

**MUHAMMAD- ISLAM’S PROPHET**

There are only a handful of men throughout the ages who have made an impact on the world comparable to that which Muhammad has made regarding religion. Yet, Jesus Christ has made a greater impact, and yes His impact was far greater, to world history than Muhammad. Christians give no honor to Muhammad as a prophet, yet interestingly Muslims do claim that Jesus was a prophet. To understand the life of Muhammad is to see the birth and emergence of Islam. Islam must be eternally tied to Muhammad because he is the founder and early perpetuator of it. Muhammad’s name alone is enough to invoke strong emotions from Muslims and non-Muslims alike based on the doctrine he taught. During the course of this study, we will take a glimpse into the life of Muhammad, and recognize how his life and theological teachings are intertwined and contrast those of the Bible.

**What Was the Culture into Which Muhammad was Born?**

Arabia during the 6th century A.D. was a very inhospitable and hostile place. The climate was, and still is, one of the most dramatically changing climates in the world. The people were nomadic by nature. They had largely been left alone by the world powers because of the lack of resources in the region. Trade routes were the life-blood of the people. Whatever they needed, they had to get from somewhere else. Life was very difficult for all who lived in this region.

The Arab religion was pagan in nature. Each different tribe would have specific gods which would have an emphasis. The Ka’bah in Mecca was a place of worship for these idols (Geisler; Saleeb 18). It housed several different idols, with the most significant being the moon god, Allah. Though Allah received most of the emphasis, Mecca was a place considered to be very tolerant religiously. It is clear to see how Islam was molded from these pagan traditions mixed with principles from Christianity, Judaism, and Muhammad’s own doctrine.

**What Significance Can Be Seen from Muhammad’s Birth?**

Muhammad was born to a widowed woman whose husband died while on a caravan traveling to Syria. His father was Abdullah, or “servant of Allah,” and his mother was Amina (Miller 3). Amina supposedly had a dream in which she was told to name her son Muhammad. At the age of six, Muhammad’s mother died, which left him to his grandfather who also shortly died. He was then raised by his uncle, Abu Talib, who was a camel herder.

According to legend, angels attended his birth, reminiscent of the events surrounding Jesus’s birth (Geisler; Saleeb 70). Legend states that when he was born, he took a handful of dust and proclaimed, “God is great.” (Geisler; Saleeb 70). Legend also states that he was born clean, circumcised, and already having his umbilical cord cut. Supposedly, many other signs took place around the world to announce Muhammad’s birth. Interestingly, the Quran does not

provide information surrounding his lineage or these “miraculous events surrounding the birth of Muhammad. Therefore one is forced to rely on tradition passed down orally and finally recorded, to substantiate these claims. The source of information concerning Muhammad's roots was first listed in the Arabic book “Alsera Alnabawia” (The Biography of Muhammad), which was written in 758 A.D. by Ibn Ishaq. The book was then edited in 833 A.D. by Ibn Hesham and other Muslim biographers.

### **Was Muhammad the Foretold Prophet of Deuteronomy 18?**

Muslims point to Muhammad’s birth as the fulfillment of Moses’ prophecy of a coming prophet in Deuteronomy 18:18-19. “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him.” The argument used to show Muhammad as the fulfillment of this prophecy is well thought out, yet contains many holes.

First, Muslims will emphasize the statement, “from among their brethren,” (Deut. 18:18) and point back to Abraham, whom they claim was the first Muslim (Huffard 27). Muslims insist that since Isaac was the son considered by the Jews to have been the one through whom Abraham would become the father of multitudes, the descendants of Ishmael were the brethren referred to by Moses. They point out that Muhammad was from the lineage of Ishmael, therefore he was the prophet under consideration by Moses. Yet, with this line of thinking, a declaration must be made as to the consistency of the thought. “How unreasonable to accept the rejected son (Ishmael) over the son of promise (Isaac) through whom the Jewish nation came as well as Jesus” (Huffard 27).

If the Bible is to be used by the Muslim as the source of the prophecy, the Bible must also be consulted for its fulfillment. In the days of John the Baptizer, he was asked “art thou that prophet?” (Jn. 1:21). He went on to explain that he was the one preparing the way of that prophet. Peter later preaches of “that Prophet” as having already come. One can now deduce with a certainty that the prophet came between the time of John the Baptist (prior to Jesus’ ministry) and the day of Pentecost when Peter preached about “that prophet” which he declared was Jesus (Acts 3:20-26). Again, this prophecy was shown to be fulfilled centuries prior to Muhammad’s birth. Notice below the Bible’s description of “that prophet” as relating to Christ:

Acts 3:20-26 “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise

foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

Muslims further use Surah 61:6 to claim that Muhammad was “that prophet” or “Apostle” to come as prophesied by Jesus Christ himself. Interestingly, the New Testament which contains and devotes much of its writings to Christ himself makes no such claim about “Ahmad”.

*Surah 61:6 And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of God (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of an Apostle to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "this is evident sorcery!" (Surah 61:6)*

### **How Was Muhammad Affected by His Marriage?**

At the age of twenty-five, Muhammad met and married a woman fifteen years his senior named Khadija. She was a wealthy woman in the trading business (Miller 4-5). Muhammad’s new found wealth allowed him time to travel and wander in periods of meditation. In his travels, he ran across stories which were very similar to the accounts he would later claim were “revelations” from God. At the age of forty, he told his wife that he was visited by the angel Gabriel and that he was receiving “revelations.” These “revelations” would continue until the time of his death. These were put together and are known today as the Quran. One of the most fascinating claims is that of the “nighttime journey” in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of his mission as recorded in the Islam glossary (<http://www.islamicity.com/IslamicGlossary>). This “night time” journey is described below.

With the support of his wife, Muhammad began to call himself the prophet of Allah. He began to preach his new religion to those around him. Because of the religious toleration in the region around Mecca, joined with Muhammad’s willingness to compromise with the dominant religions of his day, he was allowed to teach this new religion. It was only when the customs of polytheism in the region were challenged by Muhammad that any resistance was given (Geisler; Saleeb 74). It was more than just faith in polytheism that caused this resistance. Another source of the resistance was this new teaching would affect their financial livelihoods. Geisler; Saleeb states: “Some modern historians believe that the Meccans of Muhammad’s time no longer had an active faith in their own religious institutions but were interested in preserving the central sanctuary of Mecca as a lucrative destination for pilgrimages”(Geisler; Saleeb 74). On a religious level there was a “great dislike for Muhammad’s constant warning of the hereafter, the last judgment” (Geisler; Saleeb 74).

It was because of his wife’s wealth that he was able to spend so much time teaching his new doctrines. After the death of Khadija, Muhammad’s home life began to change. He

eventually had eleven wives (some claim as many as 15) and concubines, the youngest of which was six at the time while he was fifty. Aisha was the six year old daughter of the wealthy Abu Bakr, one of his most prominent early adherents (Miller 9). According to Muslim.org, Bukhari stated that Muhammad consummated the marriage to Aisha at the age of 9 (<http://www.muslim.org/islam/aisha-age.htm>), but more recent attempts by Muslim Scholars have attempted to put her age at about 28.

### How Did Islam Spread So Quickly?

Muhammad rejected the idea of peaceful co-existence with the other religions in Mecca and he began to become violent to the people around him. He made a political alliance with Medina, which led the people of Mecca to try to capture Muhammad and put him to death, a threat that only extended to Muhammad and no one else. Muhammad finally fled to Medina in A.D. 622 (Miller 12). It was this rejection that caused Muhammad to become more ruthless. His followers began to raid caravans to finance his plans. Slowly, Muhammad began to use more and more violence to spread his religion. The phrase “Islam, tribute, or the sword” became the calling card of Muslims treatment of surrounding peoples. There were many battles fought in the name of Islam, leading to the idea of Jihad, or “holy” war. Furthermore, many verses in the Quran promise blessing to those who kill in the name of Allah.

*Remember thy Lord inspired the angels (with the message): "I am with you: give firmness to the Believers: I will instil terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them." (Surah 8:12)*

The “unbelievers” which were to have their heads and fingertips cut off included any religion which opposed the Islamic faith. There are 109 verses in the Quran declaring the faithful Muslim to engage in Jihad against any unbeliever. The “Muslim” today that insists they are peaceful and do not promote war is not a “true Muslim” according to the Quran, just as a “Christian” who promotes acts of self-aggression and violence is not a “true Christian” as described by the Bible.

### Conclusion

Muhammad’s reign of terror came to an end upon his death in A.D. 632, but was and is continued by his followers. Many of Muhammad’s “revelation” were given to allow terrible acts to take place in the name of Allah. The stage was set for Islam’s continued growth through means of violence for centuries to come. Even in our own time, we can see the effects of the violent stand which began with Muhammad. Muhammad is held in such high esteem by his followers that it seems he is placed on a higher pedestal than their god Allah. This clearly demonstrates the attitude of Muhammad, which permeates throughout his religion yet today. A clear look at the founder of a religion can give a great deal of understanding about the religion itself. Viewing Muhammad’s life show a frightening look into a religion that is growing faster than any other in the world today.

## **Additional Information**

### Muhammad's Night Journey

(This section is for additional information and is a direct quotation from the website provided at the end. All mentions of Muhammad or Allah are likely to have their Muslim counterparts mentioned after. This is in no way a statement of the writer of this study.)

The last days of the Makkah phase in the Prophet's life were noted for alternate fortunes. However, glimpses of propitious lights were looming on the distant horizon, ultimately materialized in the event of the Prophet's Night Journey (Al-Israa') to Jerusalem and then Ascension (Al-Mi`raj) through the spheres of the heavens. The exact date of this great event is still controversial:

Some scholars, including Imam At-Tabari, are of the opinion that the Night Journey occurred in the same year the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) received the first revelation. Imams An-Nawawi and Al-Qurtubi prefer the opinion that it occurred five years after the Prophet's mission. Another opinion sets Rajab 27, 10 years after the Prophet embarked on his great mission as the exact date of the event. Still, other scholars are in favor of dates ranging between 12 to 16 months prior to the Prophet's migration to Madinah.

The first three opinions were rejected by some scholars on the basis that it is established that the obligatory Prayer was instituted on the night of Al-Israa' and that such institution had not occurred during the lifetime of Khadijah, the Prophet's wife, who passed away in Ramadan, 10 years after the Prophet had started his noble mission. As for the other opinion, I [Al-Mubarakfuri] did not find any proof to strengthen it. However, the context of Surat Al-Israa' implies that it was revealed in a late time during the Makkah phase.

The scholars of Hadith reported the details of the Night of Al-Israa'. Here I give a summary of the Night's events:

Adam welcomed the Prophet and expressed faith in his prophethood.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was carried in body from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on a mount called Al-Buraq in the company of Angel Gabriel. There Prophet Muhammad led all the other prophets in prayer.

After that Gabriel took him to the heavens. When they reached the first heaven Gabriel asked the guardian angel to open the first heaven's door. It was opened and Prophet Muhammad saw Adam, the progenitor of humankind. The Prophet saluted him. Adam welcomed him and expressed his faith in Muhammad's prophethood. The Prophet saw on the right side of Adam the souls of those who will be happy in the hereafter and saw the souls of the doomed ones on his left.

Gabriel then ascended with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to the second heaven and asked for opening the gate. There the Prophet saw and saluted Prophets Yahya (John) and `Isa (Jesus). They returned the salutation, welcomed him, and expressed their faith in his Prophethood.

The same happened in each heaven: In the third heaven, the Prophet saw Prophet Yusuf (Joseph); in the fourth, Prophet Idris (Enoch); in the fifth, Prophet Harun (Aaron); in the sixth, Prophet Musa (Moses); and in the seventh, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), (peace and blessings be upon them all).

When Prophet Muhammad left Prophet Musa (peace and blessings be upon both of them) in the sixth heaven, Prophet Musa began to weep. Asked about the reason, he answered that though Muhammad was sent after him as a messenger, those who will enter Paradise from Muhammad's nation are greater in number than those from Musa's nation.

The Prophet then was carried to Sidrat Al-Muntaha (Arabic for "the remotest Lote-tree") and was shown Al-Bait Al-Ma`mur (Arabic for "the much-frequented house") which is attended daily by 70,000 angels; the angels who attend it never leave it until the Day of Resurrection.

He was then presented to the Divine Presence getting at the closest possible nearness. There Almighty Allah ordained 50 daily prayers for him.

On his way back, he told Prophet Musa that his followers had been enjoined to pray 50 times a day. Prophet Musa advised him to ask Allah to reduce the number because the Muslim Ummah would not bear performing such a number of prayers. The Prophet turned to Gabriel as if asking his counsel. Gabriel nodded, "Yes, if you desire," and ascended with him to Almighty Allah. Then Almighty Allah made a reduction of 10 prayers. The Prophet then descended and reported that to Musa, who again urged him to request a further reduction.

The Prophet once more begged Allah to reduce the number further. He went again and again to Almighty Allah at the suggestion of Musa till the prayers were reduced to five only. Again, Musa asked him to implore for more reduction, but the Prophet said, "I feel embarrassed (of repeatedly asking my Lord to reduce the number of daily prayers.) I accept and resign to His Will." When the Prophet went farther, a caller was heard saying: "I have imposed My (Allah's) ordinance and alleviated the burden of My servants."

The Night Journey raised a good deal of stir among people, and the skeptical audience plied Muhammad with all sorts of questions. The disbelievers found it a suitable opportunity to jeer at the Muslims and their creed. They pestered the Prophet with questions as to the description of the Mosque at Jerusalem, where he had never gone before, and to their astonishment, the Prophet's replies furnished the most accurate information about it. However, this increased in them nothing but flight from Islam, and they accepted nothing but disbelief.

For true Muslims, however, there was nothing unusual about the Night Journey. Almighty Allah, Who is powerful enough to have created the heavens and the earth, is surely powerful enough to take His Messenger beyond the heavens and show him firsthand those signs of His that are inaccessible to people otherwise.

This believing attitude was epitomized by Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) whom the disbelievers challenged on account of this event to believe what the Prophet said, and he readily said, "Yes, I do verify it." It is reported that this answer is what earned him the famous title of As-Siddiq (Arabic for "the verifier of the truth").

\*This excerpt was taken from: <http://www.onislam.net/english/shariah/muhammad/his-life/457524-the-story-of-the-night-journey.html>.

### Time Line of Important Events in Prophet Muhammad's Life

570 C.E. Muhammad is born in Mecca.

595 C.E. Muhammad marries Khadija, who later becomes the first Muslim.

610 C.E. Muhammad receives what he comes to believe is his first visitation from the angel Gabriel and revelation from Allah.

613 C.E. Muhammad begins preaching Islam publicly in Mecca.

615 C.E. Friction with the Quraysh causes some Muslims to leave Arabia for Abyssinia.

619 C.E. Khadija dies.

620 C.E. The Night Journey Prophet Muhammad is carried from Mecca to Jerusalem and then travels to the heavens and meets the previous prophets (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc).

622 C.E. The Hijra: Muhammad and the Muslims flee from Mecca to Medina.

624 C.E. The Nakhla raid. These raids were not solely designed to exact revenge from the people who had rejected the Prophet who had arisen among them. They served a key economic purpose, keeping the Muslim movement solvent.

624 C.E. The Battle of Badr: the Muslims overcome great odds to defeat the pagan Meccans.

624 C.E. Muhammad and the Muslims besiege the Jewish Qaynuqatribe and exile them from Medina.

625 C.E. The Battle of Uhud: the pagan Meccans defeat the Muslims.

625 C.E. Siege and exile from Medina of the Jewish Nadir tribe.

627 C.E. The Battle of the Trench: the Jewish Qurayzah tribe betrays Muhammad.

627 C.E. The Execution the males of the Qurayzah tribe and enslaves the women and children by Sa'd Ibn Mutab.

628 C.E. Muhammad concludes the Treaty of Hudaibiyya with the pagan Meccans.

628 C.E. Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims besiege the Khaybar oasis and exile the Jews from it.

630 C.E. Muhammad and the Muslims conquer Mecca.

630 C.E. The Muslims prevail in the Battle of Hunayn and conquer Ta'if; Muhammad becomes the ruler of Arabia.

631 C.E. The Arabian tribes remaining outside Islamic rule accept Islam.

631 C.E. the expedition to Tabuk.

632 C.E. Muhammad dies in Medina on June 8, 632 CE.

\*This timeline was taken from: [http://www.answering-christian-claims.com/Time\\_Line\\_Of\\_Prophet\\_Muhammad\\_Life.html](http://www.answering-christian-claims.com/Time_Line_Of_Prophet_Muhammad_Life.html)

### Review Questions

Question 1) Explain the culture Muhammad was born in to, the traditional beliefs about his birth, and his early life.

Question 2) What is the claim by Muslims regarding Deuteronomy 18:18-19 with specific discussion around the phrase “raise THEM a Prophet from among THEIR brethren”?

Question 3) Based upon the promise given to Abraham regarding Isaac in Genesis and the questioning of John the baptist, how did the Jews understand Deuteronomy 18:18-19?

Question 4) What new testament passage (with specific wording cited) confirms for us the meaning of Deuteronomy 18:18-19 and given this text, is it possible that Muhammad is who Muslim’s claim he is (the “Prophet” from Deut 18:18-19)?

Question 5) Explain how Muhammad’s marriage impacted his life.

Question 6) Why did Islam spread so quickly and how is Jihad related? What was the ultimatum given to those that Muslims conquered (three options)?

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