



# Postclassical Era

Introduction Info Unit 1 c. 600 – 1200

## Unit 1 1200 – 1450

- Shift from polytheism to monotheism
- Growth in international trade
- Technology and ideas spread
  - Due to growing trade, military encounters, and redefining of boundaries within civilizations
- Variety of political forms
  - But no single, dominant political form

# What was Arabia like before Muhammad?



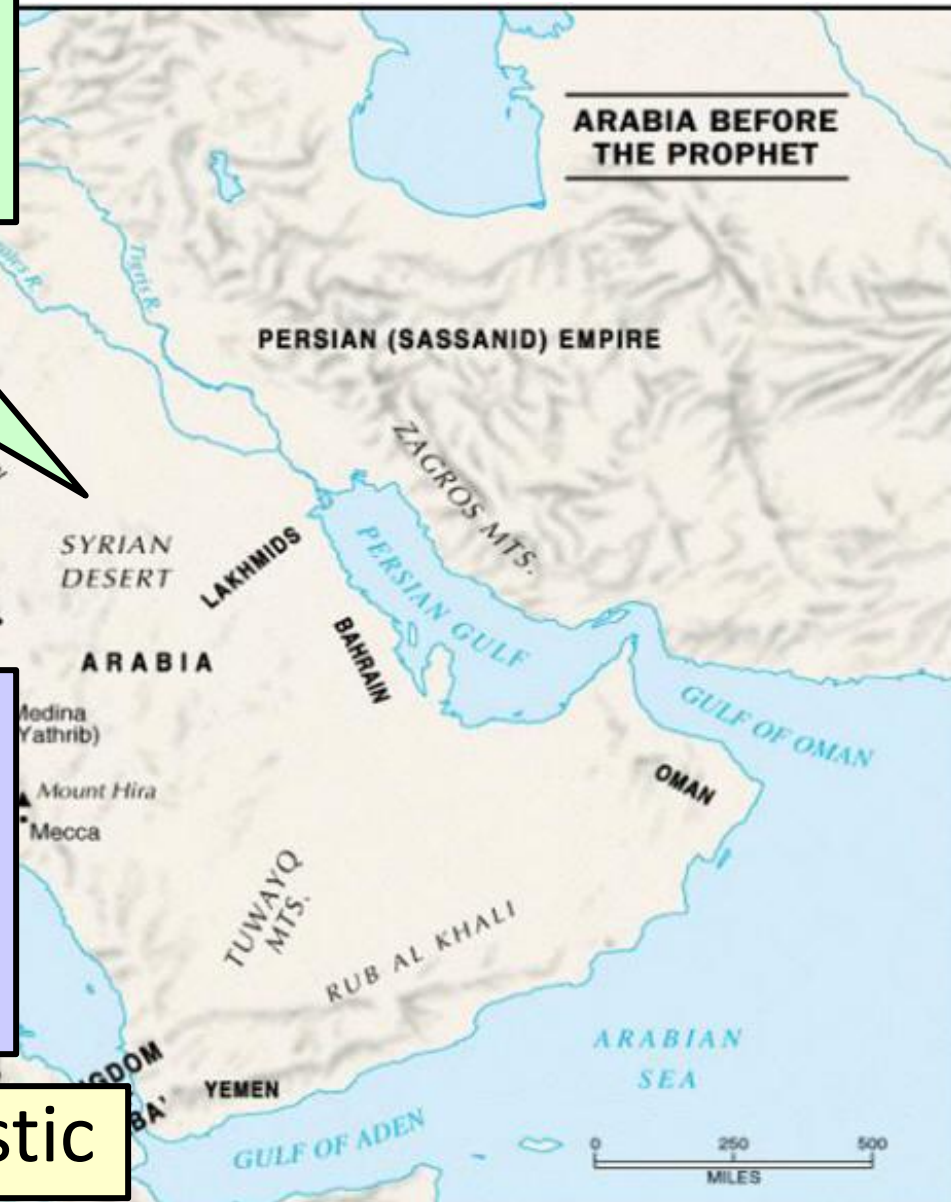
# Arabia, the Birthplace of Islam

The Arabian Peninsula is a desert region with little fertile soil or farming

Most Arabs lived in desert tribes which were centered around families & were ruled by clans

Arabia was not united under a single gov't, but Arabs did have a common language (Arabic)

Most Arabs were polytheistic



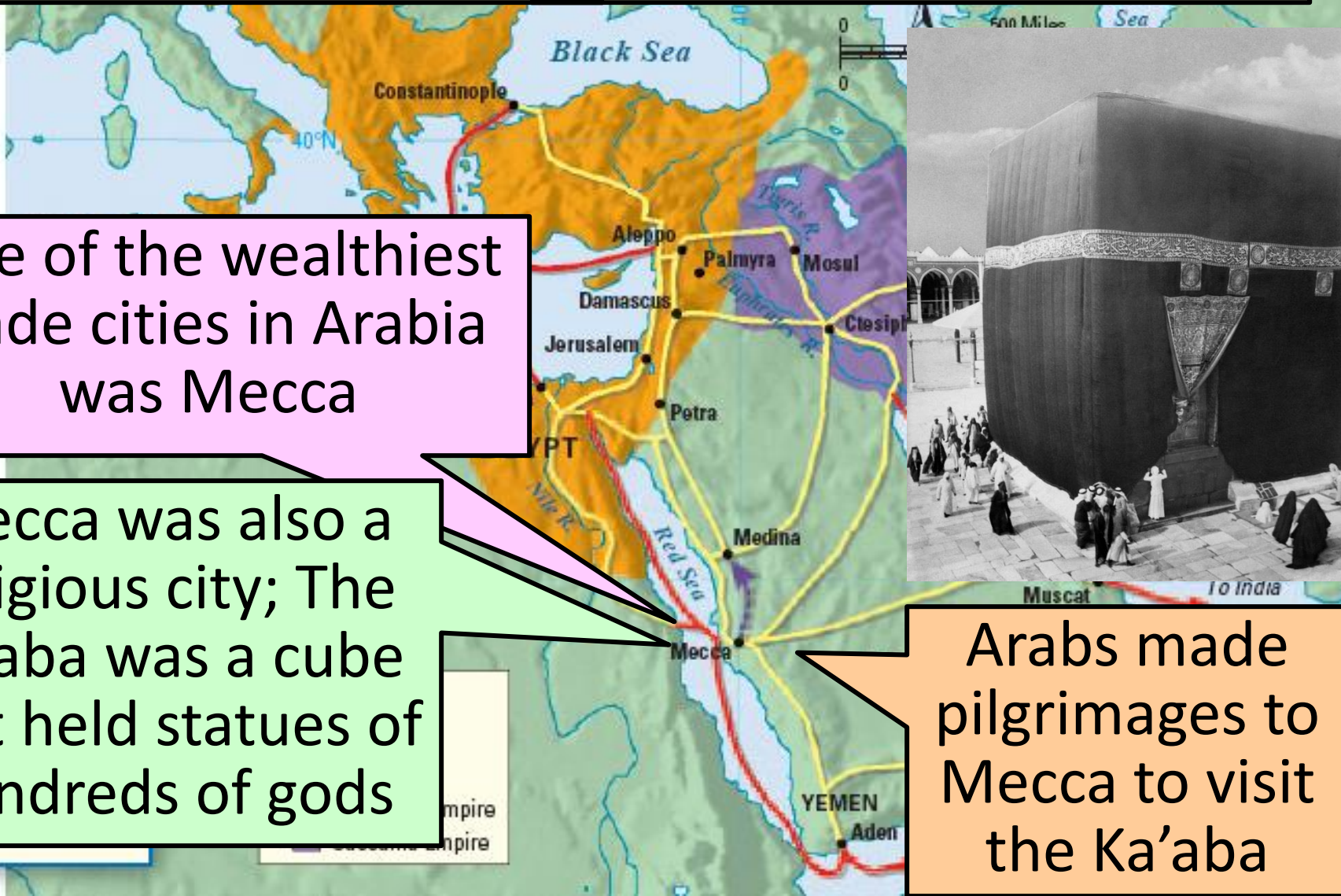


But, Arabia was the intersection of 3 continents (Africa, Asia, & Europe) so it was an important region for trade & had lots of cultural diffusion

One of the wealthiest trade cities in Arabia was Mecca

Mecca was also a religious city; The Ka'aba was a cube that held statues of hundreds of gods

Arabs made pilgrimages to Mecca to visit the Ka'aba





# Arabian World and Birth of Islam

- ▶ Many *bedouin* clans helped spread the beliefs of the prophet Muhammad.
  - Bedouin = nomadic
- ▶ *Sheiks (Shaykhs)* – leaders of tribes and clans
- ▶ Inter-clan rivalries would lead to wars breaking out
- ▶ Most important city was Mecca (located in mountainous region along the Red Sea and western part of Arabia)
  - Mecca was founded by the *Umayyad* clan
- ▶ Northeast of Mecca was Medina – the city of the prophet Muhammad.
  - Both Medina and Mecca engaged in long distance trading (Mecca more so than Media); both considered “trade centers”
  - Control of Medina was contested between 2 bedouin groups and 3 Jewish clans.



# Rise of Islam

- ▶ Creation of a new empire in the “Middle East” and North Africa, as well as parts of India, south Europe, and central Asia
- ▶ *Islam* – submission; self-surrender of the believer to the will of the one
- ▶ *Muslims* – followers of the new faith (Islam) and its prophet (Muhammad)
- ▶ Muslim traders & conquerors became the prime agents for the transfer of food crops, technology, and ideas among the many centers of civilization in the Eastern Hemisphere
- ▶ Muslims had works in philosophy, literature, mathematics, and science
- ▶ *Quran* – the holy book containing Allah’s revelations to Muhammad



# Rise of Islam

- ▶ Islamic world:
  - ▶ **unified** by a common allegiance to the religious teachings of *Muhammad* and to some extent by the Arabic language
  - ▶ **divided** by political rivalries, cultural & linguistic diversity, and religious *sectarianism* (excessive devotion to a particular sect, especially in religion)

# Arabian World and Birth of Islam

- ▶ Women in pre-Islamic bedouin culture enjoyed greater freedom and higher status compared to other civilized centers [Byzantine and Sasanian (Persian) empires].
  - Did NOT wear veils and were NOT secluded...at this point in time
  - Women's advice was highly regarded
  - Women AND men were both sometimes allowed to have multiple marriage partners
  - Still not considered = to men.
  - Women's status varied from one clan/family to the next.

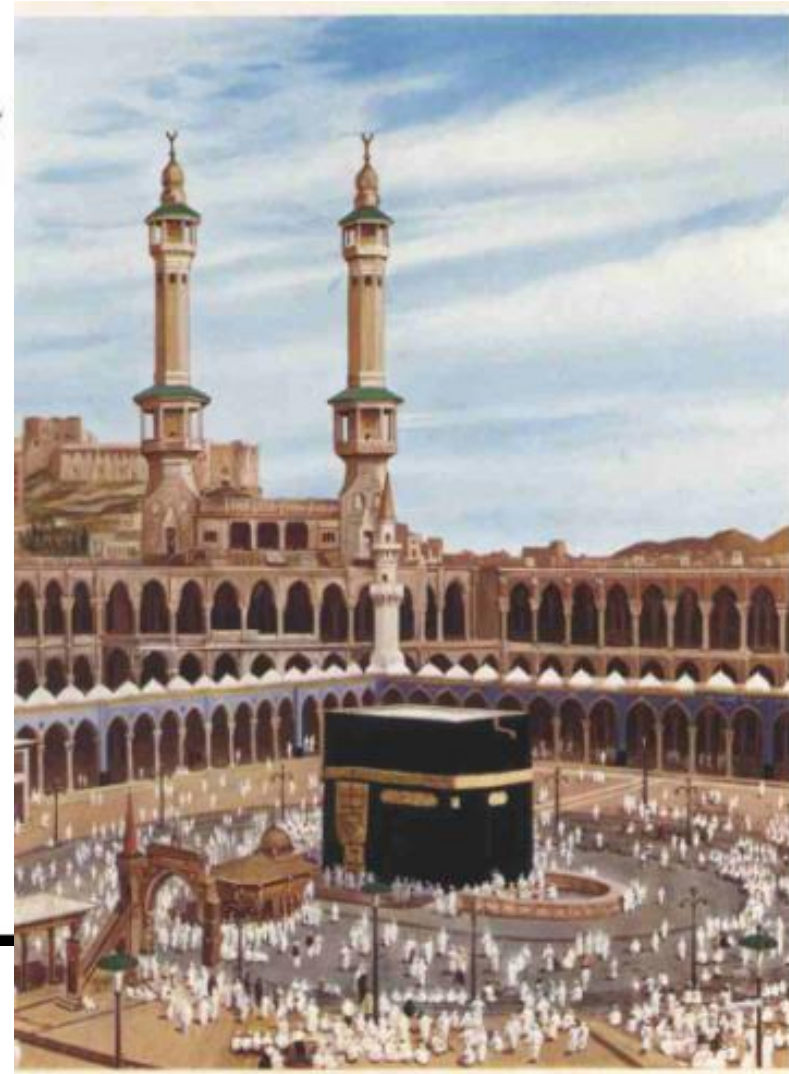
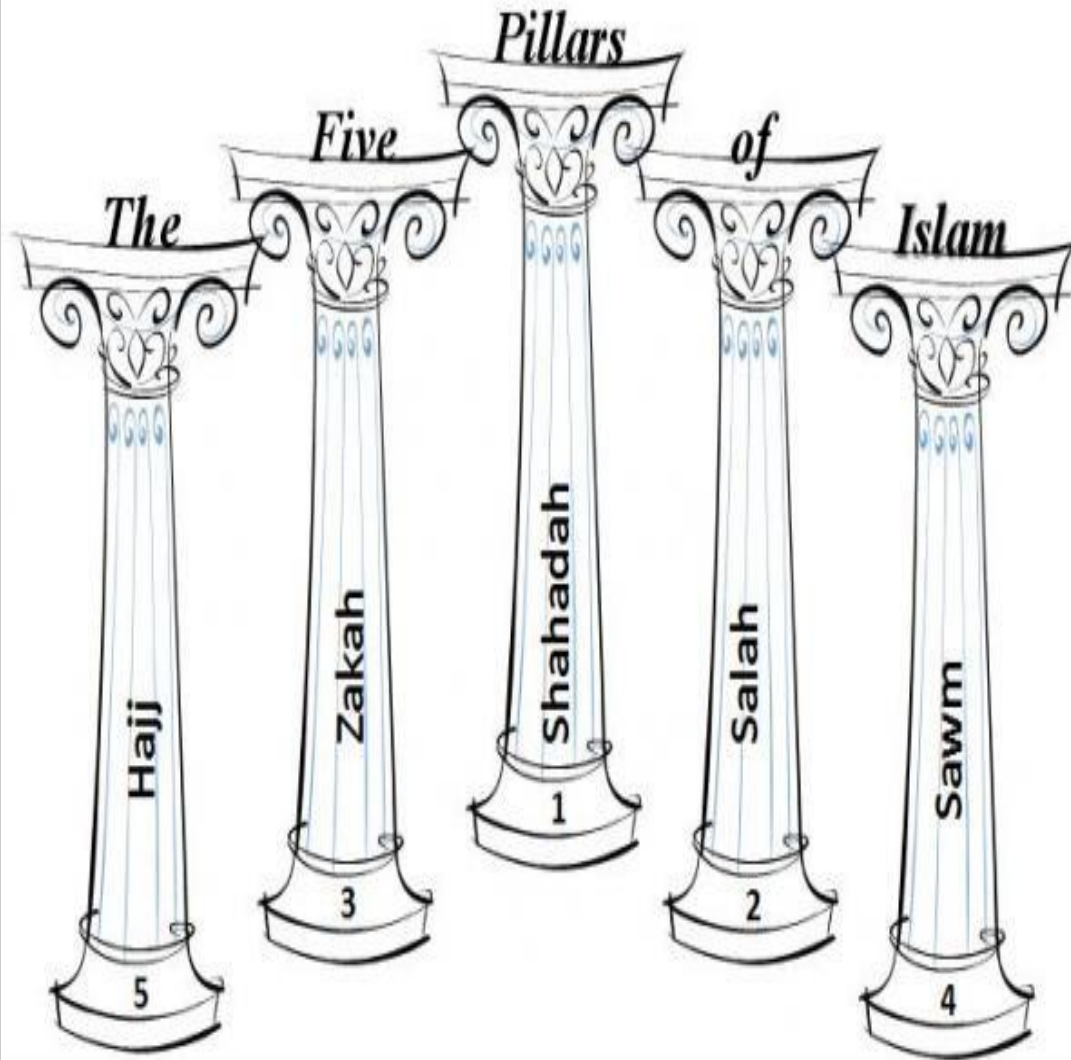




# Overview of Islam

- Around 600 AD, a new monotheistic religion began called Islam:
  - The faith was founded by the prophet Muhammad
  - His followers, called Muslims, spread Islam throughout the Middle East, Africa, Asia, & Europe

# Muslims believe in the Five Pillars of Islam:





# Elements of Islam

- Uncompromising Monotheism
- Highly developed legal codes
- Egalitarianism (belief in equality of all people)
- Strong sense of community

## “5 Pillars of Islam”

1. confession of faith
2. pray 5 times a day facing the city of Mecca
3. fast during the month of Ramadan
4. tithe for charity (payment of charity called a *zakat*)  
strengthened the community and cohesion
5. *hajj*, or pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca to  
worship Allah at the Ka’Ba.

# The Early Life of Muhammad

- Born in Mecca in 570 into a poor clan, was orphaned at a young age, & was raised by his grandparents
- As an adult, Muhammad became an honest & successful merchant
- Lived/worked as a trader and traveler
- Helps him see religious currents sweeping through Arabia, especially the idea of monotheism (contact w/Jewish & Christian merchants) and a growing dissatisfaction of the old gods
- Was socially prominent, economically well off, and admired for his trading skills and trustworthiness
- Became dissatisfied with life and distracted with a life that focused on material gains.
- He married a wealthy, older widow named Khadija & started a family





# Khadija and Muhammad

- Was a successful and esteemed business woman

Father was successful, inherited her father's skills, took over the business, was larger than all of the Quraysh trade companies combined, never compromised her modesty or integrity to succeed in the male-dominated trades.

- Turned down many marriage proposals

Married twice before; both marriages produced children and both left her widowed

- According to history, asked Muhammad to marry her

Learned of his character and business sense/experience managing caravans, hired him, didn't need a husband (\$\$\$), he did not have the means to seek a wife, fell in love with him, through a friend, asked him

- Was 15 years older than Muhammad (40/25)

- Was an ideal wife; theirs was a true love story

"Your wives are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them." (Qur'an 2:187)

Was monogamous until her death, when he received the first of God's revelations left him frightened and feeling alone/no one believed in him, comforted her husband, encouraged him. Bore him 6 children. He loved no one more than her during his life.

- She was the first Muslim

Mother of Islam, 1<sup>st</sup> person to accept Muhammad as the final prophet of God and the revelations that culminated into the Qur'an

- Spent her worldly riches on the poor

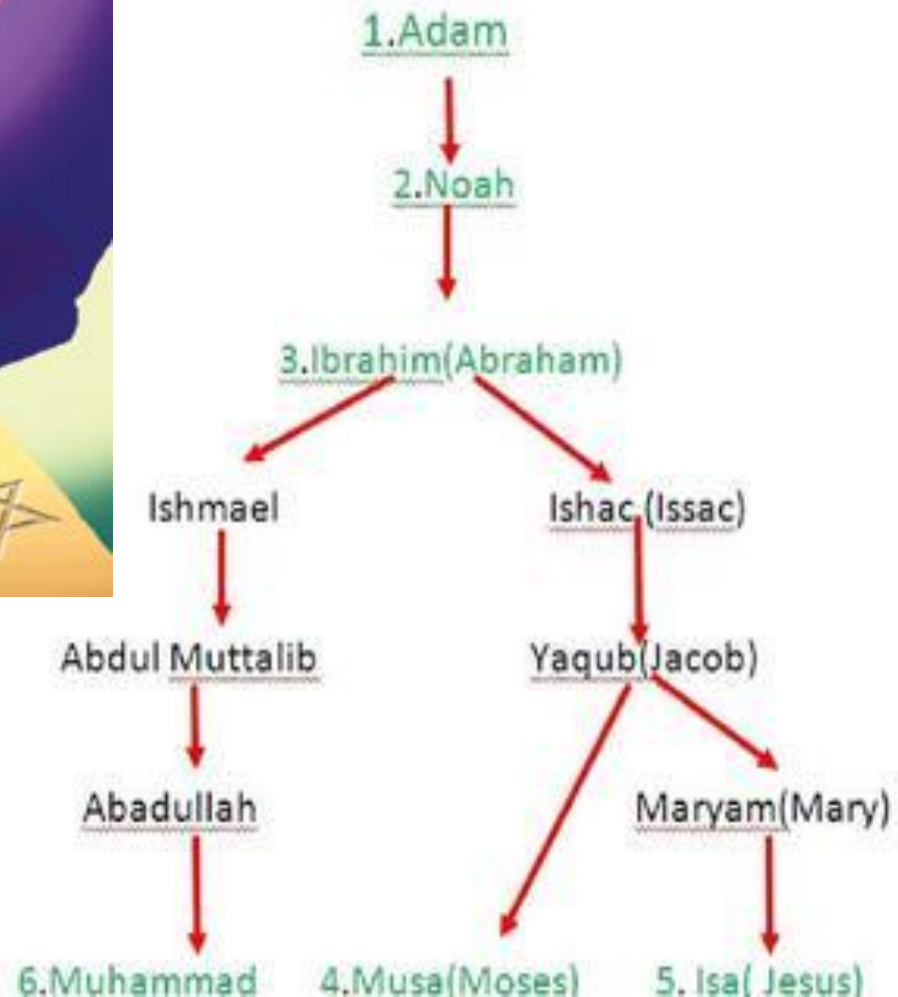
gave her earnings to the poor/orphans/widows/sick, helped poor girls/dowry



# What happened to Muhammad in 610?

- Over time, he found the richness and corruption of the merchants and townspeople to be troubling.
- He decided to visit the hills to meditate. Muslims believe that while he was meditating in the hills he received revelations from God through the Angel Gabriel.
- Around 610 C.E. he received his first “revelation”
  - His following/followers were a small group at first (his wife, several clans people, and some servants and slaves).
- Eventually fled Mecca due to threats from the Umayyads and other clans

# What is the basic concept of Islam?



# The Hijrah

How did some people respond to Muhammad's new religion?

## ■ Reactions to Islam:

- By 613, Muhammad began preaching his new ideas in Mecca
- Some people were attracted to Islam
- But, many people feared Muhammad's growing popularity & that Mecca would lose its status as a holy city



# Islam Grows in Medina

## How did Muhammad react to violence in Mecca?

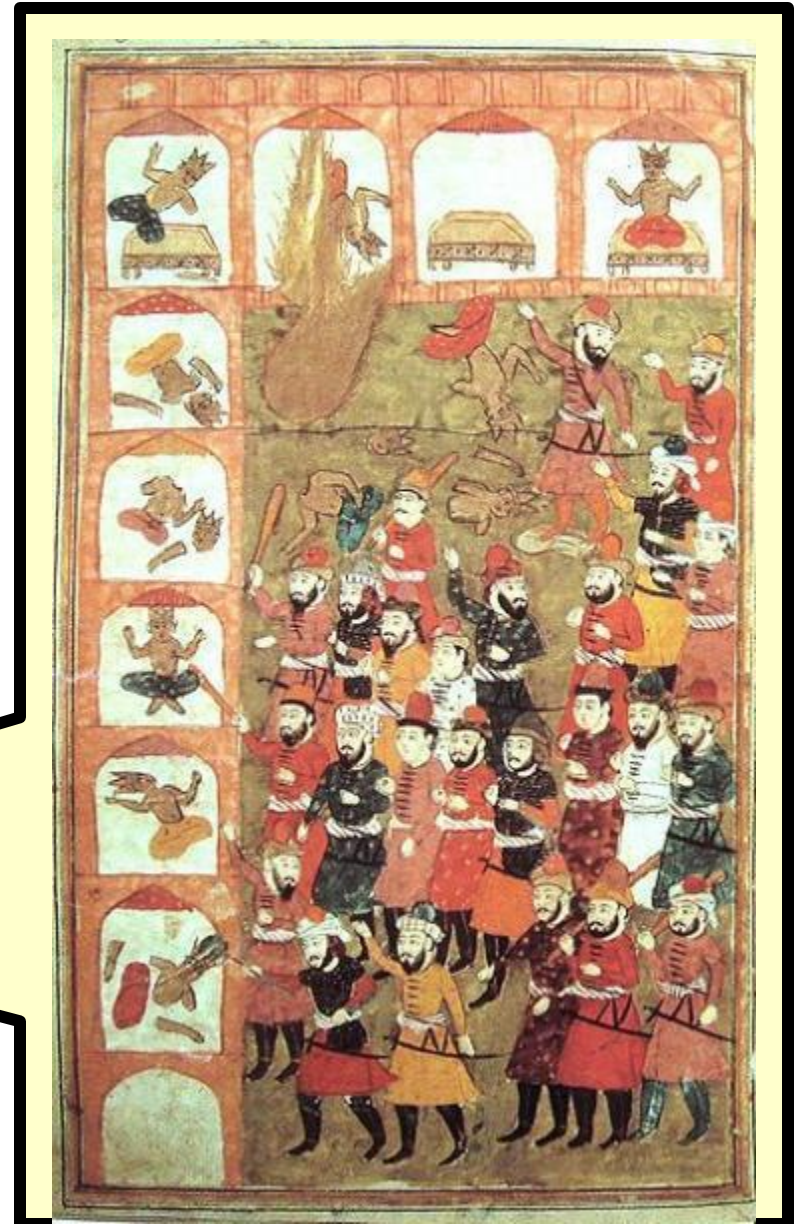
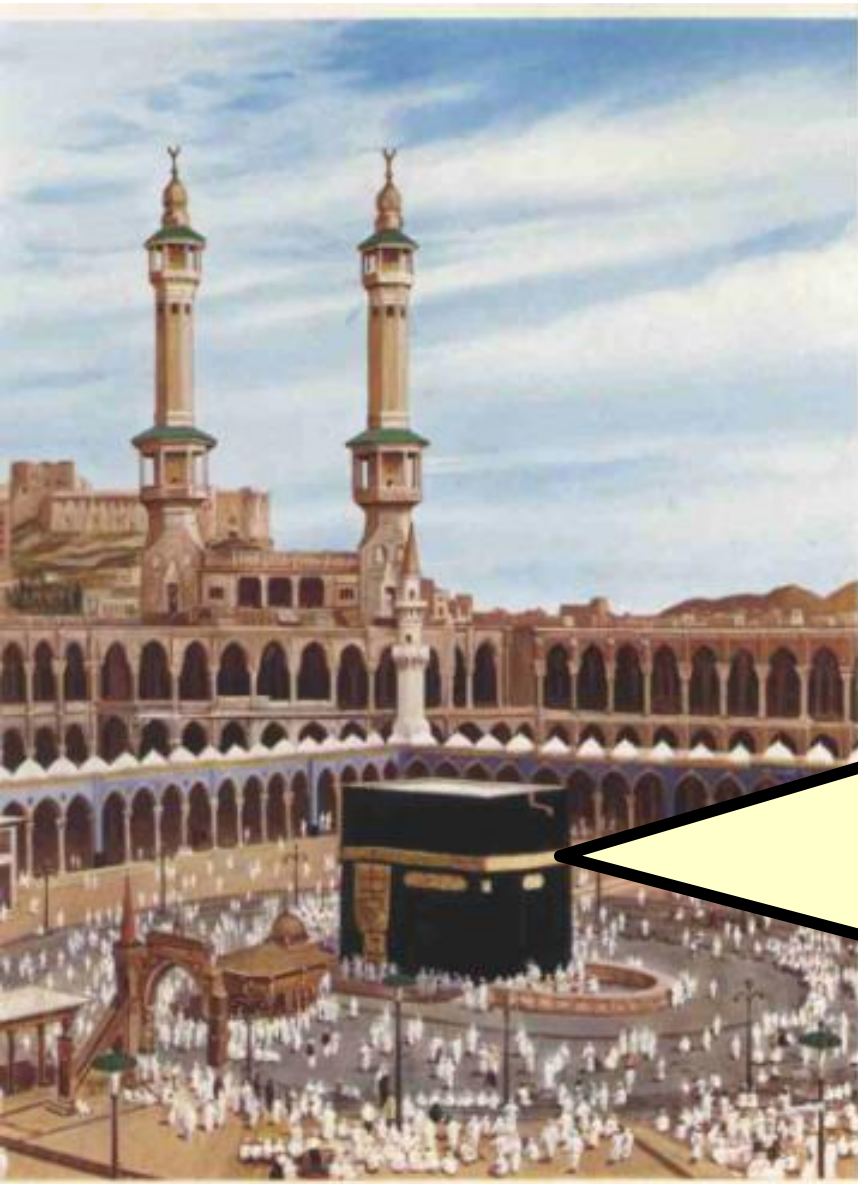
- After years of attacks, Muhammad & his followers fled to Medina
  - This migration was known as the Hijrah
  - In Medina, Muhammad gained new converts who put Islam above their families & clans
  - He taught respect for Christians & Jews (“People of the Book”)



# Muhammad

- ▶ 622 C.E. – secures safe passage from Mecca to Medina
  - Given a “hero’s welcome” when in Medina
- ▶ Series of attacks in Medina in mid 620’s C.E.
  - Signed treaty w/ the Quraysh clan in 628 C.E.
- ▶ His preaching/teaching would lead to a new form of monotheism
  - This new religion would provide an ethical system that healed deep social rifts within Arabian society
  - Islam stresses the dignity of all believers and their equality in the eyes of Allah.

What did Muhammad do after he gained converts & returned to Mecca?

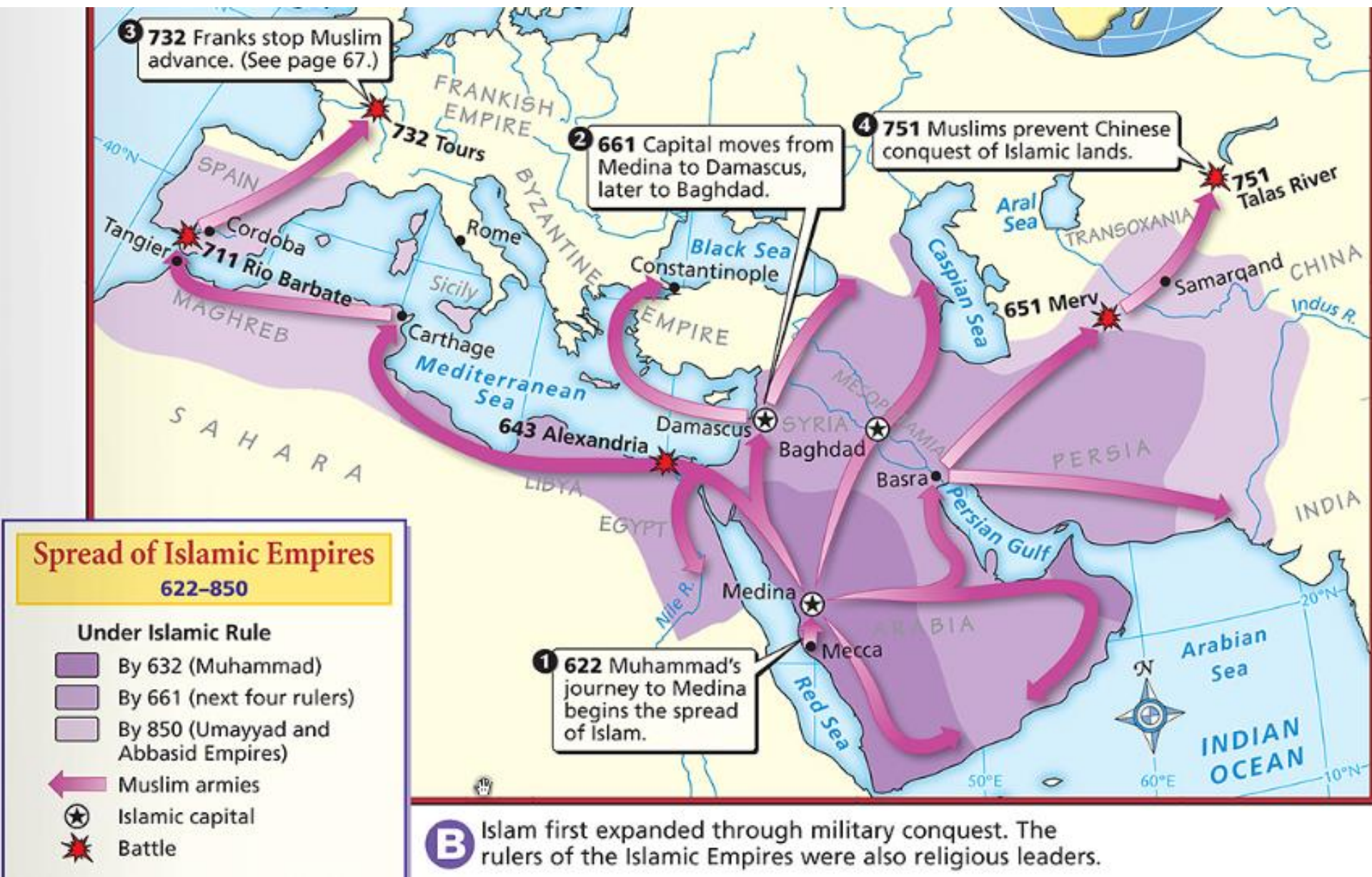


# Islam

- In 630, Muhammad returned to Mecca with 10,000 troops & conquered the city
  - He destroyed the god statues in the Ka'aba, leaving only the statue for Allah
  - This time, the people in Mecca converted to Islam
  - In 632, Muhammad died



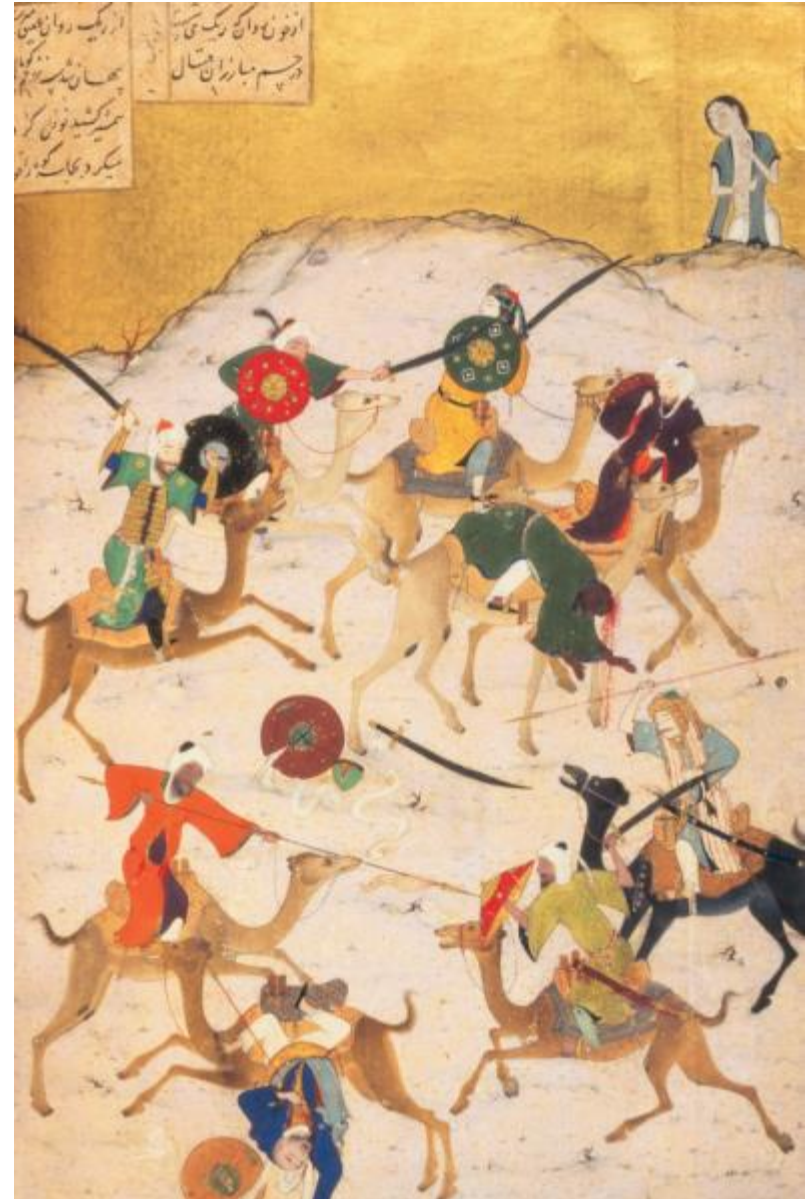
# What happened to Islam after Muhammad's death?



**B** Islam first expanded through military conquest. The rulers of the Islamic Empires were also religious leaders.

# The Islamic Empire

- After Muhammad, Islamic leaders created an empire:
  - The Islamic Empire had well-trained troops that conquered nearby regions
  - The massive empire led to great wealth for Muslims & new opportunities to spread Islam





# Arab Empire of the Umayyads

- Muhammad's victory over the Umayyad tribe and resulting allegiance of bedouin tribes of Arabia creates a new center of power in the Middle East.
- Muhammad suddenly died in 632
  - Appeared that the Islam religion would disappear.
  - Internal disputes among clans/tribes
- Umayyads emerge as the dominating force in the Islamic community
- Under Umayyad rule, Arabs built a vast empire
  - This established the foundations for an enduring civilization until its fall in mid-8<sup>th</sup> Century
- Most of Arabia was united under Islam by 633
  - Begin to mount expeditions beyond Arabian borders
  - Conquests in Mesopotamia, North Africa, and Persia
  - This empire was considered “Arab” and not “Islamic”; led by the Umayyads.



# By 750 AD, Muslim leaders built an empire

The Islamic Empire connected diverse people through religion & trade

Muslim scholars focused on learning & developed numerous cultural achievements that are still used today

## Spread of Islamic Empires

622–850

### Under Islamic Rule

- By 632 (Muhammad)
- By 661 (next four rulers)
- By 850 (Umayyad and Abbasid Empires)

- Muslim armies
- Islamic capital
- Battle

1 622 Muhammad's journey to Medina begins the spread of Islam.

conquest of Islamic lands.

751 Talas River

651 Merv

PERSIA

ARABIA

Mecca

Medina

Basra

Baghdad

SYRIA

ME-SOPOTAMIA

Constantinople

Black Sea

Caspian Sea

Armenia

Transoxania

China

Indus R.

INDIA

Arabian Sea

INDIAN OCEAN



Islam first expanded through military conquest. The rulers of the Islamic Empires were also religious leaders.





# Arab Empire of the Umayyads

- ▶ Caliph – the political and religious successor to Muhammad.
  - First caliph to succeed Muhammad was *Abu Bakr* (632-634)
  - He received no financial support from Muslim community and his mandate was limited
  - Only loosely controlled military commanders
- ▶ Islamic peoples defeated bedouin tribes one after the other.
  - These victories are known as the *Ridda Wars*
  - Initial victories revealed vulnerability of the Byzantine & Persian Empires. Sasanian/Persian empire was the weaker of the two.
  - Former guardians of Byzantine & Persian empires now joined the Arabian empire
- ▶ Motives for Arab Conquests:
  - Unity provided by Islamic faith gave them a common cause and strength
  - Campaigns of expansion and rich farmlands of other territories
  - To glorify their new religion (Islam)
  - Desire for looting other tribes' materials/wealth
  - Release the energy of other bedouin tribes against each other



# Arab Empire of the Umayyads

- ▶ *Jihads* - holy wars launched to forcibly (force) spread the Muslim faith
- ▶ \*Arabs did NOT want to convert a large number of people to Islam because they would have to share the wealth they acquired and also lost tax revenue\*
- ▶ By 650 CE, Arab invaders eventually would be able to take over most of: Palestine, Egypt, Syria, and western Iraq
- ▶ Even though the Byzantine empire survived for many centuries to come, it was constantly under siege and greatly reduced its power.



# The Sunni-Shi'i Split

- ▶ Success of the Muslim armies and their expansion of the Arab empire diverted attention from rivalries/division within the Islamic community (inter-tribe rivalries)
- ▶ Growing tension among groups broke into violence in 656 CE when the 3<sup>rd</sup> caliph, *Uthman*, was murdered.
  - \*He was unpopular among many tribes because he was elected caliph by the Umayyad clan (Muhammad's rivals).
  - Ali was proclaimed by supporters to be the next caliph; Umayyad's rejected this claim. → this leads to warfare between the groups.
- ▶ Ali:
  - Famous warrior and commander
  - After victory at Battle of the Camel in 656, most Arab's shifted support to him against the Umayyad's.
  - \*Eventually assassinated by Umayyad's after early victories against them
- ▶ Split into two groups (Sunnis & Shi'ites):
  - Sunnis – supporters of the Umayyads
  - Shi'ites – supporters of Ali
- ▶ Still a major fundamental conflict in the Islamic world TODAY!



# The Umayyad Empire

- ▶ Muslim armies started a rivalry with Buddhism in central Asia...rivalry still continues TODAY!
- ▶ By early 700's, Umayyad's empire ruled from Spain to central Asia (largest empire since the Romans!)
- ▶ Mecca still remained the "holy city" of Islam, but the Umayyad's shifted their political center to the city of *Damascus* (located in Syria)
- ▶ \*Only Muslim-Arabs were considered "first class citizens" of this empire.



## “Converts” & “People of the Book”

- ▶ *Mawali* – converts to Muslim
  - Were forced to pay property taxes
  - Number of converts was low due to taxes
- ▶ *Dhimmis* – people of the book (the Bible)
- ▶ Umayyad’s were tolerant of other religions (Christians and Jews) as long as they paid their *jizya* (a tax for non-Muslims)





# Umayyad Decline & Fall

- ▶ Many Umayyad warriors settled far away from Damascus (political center of Umayyad).
  - Resent authority from far away
  - Warriors also not given their share of the wealth captured by the empire
  - Saw the Damascus elite as corrupt
- ▶ Revolt started when new warriors were introduced by Umayyad officials
- ▶ Former Umayyad warriors formed alliance with groups that resisted Umayyad rule.
  - Also were allies with Shi'ites and the mawali (not fully recognized as Muslim)
- ▶ This diverse group of rebels captured Persia and Iraq and eventually conquered Syria (including the Umayyad capital of Damascus).



# Arab to Islamic Empire: “The Abbasid Era”

- ▶ Abbasids are the next major group to take over Islamic civilization.
  - Abbasids lead to a bureaucratic expansion.
  - Admitted converted Muslims as FULL members of the Islamic community
  - This results in Islam becoming a universal faith (from Spain to the Philippine Islands) instead of a religion for a few elite groups.
- ▶ Built new capital in Baghdad (Iraq)
- ▶ Bureaucratization of Islamic Empire is shown in the growing power of the *wazir* – chief administrator and head of the *caliph's* inner councils.
- ▶ Distinctions between the mawali and first generation Muslims disappeared.
  - Most converts were won over peacefully now → exempt from paying a tax
- ▶ “Abbasid Age” was a time of great urban expansion due to the revival of the Afro-Eurasian trade network.



# Conclusion

- ▶ Arab/Islamic Empire became one of the greatest civilizations of the preindustrial world.
- ▶ \*The first truly “global” civilization
- ▶ \*Built their religion on earlier traditions of Christianity and Judaism
- ▶ Umayyad caliphs (661 – 750 CE) → Umayyad rule
  - First example of religious legitimacy to be used to build a powerful, absolute political order/structure.
- ▶ Achievements in Arts & Sciences – relied heavily on achievements of Greece and Mesopotamian civilizations.
- ▶ Never before had a civilization combined so many linguistic groups, religions, and ethnic types.

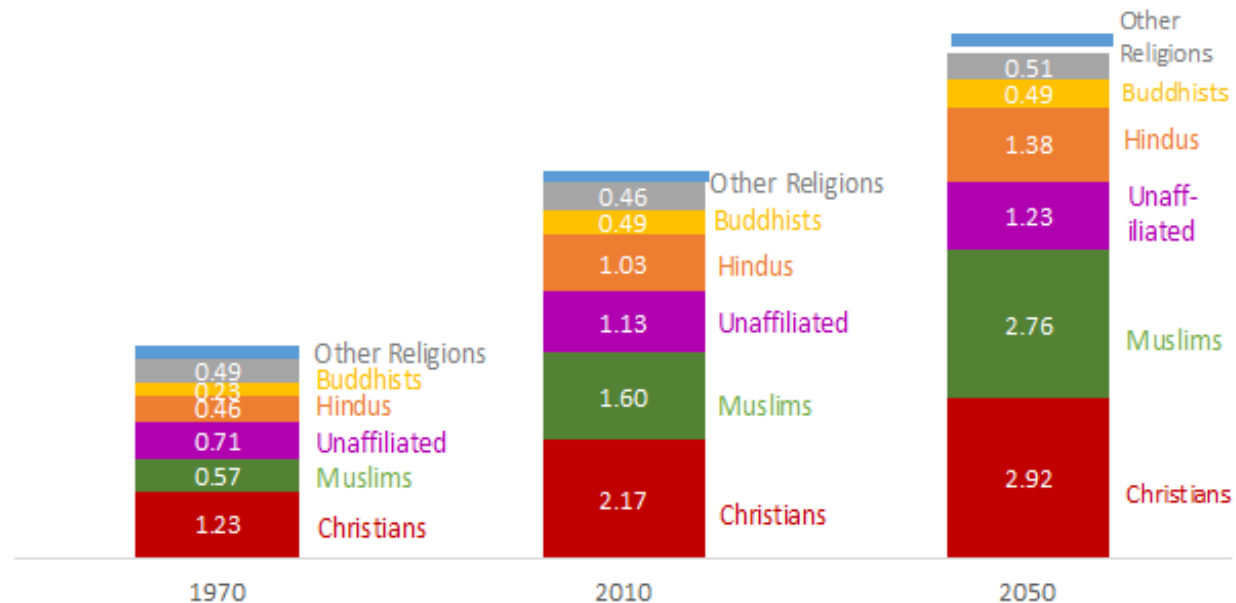
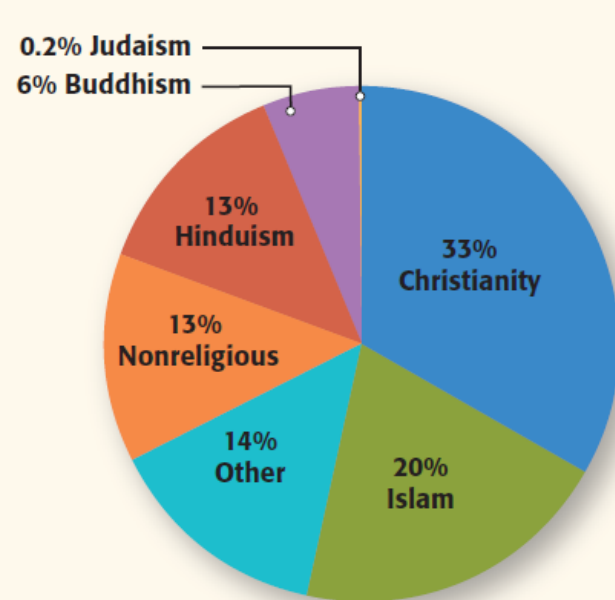
# Overview of Islam







Today, Islam is the world's fastest growing religion with more than 1 billion followers throughout the world.

## 80 Years of Global Religious Change - 1970, 2010 and 2050

*Global population by religious group in billions...*

**World Population: 6.2 billion\***



	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Confucianism
						
Followers Worldwide	362 million	2 billion	820 million	1.2 billion	14.5 million	6.3 million