

Church History



Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21st century



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- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
 - *The “Dark Ages” Overview*
 - *Flagrant Abuses of Authority: Zeno, Theodoric, and Clovis*
 - *Auctoritas Sacrata Pontificum: Gelasius*
 - *The Rise of the Monk: Benedict, Brendan, and Dennis*
 - *The Politics of Death: Justinian and Columba*
 - *Kingdoms of God: Gregory and Muhammad (part 2)*



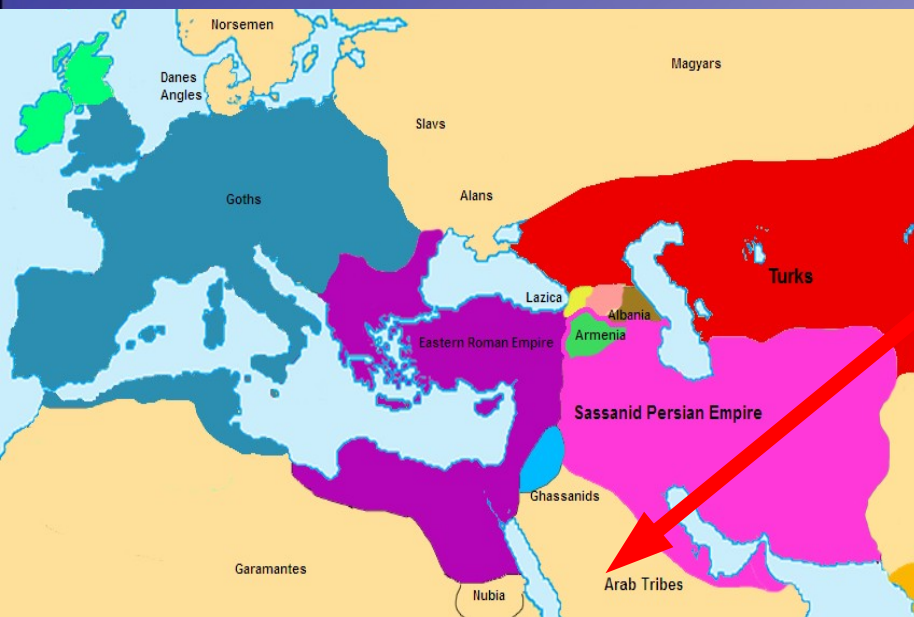
The Early Middle Ages

- This was a time of kingdom-carving
 - 590 Gregory was elected Pope
 - He focused on building up the Roman Catholic Church as a unified, consistent, and strong power in Europe



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 - 610 Muhammad had an angelic vision
 - On the other side of the known world, a middle-aged businessman from Mecca was growing disenchanted with the polytheism in Arabia



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - Remember—at this time in history, the Arabs worshipped multiple gods
 - The Kaaba shrine in Mecca had 360 idols of tribal gods for people to worship—
 - Hubal, the king of the gods
 - Ta'lab, the moon god
 - Al-Qaum, the war god
 - Dushara, the mountain god
 - Allah, the creator god
 - and his three daughters, Allāt, Manāt, and al-'Uzzá
 - etc...
 - And Arabic mythologies are filled with various supernatural creatures such as *djinns* (good but arrogant spirits called *mārids*, and evil spirits called *'ifrīts*), *ghuls* who haunt deserts and graveyards, etc.



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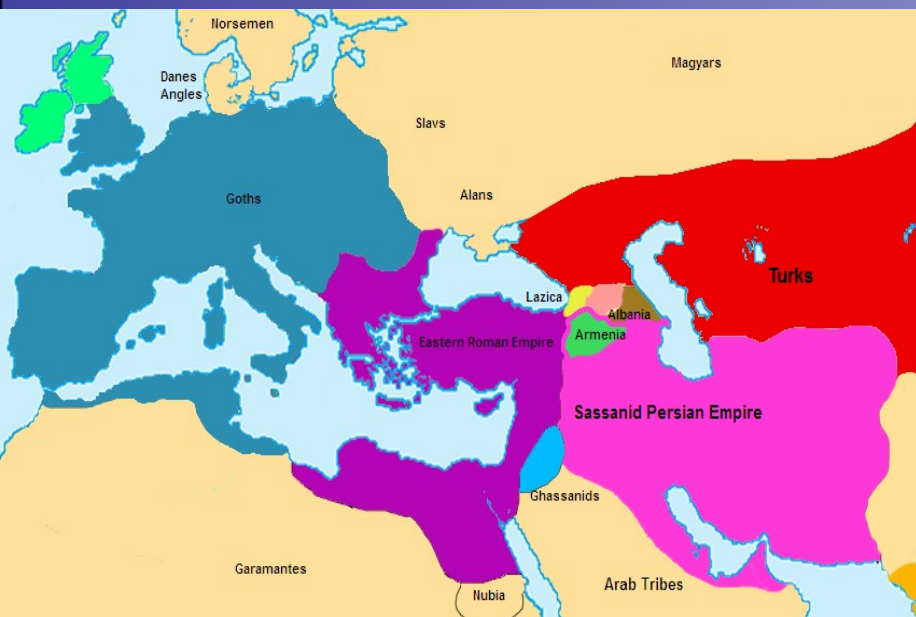
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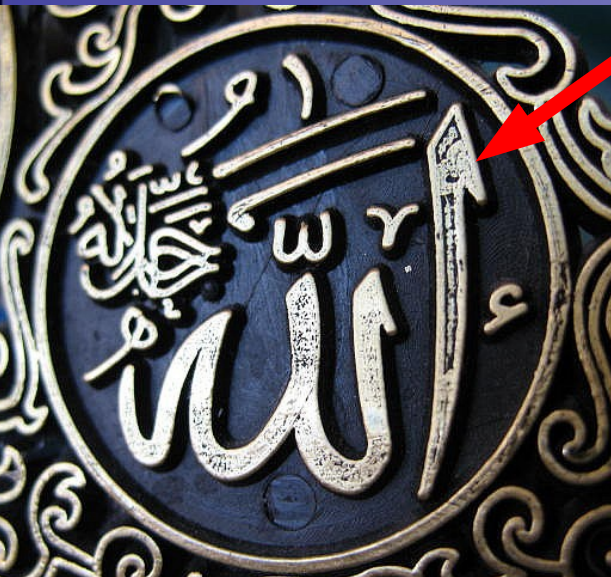
Muhammad had an angelic vision

- On the other side of the known world, a middle-aged businessman from Mecca was growing disenchanted with the polytheism in Arabia
- After meeting a Christian monk named Bahira and learning about Christianity, Muhammad was drawn to the idea of a monotheistic religion
 - He spent whole weeks alone in the hermits' caves outside of Mecca, praying and seeking the One, True God
 - One night, he claimed to have been visited by the angel, *Jibrīl* (Gabriel), who shared with him the truths of *Islam* and dictated to him the *Qur'an*, which preaches a decidedly militant monotheism and absolute devotion to the *one* god, the *creator* god named Allah



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - Though sometimes said to mean “peace,” the word, *Islam* (الإسلام or “al-’islām”) actually means “voluntary obedience [to God]”
 - But it is etymologically related to the Hebrew word, *shalom* (שלום), at its root level
 - Both technically point to the sense of peace that comes from placing yourself under the authority and sovereignty of God
 - Since there is no official “symbol” for Islam, it's usually just denoted by a calligraphic expression of the word
 - They even use the depiction in very fancy, decorative ways



الله



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 - The whole “crescent and star” thing didn’t kick in until the Muslims conquered Constantinople in 1453 and took *their* symbols and flag as their own
 - But really, technically, Islam eschews *all* symbols and depictions as essentially idolatry



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 - Though sometimes said to mean “peace,” the word, *Islam* (الإسلام or “*al-’islām*”) actually means “voluntary obedience [to God]”
 - Thus, I don't have a picture of Muhammad to show you
 - Even a cute little cartoon made recently about the life of Muhammad always places him off-screen so that you never see his face depicted (and thus, even accidentally, begin worshipping his image)
 - Instead, they tend to use another calligraphic representation of his name
 - Ironically, again, they still make use of all of these calligraphic representations in flags, wall paintings, etc.
 - And they always make it a point to to say, “Peace and blessings be upon him,” every time Muhammad's name is mentioned—and get a little miffed with people who don't
 - To outside ears, that all kinda reeks of iconic depictions and worship



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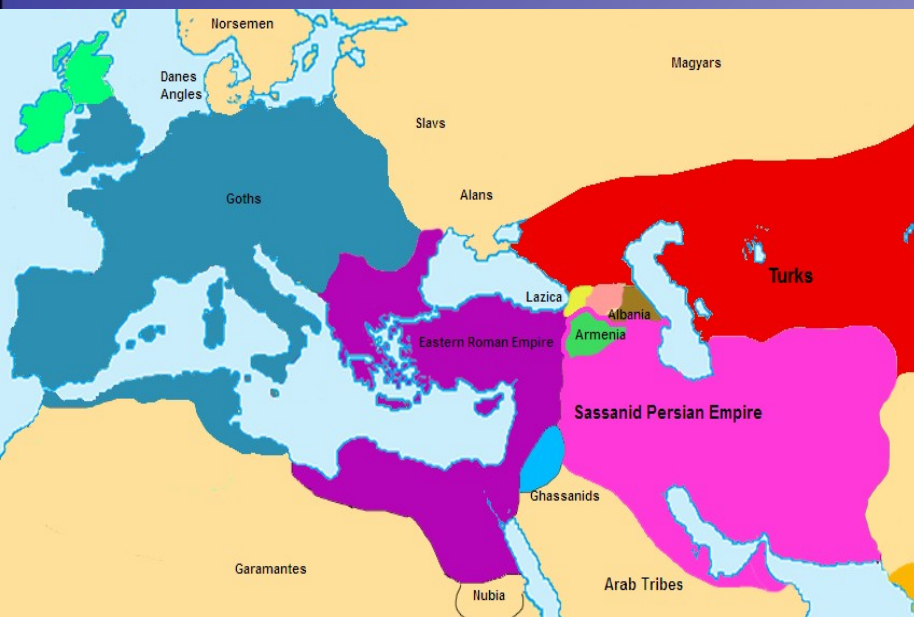
Muhammad began preaching in Mecca

- Pulling from both Judaism and Christianity (and calling all three faiths, “People of the Book”), he fashioned a religion that stemmed from Ishmael rather than Isaac, but purported to worship the same God—whose name was *Allah*

- Thus, the Islamic confession of faith—“There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet!” (which differentiates the religion from all others)

- Islam preached that only Allah should be worshipped, that men like Abraham (‘*Ibrāhīm*), Moses (*Mūsa*), and Jesus (‘*Isā*) were great prophets of Allah, and that Allah wanted to bring the whole world together in right living and worship

- Thus, people should treat others with Judeo-Christian ethical standards, stop worshipping idols, stop fornicating, stop using sorcery, etc.



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Muhammad began preaching in Mecca

- To many Christians, that sounded pretty good, as far as non-Christian religions went
 - In fact, when the burgeoning faith was originally persecuted in Mecca, a number of Muslims found sanctuary within the nearby Christian kingdom of Ethiopia
 - Even Muhammad himself buckled under the persecution

- To accommodate local polytheists, he added some verses to the *Qur'an* that lauded the daughters of Allah—Allāt, Manāt, and al-'Uzzá—as Meccan goddesses in their own right
- Later, Jibrīl made him remove the verses, and he realized that they had been whispered to him by 'Iblīs (the Devil—an evil *'ifrīt*)
 - Thus, they're often referred to as "The Satanic Verses"



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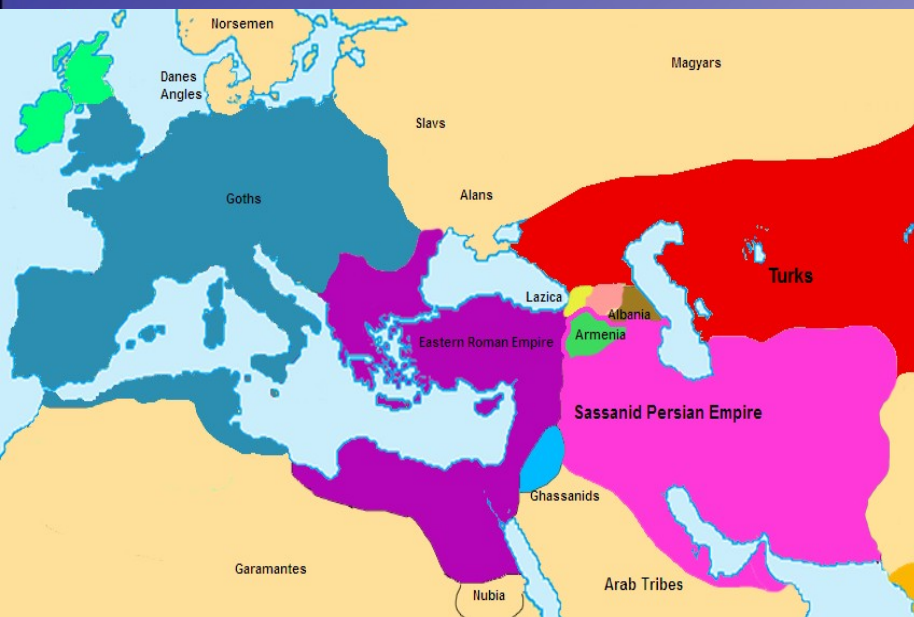
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- Upon their removal, he was run out of Mecca by a mob, and he settled with his followers in Medina, preaching that Allah has no offspring



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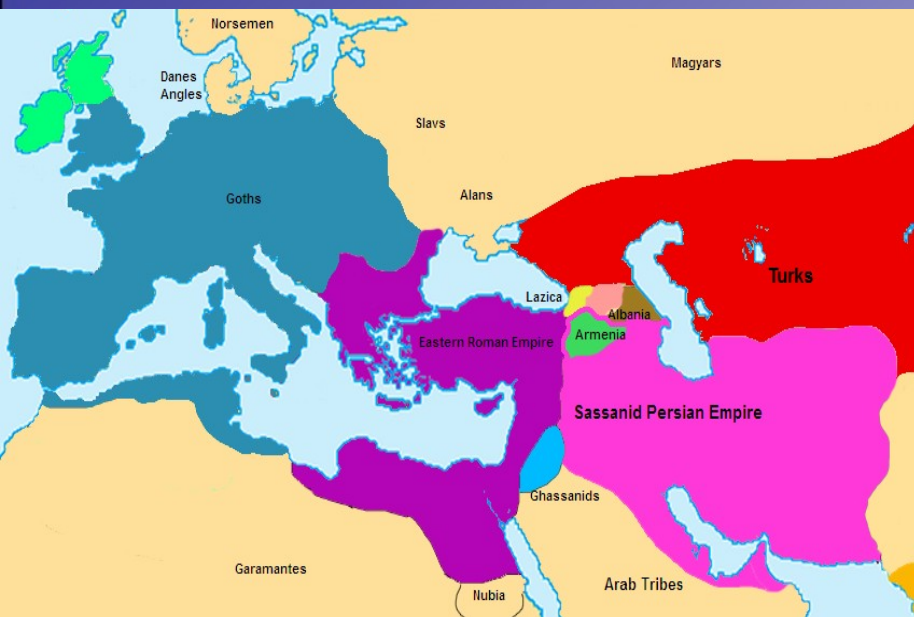
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- To strengthen his faith, Jibrīl took him on a supernatural journey one night to Mecca, and then to God's heavenly temple (or possibly just the one in Jerusalem)

- He was also told that he should stop praying toward Jerusalem as God's holy city, and start praying toward Mecca—beginning the turn away from a Judaic mindset within Islam

- Increasingly, re-taking Mecca became a priority for him



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - Think of Islam like a cult—very similar to the Mormon cult founded by Joseph Smith in the 19th century here in America
 - Both cults began with a man who expressed a strong burden to get all of the divided religions together under one, clear banner... who luckily was then visited by an angel who told him all about such a religion
 - Both cults began as being very similar (in theology and practice) to Christianity
 - And both cults only began drifting from that original base as time went on and the whims of their unquestionable leader changed
 - For instance, both religions originally eschewed polygamy... until the founder was found in bed with someone other than his wife
 - At that point, the founder shared that God Himself had told him to change the rules for the cult—especially for the founder



The Early Middle Ages

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 - Think of Islam like a cult—very similar to the Mormon cult founded by Joseph Smith in the 19th century here in America
 - For instance, *Sura* 4.3 in the *Qur'an* says that men should restrict themselves to four wives at most
 - But *Sura* 33.50-51 declares that Muhammad could have as many wives as he wanted
 - In point of fact, he had 22 wives—at least 9 at any given moment
 - One of them named Zainab was originally the wife of his adopted son, Zayd, before Muhammad decided that he wanted her himself
 - Another named Safiyya was captured in a raid in which Muhammad killed her husband—he had promised her to Dihya Al-Kalbi, but then decided to keep her himself
 - Another named Aisha was six years old when she was given to Muhammad—but he didn't have sex with her until she was nine
 - The *Hadith*—the collection of oral stories and traditions about Muhammad—says that she was still playing with her dolls at that age



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 - In *Hadīth Bukhārī* 7,62,48, Muhammad is told that Allah “hurries in pleasing you” sexually by offering him a continuous succession of nubile young wives

محمد



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 - For that matter, Muhammad's own perceived level of holiness and power grew as time went on
 - In *Hadīth Muslim* 1,380, people will approach the doors of Paradise and ask a succession of prophets to open the doors, but none of them—Adam, 'Ibrāhīm, Mūsa, nor 'Isā—will be holy enough to do so
 - Only Muhammad will be holy enough to open the doors of Paradise for people



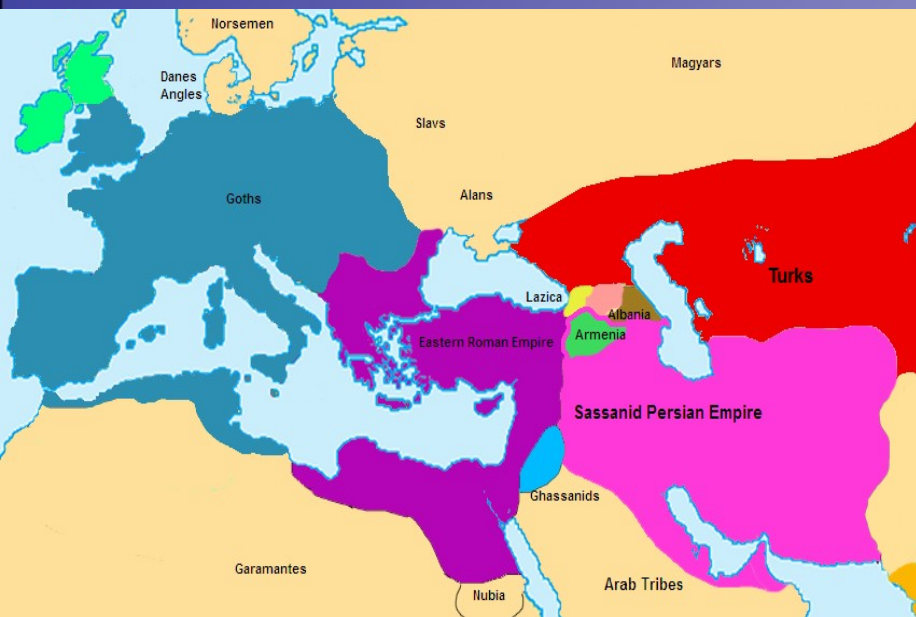
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 - So by the time the followers of Islam had grown numerous enough to move on Mecca, Muhammad had become not only the unquestioned leader of the cult, but also unquestionable



The Early Middle Ages

- This was a time of kingdom-carving
 - 590 Gregory was elected Pope
 - 610 Muhammad had an angelic vision
 - 613 Muhammad began preaching in Mecca
 - 624 Islam began a process of armed conquest (what in Arabic is referred to as *jihad* (جهاد) or *ġihād*—meaning “struggle”)



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Islam began a process of armed *conquest*

- 300 of Muhammad's Muslims set an ambush for a Meccan merchant caravan at Badr

- Even though the Muslims were outnumbered, they had surprise on their side—they killed 45 Meccans and took 70 more as prisoners to ransom back to Mecca

- Muhammad attributed their victory to help from angels, and more people put their faith in him completely as a result

- But the next year, Mecca launched a retaliatory assault against the Muslims that killed many of them, including Muhammad's uncle



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Muhammad attacked the Byzantine Empire

- 3,000 of Muhammad's Muslims attacked the Ghassanids in retaliation to a perceived disrespect toward their emissaries

- But they were utterly routed by Byzantine Emperor Heraclius and his 200,000 troops and driven back to Medina

- NOTE: while “out and about,” Heraclius then invaded Persia and retrieved the “True Cross” that had been taken from Jerusalem by Sassanid Emperor Khosrau II back in 614, when he had captured the city and slaughtered all of the Christians

- Khosrau had then turned Jerusalem over to Jewish revolutionaries

- Heraclius re-took Jerusalem, killed hundreds of Jews, then banned *all* Jews from ever even *entering* the city, much less *worshipping* there



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Muhammad finally captured Mecca

- Amassing a force of over 10,000 men, he rode on Mecca—which quickly surrendered

- He killed most of the leadership, destroyed the idols in the temple there, and forced all of the citizens to convert to Islam

- Again, he told his followers that their victory was due to the intervention of angels on their behalf, and his fame grew all the more
 - From his new base of operations in Mecca, Muhammad was beginning his larger conquest of all Arabia when he passed away at the age of 63



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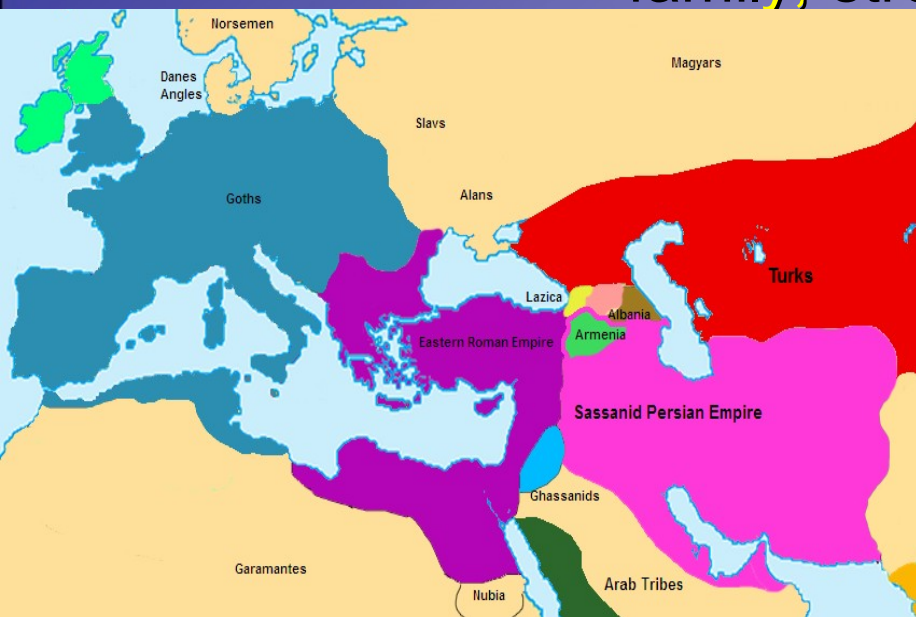
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- After Muhammad's death, there was some debate about who should lead the Muslims—family, strong military leaders, or wise men?

- In the end, they went with all three in Abu Bakr—Muhammad's father-in-law and a military hero from various battles over the years, naming him the first *caliph* (خليفة or *halīfah*—an old Arabic word meaning “successor”)
- Abu Bakr died two years later, and was succeeded by the *second* caliph, Umar the Great



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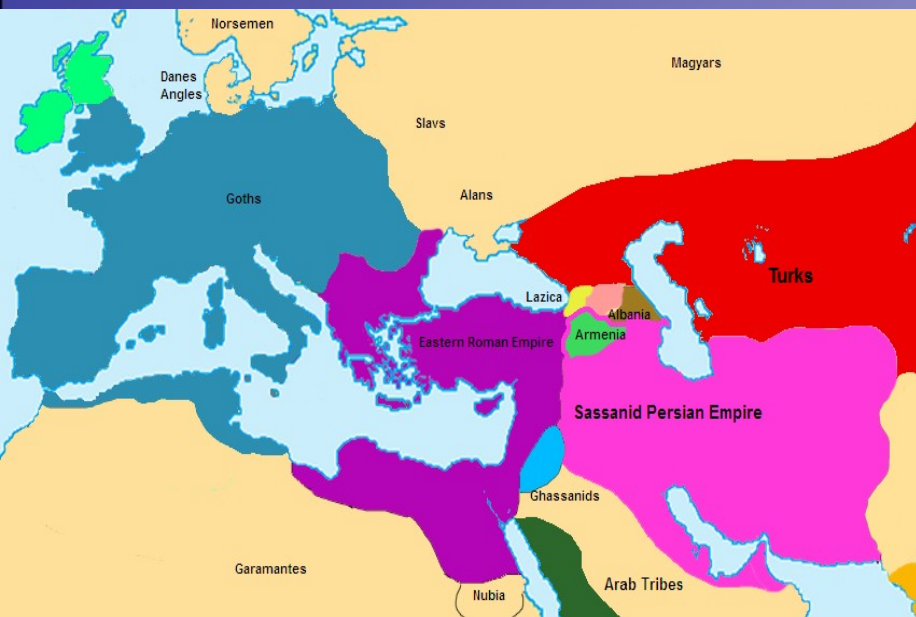
- Umar was not only a brilliant politician, but he was also a strong military leader with an eye for growing the religion of Islam through conquest

- 636—he defeated Emperor Heraclius at the six-day Battle of Yarmouk

- 637—he laid siege to and conquered Jerusalem back from the Byzantines

- He shrewdly allowed the Jews back in to worship freely, which created a positive feeling toward the Muslims among Jews around the world

(NOTE: in 691, the Muslims then built the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount, incurring the wrath of Jews around the world)



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- Under Umar and his next two successors, the sphere of control of Islam grew dramatically across the Middle East

- By 661, all of Arabia, Egypt, and Persia were completely controlled by Muslims, and all other religions were suppressed
- Ironically, though the Byzantine Empire was concerned, the Church in Rome was relatively happy with this, since all they saw was a monotheistic religion pushing out all of the polytheists in the region



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- 711 Continued conquest brought Islam to Europe
 - Under Tariq ibn Zayid, the Moorish Muslims invaded the Iberian Peninsula

- (the term "Moor" comes from the Latin "*Mauri*"—the Romans' term for the citizens of the province of *Mauretania*)
 - And even that name appears to have come from the Greek word *αμαυρός* (*amaurós*, or "dark")



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- (the term “Moor” comes from the Latin “*Mauri*”—the Romans' term for the citizens of the province of *Mauretania*)
- Ironically, part of why this invasion was so easy to accomplish was due to assistance and intelligence gathering on the part of the dissident Jewish community in North Africa that had been run out of Spain back in 589
 - The Moors would occupy Spain for the next 781 years, affecting the region, language, culture, and gene pool dramatically forever

