

## A Christian's guide to the Koran, Lesson 33, Prophecies, wars, and wives

(Audio and pdf available on this website.)

Today, suras 30-37

30, "the Byzantines." Prophets need prophecies and fulfillments. Chapter 30 is hailed as such. The Romans, now known as Byzantines in their eastern empire, have just been defeated by the Persians. This took place in around 614-615. Muhammad here "predicts" that within a "few years" all will be reversed. In fact, the counter-offensive began seven or eight years later, and was not completed for three more years. Thus the "few years" stretches to at least 10 or 11. Geisler, in *Answering Islam* points out that there are other textual problems with the Arabic wording of the prophecy that all but negate the force intended. Though this is by far the closest possible thing to predictive prophecy that Muhammad intended, we must agree with his earlier assumption that Allah worked no miracles through him.

Of note in sura 30 is the oft-repeated notion of "what your right hand possessed", a reference to the common practice of the ownership of slaves. Surely in the New Testament writings one cannot rule out the possibility of believers acquiring such help. Let's be honest. But the refreshing difference in the writings from Jesus is that apostles actually directed portions of their letters to slaves. A runaway slave is actually the topic of one entire, though short, epistle of Paul. In it, he elevates Onesimus to the level of brother in Christ, and expects his brother/master Philemon to treat him as such.

I know of no words directed to slaves in the Koran, though much is said to slave-owners about their property, and the comments are not uplifting, to say the least.

Verse 45 reminds us that Allah does not love the infidel.

31, "Lokman". Lokman is the subject of a story that seems to be originated by Muhammad. It sounds a little like David instructing Solomon in the book of Proverbs. A long series of fatherly admonitions regarding Allah and Islam are addressed to "my son."

The son is given several of the names of Allah, names which occur throughout the Koran which I have failed to mention. As names of the Catholic popes of medieval times, or as the titles given to Communist dictators down through the years, they bear no resemblance to the person, and are repeated so very often, so as to be very easy to overlook. "He is the dear, the wise," "Allah is hearing, seeing." "Allah is knowing, aware," etc.

32. "The Worship." Here Allah is seen creating humans from clay but making his "seed" from "worthless water". Stranger still we read of a trip from heaven to earth that takes 1,000 earth years, but is equivalent to one heaven-day. But in 70:4 that same day trip taken by angels and the spirit takes 50,000 years. Fascinating?

33. "The parties." Without even looking at the chart provided in my Koran, I knew I was suddenly back to Medina when I started reading. You'll see why.

First we read of the banning of adoption for Muslims. "He did not make your adopted sons your sons." Send them back to their own fathers, says the Koran. If you don't know who the fathers are, you can be their brothers and friends, but no more.

As with so much of the Koran, if we could see behind the scenes, we would know exactly why a particular sura came at a particular time. In this case, per Dakdok, Muhammad had been captivated by desire for a woman who had once been married to Muhammad's adopted son. Allah takes the "credit" for the whole affair by saying, "we married her to you, so that it would not be a shame on the believers to marry the wives of their sons."

To further remove from shame, it seems, the adopted son is no longer his son, per this sura.

In verses 13ff, men complain that if they go to war with Muhammad, their houses will be left defenseless. The prophet tells them that "fleeing will not profit you." You'll still have no enjoyment even if you stay behind.

The history of these wars is tragic. Muhammad was in Medina as a fugitive, but slowly gained power there. One way he climbed up the ladder was by assembling raiding parties to attack caravans coming out of Mecca. Retaliation. As his military might swelled, so did his numbers. People are attracted to success. And intimidated by it.

In verse 21, "Apostle" Muhammad is called a noble example for the people. This in spite of the calls for revenge, the raids, the growing number of dead Arabians, his family life, his 15 wives. But then, we argue not with Allah. Our suspicion, though, is that it is Muhammad that has so designated himself.

In verse 26, in more not-so-endearing words, he tells of how he has terrorized Christians and Jews, killing some, imprisoning others, confiscating the property of still others.

Think quickly of the life of Jesus Christ, and how it compares to Muhammad's life. The thief comes to kill, to steal, to destroy. Jesus came to give abundant life. The contrast is blinding.

Verse 28. Next we learn that if your wife is worldly, you are to send her packing. On the contrary, if they are to stay with you, they are to be people of the house!

Even Proverbs 31, long before Jesus, described a very active woman totally involved in her husband's life yet totally able to prosper in the marketplace. And I don't need to tell you that worldliness, though indeed condemned for us too, is no cause for divorce.

Speaking of women, Muhammad was given in verse 50 of this chapter a special dispensation regarding the fairer gender. According to the Usama Dakdok translation, any believing (Muslim) woman was free to offer herself to the prophet, and not just for long term commitments we know of as marriage. Muhammad is told that he may withhold himself or give himself to any of his women at will, and that "there is no sin on you."

Records available seem to point to the fact that he had about 15 wives, although the cap is finally put on the total here in verse 52. No more wives are allowed, no exchanges are to be made, except of course for slaves etc.

Forgotten again in all this talk of Muhammad's privileges is the sorry plight of the women so used. Records indicate that some of those women eventually rebelled against this setup. But the Koran is specific that none of them were permitted to be re-married after his death (53). The privilege of being with the prophet came with a high price.

More privileges are accorded the prophet in 53ff. People who come to eat with him are to come at serving time and leave immediately following. No "familiar conversation" is to be had during this time, as this would "harm the prophet."

Finally in this very disturbing sura, hypocrites and agitators are to be caught and killed. The word "slaughtering" then follows.

34. "Sheba". We re-visit the queen of Sheba and Solomon in some unusual lines, perhaps the strangest of which concern the death of the great king. He leans on his staff one day, and dies. But does not fall. A worm slowly eats away at the wood until he topples it, king and all. The text then disintegrates into a condemning word against Sheba and the infidels.

35. "The Creator." I find nothing new in this sura, but I do see a line I have passed over several times which may need attention. "And there is not any nation, except that they have a warner gone to it." Muhammad sees himself as the great warner of all times. But he implies here that every nation has at least one person like himself who warns all the people of his particular nation. I am not sure that any proof can be offered of this, but he was certainly convinced thereof.

36. "Ys". I have found this sura to be the most incomprehensible of all so far, starting with the title, which has no Arabic meaning, per the translator. Simply two Arabic letters. I will not say that there is no deep hidden meaning within all these lines. But I remind you here that I am but visiting the Koran, with Bible in hand. As I see things that alarm me and need to be reported to the church, I speak. The other things I will pass by.

Verse 69 reminds us that Allah is opposed to the poets who opposed Muhammad, and that the Koran is "clear." Such has not been my experience.

37. Finally for today, sura 37, "the assembled ranks", mentioned only in verse 1. In this chapter is further described heaven, where there is non-alcoholic wine and the ultimate in sexual pleasures. Muhammad was unaware of the true pleasures that are at the right hand of the Father forevermore, and that Jesus said our life in that day will be more angelic than human when it comes to the functions of the body. The prophet simply did not know these things.

It is also in this sura that Muhammad tries to imply that Ishmael is the son of Abraham that was to be sacrificed, and that for being so obedient, Abraham was given Isaac as an extra blessing.

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