

# Islam



These are the faiths we've learned:

<b>Judaism</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>
Old Testament (Torah)	Old & New Test. (Bible)	Vedas	
Yahweh (God)	God	Brahman	Brahman
Moses	Jesus	avatars (Vishnu)	Buddha

Now we learn about one of the most misunderstood of the great religions. A religion of peace despite some who claim to follow it.

**Islam:** “submitting to the will of God.” Great faith born in the 600’s A.D. in the Arabian peninsula. Unfortunately it’s also the supposed faith of some high profile loons – the September 11<sup>th</sup> hijackers, Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein.

## I. A new faith born in the deserts of Arabia:

Arabia in 600’s A.D.? Look at the ancient maps. There’s nothing but desert. NOTHING’S THERE!!

Not so fast there is something or rather somebody there

**Bedouins:** nomadic herders in Arabia. Move cattle and sheep from oasis to oasis.

- constantly fought one another
- worship sacred stones and trees and spirits
- excellent fighters

If something could unite these Bedouin tribes they could be a very dangerous fighting force. If only they could be brought together as one people as the Arabs. Well these tribes all speak the same language, have similar customs and they all trace their descent to a common ancestor – Abraham of the Bible.

## II. What? You mean the same Abraham who led the Hebrews to the “Promised Land.”

Yes the same. So why are Arabs in Arabia and not the “Promised Land.” We’ll have to go back and teach you an Old Testament Bible story.

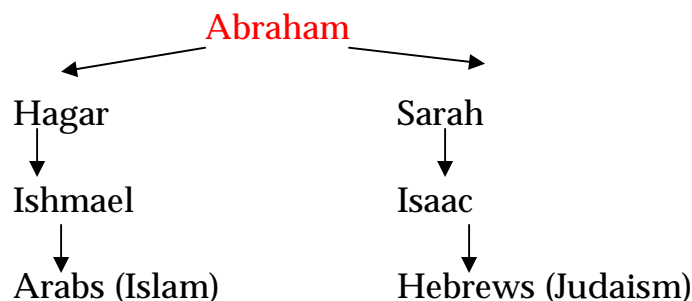
When Abraham got to Canaan, YHWH told him that he would father a great people. Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were both pleased to hear this but there was only one problem. Abraham and Sarah were both in their 90s.

Sarah thought that she could never have children so she convinced Abraham that he should have a child with her servant, Hagar. Abraham agreed and he and Hagar had a child named Ishmael. Everyone was happy.

Then miraculously Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to the child Isaac. The two boys and family were happy for some time. But Sarah eventually became extremely jealous of Ishmael. Since Ishmael was the oldest son he would inherit everything from Abraham. Sarah wanted her son, Isaac, to inherit the land.

Sarah then convinced Abraham to throw Hagar and Ishmael out into the desert. The Bible story ends here.

According to Arab tradition, however, Hagar and Ishmael survive. They wander into the deserts of Arabia. Near death, Ishmael sits on a rock. Hagar begs YHWH to help them. The archangel Gabriel appears and brings water forth from the rock. Hagar and Ishmael are saved. Ishmael goes on to found the Arab people.



Abraham is thus the father of two great peoples according to this story. The Arabs and the Hebrews.

### III. All Arabs thus worship YHWH but over time they have come to worship many other gods also.

Are a few towns which developed from trade. The most important.

**Mecca:** growing town in Arabia. Important for trade and also held greatest Bedouin religious object.

**Kaaba:** means “cube.” Cube structure houses a stone from heaven. Gift of polytheistic gods – (meteorite?)

Pilgrims come all over to see it and spend money in Mecca.

**Pilgrims:** travelers to a religious shrine.

That is the scene in Arabia and in the town of Mecca in the 600's. Now a great man appears that turns the Mecca and Arabia on its head.

**Mohammad:** preaches a new religion in Mecca – founder of Islam.

- Camel driver and trader. Often visited Israel and Jerusalem. Lot of contact with Christians and Jews there.
- At 25, he marries a rich widow and retires. Sits and ponders.
- Troubled by the drinking, gambling and corruption in the holy city of Mecca.
- Spent much of his time in a cave outside of Mecca thinking and **fasting:** going without food. (purifying the body)

- Began to believe in the same god as the Christians and Jews. Believed in Yahweh, or God, or Allah.

**Allah:** “God” Arabic word for the God of Christians, Jews and Moslems. Same god, just the final word.

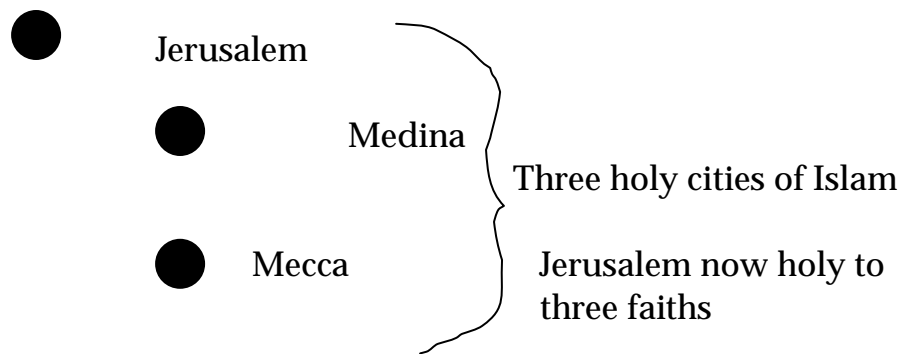
Soon after has a vision of the angel Gabriel who tells him to preach to the people of the one true, god.

Mohammad returns to Mecca and he is laughed at. But slowly but surely he begins to gain followers. As the faith gains strength the city leaders begin to get concerned.

*If the faith keeps growing then who will visit the Kaaba? If no one visits the Kaaba then how will we be rich.*

Meccan leaders begin to persecute Mohammed and his followers. Harass, beat, torture, and even kill some of his followers. Sounds like Jesus?

Things are going really poorly and Mohammed goes to bed, and once more he has a vision sent by God. In the dream Allah takes his soul to Jerusalem. There he lies on a rock and Allah guides him into Heaven and speaks to him. Tell him to flee to Medina.



**Hegira** – “flight” Mohammed and his followers flee from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. Mohammed becomes ruler of the city. This is the first year in the Islamic calendar – this year is 1380 in the Islamic world.

Meccan forces invade and attack Medina over and over again. Each time Mohammad and his followers fight them off. Mohammad preaches something new to his followers.

**Jihad:** to struggle or to exhaust one's effort to please God. Can mean to help others, or to preach Islam, or to become a better person, or to defend Islam. If you die in this you go to paradise.

By 630 Mohammad's triumphant forces march into Mecca unopposed. By 632 all the tribes of Arabia declare for Islam and their loyalty to Mohammad, and Mohammad then dies.

## II. Core beliefs of Islam

**Islam:** "submitting to God" Giving oneself completely to Allah.

**Muslims:** "one who surrenders to God" - followers of Islam

**Koran:** Islamic scripture. Word of Allah as revealed to Mohammad.

Jews – Torah (Old Testament)

Christians - Bible (Old T. & New T.)

Muslims – Bible and Koran

Mohammad is the last of the prophets of God!

**People of the Book** – Christians and Jews are to be respected because they also worship Allah.

**Pillars of Faith:** Five duties every Muslim must fulfill.

**1)** (Shahada) "There is no god but Allah and Mohammad is his prophet."

Declaration of faith. Whispered in a newborn baby's ear and is a line in most prayers.

2) Pray five times a day facing Mecca

- **mosque** – Muslim house of worship
- **imam** – leader in a mosque
- **clerics**
- **Allah akhbar** – God is great!

-dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, evening

3) Giving of **alms** - charity

4) Fast in the month of **Ramadan** month of the first revelation. Cannot eat or drink during daylight hours.

5) Pilgrimage to Mecca - see the Kaaba – built by Abraham. Inside a black stone said once to be white turned black by all the kisses.

- no pork, no drinking and no gambling

Paradise: cool fruit garden on a mountaintop

Hell – flame filled pit with nothing but salt water and a plant that makes you hungry.

Allah created all creatures so it would be a sin for man to recreate them. No human or animal depictions. No pictures of God. No cameras or photographs.

**Hijaab** – head scarf or veil for women. For most it's a choice. Modesty before Allah.

Men may have up to four wives if they can provide for them and women may divorce.

## Arab expansion

Mohammad's last command was that the Arabs were to spread Islam. They explode out of Arabia and over the next 100 years they conquer territory from the Byzantines, into North Africa, all the way into France where they are stopped by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours.

Give up then you pay taxes. Fight and everything will be taken from you.

Christians in these areas over the centuries convert to Islam.

**Infidels** – nonbelievers in Islam

## Great Arab Empire

While Europe is in the Dark Ages

- **Baghdad** – Arab city in Mesopotamia becomes capital of Arab Empire. Becomes major trading center of the world. Arabs become rich.
- Arabs translate and preserve works of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates thus saving them.
- **Alchemy** – Arabs work to turn lead into gold. Founders of chemistry.
- Invented algebra and taught it to the Europeans and brought numbers 0-9. Only numbers before were Roman numerals.
- Discovered that diseases were *contagious* and opened world's first pharmacies.
- Books – **Arabian nights** collection of Arab tales– Aladdin and Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

**Sultans**: title for Arab kings.

**Vizier** – chief advisor

# Conflict in Jerusalem:

**Dome of the Rock**: 687 A.D. Temple to house the sacred rock from whence Mohammad spoke to Allah about the hegira. Also the same site as the Temple of Solomon where the Ark of the Covenant was kept.

Nearby is the **Wailing Wall** – last remaining wall of the temple Solomon where Jews insert prayers into the wall for God.

Of course Jerusalem is holy to Christians as the city where Jesus was crucified and rose again!

Jerusalem is holy to Muslims, Christians and Jews! All want to sit in the front seat of the car.