

A Christian's guide to the Koran, Lesson 22, Women disrespected, the crucifixion denied

(Audio and pdf available on this website.)

Today we cover all of Sura 4, called "The Women."

Treatment of the women of Israel in comparison to the peoples around that nation was liberating. Traditions of men rose and clouded God's original intentions. But then Jesus came and set all that straight. Women followed and served Jesus happily, and do so to this day. The woman is considered a co-heir with men of eternal salvation. She is active in Christian ministry, the apostles only forbidding certain leadership functions to the female, for compassionate reasons, while never suggesting inferiority or ultimate inequality.

We have already seen in Islam some clues that Muhammad did not feel exactly the same way...

"Two and three and four" wives are permitted in the first verses of this sura, provided that the man will treat them equally. We have seen, with the aberrations from the standard set in the Bible, just how impossible it is to treat two, three, and four human beings needing a man's love, with equality. I offer Jacob and David, two greats with God, as examples of what I am speaking. As with masters, so with women, you cannot serve more than one.

Actually Muhammad admits this much later in the chapter. He comes out and says, "You never can deal fairly between the women, even if you try carefully..." So, not to worry. If two women are squabbling over something and decide to leave you, Allah will make them both rich, so let them go (129-130). This may have been in the context of a woman who fears her husband is going to leave her, mentioned in the previous verse. But it also sounds like a general principle which Muhammad was forced to acknowledge.

In verse 11 Muhammad once more differentiates between male and female in terms of worth. The male heir is to receive the equivalent of two female portions.

We can sympathize with the ruling of the Koran (verses 15ff) that lesbians are to be detained in their own homes until death, or until they repent. Would that it could be so. That all sinful practices could be so quarantined. However, what sort of repentance comes from detention? We know the answer to that from the lives of the inmates of our penal institutions. Many promises, many professions, but when released, many stumbles. How would one know that repentance had taken place before the release, anyway?

In Christ we have the option of sharing not only forgiveness, but the very presence of God within to deter from future crimes. Detention is a death sentence. The Gospel gives life.

In verse 18, death-bed repentance is now forbidden. So the above-described lesbian cannot even hope for Heaven if at the last moments of her life she hears about Jesus and Jesus saves her, fills her, cleanses her. Islam says these shall have a "painful torment." Jesus says, "Today you will be with me in paradise!"

Next comes a discussion about being financially responsible when you "desire to exchange one wife for another," followed by a list of those with whom sexual relations is forbidden. This list is commendable, even recognizable to Christians and all people of a moral bent.

It is the list that comes next that is a bit difficult to deal with, partly because of the way it is worded, partly because of the fleshly behavior that is outlined, because Allah "created the human weak." Weak indeed. Part of the list says, if you cannot marry a "free believing woman," then enjoy intimacy with "those whom your right hand possesses from your young believing girls." That is, slaves. Um, ask their parents first, of course.

That's what it says. And it adds, "If you avoid the biggest [sins] of which you are forbidden, we will atone for your evil deeds..." Implication being, don't push it too far. But Allah understands your weakness, men, so he allows a lot of laxity in the area of sexual conduct.

Not mentioned in any of this is the feeling of the woman, except that she is to be given financial consideration, and equality. Most women I have heard on this subject care more about love than these other commodities. The text here seems to be catering, not to love, but to lust.

Under Moses, a woman was to be given a certificate of divorce so that her life could continue in some way if a marriage broke up. Under Christ, God's people are commanded to keep the bond of marriage unbroken at any cost. Divorce, abandonment, exchanging wives as property, severely damages the human psyche, not to mention the pain to the children often involved. Untold evil follows such casualness in relations.

Allah's - or is it not Muhammad's- feelings about the genders are spelled out in verses 34 ff: "Men are in charge of women..." "Good women are obedient..." "And of whom you fear rebellion, so preach to them...and scourge them." This is not called wife-beating in Islam. It is the command of Allah for the man to so discipline his wife.

We see occasional severity in Moses. But nothing so sustained as this. Christians believe in the headship of a man in the married life. It is natural, normal, and also spiritual, a picture of the headship of Christ over His church.

But Christ Jesus does not have to keep telling His true bride that He is "in charge." Or that to be good, she must be obedient. The relationship assumes such. It is even harder to picture Jesus having to beat His beloved, as a Muslim husband is enjoined to do to his wife. Once more, this "later revelation" is far inferior to the two original ones it seeks to replace.

By the way, men who are on their way to prayer need to stop in their tracks if they are drunk, sick, traveling. Or if they touched a woman in any way. They must be cleansed, and if water is not available, some good dirt will do.

Though this chapter is called "The Women," there are many other subjects covered, as in all the Koran's suras. I will give here some quick summaries:

Watch out for Christians and Jews trying to give you their errors.

The present giving of the Koran confirms the Bible. Believe the Koran. Believe the Bible.

Those who do not believe the Koran will be roasted in a fire.

Shade and virgins for the faithful.

Muslim believers are to go to war, in separate groups or all together.

A great reward for Muslim warriors. Don't be afraid of the battle!

The command to kill infidels wherever they are found, and never to befriend them, is repeated in 89ff. Those who apostasize are to be treated the same way. "Wherever you find them."

A Muslim who kills another Muslim by mistake must pay "blood money" to free a slave. Straight to Hell, though, if it was not a mistake.

Jihadists are favored over non-jihadists.

Islam is the best religion.

Verse 142. Several times Allah is pictured as a deceiver. At first, one thinks this is a misprint. But eventually it settles in that Allah deliberately leads astray those who refuse to follow him. We remember our God who hardened Pharaoh's heart. But this same God hates the death of the wicked. Never does it surface in the Koran, to my knowledge, that tears are shed at the prospect of the lost having their doom sealed eternally.

The contradictions continue. In verse 78, Allah says that both misfortune and fortune are all from him. But in 79, "Whatever good fortune befalls you is from Allah, and whatever misfortune befalls you is from your own self." Ironically, in verse 82, "Allah" declares that "if it [the Koran] was from other than Allah, they would have found in it many inconsistencies."

Hidden away in a chapter about women is one of the biggest fantasies of all time, the denial of the crucifixion, and therefore resurrection, of Jesus Christ. This most reliable of all historic and Biblical facts is attacked head-on by Muhammad in 157ff: "And they did not kill him [Isa, son of Mary]...but it was made to appear to them...Yet Allah raised him up to himself...And on the day of resurrection, he [Isa] will be a witness against them."

Probably knowing what he has just done, he becomes very defensive. Muhammad insists that those who have become infidels have strayed far from the truth, and cannot be forgiven.

On that day, at the resurrection of which Muhammad speaks, his words will come back to haunt him.

As though the latter twisting of truth is not enough, Muhammad ends this sura with more falseness. "Surely the Christ Isa, son of Mary, is only a messenger of Allah and his word, which he cast to Mary, and a spirit from him... do not say 'Three'... surely Allah is only one god...Allah is sufficient as a guardian [not a son]...Christ does not disdain to be a servant of Allah..."

He concludes, "We have sent down to you a clear light... Allah will guide them to him a straight way."

Allah calls his darkness light and his crooked, straight. Let it be known by God's people that Jesus is the true light that comes into the world, and that His way is the only straight way. I need not tell you that Jesus did indeed die for your sins, that Jesus indeed was resurrected from the dead, that Jesus, along with the Father and the spirit [all three of which are mentioned in this passage!] constitute the Godhead, defined in Scripture and in church creeds for many centuries as the truth from God.

Muhammad's saying different has changed nothing, except the potential fate of one fourth of the current human race if they believe him. Let us pray fervently for Muslims everywhere.

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