

History of religion

[Religion](#), [Jesus](#)



History of Religion Bobby Barton His 103 World Civilizations I Instructor: Debbie Cassetta December 10, 2012 Religion comes from the Latin word religio. Religion is generally the beliefs, rules, and ceremonies to worship a god or a group of. It is also considered a spiritual practice based on faith of supernatural powers of the universe. How man should live and provide explanation of things he does not understand is a concerned issue of religion. The first forms of religion may have developed from hunter gatherer societies. This was a way of explaining natural forces of the world which provided security of the way man felt about the world. There are many types of religion and with each comes a different set of beliefs and rituals. In these different religions, there are beliefs of different gods, different ceremonial rituals, and different beliefs due to the cultural background of the region in which the religion formed. The main religions of the world are Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. From the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, came Christianity. In Roman occupied Palestine, Jesus was born circa 4 B. C. E. This was a Jewish province of the Roman Empire. Insurgency, political instability, and suffering were all a part of the Common Era first century. The Roman authorities had an armed uprising by crucifying around 2, 000 people within the first year of Jesus' birth. Making life intolerable during this period were disease epidemics, poverty, and famine. Believing to be living in the end of times, or trial and tribulation, many Jews thought it would end with God's intervention. They believed God would institute the Kingdom of God, which would be full of righteousness and justice after he destroyed the enemies of the Jews. Beginning as a Jewish messianic movement, Christianity began in Jerusalem in the 1st century of

what was known as the Common Era. During the relative calm of the Pax Romana, missionaries sent out the word of salvation and resurrection all through the Eastern Mediterranean. This included Italy and Rome which was the seat of the Empire. The Roman law regarded this Christian movement during the first few decades as a Jewish sect. This exempted the Christians from worshipping the Roman emperor, a god-like figure, which was legally required. A pinch of incense was offered on an altar by a participant to acknowledge the holiness of the emperor. This was a symbolic act to appease the gods responsible for the peace and prosperity of the emperor. Christians and Jews saw this as idolatry. (Davies-Stofka, 2012) Gentiles rapidly filled early Christian communities. As a group, the Christians lost legal status as Jews. Refusing to offer the incense to the emperor, they began to be accused of being unpatriotic and atheists. Fear arose in the Christians, and they began wondering if Rome would be punished by the gods. Anyone practicing Christianity in the start of the 2nd century was punished to death due to waves of persecution and suspicion. Regardless, Christianity attracted new converts and still spread. They were known for their philanthropy and their hospitality. The Christians began sharing their possessions and caring for the poor, the widowed, and orphans. This was rare in Rome, therefore drew attention to the movement. (Davies-Stofka, 2012) “ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6: 23). This was written by Paul to the Romans. It summarizes the reconciliation of humanity's sins with God which he accomplished by sacrificing his only son, Jesus Christ. This was done with the crucifixion. Christians teach that God hates sin and will punish those who

do it. All people sin. This puts them at risk of separation from God. Without him, people will suffer an insignificant and unhappy life along with despair and anxiety. They will hate others and inflict pain on them as well as the rest of creation. Christians believe life does not end with physical death. They believe the consequences of their sins will follow them into the new world. God will judge each individual based on their relationship to Christ. Salvation, as a consequence, is the major concern for Christians. The major religious belief in Judaism is there is one God. When Judaism was born, Monotheism was not common. Jewish tradition says God revealed this himself to Abraham. After God rescued the Jews from Egyptian slavery, he revealed to Moses his ten commandments. The Mitzvah, or guidelines, tell of the importance of ritual purity and how being set apart from polytheistic cultures surrounding them was important. Covered by the Tanakh narratives, historians designated Jewish history as “ Biblical Judaism”. This covers the creation of mankind to the prophets in 4th century BCE. Following the Hebrew nation, explains as the nation “ experiences cycles of favor and discipline by God”. (George Robinson, 2012). Traditionally, the view of Jewish origin is from the patriarchal narratives. These are found in the Hebrew Bible. They show the attempt to trace the birth of the nation by the ancient Israelites. They believed that one family distinguished itself from near eastern cultures by worshipping only one god. The Hebrew Bible is an outgrowth of oral myth of the historical origins passed down through generations. It was not written until around a thousand years after the events. Buddhism came from teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. He was born in 5th century B. C. E. in Kapilavastu, India. He was born a prince and would later become the Buddha. He would be

renounced wealth and power and become a spiritual leader. He had a realization of his true nature after years of asceticism and wondering. He saw his only problem stopping him from his own spiritual understanding was his own thinking. He then saw his sense of becoming an isolated individual was only an illusion. Escaping from suffering and desire later caused him to become "The Buddha". "One thing I teach: suffering and the end of suffering. It is just ill and the ceasing of ill that I proclaim." -- The Buddha. In the beginning, men were the only allowed followers of Buddha. They were called monks. Women were later allowed to follow as nuns. The women had restrictions that reflected that eras social customs. Buddha objected at first. He was later persuaded by Ananda, a disciple. Some say women could not be enlightened. They had to be reborn man. The earliest disciples were called arhat. They gained the enlightenment and were sent to teach by Buddha. The religion soon grew rapidly gaining new converts and vast amount of followers. (Julia Hardy, 2012). All of the followers of Buddha in the beginning gave up family, social status, and home. They gave up all of their possessions and even begged for food. They were taught to do this as a way of becoming detached from material things. This would help them to obtain their spiritual enlightenment. They were not allowed any intoxicants or sexual activity. They were also prohibited from having any entertainment, and beds and seat of comfort. The monks were only allowed one meal per day and could not handle any money. Those who were unable to give up their possessions, but still appreciated the teachings of Buddha, provided the monks with clothing, food, and shelter. The lay followers had five precepts in which to follow: no taking of human life, no stealing, no intoxicants, no

participation in illicit sexual activity, and no lying. Following this and giving their support, they earned merit. They facilitate rebirth and gain the freedom to find their spiritual goals. (Julia Hardy, 2012). Hinduism comes from the Persian word referring to a river in northwest India called Sindhu. The word Hindu was first used by Persians and Arabs in the 14th century. It was adopted by the British in the 19th century to describe a majority of the India population religious practices and beliefs. It is not determined exactly when Hinduism began. It is traditionally believed that it has always existed making it a timeless religion. Historically, it can be traced as far as the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, making it as old as over 4, 000 years. Hinduism is a dynamic religion that continues to grow and evolve. Hinduism differs in many ways from monotheistic religions in many ways. Hinduism does not have a specific theological system or a single founder. Hinduism also does not have a concept of prophet or central religious authority. It is generally known as the oldest organized religion in the world. This is said because of the different thousands of religious groups that have come from India since 1500 BCE. Notable features of Hinduism are the freedom of practice and belief due to wide Hindu tradition. Henotheistic religion is the major form of Hinduism. This is that they believe in other Gods and Goddesses. Recognizing a single deity, they believe the other Gods are simply manifestations of the supreme God. Traditionally the most religious tolerant in the world, India has been the home to the henotheistic and polytheistic religions, the world's most tolerable faiths. (B. A. Robinson, 2012). Hinduism has many names. Sanatana Dharma meaning " eternal religion". Vaidika Dharma meaning " religion of the Vedas". Hinduism is the most common name in North

America. The word Hinduism have come from the Persian word meaning Indian, or from an ancient inscription meaning the country between the Bindu Sarovara and the Himalayan mountain. The religions roots can be traced to the Indus valley civilization circa 4000 to 2200 BCE. Many invasions over thousands of years were the developmental influence on Hinduism. The major influence would have been when the Indo-European tribes had invaded Northern India circa 1500 BCE. They came from the steppes of Central Asia and Russia bringing with them a religion of Vedism. Commonly called " Indus valley culture", these beliefs were more advanced. Christian scholars initially proposed this theory in the 19th century. With their pre-existing belief in the Hebrew Scriptures, also known as the Old Testament, their conclusions were biased. According to their interpretation of Genesis, the creation of earth began at circa 4, 000 BCE. This put the Noachian flood at circa 2, 500 BCE. Severe restraints were placed on the development of Upanishad Hindu and Veda religious texts, and the " Aryan invasion" due to these dates. This had discounted the Vedic culture as primitive.

Archaeologists and religious historians are rejecting the classical theory. The age of the earth and the story of the flood of Noah, in the biblical sense, were apparently biased by the originators in theory. (B. A. Robinson, 2011).

Islam comes from the Arabic. It means surrender commitment. It is closely related to the word salaam which means peace. The Islamic religion is mainly practiced by Muslims, adherents of Islam, who make peace. Muslims will surrender to the Allah, Arabic for God. They give in to his will in all aspects of life resulting in joyful peace with God and themselves. Islam received its name from its founder of the religious movement, the prophet

Muhammad. The life of Muhammad, or the Hijra, are just part of the several events surrounding what may have been considered the beginning of Islam. Looking in the beginning in the sacred event of Islam, it may be sought to have begun when Muhammad had a calling to be the messenger of God, calling this the Night of Power. “ The messenger of Allah said: ‘ Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, to perform the prayers, to pay the zakat, to fast in Ramadan, and to make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so.” He said: " You have spoken rightly", Jibreel (Gabriel) from Number 2 of " Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths." It is said that Islam began in the Middle East in Arabia. This is where Muhammad was born in Mecca. He was orphaned and worked in caravan trade as a young boy. He later became business manager of a wealthy widow who later became his wife. Muhammad preferred solitude and would go the mountains on hikes. This is where he heard God through Gabriel. He then started to teach monotheistic God to anyone who would listen. This made business men angry for they were making a living by the worship of man idols. He gained enemies as well as disciples. He moved 200 miles north of Mecca to Medina after people began to rally against him. He became head of an Islamic state after entering into politics based on his business experience. This move was called Hijra and marked the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Muhammad invaded Mecca after they had made several unsuccessful attempts at him in Medina. He easily took over the land in Mecca. He then began to extend the rule of Muslim all over Arabia. The Arab tribes were all united under the Islam religion. A civil war broke out among the tribe leaders after Muhammad's death. Islam became successful

in military and political conflicts resulting in the rise of medicine, philosophy, and technology. The Islamic religion grew from North Africa and the Middle East, and expand through Portugal and Spain and Indian sub-continent borders. Being a monotheistic religious tradition, Islam developed in the 7th century C. E. in the Middle East. Islam means “ submission" or “ surrender". It was founded through the teachings of Muhammad. This was an expression to surrender to the will of Allah. He was said to be the creator of the world. The sacred slam text, Quran, contains teachings that were given to the Prophet from Allah. Islam essentially believes Allah is the one true God and there is no equal. Sunni and Shi'a are two branches in the tradition. Each which claim differences in maintaining the authorities of the religion. One characteristic unifying Islam is the Five Pillars, the fundamental practice. Ritual prayer, the zakat, profession of faith, fasting, and hajj are the five practices. Hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca. Sacred places, Mecca, Jerusalem, and Medina, are defining characteristics of Islam primacy. Muslims worship Allah at mosques by prying and scripture study. There are no distinction between Islam aspects of life and religion. All of a Muslim aspect of life is to the servitude of Allah. Islam rapidly expand from the Arabian peninsula, its birthplace, with significant influence throughout Asia, Africa, America, and Europe. (Davies-Stofka, 2012). There are many different types of religions and beliefs. Some worship one God, while others worship many Gods and or Goddesses. All start with the teachings of one single person. All believe that there god is the one and only, and that he is the creator of all life and the Earth. Every religion has a different aspect on life, and what happens when they die. Some of these religions come from around the same place, and

believe in the same God, but worship in different ways. The origins from where these religions began hold their god, or gods, high and worship him to the full extent. Many of these countries base their political standings around what they believe is the righteous way. As discussed, the five most practiced religions are Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Christianity formed in 33 CE in Palestine. It has 2,100,000,000 followers and their deity is God. The Bible is the sacred text. Second is Islam with 1,500,000,000 followers. It originated in 622 CE in the Arabian peninsula with Allah as their deity and Qur'an as the sacred text. Third is Hinduism with followers that reach 1,000,000,000. Hinduism formed in c. 2000 BCE in India. Polytheistic is their deity with Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Epics, and Vedas as sacred texts. Buddhism began in c. 5th century BCE in India and has 35,000,000 followers. They have a pantheon of deities. The sacred text of Buddhism is Pali Tipitka, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Canons. Finally, we come to Judaism. Judaism was formed in Canaan in c. 2000 BCE. Their deity is God and they have 14,000,000 followers with Torah, Talmud, and Tanakh as their sacred texts. References Caldwell Moore, Edward (1912). *Nature of Religion*. Retrieved November 26, 2012 from [www. questia. com](http://www.questia.com) This book is older, which makes it better for my research. It does not show the most modern forms of religion. It covers the philosophy of historic religion. It even covers church of the earliest 19th century. Davies-Stofka, B. (2012). *Christianity*. Retrieved November 26, 2012 from [www. patheos. com](http://www.patheos.com) This site has many different eras related to Christianity. It starts with the beginning. It has different sections including places that practice this religion, and the rituals and ceremonies performed for it. I believe this is a great source

because it has so many different areas of study. Davies-Stofka, B. (2012). Islam. . Retrieved November 26, 2012 from [www. patheos. com](http://www.patheos.com) This site has many different eras related to the Islamic religion. It starts with the beginning. It has different sections including places that practice this religion, and the rituals and ceremonies performed for it. I believe this is a great source because it has so many different areas of study. Hardy, Julia (2012). Buddhism. Retrieved November 26, 2012 from [www. patheos. com](http://www.patheos.com) This site explains early developments, and exploration and conquest. It begins with how Buddhism came to be, and who started it. I think this source will help a lot in exploring deeper into the religion. Kinnard, Jacob N. (2012). Hinduism. Retrieved November 26, 2012 from [www. patheos. com](http://www.patheos.com) This site explains the rites and ceremonies. It tells of the worship and devotion in the daily life of Hinduism. It talks also about sacred space. This source will help get deeper References into the beleifs of Hinduism. Krell, Mark A. (2012). Judaism. Retrieved November 26, 2012 from [www. patheos. com](http://www.patheos.com) Principals of moral thought and action, leadership, vision of society. This has it all from the beginning of Judaism, to the current days. This site shows so much, and is very helpful for researching. Robinson, B. A. (2012) Hinduism. Retrieved December 10, 2012 from [www. relioustolerance. org](http://www.relioustolerance.org) This site tells of the many diversities of Hinduism. It tells what separates it from the other religions, and why it has become the third largest practice in religion. It tells of the beliefs, and sanctity. Robinson, G., Essential Judaism (2012). Retrieved December 10, 2012 from [religionfacts. com](http://religionfacts.com). This site tells of the crusades from beginning Judaism. It explains the history of how it began, and beleifs they hold. It also tells the timeline from the beginning to present day

practices. Verkamp, Bernard J. (1995) *The Evolution of Religion: A Re-Examination*. Retrieved November 26, 2012 from [www. questia. com](http://www.questia.com) This book has the souls history, the evolutionary process of religion, and the adaptive value. There many different aspects in this book on how religion came to be. I found it extremely helpful.