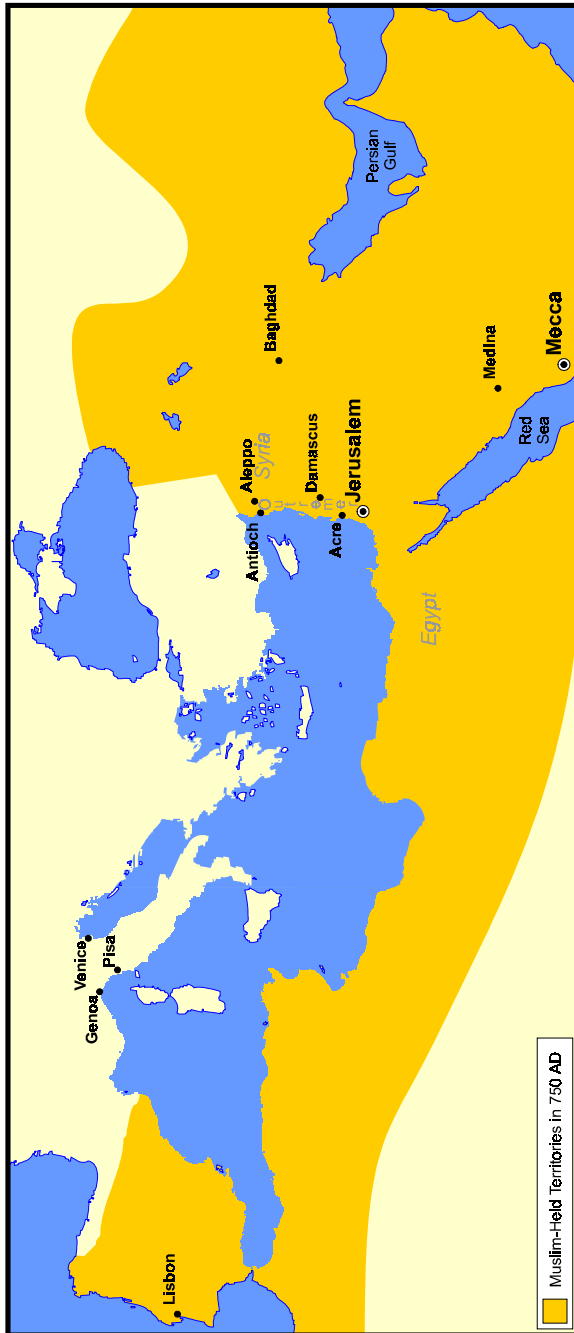


## A Two-Page History of the Muslim Faith and Culture



<http://www.users.fast.net/~acheson/muslimhistory.pdf>

## Timeline

- 570 AD Muhammad is born in Mecca.
- 595 AD Muhammad marries Khadija.
- 610 AD Muhammad receives a vision of the angel Gabriel in a cave on Mt. Hira.
- 622 AD Muhammad and his followers flee Mecca to escape death at the hands of Meccan polytheists. They settle in Medina, where Muhammad establishes the first Islamic state.
- 630 AD Muhammad conquers Mecca. Inhabitants are forced to convert to Islam. Their leaders receive positions of power within the new regime.
- 632 AD Death of Muhammad
- 632 AD Muhammad succeeded by the "four righteous caliphs." Authoritative Qur'an (Koran) compiled by Uthman.
- 661 AD Split forms between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims.
- 750 AD Muslims conquer most of Spain.
- 1096 AD First Crusade (People's Crusade) begins.
- 1098 AD Fatimid (Shi'ite) Muslims purchase surrender of Jerusalem from Seljuk (Sunni) Muslims.
- 1099 AD Crusaders capture and loot Jerusalem. Establishment of Outremer.
- 1146 AD Second Crusade begins, ends in failure
- 1171 AD Saladin brings Fatimids under Sunni control, uniting Muslim forces around Outremer.
- 1187 AD Jerusalem surrenders to Saladin's Muslims.
- 1189 AD Third Crusade begins.
- 1192 AD Third Crusade ends peacefully in truce.
- 1198 AD Fourth through Seventh Crusades fail to break
- 1270 AD Muslim power in Egypt.
- 1291 AD Acre, last remaining Crusader city in Outremer, recaptured by Muslim forces.

## Life of Muhammad

Muhammad was born in 570 AD in Mecca, a member of the Hashimite clan of the Quraishite tribe. His father Abdullah had died two months before his birth, and his mother Amina died when he was six. After his mother's death, Muhammad was raised by his grandfather (the guardian of the Ka'aba temple in Mecca) for two years, then by his uncle, Abu Talib, a shopkeeper.

Muhammad grew up as a shepherd, and was a successful caravan trader until he was twenty-five, when he married Khadija, a wealthy businesswoman from an Ebonite Christian background.

In 610 AD, at age 40, Muhammad became a prophet. He claimed to have seen a vision from an angelic being while meditating in a cave on Mount Hira. He was unsure of the meaning of this revelation at first, but after three years, and with the urging of his wife and friends, he began preaching a message of one god, holy judgement, and compassion towards the poor. He continued to claim new revelations from Allah for the rest of his life.

Most Muslims claim that Muhammad was illiterate, but this is questionable, since literacy would have been common given his background, and a necessity for his work as a caravan trader. There are also historical instances where he was said to read and write.

Facing violent opposition to his teachings from his own Quraish tribe, Muhammad was forced to flee Mecca to Medina on September 25, 622, an event now known as the *Hijra* (Hegira), and the starting point of the Muslim calendar. In Medina, Muhammad established the first Islamic state. It was at this time that he also established the doctrine of forcible conversion to Islam by conquest.

From 624 onwards, Muhammad fought a series of battles culminating in his conquest of Mecca in 630 AD. The Meccans were forced to convert to Islam, and the powerful Quraish and Umayyad clans were joined into the Islamic power structure by giving their leaders prominent positions in the military and government.

After the death of Khadija in 621, Muhammad married eleven other women. Muhammad died in 632 AD.

## Theological History of Islam

### Pre-Muhammad

Before Islam, the dominant Arab religion was polytheism. In the Ka'aba temple in Mecca, idols for 360 different gods were worshipped, as well as the Black Stone, a large black meteorite.

In addition, Muhammad may have been influenced by Khadija's Ebonite Christian background, as well as Nestorian Christianity, and some knowledge of Judaism.

### Time of Muhammad

Islam is a monotheistic faith. It is based on five central tenets, which are known as the 5 Pillars of Islam:

- Faith (Shahada), stated in the creed "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His prophet."
- Prayer (Salat)
- Charity (Zakat)
- Fasting (Sawm), esp. during the month of Ramadan.
- The Pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj).

Another doctrine of Islam is that of forced conversion. Inhabitants of Muslim-controlled areas are often forced to convert to Islam (though not always).

### Post-Muhammad Developments

For the first 29 years after Muhammad's death, Islam was ruled by a series of four caliphs. But in 661 AD, division broke out between two factions over who should rule the Muslim world.

The dominant Sunni Muslims believe that the caliph should be a member of Muhammad's Quraish clan, and be chosen by consensus.

The Shi'ites believe that the rightful successors are the descendants of 'Ali (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and the husband of Fatima, Muhammad's only child to survive to adulthood).

Other Muslim sects include the Druze, Admadiyya and Wahabbis (the Taliban are Wahabbis).

## The Crusades

By 750 AD, Muslim armies had captured North Africa, Palestine, Syria and most of Spain (see map). In 1071, Seljuk Turks, descendants of the Mongols and recent converts to Sunni Islam, shattered the forces of the Byzantine Empire at Manzikert. Emperor Alexius wrote to Pope Urban II for aid, expecting mercenary troops.

In 1095, Urban II issued the appeal that led to the First Crusade. He had a number of goals: to aid his fellow Christians in Syria, to avert the dangers that Christian pilgrims faced in making pilgrimages to the Holy Lands, and to unite Christendom against a common enemy.

The Crusaders, consisting of the armies of a number of noble lords (but no actual kings), captured Antioch from the Seljuk Turks in 1098, looting the city and slaughtering its inhabitants. Afterwards, the Crusaders marched their army out of Antioch and defeated the much larger Seljuk army in the field, seriously reducing the Seljuks' strength in the area.

The Crusaders were greatly aided by infighting between the Shi'ite Fatimids in Egypt and the Sunni Abbasids and Seljuk Turks in Syria. In 1098, The Fatimids took advantage of the Seljuks' defeat at Antioch and captured Jerusalem for themselves, after paying the Seljuk garrison to leave the city.

The Crusaders captured Jerusalem from the Fatimids in 1099. Again, the city was looted and many of its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants were killed.

The Crusaders then set about strengthening and establishing their new territory, which they called Outremer, literally "Beyond-the-Sea," because they travelled there by sea from Genoa, Pisa and Venice.

In 1144, Seljuk Turks under Nur al-Din conquered the city of Edessa. This posed a threat to Outremer.

In response, the Second Crusade was mounted in 1146 to shore up the holdings in Outremer. This crusade failed on nearly every level. The one bright spot was in Spain, where some of the Dutch and English Crusaders stopped on their way to the Crusade to help King Alfonso of Portugal retake Lisbon from the Muslims.

After the failure of the Second Crusade, the Seljuk Turks were able to continue to make gains in the eastern portion of Outremer, taking Damascus in 1154.

Meanwhile, the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt was waning rapidly, and both Christian and Seljuk armies attacked the region in 1164. In 1167, a treaty was signed under which the Fatimids would pay a huge annual tribute to the Christians in exchange for their support, and the Seljuk and Christian forces left the region. In 1168, Christian forces under the Knights Hospitallers broke the treaty with Egypt and attacked. The Egyptians then made an alliance with the Seljuks, who pushed out the Christians and installed a Kurd named Saladin (Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub), as vizier to the Fatimid caliph. Saladin began installing Sunni officials into key positions, and after the Fatimid caliph's death in 1171, he formally switched Egypt's allegiance to Sunni Islam.

After the death of Nur al-Din in 1174, Saladin took command of the united Muslim forces, and, backed by the wealth of Egypt, proceeded to conquer the remainder of Syria. He then defeated the Byzantine empire in 1176, and invaded Palestine in 1187, winning the peaceful surrender of Jerusalem after an unbreakable siege.

A Third Crusade, called by Pope Gregory VIII, began in 1189. The Crusaders, under the leadership of Richard I the Lion-Heart, defeated Saladin's army at Acre, then pushed towards Jerusalem, but realized they could not hold the city as long as Egypt remained under Saladin's control. In autumn of 1192, Richard made a shocking truce with Saladin: his sister would marry Saladin's brother, who would rule all Palestine, leaving the Crusaders at peace in their coastal cities, and giving Christian pilgrims free passage to Jerusalem. Saladin's outstandingly chivalrous behavior during the entire campaign had deeply impressed the Crusaders.

The Third Crusade was the last of the great Crusades. A number of smaller Crusades would be made over the next hundred years, attacking Muslim forces in Egypt, as well as heresy at home in Europe. The Crusaders' holdings in Outremer continued to diminish, however, and in 1291 the last Crusader city of Acre fell, leaving control of the region in Muslim hands.