

ISLAM

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Muhammad the Prophet

Born: 570 AD Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Died: June 8, 632 AD, Medina, Saudi Arabia

In 610 AD at age 40, Muhammad reported that he was visited by the angel Gabriel and received his first revelation from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "surrender" (Islam) to Him is the only way acceptable to God, and that he was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as other Islamic prophets.

Muhammad spent the next twelve years preaching in Mecca, first only in private, then in public. During these early years, Muhammad preached a peaceful message. He called for religious tolerance, but he told people that they needed to turn to Allah. In general, the polytheistic Meccans hated him. The persecution eventually got so bad that Muhammad accepted an invitation to move to another city.

In 622, Muhammad and most of his followers moved nearly 300 miles north to what is now Medina. It's difficult to overestimate the importance of the move of the Muslims from Mecca to Medina. The character of the Muslim movement changed dramatically from a passive proselytization of the faith to an active political and military movement.

From his base in Medina, Muhammad began a series of raids against the Meccan caravans. While the first six raids failed, the seventh raid—the “Nakhla raid”—was a success. The problem was that the Muslims attacked during a holy month in which everyone had agreed not to fight. An innocent man was even killed during the raid. This eventually led to war between the Muslims and Mecca.

For the next ten years until Muhammad's death in 632 AD, the Muslims never stopped fighting. Muhammad fought several more key battles against Mecca (the Battle of Uhud and the Battle of the Trench), finally taking the city in 630 AD with an army of 10,000 Muslim converts.

ISLAMIC BELIEFS

- Muslims believe that God finally sent Muhammad to transmit the message of the Quran, which is universal (for all people) in its message.
- Muslims believe that previous Islamic holy books; the Torah given to Moses, the Psalms given to David and the Gospel given to Jesus (both Old and New Testaments) were for a particular time and community (not universal) and were corrupted.
- Muhammad is the final Prophet and the Quran will remain uncorrupted in its true form till the Last Day.

Five Pillars of Islam

1. Faith or belief in the Oneness of God and Muhammad the final prophet
2. Establishment of the daily prayers;
3. Concern for and almsgiving to the needy;
4. Self-purification through fasting; and
5. The pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able.

THE QURAN (KORAN)

- The Quran is the most important book in Islam. It contains the teachings and story of the chief prophet of Islam, Muhammad.
- The Quran, whose name means "recitation" in Arabic, is the sacred text of Muslims and the highest authority in both religious and legal matters.
- Muslims believe the Quran to be a flawless record of the angel Gabriel's revelations to Muhammad from 610 until his death in 632 AD.
- It is also believed to be a perfect copy of a heavenly Quran that has existed eternally. The revelation was put in writing shortly after Muhammad's death to preserve the content from corruption, but it is still regarded as most authentic when recited aloud.
- The Quran is roughly the length of the Christian New Testament. It is divided into 114 surahs (chapters) of widely varying length, which, with the exception of the opening surah (fatihah), are generally arranged from longest to shortest.
- Muslims have preached since the beginning of their faith that their holy book is written/spoken/recited in the actual words of God, and that he communicated them through the Angel Gabriel to his Prophet Mohammed in God's only language, Arabic. They further claim that the Koran cannot be understood in any other language but Arabic. They tell us confidently that it is "God's final communication to mankind."

Truths of Christianity

Accepted by Islam

- Christianity and Islam believe that God is one and that He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
- Christianity and Islam believe that God speaks to the human race during various stages of history and sends prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Joseph, John the Baptist, Jesus, etc.
- Christianity and Islam believe that people should follow the Ten Commandments and the moral teachings of the prophets.

- Christianity and Islam believe that Jesus was absolutely without sin throughout his life.
- Christianity and Islam believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin; therefore Jesus was born miraculously.
- **Catholicism** and Islam believe in the Immaculate Conception.

This Muslim belief stems from the hadiths (prophetic traditions): "I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "There is none born among the offspring of Adam, but Satan touches it. A child therefore, cries loudly at the time of birth because of the touch of Satan, except Mary and her child."

Thus, Islam believes that only Mary and Jesus were not touched by Satan. Even Muhammad did not have this distinction.

- Christianity and Islam believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and he performed miracles.
- Christianity and Islam believe that The Old Testament/Torah and the New Testament/Gospel) are Holy Scriptures.
- Christianity and Islam believe that Jesus ascended to Heaven.
- Christianity and Islam believe that Jesus Christ will return by descending from Heaven.

- Christianity and Islam believe that Satan is evil; therefore, people should not follow Satan.
- Christianity and Islam believe in the immortality of the soul, resurrection of the body and judgment on the last day.
- Christianity and Islam believe that there is hell and paradise.

Differences Between Christianity and Islam

- Christianity believes that God has one Nature but is a Trinity of Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).
- Christianity believes that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate (As God, He existed from all eternity and at a moment in time He took on flesh and entered time and space).
- Christianity believes that God reveals himself to humanity throughout history by way of the prophets. The fullness and completeness of God's revelation is manifested by God's son, Jesus Christ. Therefore the additional Revelation claimed by Muhammad is false.

- Christianity believes that Jesus was crucified, died and was buried and rose again on the third day and ascended into Heaven.
- Islam denies that Jesus was crucified on the Cross and therefore he did not die, but ascended bodily into heaven (a disciple died in his place).
- Islam believes that on the last day, all resurrected humans will be judged by Allah according to their deeds. One's eternal destination depends on balance of good to bad deeds in life (scale of good and evil works).

- Christianity believes in Salvation by way of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (God). There is nothing you can do to earn your salvation (works/righteousness). Salvation is a free gift.
- Islam views the relationship between God and humanity as Master/Slave relationship, one that lacks love. Christianity understands the relationship between God and humanity as Family and Love. God is our Father, Mary is our Mother and Jesus is our Brother.
- The greatest act of Love shown by God to humanity is Jesus (God Incarnate) sacrificing himself on the cross on our behalf in order that we may be reconciled with God.