

Misconception: Muhammad was the founder of Islam



Background: Some think that a man named Muhammad from Arabia was the first to introduce Islam or it came into existence with him and The Quran.

The word "islam" can be translated as "surrender/submission" (to God). A "muslim" can be translated as "one who surrenders/submits" (to God).

According to The Quran, everything in the universe, willingly or unwillingly has ultimately surrendered to God, thus the basic concept of islam/surrender/submission is as old as the universe itself:

Do they seek other than the system of God, when all things in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly have surrendered to Him, and to Him they will be returned. [3:83]

The Quran clearly states that Muhammad was a messenger and inspired just as the prophets before him:

We have inspired you as We have inspired Noah and the prophets after him. And We inspired Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Patriarchs, and Jesus, and Job, and Jonah, and Aaron, and Solomon; and We have given David the zaboor*. [4:163] *commonly translated as the Psalms

Say: "We believe in God and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit. [3:84]

And Muhammad is no more than a messenger; the messengers have already passed away before him; if then he dies or is killed will you turn back upon your heels? And whoever turns back upon his heels, he will by no means do harm to God in the least and God will reward the grateful. [3:144]

It is not for a mortal that God should give him the book and the wisdom and prophethood, then he should say to men: Be my servants rather than God's; but rather (he would say): Be servants of the Lord because of your teaching the Book and your reading (it yourselves).[3:79]

Also, The Quran specifically mentions the term "muslim" for those before prophet Muhammad, including: Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, and the companions of Jesus. [see 2:128, 2:131, 3:67, 3:52, 5:111, 10:72]. Thus, the prophet Muhammad was not the founder of islam/submission, but simply continued this universal message as one of many messengers of God.

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