Allah and the Bible agree in verse 66: "Surely the human is infidel." Yes, God has included all under sin. Including all Muslims, Muhammad, everyone. But the remedy for this awful state of affairs is not given in the Koran.

The last statement of this sura is a reminder that Abraham has named all of God's people, "Muslims."

Sura 23, "the believers", moves us back to Mecca. "Believers" are given first some specifics about their sexual purity. Private parts of the body are only for spouses. Or slaves. Or concubines. If single, just for slaves or concubines.

A Bible story: It's back to Brother Noah. He is told (in verse 27) that Allah will give a command, and the storms will come and "boil up" like froth on milk. At that point, Noah is to enter the ark with all the animals. True or false? The Biblical account has Noah gathering animals well in advance of the flood. Seven days then pass after all are settled in. Then the rain.

Jesus. We are here finally given a reason why God has no son, and that son is not God, and why there cannot be multiple gods etc. The fact is, more than one God would mean strife between them, and chaos in the heavenlies.

Muhammad thinks as a man. Rightly so, and we understand. Men fight. Two or three men cannot properly rule anything together. Won't work. Three Gods would be an awful thing. We Christians believe in one God manifested in three Persons, Who are in perfect harmony. The Father and the Son and the Spirit think as One. Jesus never did anything He did not see the Father doing. The Spirit speaks only what He hears from Heaven. There is no strife. No chaos.

Muhammad's concept of god was just too small.

Need I say it? The sura ends with more threats of torment: "The fire will scorch their faces, and they will shrivel in it."

Sura 24 is called "the light," but it is not. We are again in Medina and the sura begins as the last one did, with sexual issues.

First, 100 stripes for those caught in fornication. No mention is made of forgiveness for repentants. Once more I refer to Usama Dakdok's comment. He says that this practice has now switched to stoning, because originally the verse that says stoning was part of the recitation of Muhammad. But that verse was eaten by a goat. Now we must just take the word of the Muslim scholar that such is the case.

The guilty party has more problems. He is not to have intimate relations with anyone except one guilty like himself. Or maybe with a polytheist, which includes Christians.

In a related situation, if anyone dares to accuse a chaste woman of something and cannot bring four witnesses, he is to be given eighty stripes and he is never to be believed again. Repentance is allowed here, however.

Further, if a man accuses his own wife of some sin, and there are no witnesses at all, then husband or wife need only to swear by Allah four times, and they will be believed.

All of this seems odd to us until we read on about the "slander" of Muhammad's favorite wife, Aisha. Three witnesses had accused her of adultery. That was the required number until then, according to the translator Dakdok. It seems that this new law was created specifically for this situation. Now there had to be four witnesses. Aisha was spared.

By the way, Aisha was 6 years old and Muhammad 52 when they were married. It's a bit young, but he waited until she was 9 before there was any intimacy in their marriage...

Anyway, horrific judgments, as you might imagine, are then leveled on all those who partook in the slander.

Next comes a call to modesty and complete covering of the woman. However, she is allowed to be seen in more casual attire to a whole host of family members, slaves, young children, effeminate males. But there is debate about just how casual is casual. Since effeminate males and "children who have not looked upon a woman's private parts" are some of the exceptions to the covering rule, just what is Muhammad saying?

Next, those who cannot afford to marry are to keep themselves chaste. However if you own a slave, he/she is to be chaste only if so desired. Otherwise they may be used in prostitution. If they were compelled to do this against their will, they should remember that Allah is forgiving.

There follows a lengthy praise of Allah as "the light of the heavens and the earth..." Yes, after all the darkness of these precepts, he proclaims himself to be light.

Then Muhammad talks of how all animals were created from the water, though Genesis mentions a whole class of animals that came from the earth.

And a curious section regarding the rules of privacy. Three times a day a man's privacy is to be strictly observed, basically, morning, noon, and evening. During these three times it is quite possible that they might be clothed rather skimpily, or not at all. During those times, slaves and children must ask permission to come into the tent. At any other time, they do not have to "knock" and will not have sinned if you happen to be unprepared for their visit.

Thus ends chapter 24. Only 90 chapters to go! But soon those chapters will be a page long, and even 3-4 suras to a page. So, actually, only a few more lessons to go. Stay with it!

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