The Prophet in Makka (610–622)

The early preaching, the opposition of the Quraysh, the migration to Abyssinia, the boycott, the Year of Sorrow, Ta'if, the Night Journey, the pledges at Aqaba and the Hijrah.

Preaching in Makka

Stage	Details
Secret preaching (610–613)	For about **three years** the Prophet (pbuh) invited close family and friends. Early Muslims met at the house of **al-Arqam** to learn and pray. Early converts included **Khadijah, Ali, Abu Bakr, Zayd, Uthman, Zubayr, Talha, Abdur Rahman ibn Awf, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Bilal** and **Khabbab**
Public preaching (from about 613)	God commanded him to warn his **close relatives** and then everyone. He climbed **Mount Safa** and called the Quraysh, asking whether they would believe him if he warned of an army behind the hill. They said yes, then rejected his message. His uncle **Abu Lahab** cursed him
The message	**One God**, the rejection of idols, **honesty and justice**, care for the poor, **equality of all believers**, and **accountability on the Day of Judgement**

The opposition of the Quraysh

Why did the Quraysh oppose him?

- The message **attacked idol worship**, which brought them **pilgrims and trade** at the Ka'bah.
- It threatened the **leadership and status of the Quraysh** and the old **tribal customs**.
- Islam said that **all people are equal before God**, which angered the proud and the rich; slaves and the poor were among the first Muslims.
- The leaders feared that the Prophet (pbuh) wanted **power** (they offered him wealth, kingship, even marriage if he would stop).

Opponents: Abu Jahl (Amr ibn Hisham), **Abu Lahab** and his wife, **Abu Sufyan, Walid ibn al-Mughirah, Utbah and Shaybah, Umayyah ibn Khalaf** and others.

How they persecuted Muslims:

- **Insults and mockery**, accusing him of being a poet, a magician or a madman, and throwing rubbish and thorns in his path.
- **Torture of poor and slave Muslims: Bilal** was pinned under a hot rock, **Sumayyah** (the first martyr) and her husband **Yasir** were killed, and **Khabbab** was burned. **Abu Bakr** bought and freed several slaves.

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- **Pressure on his family:** the Quraysh pressed **Abu Talib** to stop him, but he **protected** his nephew (although he did not become a Muslim).
- **Offers and bribes**, then threats.

More examples of the Quraysh's opposition

- **Abu Lahab's household.** After Sura 111 he made his sons divorce the Prophet's daughters **Ruqayyah** and **Umm Kulthum**, and his wife **Umm Jamil** put thorns in the Prophet's path. When the Prophet's son died, Abu Lahab called him **abtar** ("cut off"), and **Sura 108** (al-Kawthar) answered that it was the enemy who would be cut off.
- **Physical attacks.** Abu Jahl threw the entrails of a camel on the Prophet while he prayed, and his daughter **Fatimah** cleaned him; another man tried to strangle him near the Ka'bah.
- **The bribe.** The Quraysh offered wealth, leadership and marriage. He answered his uncle: "If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left to make me give up this cause, I will not stop until God makes it succeed or I perish." Abu Talib promised never to abandon him.
- **Torture of the weak. Ammar** and his parents Yasir and Sumayyah were tortured on the burning sand. **Bilal** was dragged and kept under a heavy stone and kept saying "One, One". **Abu Bakr** was beaten and dragged by his beard when he defended the Prophet. **Uthman** was wrapped in a mat and smoked by his uncle. **Khabbab** was burned on hot coals, and **Ibn Mas'ud** was beaten for reciting the Qur'an by the Ka'bah.

Migration to Abyssinia (about 615)

When persecution grew, the Prophet (pbuh) advised a group of Muslims (about **a dozen men and four women at first** (including **Uthman and his wife Ruqayyah**), later about 80) to go to **Abyssinia** (Ethiopia), ruled by a just Christian king, the **Negus (Najashi)**. The Quraysh sent envoys to bring them back, but the Negus heard the Muslims' leader, **Ja'far ibn Abi Talib**, recite from **Sura Maryam** and refused. This was the **first migration (hijrah)** in Islam; it showed that Muslims could find safety under a **fair non-Muslim ruler**. Among those who went were **Uthman and his wife Ruqayyah**.

More about Abyssinia

- The revelation of 39:10 ("God's earth is wide ... the patient will be paid without measure") came before the first journey, by boat across the Red Sea to **Aksum**.
- In Ramadan of that year the Prophet recited **Sura an-Najm** at the Ka'bah and the Quraysh present bowed down with the Muslims. A false report spread that Makka had accepted Islam, and some migrants returned. When they found it untrue, the persecution grew worse and a **second, larger migration** (about **83 men and 19 women**, led by **Ja'far ibn Abi Talib**) left.
- The Quraysh sent **Amr ibn al-As** and **Abdullah ibn Abi Rabi'ah** with gifts to ask the Negus to return them. Ja'far explained that the Muslims had lived in ignorance and violence, that God sent them a

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Messenger they knew for his truthfulness, who told them to worship one God, tell the truth, keep trusts, be kind to relatives and neighbours and protect orphans, and that they had come to Abyssinia to escape persecution.

- He then recited the opening of **Sura Maryam**. The Negus and his bishops wept and said that this and the Gospel came from the same lamp, and he sent the Quraysh gifts back.
- **Why did the Makkans pursue them?** They feared Islam would spread, did not want Muslims to have a safe base abroad, and wanted to punish and discourage converts.
- **Why was the migration important?** It was the first Muslim migration, showed that Muslims could find a safe refuge with a just ruler, carried Islam beyond Arabia, and prepared the way for the Hijrah.

Conversions that strengthened the Muslims

Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle and a strong warrior, and **Umar ibn al-Khattab**, a fierce opponent, became Muslims (about 615–616). Umar is said to have been moved after hearing the verses of **Sura Ta Ha**. Muslims could now pray openly at the Ka'bah.

The boycott (about 616–619)

The Quraysh wrote an agreement to **boycott the Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib** (the Prophet's clans): no marriage, trade or contact. The families lived in a valley, **Shi'b Abi Talib**, for about **three years**, with little food. The boycott ended when some of the Quraysh were ashamed of it and found that **termites had eaten the document** (except the name of God).

- The boycott began in the **seventh year** of the mission. **Abu Lahab** was the only member of the clan who did not join the Prophet's side. The agreement was **hung inside the Ka'bah**. The besieged families ate leaves, and a few relatives such as **Hakim ibn Hizam** smuggled food to them. They could leave only in the pilgrimage season.
- It ended when **Hisham ibn Amr** and others who had family in the valley shamed the Quraysh. When they went to remove the document, termites had eaten it, leaving only the name of God.

The Year of Sorrow (619)

In the same year **Khadijah** and **Abu Talib** both died. The Prophet (pbuh) lost his closest supporter and his protector, and persecution grew worse. Its name is *'Am al-Huzn*.

- Khadijah died first, soon after the boycott ended. When **Abu Talib** was dying, the Quraysh leaders visited him and suggested a compromise, that each side should worship the other's gods for a time. **Sura 109** (al-Kafirun) was the answer: "You have your religion and I have mine."
- After Abu Talib's death the leadership of the Banu Hashim passed to **Abu Lahab**, a bitter enemy, so the Prophet **lost the clan's protection**. This is why he went to Ta'if and later left Makka.

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The journey to Ta'if (619)

The Prophet (pbuh) went to the town of **Ta'if**, about 60 km away, hoping for protection. The leaders **rejected** him, and urchins **threw stones**, wounding him. An angel offered to destroy the town, but he **refused** and prayed that their descendants might believe. He returned to Makka under the protection of **al-Mut'im ibn Adi**. The event shows his **patience and mercy**.

- He went with **Zayd ibn Harithah** to the **Banu Thaqif**, spoke to three chiefs and then to the people for about ten days. The chiefs sent slaves and boys to drive him out, and **Zayd** was wounded protecting him.
- He rested in an **orchard** belonging to two Makkan brothers (Utbah and Shaybah). Their Christian slave **Addas** brought him grapes and accepted Islam after speaking with him.
- The angel of the mountains offered to crush the town. The Prophet answered that he hoped God would raise from their children people who would worship Him alone, and prayed "O God, forgive my people, for they do not know."
- At **Nakhla** on the way back, a group of jinn heard him recite and believed. He entered Makka under the protection of **al-Mut'im ibn Adi**.
- **What can Muslims learn?** To be patient in difficulty, not to wish harm on those who treat them badly, to pray for them, and to keep going after losses.

The Night Journey and Ascension (about 620)

In the **Isra'** the Prophet (pbuh) was taken one night from the **Ka'bah** (Masjid al-Haram) to **Jerusalem** (Masjid al-Aqsa), and in the **Mi'raj** ascended through the heavens, meeting earlier prophets. During it God commanded the **five daily prayers**. It is mentioned in **Sura 17** (*al-Isra'*) and **Sura 53**. It comforted him after the Year of Sorrow and gave Muslims **prayer** and a link with Jerusalem.

The Night Journey in more detail

- Tradition places it on **27 Rajab**, in the eleventh year of the mission. The Prophet was taken on the **Buraq** from near the Ka'bah to **Jerusalem**, where he **led the earlier prophets in prayer**, and was offered milk and wine; he chose the milk ("the natural way").
- In the **Mi'raj** he rose through the seven heavens: **Adam** (first), **Yahya and Isa** (second), **Yusuf** (third), **Idris** (fourth), **Harun** (fifth), **Musa** (sixth) and **Ibrahim** (seventh). He reached **Sidrat al-Muntaha**, where Jibril could go no further.
- **Fifty daily prayers** were first ordered. On the advice of Musa the Prophet returned several times until they were reduced to **five**, with the reward of fifty.
- The Quraysh mocked him, but he described the caravan he had met on the road and it arrived as he said. **Abu Bakr** believed without hesitation and was named **as-Siddiq**.

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- **Why was it significant for the Prophet?** It showed that God had not left him after the Year of Sorrow, gave him a vision of his own place among the prophets, and gave his community the daily prayer.

The Pledges of Aqaba and the Hijrah

- **Pilgrims from Yathrib (Madina)** from the tribes of **Aws and Khazraj** met the Prophet (pbuh) at **Aqaba**, near Mina, during the pilgrim season. Madina had **civil strife** between its tribes and the presence of Jews who spoke of a coming prophet.
- **First Pledge of Aqaba (621):** about **12** men accepted Islam and promised to obey. **Mus'ab ibn Umayr** was sent to teach them.
- **Second Pledge of Aqaba (622): 73 men and 2 women** pledged to **protect** him as they protected their families.
- **The Hijrah (622).** The Quraysh planned to **kill** the Prophet (pbuh), choosing one man from each clan so that the blame would be shared. He left in the night; **Ali** slept in his bed to deceive them, and then returned the people's deposits. The Prophet (pbuh) and **Abu Bakr** hid for three days in the **cave of Thawr**, where a spider's web and a dove's nest helped to hide them. They then travelled to **Quba** and **Madina**, guided by **Abdullah ibn Urayqit**, and were welcomed on **12 Rabi' al-Awwal**.

More about the Pledges and the Hijrah

- In 620 **six men of the Khazraj** met the Prophet at Mina and accepted Islam. In 621 **twelve** came (two of them from the Aws) and took the **First Pledge**, promising not to worship others besides God, not to steal, commit adultery or kill their children, not to slander, and to obey in what is right. It is called the **"Pledge of the Women"** because it said nothing about fighting. **Mus'ab ibn Umayr** went to teach them.
- At the **Second Pledge** (73 men and 2 women), **al-Bara' ibn Ma'rur** spoke for them, promising to protect the Prophet as they protected their own families. The Prophet answered: "I am of you and you are of me; I will fight whom you fight and make peace with whom you make peace."
- The Muslims then left for Madina, family by family. Only **Abu Bakr and Ali** stayed behind with the Prophet. The death of **al-Mut'im** left him without protection, and at **Dar an-Nadwa** the leaders planned for a man from each clan to strike together. The Prophet was told by revelation (8:30).
- He left at night, **threw dust** at the watchers while reciting Sura 36:9 so that they did not see him, and met Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr's son, daughter **Asma** and servant **Amir ibn Fuhayrah** helped them in the cave of **Thawr**. When the pursuers stood near, Abu Bakr feared they would be found, and the Prophet said: "What do you think of two with God as the third?" (9:40). The Quraysh offered **100 camels** for his capture, but the leader of one party, **Suraqah**, was stopped when his horse stumbled.
- They stopped at **Quba**, where the Prophet helped build the **first mosque** in Islam, and prayed the first **Friday prayer** in the valley of the Banu Salim. In Madina his camel **Qaswa** was left to choose and knelt on land belonging to two orphans, which he bought for the Mosque, staying meanwhile with **Abu Ayyub al-Ansari**.

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- **What was the importance of the Hijrah?** The Muslims could practise openly, the community became one, and the **Hijri calendar** began from it.

Why should Muslims shelter people in need? The Ansar sheltered the Emigrants, and the Prophet said that the one who looks after an orphan would be with him in paradise; refugees and orphans today need homes, food and safety.

> **Importance of the Hijrah: it was the turning point: Muslims gained a home and a community, and the Islamic calendar later began from it (1 AH, set in the time of Umar).**

The experiences of the Makkan period (summary)

Experience	What it teaches
Persecution	Patience (*sabr*) and trust in God
Ta'if	Mercy towards enemies
Abyssinia	Seeking safety with a just ruler; tolerance
Hijrah	Sacrifice for faith; planning and trust in God

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> Describe the opposition the Prophet (pbuh) faced in Makka. Why did he leave for Madina?

Outline. Quraysh feared for idol worship and trade, status and equality; insults, torture of weak Muslims (Bilal, Sumayyah, Yasir), the boycott (three years), Year of Sorrow; Ta'if. He left because the Quraysh planned to kill him and the Muslims of Yathrib (Aqaba pledges) offered protection; Hijrah in 622 with Abu Bakr and Ali's help.

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