

A Christian's guide to the Koran, lesson 18, JIHAD, RETALIATION, and RAMADAN

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

Today we present Lesson 18, covering, still, Sura 2, "the cow", verses 154-207.

Jihad! Who has not heard the word in our day? The first hint of a holy war of the physical sort is here in the second chapter, verse 154, where the writer speaks of those who are killed for the sake of Allah.

Christians were promised persecution. Such it has ever been. Multiplied millions have died for their faith in Christ or one of His teachings. Holy war, or jihad, of which we shall hear much in later suras, is not about persecution, though Muhammad was certainly not well received at first. And by the way, shame on those calling themselves Christians through the years who have used weapons and wars to crush their enemies. It is crystal clear that we have another set of weapons at our disposal that ultimately will settle the faith issue.

Yes, we do believe in violence at the return of Jesus, when His offer of salvation to the world has been rejected long enough. But never should we take it upon ourselves to bring about the vengeance that belongs only to the Lord.

Islam has no such teachings of restraint. The killing of Christians and Jews is expected and has been practiced for 1,400 years. That is not to say that there is not a teaching effort, and a socialization mission and the whole business of infiltration, even subversion, much as Romanists have used to push their agenda. But when it is feasible, and the strength is present, and all else fails, Islamists have no problem with snuffing out the life of an infidel.

Verse 158 sounds Romish in its content. We can surmise that much of the reward system in Mecca derives from the indulgence system of Rome. Here the promise of forgiven sins is offered to one who makes a pilgrimage to the special house we described in the last lesson. We shall learn later that the absence of sin is not necessarily a free pass to heaven, but it surely cannot hurt.

More curses follow in 159ff. Allah is upset. He has gone to all the trouble of sending down what he calls "proof and guidance" in this new revelation of Muhammad. So anyone who deliberately ignores his corrections to the "book", the Bible, will be cursed. Unless they repent, and reveal what they did. Infidels who don't repent are likewise cursed.

Those, like Muhammad and some Popes, who love to engage in curses, ought to read our Psalm 109, which tells the ultimate fate of those who curse others.

More curses are placed now on those who eat the wrong foods. The dietary laws here in 172ff sound suspiciously like Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The interesting thing here is that Allah seems to give assent again to "the book with the truth" and he chides those who dissent from it. Again then we must say that the "book" (Bible) of the 7th century was evidently approved by this first Muslim. It's the *people* of that book that keep coming under his judgment. First it is because they pervert the book, other times it is because they disobey that book. Readers/listeners are forced to take their pick here, but a curse follows regardless.

An exhortation to the proper use of money follows, again much like Judeo-Christian thought.

But following this little bit of light, the darkness returns. 178ff describes the law of retaliation, or vengeance, in Islam. It goes like this: If a man is murdered, there must be vengeance. If the slain man was free, a free man must die. If he was a slave, a slave must die. If a woman, a woman. The perpetrator of the act is not mentioned here, only the victim. It is not who pulls the trigger that matters in this ruling, but the equality of loss to both sides.

Moses talked about body parts. An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. Muhammad speaks of class distinctions. Jesus surpasses both by saying to turn away altogether. More on that radical teaching later.

Ramadan is mentioned in 185ff. This is supposed to be the time when the Koran was first sent down to Muhammad. It is the 9th month of the Islamic year using the lunar calendar. That means Ramadan is 11 days earlier every year by the Gregorian calendar.

A month of fasting is called for, but no specifics are mentioned. The current tradition is for all day fasting and a huge feast each night. Weight gain, we are told, is greater during this month than in all the others. Allah says (187) that the people can, in the evenings, "eat and drink until you can discern a white thread from a black thread at the daybreak." Interesting.

Even more interesting is the concept of a daylight fast, says translator Dakdok, in places like Alaska, where day can last for months...

More praying and spiritual reading are called for, including today the reading/ hearing of the entire Koran. In the version I use, that would mean about 12 pages a day.

Sex is forbidden during Ramadan also. Except during the nights.

Starting in 190 we come upon yet another clear difference between the faith of Jesus and the faith of Muhammad. Now, we understand that the way of Jesus is an impossible one without the Spirit of God's empowerment. So there is no need to water down what Jesus said. And he said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Do not resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." Jesus lived out that life, though humanity raised its hand against God Himself.

Islam is not like this at all. "Engage in war for the sake of Allah against those who war against you." The prerequisite of self-defense will be absent in other chapters and will apply to the extermination of infidels, period. Here he goes on to say, "Kill them wherever you find them, and get them out from where they got you out." Later, "So if they engage in war with you, so kill them; likewise is the reward of the infidel."

193 continues this theme, and it becomes more and more obvious that we are talking about a holy war here. "And engage in war with them until there be no sedition and the religion be to Allah." Keep fighting infidels until all come to Islam.

The Muslim must always think in these terms, for Islam is a religious state. It is incomprehensible to them that anyone would attack them just because they, the Muslims, have become a nuisance with their terrorist ways. "Surely people hate our religion and our holy ways and want to exterminate us. So we must fight back, and make them all submit."

Let me say in passing, "Submission" is the English word for *Islam*. Not "peace." The only peace that Islam craves is the *Pax Romana*, the Roman peace which means that no one ever disagrees with Allah. Anywhere.

In fairness I must say that one day the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. And His takeover of the planet will be quick, and brutal. But in the day and age which we live, He calls His servants merely to keep preaching this Gospel that will

call out members of that coming Kingdom. "Kingdom now" in the physical sense was not envisioned for the Kingdom existing in the church age. Fighting back with guns and bombs is not the agenda for His church.

196 speaks of the "Hajj", the pilgrimage enjoined on every practicing Muslim at least once in his lifetime. I was taken aback by the pagan notion of what is called here "the visit to Allah." This seems to be a god who is located geographically.

Once again to bring balance to what I say, I fully recognize that the Temple was such a place, and that the future for God's true people, at least during the 1000 year reign of Christ on the planet, involves visiting Jerusalem on feast days, as the ancient Israelites did. But we live in a totally different era of Christ's work. It is a time when Christ, through the Spirit of God, lives in His people, and in His true church. Visits are simply not necessary. There is no site on earth that is more holy than the place where Jesus decides to do His work: the human heart!

Not so in Islam. To be a true Muslim, you must make a visit to God at least once. Bring an offering or plan to fast three days. This way of life brings the workings of the God of Heaven back over 600 years before Muhammad's time.

Thank you for listening. Next time, lesson 19, sura 2, more about war, comments on alcohol and gambling, marriage laws, and more...

Note: All quotations from the Koran are taken from The Generous Qur'an, copyright 2009, used by permission of Usama Dakdok Publishing, LLC.