The Rise of Islam
(600-1200 C.E.)
The Bedouin people were tribal and nomadic. Some had settled down into towns and engaged in trading.
Oases were scattered. cities or towns were centered around the Oases. Trade routes would go from city to city, following the oases.
Another important city was Mecca.
Before Muhammad

- Mecca was both a prosperous trade center as well as a religious center.
- It held a shrine called the Ka’ba that, legend has it, was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. (This attracted both Jews and Christians as they both identified with these stories)
- Because Mecca was a religious center, fighting and weapons weren’t allowed. This enabled more effective trading to take place as well as made it an attractive pilgrimage site.
Who was Muhammad?

- Born around 570 in the city of Mecca
- He was a merchant and prospered from several successful caravans sent to Syria.
- He married his employer Khadija who was his senior by several years.
- Khadija bore him several children among whom four daughters survived.
- All but one predeceased their father.

Muhammad is the founder of the religion of Islam and is regarded by Muslims as a prophet of God (الله, Allāh), the last and the greatest law-bearer in a series of prophets: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other prophets. Muslims consider him the restorer of the uncorrupted original monotheistic faith. He was also active as a diplomat, merchant, philosopher, orator, legislator, reformer, military general, and, according to Muslim belief, an agent of divine action.
Muhammad’s Religious Experience

• Discontented with life in Mecca, he retreated to a cave in the surrounding mountains for meditation and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of Ramadan, where he received his first revelation from God.

• He was overcome by visions and voices.

• He realized it was the angel Gabriel who was telling him – ‘iqra’ or ‘recite’

• These Suras became the Q’uran (Koran).

• Many of the early recitations dealt with judgments and the end times.

The cave Hira in the mountain Jabal al-Nour where, according to Muslim beliefs, Muhammad received his first revelation.
Muhammad’s Religious Experience

• Three years after this event Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "surrender" to Him is the only way acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God.

• The duty of human beings is to surrender to this unique omnipotent god, the Merciful, the Compassionate; to surrender from the bottom of one’s heart, with one’s whole soul and mind.

• The word “Islam” means this complete surrender to the Divine will.

• One who practices such a surrender is a Muslim. Same root as salam – peace.
The Hijra – 622 CE

• Merchants of Mecca did not take to Muhammad’s message and he left the city. Much of Mecca’s economy is built on people visiting the Kaaba and its idols as part of a pilgrimage. If Mohammed’s new religion starts taking root, then people will stop coming and their economy will fall apart.

• He went to the city of Medina because he had been asked by the leaders there to share his message with them.

• This journey to Medina is called the *hijra* or hegira.

• Muhammad was now convinced that he was preaching the true message of Abraham and Jesus that had been distorted by the Jews and the Christians.
The site from which Mohammed is believed to have ascended is one of the holiest sites in Islam and is where the Dome of the Rock is in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount.
This same rock is believed by Jews to be the slab upon which Abraham bound Isaac and nearly sacrificed him (in Islamic tradition, it was Ishmael). And that it was the rock upon which the Ark of the Covenant was put.
The Return to Mecca

- Eventually war erupts between the Medina faithful and the Meccans.
  - Mohammed started raiding caravans headed to Medina. He believed this piracy was justified because the Meccans had taken the property of the Muslims when they fled to Medina.
The Battle of Badr

[Map showing the battle locations and movements]
The Battle of Badr

• 300 Muslims confront 1,000 Meccans.

• Mohammed takes up a defensive position and relies on range weapons such as slings and arrows.

• The Muslims also had religious fervor on their side while the Meccans weren’t too enthusiastic.

• About 70 Meccans are killed and another 70 are taken prisoners. Only 14 Muslims fall.
War continues and Mohammed conquers Mecca in 630. He spares the populace that had opposed him and most convert to Islam. He proceeds to destroy all the idols in the Kaaba. Hence, Islam takes root.
The Ka’ba

The Ka’ba predates Islam. It was originally a pagan site with hundreds of idols surrounding it.

In 630, Muhammad and his followers returned to Mecca as conquerors, and he destroyed the 360 idols in and around the Ka’ba. While destroying each idol, Muhammad recited [Qur'an 17:81] which says

"Truth has arrived and falsehood has perished for falsehood is by its nature bound to perish.”
• The collection of the teachings Muhammad received from Allah. Can only be read in Arabic.
• Muslims regard the Qur’an as the culmination of divine messages that started with those revealed to Adam, regarded in Islam as the first prophet, and continued with the Scrolls of Abraham, the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospel.
• These books are not explicitly included in the Qur’an, but are recognized therein.
• The Qur’an also refers to many events from Jewish and Christian scriptures, some of which are retold in distinctive ways from the Bible and the Torah.
• The Qur'an itself expresses that it is the book of guidance. Therefore it rarely offers detailed accounts of historical events; the text instead typically placing emphasis on the moral significance of an event rather than its narrative sequence.

Muslims believe the Qur'an itself to be the main miracle of Muhammad.
The Five Pillars of Islamic Faith

• Faith – “There is only one god and Muhammad is his prophet.”

• Fasting – During the month of Ramadan – changes every year because the Islamic calendar is lunar.

• Alms- Similar to the Christian tithe. Must give a portion of their income to charity and to spreading the faith.

• Prayer – Must pray five times a day at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and in the evening. Must be in Arabic. Must face Mecca.

• Hajj – Pilgrimage to Mecca. Must be made once in your lifetime. However, the elderly and the poor can send a representative.
The Hajj

Each pilgrim wears a simple draping garment so that everyone is equal.
• Different parts to it, but it culminates with walking seven times around the Ka’ba to replicated Mohammed riding seven times around it when he conquered Mecca.
Unifying Forces of Islam

**Shariah** - System or code of laws
- Regulated moral behavior, family life, business, govt. etc.
- Helps followers to interpret the Koran and to apply it to everyday life

**No separation of church and state**
- Applied Koran to *all* aspects of life (secular and religious)
- Theocracy

**Arabic language**
- Koran and prayer in Arabic only
Why Was Islam So Attractive?

- Orthodox Christianity had become so identified with Greek culture that it seemed totally foreign and unrelated to the life of the Arabs.
- Zoroastrianism was also too closely associated with Persian culture and so was not considered a real option for the Arabs.
- The Byzantine and Persian empires (especially the Byzantine) were considered oppressive and cruel. To such an extent that during the Byzantine-Persian wars the Jews sided with the Persians.
ISLAM’S ATTRACTIVENESS

• Provided an alternative to old Arab class structures. Giving poorer Arab a more equal status with the more prestigious families.
• Eliminated the inter-clan fighting by removing local gods and spirits and replacing them with worship of Allah alone.
• The revered “black stone” (al-Hajar-ul-Aswad) becomes the symbolic stone for all Arabs and eventually all Muslims (since not all Muslims are Arabs).
The Caliphs

- The death of Muhammad in 632 created confusion in the Muslim community, since Muhammad had left no details as to who should succeed him.
- After a heated discussion by the senior members of the community, Abu Bakr was selected as the first caliph or “deputy”.

- Abu Bakr became head of the state, chief judge, religious leader, military commander.
- The region ruled over by the caliph is referred to as a “caliphate”.

The Spread of Islam under Abu Bakr, 632-34 CE

- Damascus
- Jerusalem
- Medina
- Mecca
Caliphs and Caliphates

• Caliphs become religious AND political leaders
• Caliphate = dynasty of Islamic caliphs
  • Rashidun or Rightly Guided Caliphs (632-661)
    • Abu Bakr; Umar; Uthman; Ali
  • Umayyad (661-750, centered in Damascus)
  • Abbasid (750-1258, centered in Baghdad)
  • Córdoba (756-1031, Iberia)
  • Fatimid (909-1171, North Africa, Shi’a)
  • Almohad (1145-1269, North Africa, Iberia)
  • Ottoman (1517-1922, based in modern
Those Caliphs who truly followed in the Muhammad's footsteps are called 'The Rightly-Guided Caliphs'.

- Abu Bakr
- Umar
- Uthman
- Ali.

All four were among the earliest and closest companions of Muhammad.
WHY DID ISLAM EXPAND?

• Like other migrations and invasions we have looked at they began because of population pressures. The Arabs had become more numerous and needed more room and resources.

• The Byzantine and Persian empires were weak because of their continuous wars with each other and both (especially the Byzantine) were seen as oppressive.

• When the Islamic/Arab armies came out of Arabia and into Palestine and Mesopotamia they were hailed as liberators by both Jews and Christians.
The Expanding Caliphates
Divisions Within Islam

Two sects develop after the death of Muhammad

Sunnis (90%) believed caliph (leader) should be chosen by Muslim leaders

Shi’ites (10%) believed the caliph had to be a relative of Muhammad
Sunni

- The largest of the three sects.
- Dominated the early Islamic empires.
- Believe that any righteous Muslim can become a Caliph.
- This ideas was heavily supported by the Umayyad clan after Muhammad’s death.
Shia

- Originally led by Muhammad’s father-in-law and his cousin/nephew Ali.
- Believed that the Caliph could only come from the family of the prophet.
- Dominates Southern Iraq and most of Iran.
- Ali was killed/martyred at the battle of Karbala in modern day Iraq.
- Being on the losing side is a sign of righteousness – not unlike early Christianity and Judaism.
Sufi

- The mystical branch of Islam.
- The Whirling Dervishes of Turkey are the most famous representatives.
- Because of its mystical leanings, it was the ideal form of Islam for India because it fit in well with Hindu mysticism.
The Role of Sufis

- Most effective missionaries; referred to as “Islamic Mystics”
- Encouraged devotion to Allah by passionate singing or dancing
- Sufis led ascetic and holy lives, won respect of the people
- Encouraged followers to revere Allah in their own ways
- Tolerated those who associated Allah with other beliefs
Abrahamic Religions

- Monotheistic faiths of Middle Eastern origins that trace a common origin to Abraham.
  - Judaism
  - Christianity
  - Islam
Five Pillars of Islam

- **Shahada (The Creed)**
  - There is only one god
  - Muhammad is his messenger

- **Salat (Prayer)**
  - Pray 5x per day
  - Face Mecca

- **Sawm (Fasting)**
  - Ramadan

- **Hajj (Pilgrimage)**
  - To Mecca at least once

- **Zakat (Alms Giving)**
  - Alms giving
Caliphs and Caliphates

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  - Fatimid (909-1171, North Africa, Shi’a)
  - Almohad (1145-1269, North Africa, Iberia)
  - Ottoman (1517-1922, Modern day Turkey)
Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 CE)

- Political realm rather than religious empire
- Ruled from Damascus, Syria
  - Syria and Egypt had been taken from Byzantine under first caliphs
- 711: Expanded empire with conquest of Spain
  - Army of North African Berbers
- 732: Battle of Tours
  - Umayyad troops stopped by Frankish king Charles Martel in France
- Gradually replaced non-Muslim officials with Muslims
  - Instituted Arabic as administrative language
  - Silver and gold coins in 8th century (Morocco to China)
Fall of Umayyads (750)

- Few converts
  - No incentive for conversion
  - Inferiority to born Muslims
- Resentment toward Arab domination of society
- Corruption among caliphs
  - Luxurious lifestyle
  - abandonment of Muhammad’s lifestyle

- Battle of the River Zab
  - Modern Iraq
  - Abd-ar-Rahman escapes to Spain
    - Founds Cordoba (an extension of the Umayyad caliphate) in 755

- Supported by Shi’ites
  - Thought they would get a Shi’ite in power
Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258)

- Early Abbasid
  - Good leadership
  - Emphasis on piety, religious law and theology
  - Interpretations of the Quran

- Golden Age
  - Persanization
  - Paper from China = literary works
    - Compilations of Arabic grammar
    - Translations of Greek, Persian works into Arabic
    - Arabian Nights
Abbasid Decline

- Baghdad
  - Cosmopolitan
  - Greek, Iranian, Central Asian, African influences
  - Did not spread to entire caliphate
- Increase in converts
  - No distinction between converts and natural Muslims
  - Population/territory explosion
  - Military response to riots could take months

- 9th Century
  - Islamic principalities formed within caliphate
  - Took taxes away from Baghdad
- Mamluks
  - Central Asian Turkic slaves
  - Standing army of caliphate
  - Took control of caliphates
  - Samarra
Fall of Abbasids

- Turkish mamluks
- 1030s: established Turkish Muslim state
  - Took title of Sultan
  - Control of the Abbasids rather than the Buyids
- 1071: Battle of Manzikert
  - Defeat of Byzantines
  - Occupation of Anatolia
- Turkish rule
  - Cities shrank
  - No money spent on irrigation, canals
  - Baghdad in ruins
Islamic Africa

• Berbers
  • North Africa
  • Sijilmasa and Tahert
    • Northern Sahara
    • First regular trade across Sahara
  • Trade salt for gold
• Ghana
  • “land of gold”
  • Peaceful conversion
al-Andalus (Islamic Spain)

- Cordoba Caliphate (755-1061)
  - Umayyad extension
- 929: rulers take title of “caliph”
  - Response to Fatimid Caliphate
- Cut off from Islamic world
  - Creation of distinctive Islamic culture
    - Fusion of agricultural practices
      - New crops (citrus) and new irrigation
    - Roman, Germanic, Jewish, Arab, Berber influences
Architecture

- Developed in Cordoba
- Focused on mosques with minarets
- Intricate designs and patterns
- Calligraphy
Great Mosque of Damascus (Syria) 706-715

Umayyads 2nd Caliphate

preexisting Roman square towers/ minarets
Literature

• **Al-Andalus**
  • Jewish, Muslim, Christian writers
    • 11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} century
    • Arabic and Hebrew
    • Judaic law
    • Aristotelian philosophy
    • Love
    • Mysticism

• **Ulama**
  • “people with religious knowledge”
Technology

• Science flourishes
  • More advanced than Europe
• Ibn al-Haytham
  • Milky Way’s location
  • Travel of light
  • Celestial objects and size
• Chemistry
  • Pottery glaze
  • Rosewater
  • Hard soap
  • Gunpowder
  • Glass
Society

- Women
  - No travel/leaving homes
  - Burkas
  - No public role
  - Could inherit
  - Private property
  - Remarriage
  - Divorce
  - Testimony in court
Society and Education

• Slavery
  • People of the Book
    • Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians
    • Could not be slaves
  • Women
  • Not hereditary
  • Conversion = freedom (?)
• Prohibition of alcohol and pork

• Madrasas
  • Religious college
  • Iranian religious scholars
  • Arabic and Persian

• Sufism
  • Mysticism
  • First extensive Islamic organization
  • Union with God through rituals