Section 3: Islam after Muhammad’s Death (pgs. 99-103)

Objectives Vocabulary

* Describe the role of Islamic leaders in the spread 1. Abu Bakr

of Islam after Muhammad’s death 2. Caliph

* Explain how tolerance affected the expansion of the 3. Shi’a

Muslim Empire 4. Sunni

* Analyze the issues behind the split in the Islamic

community

I. New Muslim Leaders Emerge (Who were the leaders who spread Islam after Muhammad’s

death?)

1. For more than 20 years, Muhammad had spread the word of Allah across the Arabian Peninsula. He had begun to establish a Muslim Empire.

2. In particular, Arab nomads had responded to his message. Islam brought order, justice, and hope of heaven into their lives. Then, in June 632, Muhammad died. Muslims were suddenly without a leader.

A. After Muhammad’s Death

1. Muhammad had not named a successor or instructed his followers how to choose one upon his death.

2. Panic swept through the Muslim community.

3. **Abu Bakr—was Muhammad's father-in-law, closest companion and adviser, who succeeded to the Prophet's political and administrative functions, thereby initiating the office of the caliphate.**

B. Abu Bakr Succeeds Muhammad

1. In 632, Abu Bakr became the first caliph, the title means “successor.”

2. **Caliph—is the head of state in a Caliphate, and the title for the leader of Islamic community ruled by the Shari’ah.**

3.Abu Bakr promised Muslims that he would closely follow Muhammad’s example.

4. Shortly after the Prophet’s death, some clans on the Arabian Peninsula abandoned Islam. Other’s refused to pay taxes, and a few individuals even declared themselves prophets.

5. During his two-year reign, Abu Bakr used military force to reunite the Muslim community. He brought central Arabia under Muslim control and started the conquests of lands to the north that are now Iraq and Syria.

II. “Rightly Guided” Caliphs (How did the caliphs who expanded the Muslim Empire treat those

they conquered?)

1. Abu Bakr and the next three elected caliphs—Umar, Uthman, and Ali—had known Muhammad and supported his mission to spread Islam.

2. These caliphs used the Qur’an and Muhammad’s actions to guide them. For this, they are known as “rightly guided” caliphs. Their rule was called a caliphate.

A. Caliphs Expand the Muslim Empire

1. Muslims controlled most of Arabia when Abu Bakr died in 634.

2. The second elected caliph, Umar, ruled until 644. His swift and highly disciplined armies conquered Syria and lower Egypt, which were part of the Byzantine Empire. Muslim armies also took territory from the Persian Empire.

3. The next two caliphs continued to expand Muslim territory and completed the conquest of Persia. By 661, Muhammad’s successors’ had increased the size of the Muslim Empire nearly four times, either through conquest or treaty. The empire then included all of Southwest Asia and stretched into North Africa.

B. Reasons for Success

1. Muslims saw the military victories as signs of Allah’s support. They were energized by their faith and were willing to fight to spread Islam. In battle, Muslim armies proved to be disciplined, and their leaders were highly skilled.

2. The Muslims’ success also resulted from weaknesses in the two empires north of Arabia. The Byzantine and Persian empires had been fighting each other for a long time. Their armies were exhausted.

3. Another reason for the success was the Byzantine and Persian policy of persecuting people who did not support their conquerors’ religions.

4. For this reason, persecuted people often welcomed Muslim invaders as liberators. Muslims let conquered people keep their own religions if they wished to do so. The Qur’an did not allow Muslims to force conversions.

C. Muslims Rule

1. There was much blending of cultures under Muslim rule. Over time, many peoples in Muslim-ruled territories converted to Islam.

2. The people were attracted by Islam’s message of equality and hope for salvation. There was also an economic benefit—Muslims did not have to pay certain taxes.

3. Jews and Christians, as “people of the book,” received special treatment. They paid a poll tax each year in exchange for not having to perform military duties.

4. Jews and Christians also held important roles in the Muslim state as officials and scholars. However, they were not allowed to convert others.

III. A split in Islam (How did the issue of choosing leaders divided the Muslims?)

A. Umayyads Seize Power

1. In 656, a group of rebels opposed the leadership of Uthman and murdered him. His murder started a civil war.

2. Various groups struggled for power. Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, Ali, was a logical choice as the next caliph. But his leadership, too, was challenged. In 661, Ali was assassinated. They system of electing a caliph died with him.

3. A family known as the Umayyads took power and set up a hereditary dynasty. This meant that rulers would come from one family and inherit the right to rule.

4. The Umayyads also moved the Muslim capital from Medina to Damascus, a distant city in newly conquered Syria.

5. Arab Muslims felt Damascus was too far away. Some also were upset because the Umayyads abandoned the simple life of earlier caliphs and surrounded themselves with luxury. These actions divided Muslims and raised questions about how to choose leaders.

B. Muslim Community Splits

1. Because they wanted peace, most Muslims accepted the Umayyad’s rule. But a minority resisted.

2. **Shi’a—those who believed that the caliph should always be a relative of the prophet. Its members are known as Shiites.**

3. **Sunnis—those who did not resist the Umayyads and accepted the rule of the elected caliphs.**

4.*This split in Islam would become permanent, and opposition to the Umayyads would cause the caliphate to collapse.*

**BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MUSLIMS**

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|  | **SUNNI BELIEFS** | **SHI’A BELIEFS** |
| Early Caliphs | The first four caliphs were rightful rulers. | Only Ali, Muhammad’s son-in-law, was legitimate. |
| Muslim Ruler | Any Muslim who follows Muhammad’s example may be ruler. | Only a descendant of Muhammad and Ali may be imam, or ruler. |
| Sources of Islam | Qur’an and Sunnah of Muhammad | Qur’an, Sunnah, and teachings of imams |