I. Founding an Empire

- Muhammad died in 632 C.E.; He left instructions on how the next leader of Islam should be chosen.
- Muslims leaders chose a new type of leader called a “caliph.”

A. Expanding Muslim Rule

- First four caliphs were close friends or relatives of Muhammad.
  - Goal was to protect and spread Islam.
- In 636 C.E., Muslim armies began the conquest of the Persian Sasanian Empire.
  - Sasanian Empire existed since 550 B.C.E., at the Euphrates River, near the Mesopotamia civilization.
  - Sasanian official religion was Zoroastrianism, but they tolerated other religions like the Jews and Christians.
  - Trade routes across central Eurasia passed through Sasanian lands.
    - Tax income from trade made the Persians wealthy.
  - Constant warfare weakened the empire, leaving it vulnerable for the Arab Muslims to attack.
    - They also fought the Byzantine Empire for power in the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia.
- Muslim armies attacked the Persian Sasanian Empire, the “King of Kings” was forced to move.
  - Sasanian Empire fell in 651 C.E. to the Arabs; The Sasanian Empire was the last pre-Islamic Persian Empire, it became known as the Arab Empire.
    - By 660s C.E., the Arab Empire included all of Southwest Asia and Northwest Africa.

B. The Umayyads

- Expansion of the Arab Empire continued under a new caliph known as the Umayyads.
- Umayyads governed the Arab Empire from the city of Damascus in Syria, from 661 to 750 CE
- A century after the death of Muhammad, Muslims had created a large and powerful empire.
  - Arab soldiers were experienced horse riders and warriors, used those skills to fight large armies. Believed they have a religious duty to spread Islam.
- Islam teaches that Christians and Jews are “People of the Book,” people who believe in one god and follow sacred writings.
- Muslims allowed Christians and Jew to worship their religion as the Arabs continued to gain more of the regions. They coexisted in communities.
- Some Muslims rulers did force non-Muslims to convert and some non-Muslims had to pay a tax to the caliphate.
- The term Arab meant a speaker of Arabic, not a resident of Arabia.

C. Islamic Spain

- In 700 C.E., Muslim warriors came to Spain and brought their religion, customs, and traditions; they made the city of Córdoba a center of Islam.
- Spain was home to many Islamic thinkers.
  - Ibn Rushd, practiced law and medicine in Córdoba. Best known for his writing.
**Additional Notes: Chapter 3.2**

- Muslims in Spain were tolerant/accepting of other cultures.
  - In some schools, Muslims, Jews, and Christians studied medicine and philosophy together.
- The Jewish community in Córdoba flourished; A Jewish scholar, named Solomon ben Gabirol wrote philosophy and poetry. His most famous book was *The Well of Life*, it was translated into Latin and influenced many philosophers in Christian Europe.
- Jewish thinker, Moses Maimonides left Spain because of an intolerant Muslim group. He later became a physician in the Muslim royal court in Egypt and wrote philosophy and a collection of Jewish laws.

**D. Preachers and Traders**

- Muslims used preaching as a way to gain religious followers.
- Sufis, who were effective missionaries, encouraged people with an emotional approach to Islam which allowed them to gain more followers of Islam.
- Muslim merchants built trading posts throughout Southern Asia and taught Islam to the people.
  - Today, Indonesia has more Muslims than any other nation in the world.
- Some Muslim merchants crossed the Sahara to trade with powerful kingdoms in West Africa.
  - Timbuktu became a leading center of Muslim culture and learning.

**II. Division and Growth**

- While they created the empire, rival groups argued about who had the right to succeed Muhammad as caliph.
- The Muslims split into two groups, the Sunni and the Shia.
  - This split still divides Muslims today.
- Shia Muslims make up most of the population in Iran and Iraq.
- Shia and Sunni agreed on major principles of Islam, such as one God, the Quran is Islam’s holy book, and the Five Pillars of Islam.
- The Shia believed that Ali, Muhammad’s son-in-law, was the rightful heir and all future caliphs had to be Ali’s descendants.
- Sunni believed that the Umayyad caliphs were rightful rulers, though they did not always agree with the Shia’s actions.

**A. A New Dynasty**

- During the 700s CE, opposition to the Umayyad caliphs grew.
- Non-Arab Muslims were angry that Arab Muslims had the best jobs and paid lower taxes, especially in Mesopotamia and Persia, where Shia Islam was popular.
- At about 750 CE, the Shia Muslims rebelled and won support from other Muslims.
  - Overthrew the Umayyads and the Abbasid dynasty came to power and ruled until 1258.
- Abbasids focused on improving trade and culture
  - Made Baghdad the new capital, which benefited trade because of the city’s location which was on the Tigris River, east of Damascus; it benefited from trade routes on the Mediterranean Sea to East Asia; Increased Persian influence and encouraged a blending of cultures with Muslim civilization to the east.
**Additional Notes: Chapter 3.2**

- Abbasid rulers tolerated the cultural differences that existed among the people in the empire.
  - The cultures that the caliphate conquered influenced Islam.
  - Muslim, not just Arabs, could hold offices in the government and military.
  - They valued Persian culture like women wearing modest dress and concealing their faces with a veil was adopted or maintained by many Muslim in the Abbasid Empire.
  - Some Christians and Jews converted to Islam and changed their names to reflect the Arabic language spoken in throughout the empire.

**B. Site of Encounter: Baghdad**

- Located at the crossroads of trade routes that linked Africa, Europe, and Asia.
- By mid-800s CE, city had become a center of trade, learning, and culture.
- Abbasid caliphs rebuilt roads to connect Persian cities in eastern part of the empire, which improved trade.
- Early Abbasid caliphs used some of the wealth earned from trade to make Baghdad a center of learning.
  - Sent Muslim scholars to Greece, Rome, Persia, and India to bring back writings about medicine, science, and cultural beliefs of how other people lived.
  - To promote learning, caliphs established an academy of scholars who translated these writings into Arabic.
- Achievements under Abbasid rule is called the Golden Age of Islam.
- Abbasid empire fell apart in 1200s, caliphs less emphasis on learning.

**C. Who Are the Seljuk Turks?**

- Abbasids developed a rich culture, but couldn’t hold their empire together.
  - In Egypt and Spain, Muslims set up their own caliphs. Rival rulers took over much of Persia.
  - By 1000s, Abbasids ruled little more than the area around Baghdad.
- Seljuk Turks of central Asia began moving into Abbasid territory.
  - Seljuk Turks were nomads and great warriors.
  - In 1055, Seljuks seized Baghdad; took over the government and army, but allowed the Abbasid caliph to manage religious matters.
  - Seljuk ruler called himself sultan or “holder of power.”
- For 200 years, Seljuk sultans ruled with Abbasid caliphs.
  - In 1200s, people from central Asia, Mongols, swept into the empire.
  - In 1258 Mongols stormed into Baghdad, they burned buildings and killed more than 50,000 people.
- This attack brought an end to the Arab Empire.

**III. Three Muslim Empires**

- After the end of the Arab Empire, other Muslims created their own empire, they were the Ottoman Empire (today’s Turkey), the Safavid Empire (in Persia), and the Mughal Empire in India.
A. **The Ottomans**
   - During late 1200s, Turkish clans settled part of Asia Minor; they called themselves Ottoman Turks, after their leader Osman.
     - Ottoman conquered much of the Byzantine Empire.
     - In 1453, the Ottoman ruler Mehmet II, known as “the Conqueror,” took over the Byzantine capital of Constantinople and renamed it Istanbul.
   - Ottomans pushed into Southeastern Europe, Southwest Asia, and North Africa.
     - They controlled much of the Mediterranean region until the late 1500s.
   - The Ottoman leader was called a sultan.
     - Suleiman I was the most famous Ottoman ruler; he ruled during the 1500s; he was called “The Lawgiver,” because he organized Ottoman laws.
     - Suleiman I built many schools and mosques throughout the empire.

B. **How Did the Ottomans Rule?**
   - They had a large empire, Ottomans ruled many peoples who practiced many religions.
     - Islam was the official religion; Muslims enjoyed special privileges.
     - Government passed different laws for the non-Muslims.
       - Had to pay a special tax to be able to practice their own religion
   - Under Suleiman I, the military had strength and unity which did not allow European powers to colonize or conquer lands under Turkish control.
   - After Suleiman, Ottoman Empire began to break down.
     - Lost their lands to Europeans
     - Empire crumbled in early 1900s.

C. **The Safavids**
   - In 1501, Shia leader named Ismail proclaimed himself shah/king of Persia. He founded the Safavid Dynasty, which ruled Persia until the 1700s.
     - During this period, Persian spread as a language of culture and trade.
     - Urdu, a language spoken in Pakistan today, is partly based on Persian.

D. **India’s Mughal Empire**
   - During 1500s, Mughals set up a Muslim empire in India.
   - Akbar set up the Mughal Empire which prospered under his rule.
     - He allowed people to practice their religions.
     - Later Mughal rulers persecuted Hindus and Sikhs.
   - Sikhs practice the religion Sikhism which came about in the 1500s.
     - Sikhs believe in one God; they rely on one holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*
     - They honor a line of teachers descending from Guru Nanak, their founder.
   - Today Sikhism is the world’s fifth-largest religion.