

SURAH 100:1-11

FAITH: Islam | TEXT: Surah 100 (Al-Adiyat) | VOLUME: The Meaning of the Holy Quran | AUTHOR: Rashad Khalifa

OVERVIEW

Surah 100, titled 'The Courser' or 'The Chargers' (here translated as 'The Fast Gallopers' by Khalifa), is a short but potent chapter from the Meccan period. It opens with a dramatic series of oaths sworn by war horses charging into battle, panting, striking sparks with their hooves, and raiding at dawn. This violent, energetic imagery serves as a metaphor for the chaotic and aggressive nature of human striving when disconnected from the Divine. The text transitions abruptly in verse 6 to its central indictment: the human being is 'unappreciative' (kanood) of his Lord. This ingratitude is evidenced by a fierce, excessive love for material wealth. The Surah concludes with an eschatological warning, reminding the reader that the contents of the graves will be scattered and the secrets of the hearts ('breasts') will be extracted and exposed. The final verse asserts God's total cognizance of humanity's inner state, establishing Him as the ultimate Judge from whom nothing is hidden. In the context of Rashad Khalifa's translation, the language is modernized but retains the traditional warning of accountability without an explicit offer of mediation.

KEY FIGURES

The Lord (Rabb), The Human Being (Al-Insan), The Fast Gallopers (War Horses/Metaphor)

DOCTRINES ANALYZED

1. DIVINE OMNISCIENCE

Assertion: God is fully aware of all human actions and hidden secrets, specifically at the time of judgment.

"They will find out, on that day, that their Lord has been fully Cognizant of them. [100:011]"

Evangelical Comparison: The text asserts that God is 'fully Cognizant' (Al-Khabir), particularly regarding the secrets 'brought out' from the hearts. Evangelical theology similarly teaches that God knows the secrets of the heart (Psalm 44:21, Hebrews 4:13). However, in this text, this attribute is marshaled exclusively as a warning of impending judgment. In the Gospel, God's knowledge of our secret sins is the prerequisite for the specific atonement of Christ; He knows us fully yet loves us (Romans 5:8). Here, the knowledge serves to convict the ungrateful human without a concomitant offer of grace.

2. HUMAN DEPRAVITY (INGRATITUDE)

Assertion: The natural state of the human being is one of ingratitude toward God and obsession with materialism.

"The human being is unappreciative of his Lord... He loves material things excessively. [100:006, 100:008]"

Evangelical Comparison: The text diagnoses the human condition as 'unappreciative' (often translated as ungrateful or obstinate). This parallels Romans 1:21, where the root of human rebellion is identified: 'neither were they thankful.' The text further identifies the 'excessive love' of material things as a symptom of this spiritual sickness. While the diagnosis is similar to Evangelical anthropology, the implied cure in Islam is a return to submission and gratitude through self-effort, whereas Evangelicalism posits that the heart must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26, John 3:3) because the 'natural man' cannot submit to God (Romans 8:7).

3. ESCHATOLOGICAL EXPOSURE

Assertion: A future Day of Judgment will physically resurrect the dead and expose all hidden thoughts and motives.

"Does he not realize that the day will come when the graves are opened? And all secrets are brought out. [100:009-010]"

Evangelical Comparison: The text describes the 'opening of graves' and the extraction of secrets. This is a literal resurrection and a judgment based on the interior life, not just exterior actions. Evangelicalism affirms that 'God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ' (Romans 2:16). The divergence lies in the outcome: for the Muslim, this exposure is a terrifying weighing of deeds/intentions. For the Christian in Christ, the 'secrets' have been dealt with at the Cross, and there is 'no condemnation' (Romans 8:1), meaning the judgment of secrets does not result in damnation for the believer.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Divergence Status: Yes

Theological Gap: Surah 100 illustrates the fundamental gap between Islamic and Evangelical soteriology. Both agree on the diagnosis: humans are ungrateful, materialistic, and accountable to an All-Knowing God. However, the Quranic solution is 'Warning' leading to 'Submission' (Islam). The text assumes that if a human realizes the danger (v9), they can correct their behavior (v6, v8). Evangelicalism posits that the 'secrets of the heart' are so depraved that mere warning is insufficient; a substitutionary death is required to satisfy the justice of the 'Cognizant' Lord. There is no Christ-figure in this text to absorb the terror of the judgment; the individual stands alone before the Galloping Judgment.

Shared Values:

Reality of Judgment Day; Resurrection of the dead; God's Omniscience; Rejection of materialism; Human tendency toward ingratitude

Friction Points:

1. [Critical] Christology (Mediator) – The text presents a direct confrontation between the sinner and the Judge without an Intercessor.
2. [Major] Sola Gratia (Grace Alone) – Implies that escaping judgment depends on the human changing their own attitude (becoming appreciative) rather than receiving grace.
3. [Critical] Justification – Judgment is based on the 'secrets brought out,' implying a weighing of deeds/thoughts, contrasting with justification by faith where sins are covered.

Semantic Warnings:

"Unappreciative (Kanood)"

In Text: A state of obstinate ingratitude that borders on or constitutes disbelief (Kufr).

Evangelical: Ingratitude is a sin, but 'unbelief' in the Bible specifically refers to the rejection of Christ's work.

Example: *In this text, being 'unappreciative' is the primary indictment leading to judgment. In the Bible, one can be struggling with gratitude yet still be justified by faith in Christ.*

SOTERIOLOGY

Salvation Defined: Implicitly defined as escaping the terror of the Day when secrets are exposed.

How Attained: By implication: through gratitude to the Lord and detachment from material wealth (reversing the indictment of verses 6-8).

Basis of Assurance: None offered in this text. The tone is purely warning.

Comparison to Sola Fide: Directly opposes Sola Fide. The text suggests that the human's internal state (gratitude/detachment) is the basis for the verdict, whereas Sola Fide teaches that Christ's external righteousness is the basis.

MANDATES & REQUIREMENTS

Implicit Obligations:

1. Acknowledge and appreciate the Lord (countering verse 6)
2. Curb the excessive love of material wealth (countering verse 8)
3. Live in constant awareness of the coming Judgment (verses 9-11)

EVANGELISM TOOLKIT

Discovery Questions:

1. The text says God is 'fully Cognizant' of us and that all secrets will be brought out. How does that make you feel about your private thoughts?
2. Verse 6 says the human being is unappreciative. Do you feel you have been appreciative enough to satisfy a perfect God?
3. If all your secrets are exposed on Judgment Day, what is your plan to deal with the shameful ones?

Redemptive Analogies:

1. The Exposure of Secrets – We all fear our secrets being known. The Gospel addresses this not by hiding them, but by Christ bearing the shame of them publicly on the cross. [Romans 2:16, Hebrews 4:13, Psalm 32:1-5 (Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered).]
2. The Charging Horse (Urgency) – The suddenness of the raid represents the suddenness of death or judgment. We need a refuge before the raid comes. [Hebrews 6:18 (We who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us).]

Spiritual Weight:

1. Fear of Exposure [Severe] – The believer lives with the knowledge that every private thought and secret motive is being recorded and will be publicly 'brought out.' There is no promise here that these secrets will be covered or washed away, creating a burden of profound shame and anxiety.
2. Performance/Gratitude Debt [Moderate] – The accusation that man is 'unappreciative' creates a debt of gratitude that can never be fully repaid. The believer must constantly strive to prove they are not 'kanood' (ungrateful), but human nature makes perfect gratitude impossible.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Knowledge Source: Direct Revelation (Wahy)

Verification Method: Introspection and observation. The text asks 'Does he not realize?' implying that observation of the world and self-reflection should lead to these conclusions.

Evangelical Contrast: Biblical epistemology relies on the self-revelation of God in history through Jesus Christ and the written Word (Hebrews 1:1-2). This text relies on the rhetorical power of the Quranic oath and an appeal to innate human knowledge (Fitra) that has been suppressed.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Dating: Meccan Period (Early)

Authorship: Attributed to Muhammad (recited by him); Translation by Rashad Khalifa (1978).

Textual Issues: Khalifa's translation is generally standard here, though he emphasizes 'The Meaning' rather than literal word-for-word. His later '19 code' theories often influenced his translation choices, but Surah 100 is largely free of controversial '19-based' alterations compared to other sections.