Background on Arabia

- Arabia had NEVER been controlled by a single empire/civilization
- Nomadic herding and trading groups called Bedouin lived in Arabia
- Lived in fiercely independent clans and tribes
Background on Arabia

• Pastoral and trading groups
• Herded sheep and camels
• Often engaged in violent wars with each other
• Practiced polytheism and ancestor worship
• Valued personal bravery and group loyalty
Background on Arabia

- Participated in Silk Road Trade
- Silk Road and Indian Ocean Trade especially

- Tribes often fought each other over control of trade routes and water sources

- Location between the Byzantine Empire (to the northwest) and the Persian Empire (to the northeast)
Background on Arabia

- Due to trade and interaction with Roman and Persian Empires, many Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians lived among the Arabs in Arabia
- Many of their monotheistic ideas began to influence the Arabs
Core Beliefs

**Mecca (Makkah) was the most important religious and trading city in Arabia**
Core Beliefs

• Makkah was the location of the Kaaba = most important religious shrine in Arabia

• Housed representations of about 360 deities
Life and Teachings of Muhammad

• Though some sources contain exaggerations on Muhammad’s life, there is MUCH more known about the Historical Muhammad than previous religion leaders(Siddhartha, Jesus, Abraham, etc)

• Born in Mecca in 570 CE to a Quraysh family
  • Orphaned by age 8
    • Father died before he was born
    • Mother died at age of 6
    • Grandfather died at age 8

• Lived and worked with merchant/tribal leader uncle
Core Beliefs

• Muhammad Learned about teachings of Monotheistic religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism while travelling as a merchant

• At 25, he married a wealthy merchant, named Khadijah

• They had 2 sons who died in infancy and at least 4 daughters
Core Beliefs

• Troubled by the corrupt religious and political leaders, poverty, and inequalities of Mecca

• Often withdrew into the mountains to meditate
  • 610 CE he had a revelation that he was a had an overwhelming religious experience an
  • Similar to the Buddha and Jesus
Core Beliefs

• God began communicating FINAL revelations and new teachings in 610 CE (continued for the next 22 years)

• Brought to him by the angel Gabriel

• For first three years he told very few people of his revelations
Core Beliefs

- Muslims believe that **Muhammad was NOT divine**, they believe that he was a man and a messenger of God
- Meant he was the last in a long line of prophets, including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others
- Wasn’t trying to start a new faith
- More of an invitation to return to the old and pure religion of Abraham
Core Beliefs

- Islam is Monotheistic and worships the same god as Judaism and Christianity
- There is only one God
- God has no children, no parents, and no partners
- God was not created by a being
- There are no equal, superior, or lesser Gods
- God is beyond human representation
- Allah is the Arabic word for God
Core Beliefs

• Recorded revelations/teachings in text called the Quran

• The Quran rejects:
  • Hoarding of wealth and materialism
  • Exploitation of the poor
  • Corrupt business practices
  • Neglecting widows and orphans
  • Abuse of women
Core Beliefs

• The Quran/Islam teaches:
  • All people are equal in eyes of God
  • Charity/Aid to the poor
  • Living by the 5 Pillars of Islam
These are the duties of Islam, the religion of Muslims.

1. Shahadah (Faith): To believe in no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet and the

2. Salah (Prayer): To pray five times each day: Fajr - Before Sunrise, Zuhr - Early Afternoon, Asr - Late Afternoon

3. Sawm (Fasting): To give up food and drink during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan

4. Zakah (Almsgiving): To give a share of personal wealth to help people in need and support the Muslim

5. Hajj (Pilgrimage): To perform a pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in
Core Beliefs

• Islam teaches a belief in an afterlife, both a paradise and hell like punishment
• Those who hope to achieve this afterlife must submit to the will of God
• Usually described as a beautiful garden
Core Beliefs

- Muhammad’s monotheistic and social justice message threatened the power and wealth of polytheistic tribal leaders.

- Muhammad and his follower moved to Medina in 622 CE & Muslims built Umma (*ummat al-Islamiyah* or *ummah*), community of believers.
  - Called the Hijrah
  - Marks year ZERO in the Islamic calendar

- Muhammad was a political and military leader in addition to his position as a religion leader/prophet.
Method of Expansion

• Common faith in one god replaced tribal divisions & unified Muslims into the Dar al-Islam or Islamic civilization

• Literally means the house of Islam
Method of Expansion

- Islamic civilization encouraged and protected trade

- Muslim merchants spread religion along profitable trade routes and in search for wealthy agricultural regions

- Merchants traveled farther than armies and took their religion to remote areas of Eurasia.

- Individuals wanted to gain wealth and social promotion
Expansion/Conquest unified & provided a common task for the umma that was on the verge of falling apart after Muhammad’s death
Method of Expansion

• Conversion to Islam not forced on anyone in the Arab Empire

• In fact: Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians all considered “people of the book” and were given the special status of dhimmis (protected subjects)

• In the 400s years following Muhammad’s death, millions of individuals and many whole societies with the Arab Empire adopted Islam
Method of Expansion

• Not such a dramatic change for Monotheistic people such as Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians
  • Already familiar with ideas of: monotheism, heaven, hell, final judgment, divine revelation, fasting, ritual prayer, etc.
  • Islam sponsored by a powerful state lead to wealth and prestige of Arab Empire attracted people

• Successful conquest called into question the power of old gods; perhaps God really is all-powerful
Interactive Notebook Setup

• 8/19/2019
• Major World Religions
• This will be one page