

CONTENTS



AN OVERVIEW OF ISLAM	1
CHAPTER ONE — <i>The Development of Islam</i>	2
<i>Life Before Mubammad</i>	3
<i>Mubammad—The Great Prophet</i>	2
<i>The Middle East</i>	5
CHAPTER TWO — <i>The Spread of Islam</i>	6
<i>The Caliphs (632 - 661)</i>	6
<i>The Umayyads (661 - 750)</i>	7
<i>The Beginning of Islam Expansion</i>	7
<i>The Abbasids (750 - 1258)</i>	8
<i>The Crusades: A Fight for the Holy Lands</i>	9
<i>The Mongols</i>	10
<i>Three Powerful Muslim Monarchies</i>	11
I. The Ottoman Empire	11
II. The Safavid Dynasty	11
III. The Mughal Empire	12
<i>The Rise of the West: Colonialism and its Aftermath</i>	12
CHAPTER THREE — <i>Teachings and Practices</i>	14
<i>The Quran</i>	14
<i>The Mosque</i>	15
<i>The Five Pillars of Islam</i>	17
Pillar I - The Shahada	17
Pillar II - Salat	18
Pillar III - Zakat	18
Pillar IV - Sawm	18
Pillar V - Hajj	19
CHAPTER FOUR — <i>Islamic Law</i>	20
<i>Sharia</i>	20
<i>Muslim Actions</i>	20
<i>Sin and God's Forgiveness</i>	21
Good Deeds	21
Major Sins	21
CHAPTER FIVE — <i>Women in Islam</i>	22
<i>Men and Women Are Equal—Or Are They</i>	22
<i>Muslim Women and What They Wear</i>	23
CHAPTER SIX — <i>Islamic Sects</i>	24
<i>Sunnis and Shiites</i>	24
<i>Sufism</i>	25
CHAPTER SEVEN — <i>Arab Contributions</i>	26
<i>Islamic Architecture</i>	26
<i>Islamic Art</i>	27
<i>Arabic Literature</i>	30
<i>Arabic Contributions to Science</i>	32
CHAPTER EIGHT — <i>Islamic Holy Festivals and Holy Days of Observance</i>	34
CHAPTER NINE — <i>A Comparison of Islam with Other World Religions</i>	35
TEST	39
ANSWER KEY	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY & INTERNET SITES	47

CHAPTER ONE

The Development of Islam

Life Before Muhammad

Before Islam, people living in the Middle East (see map on page 5) were known as Arabs, as they are today. Their native language was and still is Arabic. All Arabs share a common history and culture.

Arabs before Islam were traders, farmers, nomads, and town-dwellers. They had many religions and worshiped a number of gods.

Muslim history begins with the story of Abraham, a prophet. It is believed that Abraham may have lived between 2100 and 1500 B.C. He is regarded by Muslims (and Jews) as the father of their people. Abraham is also considered to be the first monotheist (believer in one God).

Abraham and his wife's servant, Hagar, had a son named Ishmael. Hagar and Ishmael were sent away when Abraham's wife, Sarah, had a son, Isaac.

Hagar and Ishmael traveled to what came to be called the city of Mecca (the birthplace of Islam). There they found a sacred well. This well provided them with the water they needed to live.

When Ishmael grew to be an adult, Abraham visited him in Mecca. There, next to the sacred well, Abraham and Ishmael (a prophet, like his father) built a temple to God. This temple is called the Kaaba. It is the holiest shrine of the Islamic faith. In the wall of the Kaaba, the two prophets placed the Black Stone. Muslims believe the Black Stone fell from heaven as a sign of the first covenant between God and humankind.

Although the Kaaba was built as a temple to God, many Arabs before Islam filled it with idols that represented a number of gods. These Arabs then made pilgrimages there to worship the idols. It was not until Muhammad conquered



Mecca, in 630, that the Kaaba was cleansed of its idols and returned to its original state of holiness as a temple to the one God of Islam—Allah.

Muhammad – The Great Prophet

Islam began with the prophet Muhammad. Although Muhammad (his name means “the praised one”) is not the first Islamic prophet, he is believed by Muslims to be the last. The Quran cites Adam as the first prophet, with thousands falling between Adam and Muhammad, but only 25 listed by name. Some of those listed by name include Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus.

Muhammad was aware of Hebrew and Christian traditions and believed that God had already revealed himself in part through Moses and Jesus. However, Muhammad believed he was chosen to be God's messenger to deliver the final revelations of God to the people.

Muhammad was born in the Arabian city of Mecca, near the coast of the Red Sea in about 570. According to tradition,

Abraham's banishment of Hagar and Ishmael is a pivotal moment in the history of monotheism. Jews and Muslims both claim Abraham as their patriarch. Muslims believe themselves descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, and Jews through Isaac.

Words to remember:

Arabs
Abraham
Hagar
Ishmael
Mecca
Kaaba
Black Stone
idol
Allah
Quran



on the night of his birth, a star filled the sky with a bright light. Muhammad's parents died when he was young, so he was raised by his uncle. As a young man, Muhammad worked as a trade agent for a wealthy widow. At the age of twenty-five, he



According to Islam, the angel Gabriel spoke to Muhammad.

married this woman (who was fifteen years older than he) and had several children with her.

Muhammad was a successful caravan merchant. In the course of his many journeys, Muhammad had repeated encounters with Jews and Christians. Through them, he became interested in religious questions and grew increasingly uncomfortable with worldliness, greed, and the pagan worship in Mecca. He began to meditate in a cave on the mountain, Hira, outside the city.

There, one night, at age 40, in about 610, Muhammad is said to have received the first of his revelations from God. The angel Gabriel appeared to him and commanded him to recite words that later became part of the Quran. "Recite," Gabriel said, "in the name of the Lord who created man from clots of blood. Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One, who by the pen taught man what he did not know."

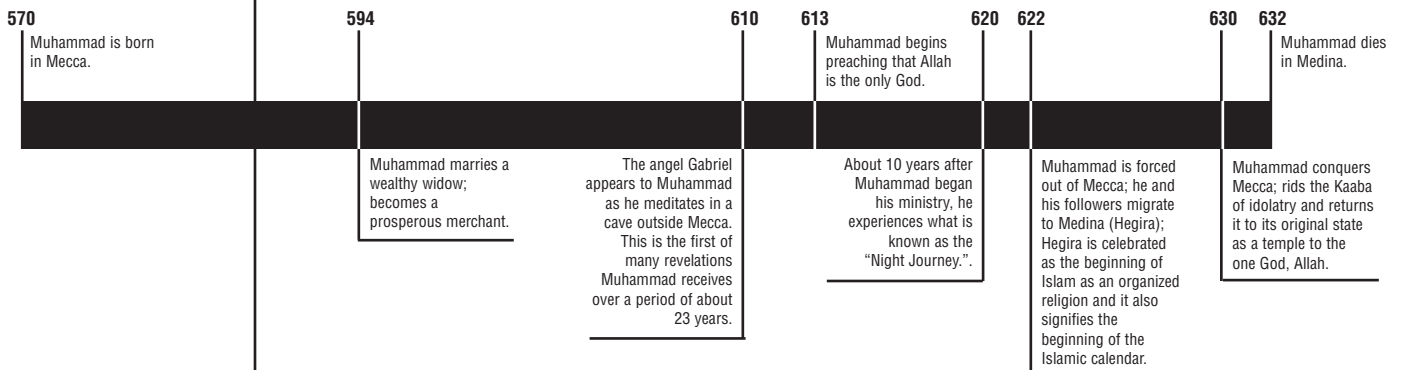
Initially frightened, Muhammad came to accept the revelations which were from then on frequently imparted to him. In 613, Muhammad began preaching the message of monotheism—a belief in the one true God. He also taught that idolatry was wrong. This concept was highly controversial, as Arabs had been worshipping a number of gods for many years.

At first, Islam was merely a local religion led by Muhammad, and Meccans tolerated his preaching. Some laughed at Muhammad and thought his teachings odd. But as he grew more confident and uncompromising, condemning the idolatry and immorality of his fellow townsmen, Muhammad was increasingly seen as a danger to the existing way of life and a threat to the Meccan economy. Merchants, in particular, feared that if Arabs became followers of Muhammad and stopped making pilgrimages to Mecca to worship idols at the Kaaba, they would stop spending money there, and the

Words to remember:

- Muhammad
- revelations
- angel Gabriel
- monotheism
- idolatry
- persecuted
- Hegira
- Prophet's Tomb

The Life of Muhammad (570–632)



merchants would no longer prosper. So, Muhammad and his followers were persecuted for their beliefs and for their disruption of Meccan life.

Fleeing persecution, Muhammad organized an exodus out of Mecca in 622. He and his small band of followers moved to the nearby city of Medina, 250 miles north, where they were welcomed. This migration is known as the Hegira. This momentous event is important for two reasons: it signifies the beginning of the Islamic calendar; and it recognizes the beginning of Islam as an organized religion.

While Muhammad was in Medina, he attempted to form alliances with Jews and Christians there on the basis of what he believed to be strong common elements in these three monotheistic religions. When his overtures failed, Muhammad began to define Islam differently. He changed the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca—an act whose political ramifications are still being felt today.

A skilled military leader, Muhammad resisted attacks on Medina by forces from Mecca and successfully led his own attack on Mecca with an army of 10,000 men in 630. Many people who once rejected Islam now embraced it. Muhammad ordered the destruction of idols that surrounded the Kaaba and restored the site to its original state—a temple to the one and only God, Allah.

Today, the Kaaba is Islam's holiest site.

Not long after Muhammad realized his quest for an Arab Islamic state—he ruled almost the entire Arabian peninsula—he died in Medina unexpectedly of fever on June 8, 632. His tomb in Medina is known as the Prophet's Tomb and it, too, is one of Islam's holy sites.



Section Review

1. How is Islam similar to Christianity and Judaism?
2. How is the role of prophet different in Islam than in other religions?
3. How is Muhammad different from other prophets you are familiar with?
4. How is Islam similar to your religion?
5. Why do you think Islam was feared and rejected at first?

Muhammad was a skilled military leader as well as a prophet.

Essay Ideas:

1. Compare Islam's holiest site (Kaaba) to a site you consider holy. Do you feel such sites are important, or perhaps irrelevant? Why?
2. Islam emphasizes moral behavior. What morals, if any, do you feel our society lacks today? If so, what do you feel has contributed to this situation? How do you think these can be reinstated?
3. People often stereotype people of other religions. What could you do to help dispel some of these stereotypes?
4. Name some material objects you feel people in our society worship. Tell why you think these things are worshiped.
5. Write about people today whom you feel are persecuted for their beliefs.
6. Imagine that God sent an angel with a message for you to give to the world. What might that message be?



THE MIDDLE EAST

Islam originated in an area known today as the Middle East. The Middle East is home to a large group of people known as Arabs who speak Arabic as their native language and share a common culture and history. Smaller ethnic groups living in this area include Iranians, Turks, Armenians, Copts, Jews, Greeks, and Kurds.

Most people living in the Middle East are Muslims.



The map above shows the geographic area known as Arabia in the year 610.

1. *Mecca is the birthplace of Islam. Look at this area on the map (left). Now circle the same area in blue on the map below and write its modern-day name.*

2. *The Middle East covers parts of northern Africa, southwestern Asia, and southeastern Europe. Scholars disagree on which countries make up the Middle East. Many say the region is comprised of these 17 countries: **Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.** Label these countries on the map below.*

3. *Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan also have large Muslim populations. Label these countries in green on the map below.*

