

GLEANINGS — April 26, A.D. 2015  
Star and Crescent

Mohammed\*, 570 - 632 A.D., is the founder of Islam, born in Mecca in South Arabia, in the lineage of Abraham and Hagar, springing from the tribe of the Koreish, the custodian of the sacred shrine of the Kaaba. His father Abdallah died before Mohammed was born, and his mother Amina died when he was six or eight years old. He was cared for by his grandfather for two years, then by an uncle, Abu Talib. A nervous, sensitive child, some scholars say he had a tendency toward epilepsy.

At age twenty-five he became a camel driver for Kadijah, a wealthy widow of Mecca, whom he married a little later. Of this union one child, Fatima, survived infancy. She later became the wife of Ali, one of Mohammed's followers and later his successor.

Trading trips took Mohammed to Syria, where he came in touch with both Judaism and a degenerate form of Christianity. At age forty he claimed to have received a vision and a call to preach. He began a new religion of mingled Judaism, Christianity, and Arabian paganism, blended together by his imaginative mind. His first converts were Kadijah his wife, Ali and Zaid, two adopted sons, and Abu Bekr, a close friend.

Persecuted in Mecca, in 622 A.D. he fled to Medina. This flight, the Hegira, dated the beginning of Islam. Mohammed gained strength in Medina, established a "theocratic" state, eliminated internal strife in the city, repulsed attacks of the Meccans, and before long returned to and gained possession of Mecca, which became the holy place of Islam. He became judge, lawgiver, and administrator among followers, and built up a strong state and a mighty religion. By 632, the time of his death, nearly all of Arabia was at his feet; within the next one hundred years North Africa, Palestine, Asia Minor, Persia, and Spain were conquered for Islam.

Mohammed's early life was perhaps one of sincerity and truth-seeking; but later years were manifestly years of power-seeking and corruption.

Essential doctrines of Mohammed's religion are:

- Allah, an absolute, all-powerful creator god
- Angels, the sinless servants of Allah
- Books, the chief of which is the Koran
- Prophets\*\*, of whom Mohammed was the last and most important
- The resurrection and last day.

The five practical duties or "pillars of faith" are:

*cont'd over...*

Recital of the creed\*\*\*  
Prayers five times daily  
The fast of Ramadan  
Almsgiving  
Pilgrimage to Mecca

Being built on "an eternal truth and a necessary fiction", Islam became strong, became one of Christianity's greatest foes, and has had world wide consequences.

Having undergone very minor form re-editing, the above is from the article on Mohammed in the book "Who's Who in Church History", edited by Elgin S. Moyer. (Keats Publishing, New Canaan CT, 1974. Library of Congress number 74-19918)

\* The name Mohammed is also rendered Muhammed or Mahomet

\*\* Islam regards the Lord Jesus as a prophet, but thinks of Biblical Christianity as a perversion of His teaching

\*\*\* This is the creed:

"There is no true god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet."

Dr. Greg Bahnsen (d. 1995), a brilliant Christian scholar, author, and apologist, believed that Islam will be the greatest foe of the spread of the Gospel in coming years. It has been said that there are more mosques - Islamic places of worship - than churches in London (yes, England) today. The religion is growing rapidly in the U.S. and elsewhere in the West. Millions already follow Islam not only in the Middle East, but in Pakistan, the Philippines and much of Southeast Asia, and Africa. The word Islam is Arabic for "submission".

See Genesis 16:1ff; Genesis 25:9; Genesis 25:12ff, etc. for Biblical information about Ishmael, Abraham's son through Hagar. Abraham's other son Isaac, born through Sarah, is the Jewish patriarch.