ISIS Beheadings & the Qur'an

*By Harry Osborne*

In recent weeks, the barbaric actions of ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) have again brought the connection of Islam and violence to the forefront. They have broadcast the beheadings of two innocent Americans and engaged in mass executions of those told to either convert to Islam or be killed. This is not the first case of slaughter perpetrated by Muslims claiming guidance from the Qur'an. It is an undeniable fact of history that Islam was spread through the Middle East and into Spain by means of the sword in the first two centuries following Islam's origin. Mohammed himself led his followers to conquer territory giving the inhabitants their choice of two fates – either convert to Islam or be killed.

As the recent barbarity has resurged, there has been a near absence of denials that such atrocities are connected with "true Islam" or the teachings of the Qur'an. In fact, establishing a “caliphate” for much of the Middle East and Africa is the stated purpose of ISIS. Simply put, they want to bring governance based on the tenets of the Qur'an.

What does the Qur'an instruct its followers about acts of violence to further its cause? The following quotations are taken from the widely respected English translation of the Qur'an produced by Abdullah Yusuf Ali with all punctuation and spelling left unchanged:

"Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have Turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith. But if they cease, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. And fight them on until there is no more Tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah, but if they cease, Let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression... If then any one transgresses the prohibition against you, Transgress ye likewise against him" (Surah 2:190-194).

"Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not. They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: 'Fighting therein is a grave (offence); but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah, to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members.' Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you Turn back from their faith and die in unbelief, their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the Hereafter; they will be companions of the Fire and will abide therein. Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah, - they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah" (Surah 2:216-218).

" Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you when ye with His permission Were about to annihilate your enemy, - until ye flinched and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed it after He brought you in sight (of the booty) which ye covet. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter" (Surah 3:151-152).

"Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home). Unto all (in Faith) Hath Allah promised good: But those who strive and fight Hath He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward" (Surah 4:95).

" O Prophet. rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding. For the present, Allah hath lightened your (task), for He knoweth that there is a weak spot in you: But (even so), if there are a hundred of you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred, and if a thousand, they will vanquish two thousand, with the leave of Allah. for Allah is with those who patiently persevere. It is not fitting for an apostle that he should have prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land" (Surah 8:65-69).

"But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them" (Surah 9:5).

"But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and taunt you for your Faith, - fight ye the chiefs of Unfaith: for their oaths are nothing to them: that thus they may be restrained. Will ye not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger, and took the aggressive by being the first (to assault) you? Do ye fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whom ye should more justly fear, if ye believe! Fight them, and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of Believers… Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (Surah 9:12-14, 29).

"Go ye forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of Allah… Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain… O ye who believe! fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him" (Surah 9:41, 111, 123).

These are only a few of the over 100 verses in the Qur'an encouraging violence as a means to spread Islam. In the Hadith, Mohammed is purported to have said, "Know that paradise is under the shades of the sword" (4:73). May God hasten the day when our citizens and especially our officials see that Islam is **not** a "peaceful religion" and the Qur'an itself clearly shows its carnal, barbaric and hate-filled nature.

The aim of Mohammed was that his followers bear the sword to advance Islam and kill those who would not submit to its teachings. But Jesus taught the establishment of a different kind of kingdom. He said, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here”* (Jn. 18:36). And how did Jesus instruct His disciples to behave towards those persecuting them for their faith? *“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust”* (Matt. 5:44-45). The truth of the gospel provides all of the power needed to draw men to a life of faith in Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:17). It is a sign of Islam’s error and the weakness of the Qur’an that it must threaten to kill people to coerce unbeliever into carnal submission.