

Islam

Brief #3

Focus

The birth of Islam was an influential development of the Middle Ages.

So far most of what you have learned in this book is about the ancient world. Remember that scholars date the ancient world from about 3500 B.C. (when people began to keep written records) to about 476 A.D. (the fall of the Roman Empire in the west).

But what period comes after the ancient world? The period of time from about the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. to about the time that the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1453 is called the Middle Ages. **The Middle Ages is the period of time between the ancient world and the modern world, or the world in which we all live.** One of the most influential things that happened during the Middle Ages was the development and spread of a religion called Islam.



Muhammad

Muhammad was a man who was born in Arabia in about 570 A.D. Nowadays we call this part of the world Saudi Arabia. **According to the Quran, which is the sacred book of Islam,** he went to the desert to pray. While he was in the desert praying, an angel came to him and told him what god wanted his people to do. When Muhammad returned from the desert he began to preach. Soon he had many followers. This marks the beginning of the religion called Islam.



The Teachings of Islam

Islam is an Arabic word that means *submission*.

People who practice the Islamic faith are called Muslims.

Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, is a

monotheistic religion. Muslims believe in the Five Pillars of Islam. These are things that are considered to be the basic duties of all Muslims. They include a belief in god and the prophet Muhammad and giving to charity. Muslims also believe in making a pilgrimage to Mecca. **A pilgrimage is a journey that a person takes to a place that is important to his or her religion.** Muslims make a pilgrimage to Mecca because they consider it to be a sacred place.

Vocabulary

1. Middle Ages
2. Muhammad
3. Quran
4. Islam
5. Muslims
6. pilgrimage
7. Ottoman Turks
8. Islamic golden age

Islam

Brief #3 (cont.)



The Spread of Islam

As people travel around the world and interact with one another, ideas are exchanged. Many of these ideas are ideas about religion. All religions are spread from one place to another this way.

Islamic traders in the Middle Ages helped to spread the religion of Islam from inside of Arabia to places outside of Arabia. In addition, Muslims invaded and conquered lands. As they did, they converted the people who lived there to Islam.

One group of people who helped to spread Islam was the Ottoman Turks. **The Ottoman Turks were people who lived within the Byzantine Empire.** They migrated there from Asia. They conquered the Byzantine Empire, which was a Christian empire in 1453. The Ottoman Empire was an influential and powerful Islamic empire. It survived until 1923.



Islamic Golden Age

From about the 8th to the 15th centuries, the Islamic world entered what scholars call the Islamic golden age. **The Islamic Golden Age was a period of time when the sciences, arts, and medicine expanded and flourished in the Islamic world, specifically in places where the religion of Islam was the major belief system.**

Advances in chemistry, along with the first tar roads, pharmacies, psychiatric hospitals, and stained glass were all invented in the Islamic world of the Middle Ages. Scholars also believe that the first candy was produced by Muslims during the Middle Ages.

