

Basic Facts About Muhammad's Early Life

- ☉ He was born at Mecca around AD 570.
 - Mecca is located in modern-day Saudi Arabia, about 770 miles SSE of Jerusalem.
 - Mecca was an oasis & trading center.
 - Mecca was also the site of the Ka'abba (Arabic for "The Cube"), a black building which housed a diverse assortment of images (perhaps 360) worshipped by the various tribes of the region.
- ☉ Orphaned at an early age, Muhammad was raised by his uncle, who was the leader of the Quraysh tribe. The Quraysh were descendants of Ishmael (Abraham's son) & the most powerful tribe in/around Mecca.
- ☉ Muhammad apparently became a very skilled merchant.
- ☉ His first marriage, at age 25 (AD 595), was to Khadijah, an wealthy merchant woman, perhaps 40 years older than Muhammad, who was impressed by his merchant skills.
- ☉ Muhammad certainly had contact with both Judaism & Christianity, although his concepts of Christianity clearly came from unorthodox & non-canonical sources.

How Muhammad Supposedly Became The Prophet Of Allah (Arabic for "The God")

- ☉ In AD 610, around age 40, Muhammad began having unusual dreams and soon developed the habit of spending long hours meditating in a cave near Mecca.
- ☉ It was in this cave, during the month of Ramadan, where he was supposedly visited by the angel Gabriel, who repeatedly squeezed him until he began to "recite"¹ revelations about the one, true God – Allah.²
- ☉ Muhammad was reportedly very disturbed by this revelation, only being calmed by his wife wrapping him in blankets. He apparently intended to kill himself rather than live as a madman, but in that process saw another vision of Gabriel. Shortly thereafter, his wife's cousin, an old, blind, Ebionite³ priest, assured him that his experiences were real & that he was Allah's new prophet.
- ☉ During the next three years, he supposed received many other such revelations. When, in AD 613, he began to share all this information publicly ("Allah is the only God" & "I'm his new prophet" & "Judgment Day is coming"), he & his "Muslim" (Arabic for "one who submits") followers were treated with contempt, sometimes even attacked.
- ☉ During the next few years, Muhammad was somewhat protected by his uncle's status as the head of the Quraysh. After his uncle died in AD 619, that protection was gone. His wife of nearly 25 years also died in AD 619, ending her powerful support as well. This year is called "The Year of Sorrows."
- ☉ In AD 620, Muhammad was invited to be the neutral arbiter in resolving a long-term dispute among the various Arab & Jewish tribes in the city of Yathrib (later Medina), which was located just over 200 due north of Mecca. He skillfully orchestrated an acceptable resolution. Over the next couple of years, many Muslims migrated to Yathrib where Muhammad was certainly more respected than at Mecca.

¹ "Qur'an" or, if you prefer the older English spelling, "Koran," is Arabic for "The Recitation."

² Here is an account of that first "revelation" taken from the Qur'an, Sura 96:

Recite in the name of your Lord who created – created man from a clinging substance [literally, "a blood clot"].

Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous - Who taught by the pen - taught man that which he knew not.

No! [But] indeed, man transgresses because he sees himself self-sufficient. Indeed, to your Lord is the return.

Have you seen the one who forbids a servant when he prays? Have you seen if he is upon guidance or enjoins righteousness? Have you seen if he denies and turns away - Does he not know that Allah sees?

No! If he does not desist, we will surely drag him by the forelock - a lying, sinning forelock. Then let him call his associates; We will call the angels of Hell.

No! Do not obey him. But prostrate and draw near [to Allah].

³ The Ebionites were a heretical Christian sect which gravitated toward all things Jewish. They rejected all of Paul's writings.

How Muhammad Became the Supreme Leader of the Ummah (Arabic for “Community”)

- ♣ In AD 622, to escape an assassination plot, Muhammad moved himself and his remaining Muslims to Yathrib. This became known as the Hijira (Arabic for “migration”) & marks Year 1 on the Islamic calendar. It was also around this time that Yathrib became “Medina” (Arabic for “The City”).
- ♣ Shortly after his arrival, since he now had so many followers in Medina, Muhammad imposed a unilateral, mutual-defense & aggression pact between his Muslims & the other peoples (including the Jews) of that region. It would appear from the “Constitution of Medina” that he considered himself already at war with the Quraysh back at Mecca (who had seized all Muslim properties left behind) and that he now expected the Arabs & Jews of Medina to assist him in prosecuting a war against his enemies.
- ♣ At first, the Muslims simply raided Meccan trade caravans, gaining financially from doing so.
- ♣ In AD 624, at the Battle of Badr, Muhammad & the Muslims inflicted such disproportional losses upon the Meccan army (which had come out in defense of the caravans) that even more people became Muslims & followed Muhammad into further battles. War continued between the Ummah of Medina & Mecca for the next few years.
- ♣ In AD 628, the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah was agreed to, allowing the Muslims to make a pilgrimage back to Mecca’s Ka’aba in AD 629.
- ♣ This treaty was set aside in AD 630, resulting in Muhammad amassing a huge Muslim army (about 10,000 strong), after which he captured Mecca. All the images in the Ka’aba were destroyed & the site was re-dedicated to Allah. Most Meccans became Muslims rather than risk opposition to Muhammad.
- ♣ Further battles during the next two years resulted in the Arabian Peninsula coming under Muslim control.
- ♣ Muhammad died in AD 632 at age 63. A few months early he made his final hajj (Arabic for “journey”) to Mecca & delivered his final message, which included two key items regarding Islam.
 - “O People, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in zakat [2.5% to charity]. Perform hajj if you can afford to.”
 - “O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qu’ran and my example, the Sunnah and if you follow these you will never go astray.”