

Islam's Beginnings
Classical Story
Part 1 - Muhammad

- Born in 570
- Spent early life as a nomad
- About age 25 went to work for a widow named Khadijah, eventually married her
- According to a local pagan custom, went to Mt. Hira to pray, while there the angel Gabriel appeared to him.
- Three times he is told to 'recite', three times he says he cannot 'recite' - he was illiterate.
- He was terrified by the encounter but his wife encouraged him to see them as a revelation. She gives him a test, which he passes. She then tells her cousin, who was a Christian, and he confirms that Muhammad is a prophet.
- The revelations came in dreams, visions, while awake, by an angel, by an angel as a young man, through trance-like rapture, sound of a bell, or as words suggested in his mind.
- The revelations were given in Arabic so as to be 'understood'.
- Revelations occurred from 610-632

Islam's Beginnings
Classical Story
Mecca and Medina

- The first half of the Qur'an is the Medina period (622-630), the second half is the Mecca period (610-622)
- 621 the Mi'raj. Muhammad rides a winged-horse (Buraq) to Jerusalem and lands where the Dome of the Rock is. This is called al'Isra, the 'night journey'. He ascends to the seventh heaven into the presence of Allah and Allah tells him he must pray 50 times a day. He descends to the 5th heaven and tells Moses. Moses tells him to go back up and get the number down. So this is repeated until Muhammad get the number down to five.
- 621-Muhammad is having trouble in Mecca so he moves to Medina. This is called Hijra or "exodus".
- In 630 he takes over Mecca
- He suddenly dies in 632 (some say he was poisoned)

Islam's Beginnings
Classical Story
Part 2 - Followers

- 632-34 Abu Bakr
- 634-44 Umar - Arabs move out capturing the great cities of the Levant (Basra, Bagdad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo) Arabs control the entire area
- 644-56 Uthman (3rd Caliph) was given the responsibility of compiling the Qur'an because he had discovered that there were many variations of it. He assigns the task to four men who 'canonize' it in 650. Uthman collected all the other Qur'an and burned them!
- Uthman is killed and Ali (cousin and son in law of Muhammad) comes to power.
- Ali - 656-661 Shi'ites believe Ali is the only legitimate heir. (Shia Muslims believe the Ayatollah are descended from Muhammad) His right to rule results in Shia/Sunni split.
- 685-705 Caliph of Abdul Malik

Problems

- We get this account (called Sirat Rasu'allah) from Ibn Ishaq who wrote it in 765. But we don't have any of this material. We are dependent on Ibn Hisham who wrote beginning in 833.
- This is 200+ years after the death of Muhammad.
- The first sayings of the prophet (Hadith) were given to Al'buhari. He collected some 600,000. He threw out 98% of what *he* didn't like and retained 7,397. The Hadith was completed in 870. Therefore, all we know of the prophet comes 240 years after his death. No one who wrote any of this was a contemporary of Muhammad.
- Outside of some administrative documents, it is widely held that there was NO written Arabic literature for the time period of the 7th century.
- Arabic was not codified until the 8th century.
- The N.T. was not translated into Arabic until the late 8th century. Where did Muhammad get his source material of N.T. information?
- Most scholars agree that there are many words in the Qur'an that have their origins in other languages and not Arabic.

1st Arab inscription referencing Muhammad is **691**
(Volker Popp - Uhlig & Puin, 2010, pg.53)

1st reference to 'Muslim' is in **690's**
(Nevo & Koren, 2003, pg.234)

1st Arab reference to 'Muslim' just prior to 749
(Nevo & Koren, 2003, pg.234)

1st reference to 'Islam' is **691** - Dome of the Rock
(Volker Popp - Uhlig & Puin, 2010, pg.71)

1st reference to Mecca is not until 741
(Crone, Meccan Trade: The Rise of Islam, 1987 pg. 134-136)

Where is all the material? Are we to believe that of all the people they had conquered (from Spain to India by about 661), none would mention Muhammad, Islam, or Muslim? Could they not read or write?

The Problem of Geography Part 1 - Mecca

According to Dan Gibson there are only 65 geographical references in the Qur'an and only 9 place names.

Ad (23x) - Biblical 'Uz
Thamud (24x) - Nabateans
Midian (7x) - Midianites

All three civilizations are in northern Arabia approximately 600 miles from Mecca. Mecca is only mentioned once in the Qur'an.

In the Qur'an Mecca is described as;

In a valley
There is a parallel valley running next to it
Has a stream running through it
There is a pillar of salt next to it that the prophet would pass going in and out of Mecca
Fields, trees, olive trees, loam
Mountains overlooking the city and the Ka'aba

The problem is that Mecca has NONE of these attributes and archeology confirms it never did.

The 'traditions' tell us that the Ka'aba is the place where Adam and Eve were cast down. That Abraham lived there and rebuilt the Ka'aba with Ishmael. But we need to remember that these Hadith are not compiled until 870.

The Problem of Geography Part 2 - Trade route theory

The trade route theory is the idea that Mecca became so wealthy because according to the Hadith it was on trade corridors north and south and east and west.

(show world trade route map)

(show map with Mecca as trade center)

Patricia Crone - reads and writes 15 archaic languages. Wrote the book *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*.

(show map with writing at the bottom)

Goods coming from India and China would have had to overcome mountains, bandits, time, the constant conflict between Persia and Byzantium and so forth. Crone states that you can move goods 25x cheaper via sea than overland. Why would they offload in Aden only to take the more difficult route overland? To go the approximate 40 miles from Ta'if to Mecca, you must first go up 1000 feet and then back down to Mecca.

Crone read the trading documents from the 2nd through the 7th century and there is no reference to Mecca in any of these. The documents speak of Ta'if, Yathrib (Medina), and Kaybar but NEVER Mecca. Mecca does not appear in the trading documents until 741 in a document called *Apocalypse of pseudo Methodius Continuatio Byzantia Arabica*. Mecca does not show up on ancient maps until 900!

The Problem of Geography Part 3 - Qibla

The Qibla is the direction that should be faced during prayer. It is indicated by a wall niche, known as mihrab. The Hadith tell us the story.

“This Qibla was used for over 13 years, from 610 until 623. Seventeen months after the Islamic prophet Muhammad's 622 arrival in Medina – the date is given as 11 February 624 – the Qibla became oriented towards the Kaaba in Mecca. According to traditional accounts from Muhammad's companions, the change happened very suddenly during the noon prayer in Medina. Muhammad was leading the prayer when he received revelations from God instructing him to take the Kaaba as the Qibla (literally, "Turn then Thy face in the direction of the sacred Mosque:"). According to the traditional accounts contained in the hadith and sura, Muhammad, who had been facing Jerusalem, upon receiving this revelation, immediately turned around to face Mecca, and those praying behind him also did so.”

According to Sura 2:145-149 the direction changed in 624. That means that every mosque should be facing Mecca since there were no mosques in 624 and the Arabs did not move out until 638, six years after Muhammad died.

Dan Gibson was researching mosques when he came across some research done in 1905. Some archeologists stated that they had found that in three of the oldest mosques (Wassit, Kufa, Fustat in Cairo) the Qibla did not face Mecca. The researchers found this odd but did not pursue. Gibson was intrigued. So he used satellite photography to locate the Qibla in the oldest mosques. He found that none of the seven oldest mosques faced Mecca. In fact, it wasn't until 727 in Banbhore, Pakistan that he found a Qibla facing Mecca.

Show quibble slide

Notice the earliest qibla all face Petra.

The place named more than any other in the Qur'an is Thamud (i.e. Nabatea).

Petra is in the ancient Nabatean Kingdom. It was its capitol.

Arabic is derived from Nabatean.

Petra has all the physical properties attributed to Mecca.