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very popular people. Prophets were given a message from God, but oftentimes, people did not respond very positively to those messages. They chased them out of town or throw rocks at them or what have you. Only messengers were guaranteed the success of that message.

And there have only been five messengers according to Islamic teachings. First one was Noah. In Christianity, Noah isn't a prophet because he never really says anything, he just does whatever God tells him. But he does speak in the Qur'an. The other four are Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and, of course, Muhammad himself. Some of the other prophets who are shared in common between the Bible and the Qur'an include Aaron, Adam, David, Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel, Job, John the Baptist, Jonah, Joseph, Lot, and Solomon. So many characters from the Old Testament and a few from the New Testament.

Muhammad was born in the year 570, according to tradition, and he lived until the year

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But they had heard about this guy,

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But Muhammad always said he did not always speak as a prophet. There were times when he simply spoke as a human being. So he tried to be clear about when he was receiving a revelation versus when he was offering his own opinion . And his companions learned to ask him, "Are you speaking as a prophet or are you speaking as a person? If you're speaking as a person, I think I have a better idea. Why don't we try something else?" And he was willing to listen to that kind of advice.

One final point that often comes up as a criticism of Muhammad is that he had multiple wives, and was clearly a sensual person. And that's often placed in contrast to Jesus who did not marry, did not have children, and was understood to be of a higher calling. Muslims point to Muhammad's role as a family man, somebody who was married and had children, as one of the things that helps to make him very relatable to them; that he was somebody who experienced the joys and the challenges of marriage and children. I have two teenagers; they can be very challenging at times. And so he understood this at a very practical level.

One thing that's often not mentioned is that his first wife, Khadijah—he was married only to her during her lifetime. And he only began to marry other women after she died. The first wife he married after her death, he married because the community had decided that he needed a new wife to keep house for him and to keep him company so that he wouldn't get lonely.

He only had one wife, Aisha , whom he married as a virgin. The other wives were either widows or divorcees. And many of those marriages were undertaken to engage in alliances, tribal relationships, to build stronger relationships with tribes. If you need a parallel, think about European monarchies of the past where you'd have the French monarch marrying the Austro-Hungarian princess or that sort of thing. So Muslims explain it as building political relationships.

And his wives were really kind of a mixed bag. Sometimes, they got along well and