



0. MUSLIM CONQUESTS - Story Preface

- 1. FEAR OF ISLAM
- 2. MUHAMMAD'S EARLY LIFE
- 3. WHO WAS MUHAMMAD?
- 4. MUHAMMAD'S VISITATIONS
- 5. THE WORLD IN 610 C.E.

6. MUHAMMAD CONQUERS MECCA

7. MUSLIM CONQUESTS

- 8. JEWS, CHRISTIANS AND THE KORAN
- 9. MUHAMMAD AND THE MODERN WORLD

Islam teaches that Muhammad ascended to heaven in a night journey known as the *Mi'raj*. This illustration, "The Night Journey of Muhammad on His Steed," is a leaf from a copy of the *Bustan of Sa'di* (a Persian Poet) It is dated 1514 and was created by a currently unknown painter. The calligrapher was Sultan Muhammad Nur Bukhara. The source material for this image is currently maintained at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Online via Wikimedia Commons.

Two years after Muhammad's death, the entire Arabian Peninsula was converted to the Islamic faith. Within three years, Muslim armies were invading Iraq, Syria and Egypt. By 638, Caliph Umar (from *khalifah*, meaning representative) conquered Jerusalem with his armies and, by 641, had defeated the mighty Persian Empire.

Not long after, Muslims conquered Cyprus and Tripoli (in today's Libya) and had established rule in Iran, Afghanistan and Sindh. In addition, they warred against themselves in a quarrel over Muhammad's successor and, by 750, had taken over Spain. They were stopped from controlling France at the Battle of Poitiers.

In Jerusalem (as elsewhere), Muslim rulers allowed Jews and Christians to practice their own religious beliefs. But those rulers set in motion a huge problem that continues to this day. They erected the Dome of the Rock (completed in 691) over the Noble Rock, the third-holiest site in Islam.

Built on the spot where Muslims believe Muhammad ascended in a "Night Journey" to heaven (called the Miraj), the Dome of the Rock also sits on the holiest of all Jewish sites. It is the "Holy of Holies" from the first Temple. It is Mount Moriah, where God commanded Abraham (*Ibrahim* in the *Koran*) to sacrifice his son Isaac, in a test of faith. (Muslims believe it was Ishmael, not Isaac, who was to be sacrificed.)

Today the site is Temple Mount to a Jew; it is Dome of the Rock to a Muslim. It is the place over which both sides claim ownership in a struggle that seemingly has no resolution.

Believing that Islam is a way of life, not just a religious faith, Muhammad changed the Arabic world. People were bound together in a religious and political community. As Islam spread to non-Arabic countries, non-Arab people were also part of the Muslim *ummah* (community). United by faith, despite differences in culture and country, Islam became a formidable force.

What are some of the Islamic teachings set down in the *Koran*? And how were they able to transcend cultural barriers?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MUSLIM-CONQUESTS-Muhammad-the-Prophet>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MUSLIM-CONQUESTS-Muhammad-the-Prophet>

The Spread of Islam under Abu Bakr, 632-34 CE



Spread of Islam Under Abu Bakr 632-634 C.E.

Map, described above, from an online book entitled "The Islamic World to 1600," by the Department of History, University of Calgary.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spread-of-Islam-Under-Abu-Bakr-632-634-C.E.>

The Spread of Islam under Umar, 634-44



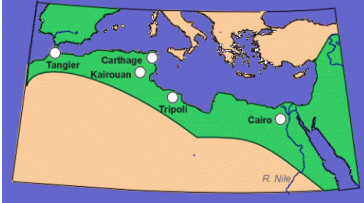
Spread of Islam Under Umar, 634-644 C.E.

Map, described above, from an online book entitled "The Islamic World to 1600," by the Department of History, University of Calgary.

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Muslim Expansion in North Africa under the Umayyad Dynasty, 661-750 CE



Muslim Expansion in North Africa, 661-750 C.E.

Map, described above, from an online book entitled "The Islamic World to 1600," by the Department of History, University of Calgary.

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Muslim Expansion in Central Asia under the Umayyad Dynasty, 661-750 CE



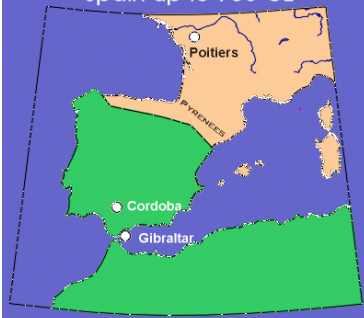
Muslim Expansion in Central Asia, 661-750 C.E.

Map, described above, from an online book entitled "The Islamic World to 1600," by the Department of History, University of Calgary.

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Muslim Expansion in Spain up to 750 CE



Muslim Expansion in Spain, Up To 750 C.E.

Map, described above, from an online book entitled "The Islamic World to 1600," by the Department of History, University of Calgary.

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Dome of the Rock - Interior

Image online, courtesy the islamicity.com website.

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Dome of the Rock - Exterior

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