

Exposed to the eastern church as it wrangled in doctrinal nuances, Muhammed concluded that Christianity did not have much to say. A meditative sort, he was bothered by the fact that the Arabian peoples had neither a prophet of their own nor a faith that unified while they were afflicted by all sorts of paganized idolatry. About 610, in the absence of other direction, he called himself a prophet and felt directed of God to lead the people. This was a matter of revelation to him and he would depend on it for the rest of his life. Many of these primary revelations became the substance of the KORAN, the sacred book of Islamic credalism.

Living in Mecca, Muhammed was appalled by great idolatry and especially that practiced at the city shrine, the Kaaba. His newly formed faith held to one God and viewed idolatry as being particularly counter-productive to truth. His outspoken protestations on the idolatry were regarded as harming the business interest of Mecca and a group of merchants plotted to kill him in 622. Learning of the plot he fled to Yathrib where his ideas had gained a few more adherents. This flight from Mecca is known as the Hegira and is regarded as the practical birth of the Islamic movement. Received at Yathrib (modern Medina), his work grew and he began the development of a governmental system that embodied his theocratic ideals.

By 630 he had a sufficient following to return to Mecca, well armed. He cleansed the shrine and made it the center of the new faith. This was accomplished, as you may have guessed, with bloodshed and fighting. But Islam is a sword wielding religion and much of its earlier success was in the form of taking other's properties for one's own good. Only recently in the Iraq-Iran war, Ayatollah Khomeini announced from Iran that war is good for Islam. Such has been the record of history and the practice continues about the same.

Muhammed died in 632 while his work was fresh and knew considerable success. His governmental decrees as issued by his followers in Medina during the years following 632 are basically the ruling ideologies of Islam since. But take note that Islam, after the pattern of Christianity, soon had many diverse elements and groups within it..often opposing one another bitterly in the quest for power.