

World History

Basics of Islam

Name:

Section:

Directions: Use the following information sheet to help prepare to watch the Crash Course World History movie on Islam. As a class we will go over the information to ensure comprehension of the materials.

Origins

In the 7th century CE the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad, in the city of Mecca, who persuaded him to begin reciting the word of God and to act as a **Prophet**. Muslims believe that God sent Muhammad as the final prophet (much like he had sent Moses or Jesus) to help bring people back to the one true religion, which involved the worship of the one true God, which they called **Allah**.

Prophet: a member of some religions (such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) who delivers messages that are believed to have come from God.

Allah: The Islamic name for God.



Pre-Islamic Political Organization

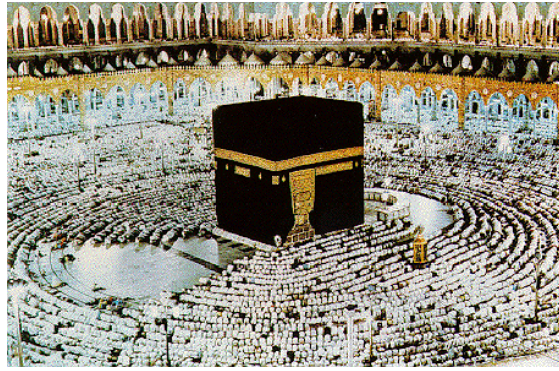
Muhammad was born into the Quraysh tribe living in the city of Mecca. The Arabian Peninsula was divided by these many different **tribes**, most of which still worship gods, similar to the ones the early Mesopotamians worshiped. To the north of the Arabian Peninsula were the Sassanian and Byzantine empires.

Tribe: a unit of social-political organization consisting of a number of families, clans, or other groups who share a common ancestry and culture.



Pre-Islamic Religious Organization

Because of its location in the Middle East the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula had been exposed to Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. The Arab people themselves mostly practiced a religion that was still very similar to that which was practiced by the Mesopotamians. The city of Mecca served as a center since it housed a temple like structure called the **Kaaba**, which held statues of many of the gods worshiped in.



The Quran

The **Muslim** holy book, called the Quran, is the written record of the revelations of Muhammad. Instead of it being a narrative like the Torah or the Bible, it is seen to be the actual word of God. Two of the main ideas of the Quran are strict monotheism, and taking care of those who are less fortunate than you.

Muslim: A follower of Islam.

The Five Pillars of Islam

Shahada – Profession of Faith

Salat – Ritualistic prayer 5 times a day in the direction of Mecca

Sawm – The month long fast during the month of Ramadan

Zakat – Charity, a requirement for non-poor Muslims to give a percentage of the money to the poor

Hajj – All Muslims who are able should travel to Mecca at least once in their lives.

Sharia Law

Islamic laws followed by the Umma. Different groups interpret the laws differently so there is not one single set of laws all Muslims follow. Islam is different from Christianity in that because of Sharia there is a long tradition of Political and religious law being one.

Umma: Muslims submit to the will of God, and when they do they become part of the community of believers.

Hijra

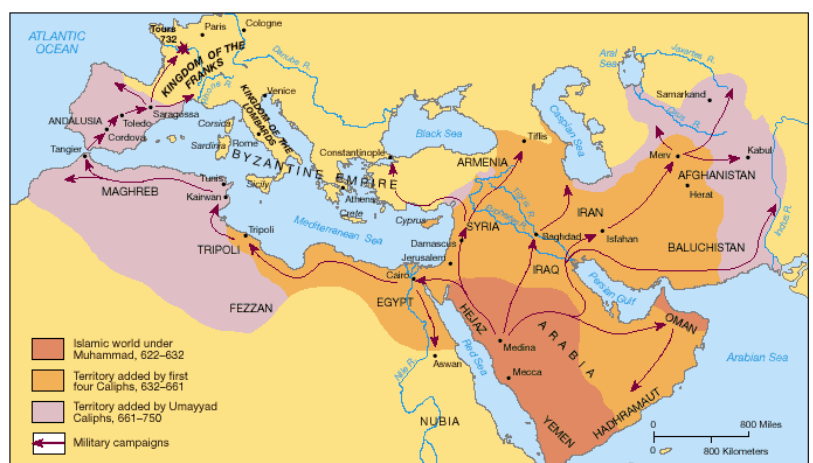
In the year 622 C.E. Muhammad was forced to leave Mecca and flee to Medina because of his preaching that went against the Quraysh tribe who was in power in Mecca. In Medina Muhammad gained support for Islam and he returned to Mecca in the year 630 C.E.

The Caliphs

After the death of Muhammad in 632 C.E. there was the question of who should be the political leader. Religiously the umma had the Quran to guide them, but there was disagreement on whether Abu Bakr (Muhammad's father-in-law) or Ali (Muhammad's son-in-law) should be the true political successor. This question led to civil war and still causes division between Muslims today.

Sunni Muslims: Believe Abu Bakr to be the true successor to Muhammad.

Shi'a Muslims: Believe Ali to have been the true successor to Muhammad



 The Spread of Islam. The rapid spread of Islam created within a century a unified cultural and economic zone from India to the Atlantic Ocean within.