

STORY OF THE KA'ABA IN MECCA

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The Ka'aba is the cube like building in the middle of the Al-Masjid mosque in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Every Muslim is expected to visit the Ka'aba at some point in their life if they are able as part of the Haj pilgrimage (one of the five pillars of Islam). The Ka'aba is what all Muslims face when they pray during their daily prayers no matter where they are in the world.

"We see the turning of thy face (for guidance to the heavens: now Shall We turn thee to a Qibla that shall please thee. Turn then Thy face in the direction of the sacred Mosque: Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction. The people of the Book know well that that is the truth from their Lord. Nor is Allah unmindful of what they do." (Quran 2:144)

The origin and significance of the Ka'aba

It's important to remember two things as we answer this question.

- There is no historical information on the building of the Ka'aba available. Ancient historians do not document this building as sacred to Muslims in any way.
- There is no biblical description of the building or the city.

It was important for Muhammad to connect Islam to Christianity and Judaism through the use of biblical personalities in his narrative. Giving biblical figures prominent roles in the building of the Ka'aba (without any biblical references) secured Muhammad's position as the final prophet among his followers while at the same time emphasizing the policy of corruption of the Christian and Jewish scripture.

Muslim's claim that the Ka'aba was originally built by Adam. They use this verse from the Quran to support that belief.

"The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakka: Full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings." (Quran 3:96)

Some traditions claim that the angels helped Adam build the Ka'aba at the sight where a meteor dropped a black stone. This stone indicated that this was the exact place on earth that is under Allah's throne. Other traditions claim that the stone descended from paradise later when Abraham was in Mecca. According to a saying attributed to Muhammad, the Black Stone had "descended from Paradise whiter than milk but the sins of the sons of Adam had made it black". (At-Tirmidhi, Sunan). The absence of this information from the Bible is used as proof that the Bible was corrupted by Christians so they would not follow Muhammad.

The same traditions hold that original Ka'aba was destroyed in the flood of Noah's time and then rebuilt again by Abraham and his son Ishmael. Here are the verses used as evidence of Abraham's building of the Ka'aba.

"Behold! We gave the site, to Abraham, of the (Sacred) House, (saying): Associate not anything (in worship) with Me; and sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or stand up, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer)." (Quran 22:26)

"Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Isma'il, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer). And remember Abraham said: "My Lord, make this a City of Peace, and feed its people with fruits, -such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." He said: "(Yea), and such as reject Faith, -for a while will I grant them their pleasure, but will soon drive them to the torment of Fire, - an evil destination (indeed)!" And remember Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House (With this prayer): "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: For Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-knowing"" (Quran 1:125-127)

After constructing the Ka'aba Abraham was instructed to teach his followers to make a pilgrimage to the site regularly.

"And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways;" (Quran 22:27)

There is even a belief that the actual footprint of Abraham exists in the Ka'aba itself. This portion of the Ka'aba is called the Station of Abraham. It is a glass and metal enclosure with what is said to be an imprint of Abraham's foot. Abraham is said to have stood on this stone during the construction of the upper parts of the Kaaba, raising Ismail on his shoulders for the uppermost parts.¹

While the Bible is clear that Abraham went outside of the land of Canaan several times in his life there is no record of a trip to Saudi Arabia with his son Ishmael. And considering the distance it would have been a lengthy and unlikely journey for either of them.

Muhammad and the Ka'aba

Muhammad's first encounter with the Ka'aba was said to be when he moved his operations from Medina to Mecca. He went in and destroyed the idols in it. It is recorded in Hadith Bukhari as follows:

"When Allah's Apostle came to Mecca, he refused to enter the Ka'ba with idols in it. He ordered (idols to be taken out). So they were taken out. The people took out the pictures of Abraham and Ishmael holding Azlams in their hands. Allah's Apostle said, "May Allah curse these people. By Allah, both Abraham and Ishmael never did the game of chance with Azlams." Then he entered the Ka'ba and said Takbir at its corners but did not offer the prayer in it." – Hadith Bukhari 2:654

Hadith also seems to indicate that the Ka'aba that Muhammad encountered was not the "newly" built one by Abraham, but one built on a different foundation.

¹ "God made the stone under Abraham's feet into something like clay so that his foot sunk into it. That was a miracle. It was transmitted on the authority of Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (may peace be upon him) that he said: Three stones were sent down from the Garden: the Station of Abraham, the rock of the children of Israel, and the Black Stone, which God entrusted Abraham with as a white stone. It was whiter than paper, but became black from the sins of the children of Adam." (The Hajj, F.E. Peters 1996)

Allah's Apostle said to me, "Were your people not close to the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, I would have demolished the Ka'ba and would have rebuilt it on its original foundations laid by Abraham (for Quraish had curtailed its building), and I would have built a back door (too)." Hadith Bukahri 2:655

At some point in his teaching Muhammad forbade non-Muslims from entering the Ka'aba.

"O ye who believe! Truly the Pagans are unclean; so let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque. And if ye fear poverty, soon will Allah enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty, for Allah is All-knowing, All-wise." (Quran 9:28)

The truth about the Ka'aba

While all of the above quotes and many more from Quran and Hadith make for an interesting story of the origins of the Ka'aba it is important to remember that none of it is corroborated by any historical data. This information is all the result of "revelation" given to one man (Muhammad) and then recorded by him for his followers. Hadith records the sayings of that same man as qualifying evidence.

The more important question for followers of Christ is why God, the true God of the Bible, would establish the Ka'aba as the center of worship built by either Adam or Abraham, and then let it become obsolete from the time of Abraham until the time of Muhammad? If God did command Abraham to institute a pilgrimage to Mecca for all believers as Quran 22:27 states, why is there no record of the command or any pilgrimage in the Bible? Considering Abraham's noted obedience to God on all other matters – including the command to sacrifice his own son – it seems unusual that this particular command for pilgrimage to Mecca is not present. Nor is the command or place ever mentioned by Jesus or any biblical prophets.

As a matter of fact both Old and New Testament prophets taught clearly that Jerusalem was where God built his kingdom.

Psalm 102:16 says "For the Lord will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory."

I Peter 2:6 says "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

The city of David or Zion is mentioned repeatedly in the bible as the heart of God's earthly kingdom. Mecca and the Ka'aba never have been a part of the story of Redemption. For Muhammad to turn it into a part of God's story in order to claim a place in history is clearly a fabrication without merit.

