

A Survey of

**OLD TESTAMENT
INTRODUCTION**

by

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Appendix 2

ANACHRONISMS AND HISTORICAL INACCURACIES IN THE KORAN

SURA 11—HOUND

:42-43. Noah's (unnamed) son is said to have refused to take refuge in the ark while the flood waters were rising, and despite his father's plea, chose rather to flee to a mountaintop, from which he was swept away by a wave. (Gen 6-7 indicates that Noah had only three sons, and that they all entered the ark. Gen 10 gives the line of descendants from each.)

SURA 12—JOSEPH, PEACE BE ON HIM

:11-20. Joseph did not go seeking his brother up at Dothan (as Gen 37 records), but rather the brothers, having already plotted his death, persuaded Jacob to let him go with them simply for fun and sport. Having gotten him into their power, they put him down into a well with water in it (rather than a dry pit). Nor was it they who sold him to the passing merchantmen, but rather a chance wayfarer who had come to the well to draw water. He sold the boy to the merchants "for a few dirhams" (rather than the substantial price of twenty shekels of silver, as Gen 37:28 states.)

:21-32. His Egyptian owner's wife (Potiphar's name is not given), in her attempt to seduce him, tore his shirt from behind (rather than from in front) in her pursuit of him—a fact observed by Potiphar's canny servant, and which served to expose the falsity of her charge. Later she admitted to her women friends that this was the case, yet in some unexplained way she managed to get Joseph into jail all the same.

:36-55. In jail, Joseph tried to convert the two "youths" (i.e., Pharaoh's butler and baker) to "Islam" and away from idolatry. Years later, the surviving youth (the butler) remembered Joseph's dream-interpreting ability, went to him in jail with a report of the substance of the king's dream (rather than the king's relating it to him directly in the palace), and got an interpretation from him which he then relayed to Pharaoh. As a result the king placed Joseph in charge of the nation's grain supply. (The rest of the story, with disclosure to the ten brothers, etc., closely follows the account in Gen 40-45).

SURA 26—THE POETS

:55-60. In Egypt, the Israelites were stated by Pharaoh to be but "a scanty band" (in contrast to Ex 1:9). As they are permitted to leave Egypt, they are said to be forsaking "their gardens and fountains and splendid dwellings." Apparently they had not been subjected to slavery at all (for no mention is made of it), but rather had enjoyed wealth and luxury while in Egypt. (This renders the whole motive for deliverance of God's covenant people from Egypt rather obscure.)

SURA 2—THE COW

:57, 61. During the exodus, the Israelites became tired of manna and demanded vegetables from the soil. After scolding them, Moses said, "Get down to Egypt, for you shall have what you asked." They proceeded to do so: "And they returned with wrath from God." (The record in Exodus-Numbers makes it clear that while discontented Israelites spoke of returning to Egypt, none of them actually did so.)

In this connection, it is stated v. 61: "They disbelieved the signs of God, and slew the Prophets unjustly; this, for they rebelled and transgressed." On this passage, see Rodwell's footnote: "This passage (cf. 26:59) is one of the numerous anachronisms which abound in the Koran and prove the gross ignorance of the Arabian prophet" (Koran, trans. J. M. Rodwell, Everyman's Library [New York: Dutton, 1909], p. 344).

:249. When King Saul of Israel marched forth with his forces, he said, "God will test you by a river. He who drinks of it shall not be of my band; but he who shall not taste of it, drinking a drink out of the hand excepted, shall be of my band." (Rodwell's footnote here calls attention to Muhammed's confusion here between Saul and Gideon. Cf. Judg 7:5-8.)

SURA 3—THE FAMILY OF IMRAN

Rodwell's introductory note to this Sura points out that Muhammed supposed that Imran (or Amram) was the father of the Virgin Mary—"Mary" being "Maryam" or Miriam, in Arabic. Cf. Sura 66:12, "Mary the daughter of Imran," who remained a virgin after marriage and motherhood. He also supposed that Mary and Elizabeth were sisters, and along with Zecharias, John the Baptist, and Jesus, they made up the family of Imran. It is just possible, as some Muslim authors assert, that Muhammed thought that Miriam's soul and body were miraculously preserved until the time of Jesus (1400 years!), in order that she might become His mother, Mary. This he may have gotten from the Talmudists, who fabled that the Angel of Death and the worm of corruption had no power over the body of Miriam (cf. Babba Bathra 17, and Josephus. Antiquities. 4:4:6). Another source for this account may have been the Protevangelium of James, iv, which states: "And Anna said, 'As the Lord my God

lives, he shall be a minister to Him all his days,'” referring to the future career of her offspring. Thus the wife of Imran says here (Sura 3:31): “O my Lord, I vow to Thee what is in my womb, for Thy special service; accept it from me, for Thou hearest, knowest!”

:41. Zacharias said to the angel, “Lord, give me a token.” He said, “Thy token shall be that for *three days* thou shalt speak to no man but by signs.” (Lk 1:18-20 makes it clear that he was to remain speechless until the promised child should be born, or about nine or ten *months*.)

:55. “Remember when God said, ‘O Jesus, verily I will cause thee to die [or, this *mutawafika* may also be rendered: “take thee unto Myself”], and will take thee up to Myself, and deliver thee from those who believe not.’” (Rodwell’s footnote here: Muhammed apparently believed that God took the dead body of Jesus to heaven—for three hours, according to some—while the Jews crucified a man who resembled him. Cf. Sura 4:156; Sura 19:34. Muhammed supposed Jesus to have died a natural death, though it is nowhere stated how long He remained in this state.)

SURA 61—BATTLE ARRAY

:6. “And remember when Jesus the son of Mary said, ‘O children of Israel, of a truth I am God’s apostle to you to confirm the law which was given before me, and to announce an apostle that shall come after me whose name shall be Aḥmad.’” (Rodwell notes: This apparently Muhammed got from the title *Parakletos* which Jesus assigned to the Holy Spirit in Jn 16:7 et al., which Muhammed confused with *periklytos* (famous, praised), for which the Arabic would be Aḥmad or Muḥammad.)

SURA 5—THE TABLE

:119. “And when God shall say, ‘O Jesus, son of Mary, hast thou said to mankind, “Take me and my mother as two Gods beside God,”’ he shall say, ‘Glory be to Thee! It is not for me to say that which I know to be not the truth. Had I said that, verily Thou wouldst have known it; Thou knowest what is in me.’” (This involves a complete misunderstanding of the Trinity, with Mary as a third person, rather than the Holy Spirit. It also implies that Jesus denied He was the Son of God; cf. Mk 14:61-62 and related passages.)