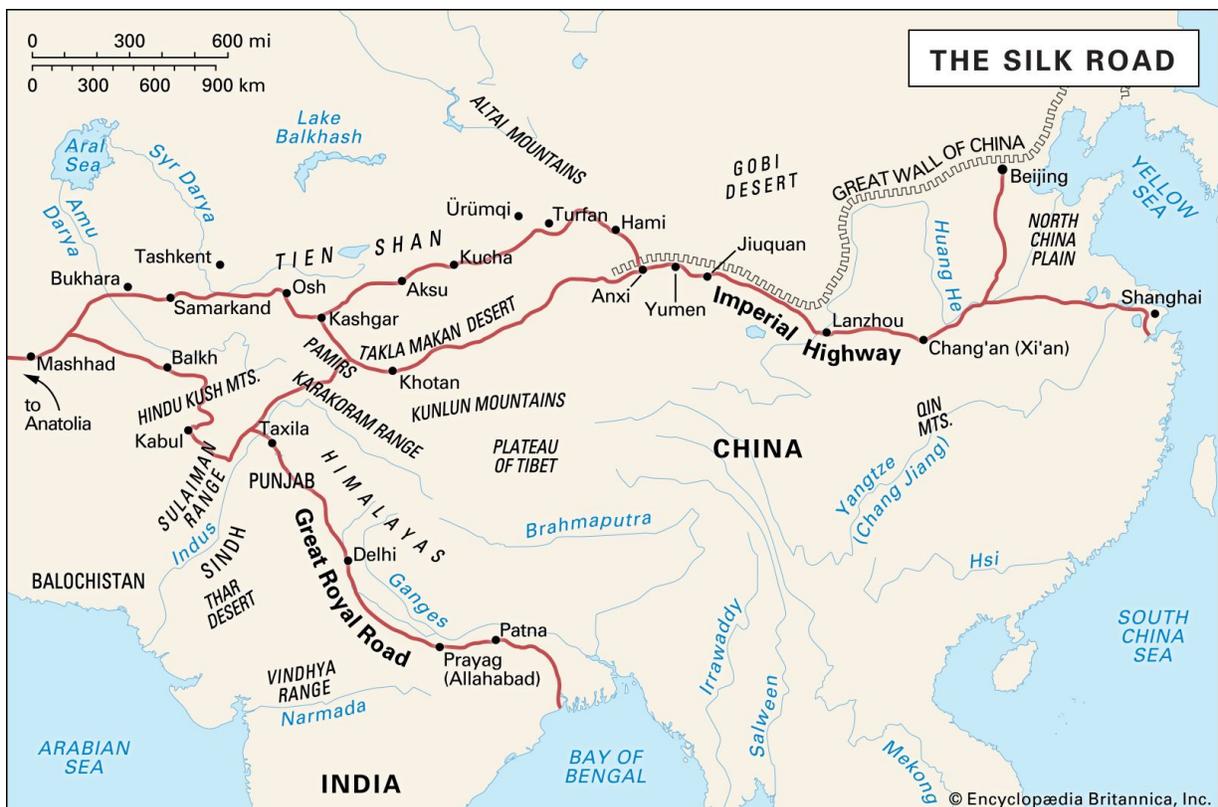


Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
6th Grade Social Studies Unit 4 Study Guide

**How to use:**

- For each item in bold, create your own test question. Write the answer, too.
- Describe the major successes and challenges of the cultures and leaders discussed in this study guide (Ancient Greece, Rome, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, etc.)

**Explain how geography affected trade in West African kingdoms and Chinese Dynasties (the Silk Road, trans-Saharan trade).**



As the map above shows, the Silk Road was not actually a road at all but a series of trade routes spanning from Europe to the Eastern edge of Asia. The silk road connected many different groups of people and covered many different types of geography along the way. The trade routes became **known as the Silk Road because fine silk made in China was really valuable in Europe** and so it became one of the most frequently traded items in this set of trade routes.

The land along the Silk Road was often very harsh. **The trade routes went through or around the Gobi Desert, the Takla Makan Desert, the Himalaya Mountains, and the Hindu Kush**

**Mountains.** The merchants who traded along the Silk Road made many adaptations to deal with this harsh geography:

- The route was usually broken up into shorter trips, with **each merchant only going from one city to the next closest city on the route**. This was done to avoid long journeys through difficult terrain but it had other consequences.
  - Because each item on the silk road had changed hands so many times, more people came into contact with each item and this sped up the spread of culture.
  - Additionally, each time a merchant sold an item they increased the price of that item so they could still make a profit. So, if a product had to be sold a bunch of times before it reached its final destination the price would be very high.
- Merchants from the desert parts of the Silk Road had to adapt to traveling long distances without water. **The use of camels instead of horses became common.**
- Also, because the Silk Road was so long and so much of it was desert. **Cities along sources of fresh water like rivers became extremely important and thus very rich.**

**Describe Marco Polo's travels on the Silk Road.**

**Marco Polo was a merchant from Venice in the 1200's.** He is famous for traveling along the **Silk Road** and spending a lot of time in Asia and then having someone write a book about it called **The Travels**. The Travels was an important book because it was the first description of many parts of Asia that Europeans had read in centuries. Culture in Asia had progressed and changed in ways that amazed people in Europe. **The Travels became the second most popular book in Europe of its time behind The Bible.**

Probably the most important stop on Marco Polo's travels was his stay at the court of **Kublai Khan**. Kublai Khan was the **leader of the Mongol Empire from 1260-1294** and controlled most of the Asian territory covered by the Silk Road. Kublai Khan was the most powerful person in all of Asia and he took a liking to Marco Polo. Marco Polo and his brothers would spend 17 years serving Kublai Khan and visiting parts of Asia that no European would visit and write about again for over 500 years.

**Explain the connection between trade routes, cultural diffusion, and settlements in Chinese dynasties and West African kingdoms (Silk Road, Timbuktu, trans-Saharan trade). Explain how interactions along the Silk Road influenced the exchange of ideas and technology among Asians and Europeans (shipbuilding, gunpowder, mathematical and scientific knowledge).**

The Silk Road contributed greatly to the development of Asia up to the 1500s.

**Economic Development:**

- Trade along the **Silk Road was the main source of economic development** in the region for centuries.
- **Merchants who traded along the Silk Road became very rich** and gained a lot of

influence in the area. Oftentimes merchants would control whole regions like governments.

- The **governments of cities along the Silk Road taxed merchants** as they passed through, making these cities very wealthy as well.
- Finally, perhaps the most important economic development attributed to the Silk Road is the development of **paper money**. Paper money, or currency, became widely used when Kublai Khan was in charge. **Currency allowed merchants to trade more easily** by setting a paper money price to goods rather than always trying to find ways to barter or trade items of equal value. **Taxing was also easier with paper money.**

#### **Cultural Development:**

- Goods were not the only things traded along the Silk Road, **merchants from all over Asia and Europe met and talked and spread ideas all over the Silk Road**
- These interactions by people from all over Europe and Asia led to the **spread of culture, especially religion.**
- The Silk Road is attributed with the **spread of Buddhism** from India to pretty much all of Asia.
- Additionally, many **technologies spread across the Silk Road** like Gunpowder which was invented in Asia but made its way to Europeans via trade.

**Describe the origins of the major Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism).**

#### **Taoism:**

**Lao-tzu, translated as either "Old Master" or "Old Boy," is believed to be the author of Taoism.** According to myth he was born around **604 B.C.E.** He eventually took a position as head librarian of the Imperial Archives. Saddened by society's lack of goodness, Lao-tzu decided to leave his home in Luoyang to live out the rest of his life in quiet and solitude somewhere beyond the Great Wall of China, possibly near Tibet. As he passed through the city gates for the final time, the gatekeeper asked Lao-tzu to write down his parting thoughts. **The "Old Master" agreed, and three days later returned with a small book. His writings were titled the Tao Te Ching, and became the most important text of Taoism.**

**According to Taoism, the entire universe and everything in it flows with a mysterious, unknowable force called the Tao.** Translated literally as "The Way," the Tao has many different meanings. The Tao also explains the powers that drive the universe and the wonder of human nature. Taoists believe that everything is one despite all appearances. Opinions of good and evil or true and false only happen when people forget that they are all one in the Tao. Therefore, it is the aim of Taoists not to forget, and if forgotten to remember that oneness.

**Over time a Taoist religion evolved, becoming somewhat different from the philosophy of Taoism just described.** While religious Taoism held some of the same beliefs, it also called for

worship of many gods and ancestors, a practice that began during the Shang dynasty. Other religious practices included the cultivation of bodily energy called "chi," the creation of a system of morals, and use of alchemy in attempts to attain immortality. **The folk religion of Taoism became popular after its adoption by China as the state religion in 440 C.E., and continues to be practiced even to the present-day.**

### **Confucianism:**

The other driving philosophy of dynastic China was **created by a politician, musician, and philosopher named Confucius**. Born in **551 B.C.E.**, Confucius wandered throughout China, first as a government employee, and later as a political advisor to the rulers of the Chou dynasty. In later life, Confucius left politics to teach a small group of students. After his death in 479 B.C.E., the ethics and moral **teachings of Confucius were written down by his students to become the Lun-yü, or Analects.**

Learning to be human was the goal of Confucianism. According to Confucius, **each person should act with virtue in all social matters; family, community, state, and kingdom, to ensure order and unity.** Man's virtue in all its forms is called "jen." "Jen" is all encompassing and unable to be defined, in some respects similar to the Tao.

By far the most influential aspect of Confucianism remains the Analects: "Not to teach a man who can be taught, is to waste a man; to teach a man who cannot be taught, is a waste of words. The wise will lose neither men nor words." It was sayings such as this one that made **Confucianism the social philosophy of China from the Han dynasty in 202 B.C.E. until the end of dynastic rule in 1911.**

### **Hinduism**

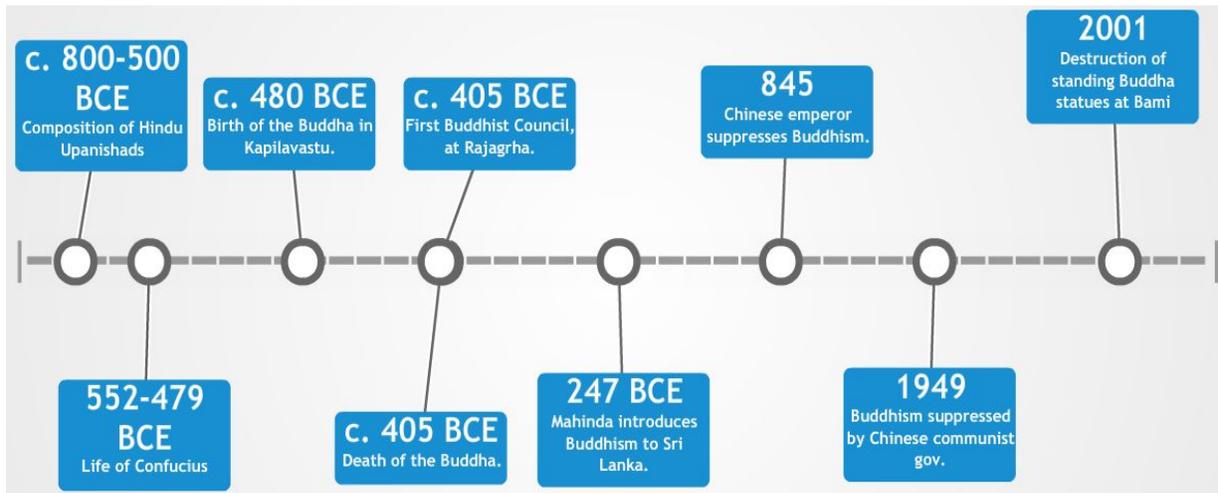
Hinduism has **no single founder**. Possibly the oldest active religion in the world, Hinduism came out of influence from **Brahmanism. Hinduism began in India roughly 4000 years ago.**

Hinduism was not just a religion in ancient India. **It was a way of life.** It affected how Indians lived, what they believed, and even the way they organized their society. Brahmanism taught that a well-organized society was divided into **social classes**. Europeans later called this the **caste system. The Vedas describe four main social classes:**

- 1. Brahmins (priests and religious scholars)**
- 2. Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors)**
- 3. Vaishyas (herders and merchants)**
- 4. Shudras (servants)**
- 5. Untouchables (street cleaners, other jobs nobody else wanted to do)**

According to the Vedas, **each class, or varna, had its own duties.** The Brahmins had a duty to study and teach the Vedas. Warriors had to become skilled with weapons. But the caste system meant that some people were much more favored than others. **Brahmins held the top place, while Untouchables held the lowest.**

## Buddhism:



**Buddhism focuses on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama who was born around 563 BCE.** With as many as 500 million followers, Buddhism is the 4th largest religion in the world. Siddhartha was born a Hindu, but had a difficult time believing the teachings because of all of the suffering he saw in the world. He also rejected the caste system. Siddhartha was born a wealthy prince, but gave up everything to find a true understanding of the world. He tried many different types of Hindu beliefs, but eventually he formed his own belief system and taught many others. **He was called “The Buddha”,** or the enlightened one. Many of Siddhartha teachings or what is called his “dharma” come from Hinduism. **His teachings were written in Buddhist holy books called Tripitaka or Sutras.**

All Buddhists, especially Theravada wish to achieve the end of suffering (Nirvana). To do this, Buddhists must train and purify their mind by following the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths are:

- 1—Life is suffering
- 2—Suffering is due to attachment to things
- 3—Attachment can be overcome
- 4—There is a life **path** to accomplish all of this

The "path" mentioned in the 4th Noble Truth is called the **Eightfold Path**. The Noble Eightfold Path is often represented as a wheel with eight spokes. This is called the Wheel of Samsara because it shows Siddhartha's dharma or life path to Nirvana. It is meant to focus the mind and behavior of Buddhists and help them reach Nirvana. The correct view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration is Siddhartha's idea of how to avoid the sorrow of life and eventually reach Nirvana.

**Analyze the role and importance of key people (Siddhartha/Buddha, Confucius), places (Asia, India, China), and texts (Vedas, Sutras) in the origin and spread of Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism).**

**Taoism:**

**Taoism was started by a man named Lao-Tzu** who was born in **Ancient China** around 600 BCE. He was a government worker for the Ancient Chinese government but decided he did not like the way society was so he moved out near the Great Wall of China to live by himself. **He wrote down his teachings in a text titled the Tao Te Ching, and became the most important text of Taoism.**

**Confucianism:**

**Confucianism was created by Ancient Chinese Philosopher Confucius** born around 551 BCE. The ethics and moral teachings of Confucius were written down by his students to become the **Lun-yü, or Analects**. Confucius talked a lot about personal responsibility and believed people should perform their duties, this led to the **Ancient Chinese government adopting Confucianism as official policy.**

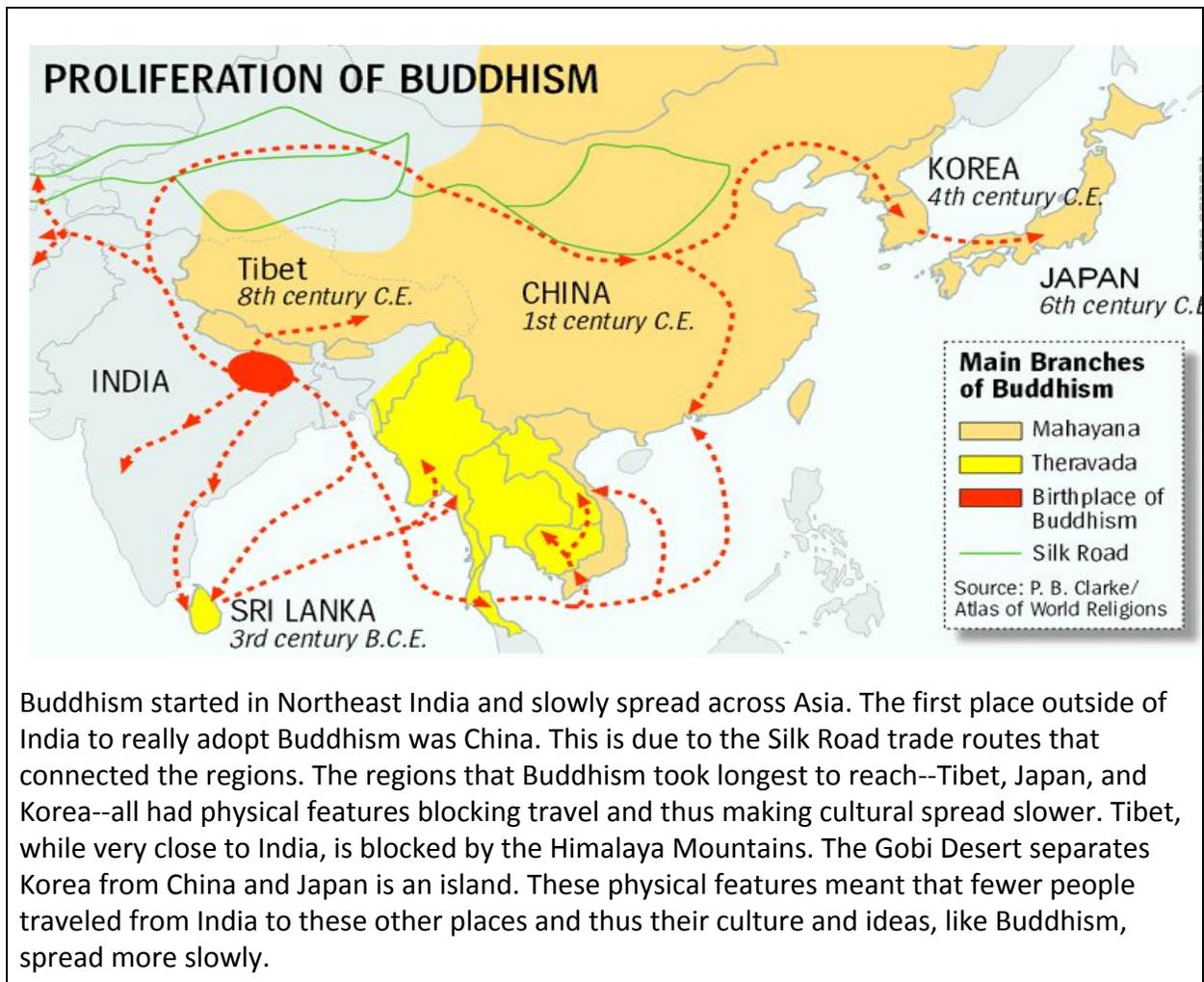
**Hinduism:**

**Hinduism has no single founder** as far as anyone knows, but Hinduism has been around for thousands of years and is one of the oldest active religions in the world. **Hinduism was formed out of the Indian system of Brahmanism and originated sometime in India about 4000 years ago.**

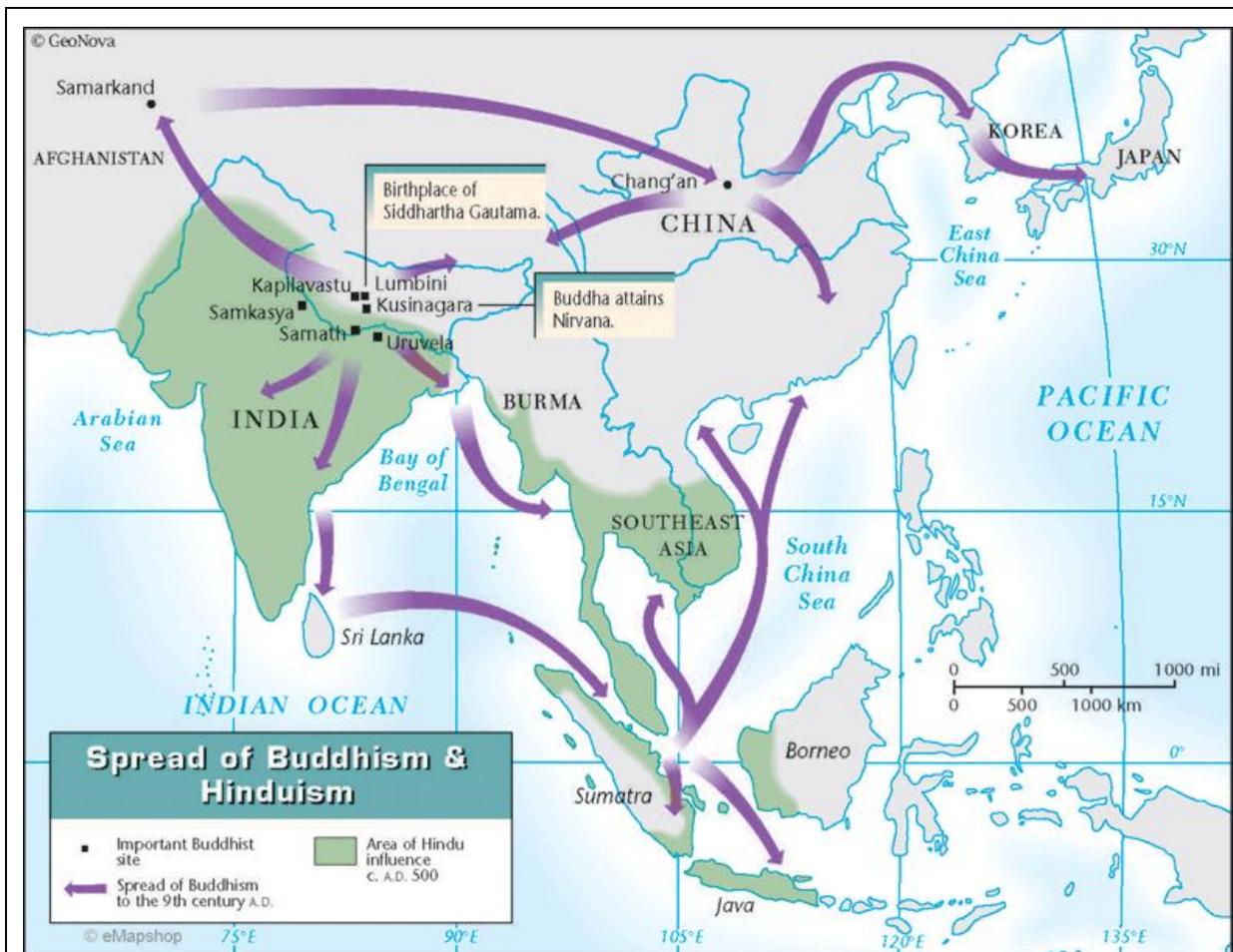
While Hinduism has no distinct founder, it does have many sacred texts. **The most important texts of Hinduism are called the Vedas** and they mostly tell the **stories of Hindu Gods and Goddesses as well as old Hindu Religious Leaders.**

**Explain the factors that influenced the spread of Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism), including the ways geography affected the spread of the religions and why some religions spread further than others (Buddhism vs. Hinduism).**

**Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism:**



Buddhism started in Northeast India and slowly spread across Asia. The first place outside of India to really adopt Buddhism was China. This is due to the Silk Road trade routes that connected the regions. The regions that Buddhism took longest to reach--Tibet, Japan, and Korea--all had physical features blocking travel and thus making cultural spread slower. Tibet, while very close to India, is blocked by the Himalaya Mountains. The Gobi Desert separates Korea from China and Japan is an island. These physical features meant that fewer people traveled from India to these other places and thus their culture and ideas, like Buddhism, spread more slowly.



As this map shows, Hinduism tended to spread more in the Southeast region of Asia and the islands East of the Indian Ocean. Hinduism likely spread to these areas because of trade routes along the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea.

While both Hinduism and Buddhism spread largely along trade routes. Buddhism was probably affected more by the Silk Road, which is why it traveled along rivers toward China, and Hinduism was affected more by coastal sea trade that predated the silk road and kept Hinduism close to the Southeastern coast of Asia.

**Compare/contrast the origin and spread of major monotheistic religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity).**

**Use maps to locate places related to the origin and spread of the major monotheistic religions (Canaan, Israel, Jerusalem, Egypt, Babylon, Mecca, Medina, Spain, Europe, Mediterranean region, Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, Southeast Asia), including important religious sites (synagogues, temples, churches, mosques) and places of shared importance (Israel, Jerusalem, Middle East).**

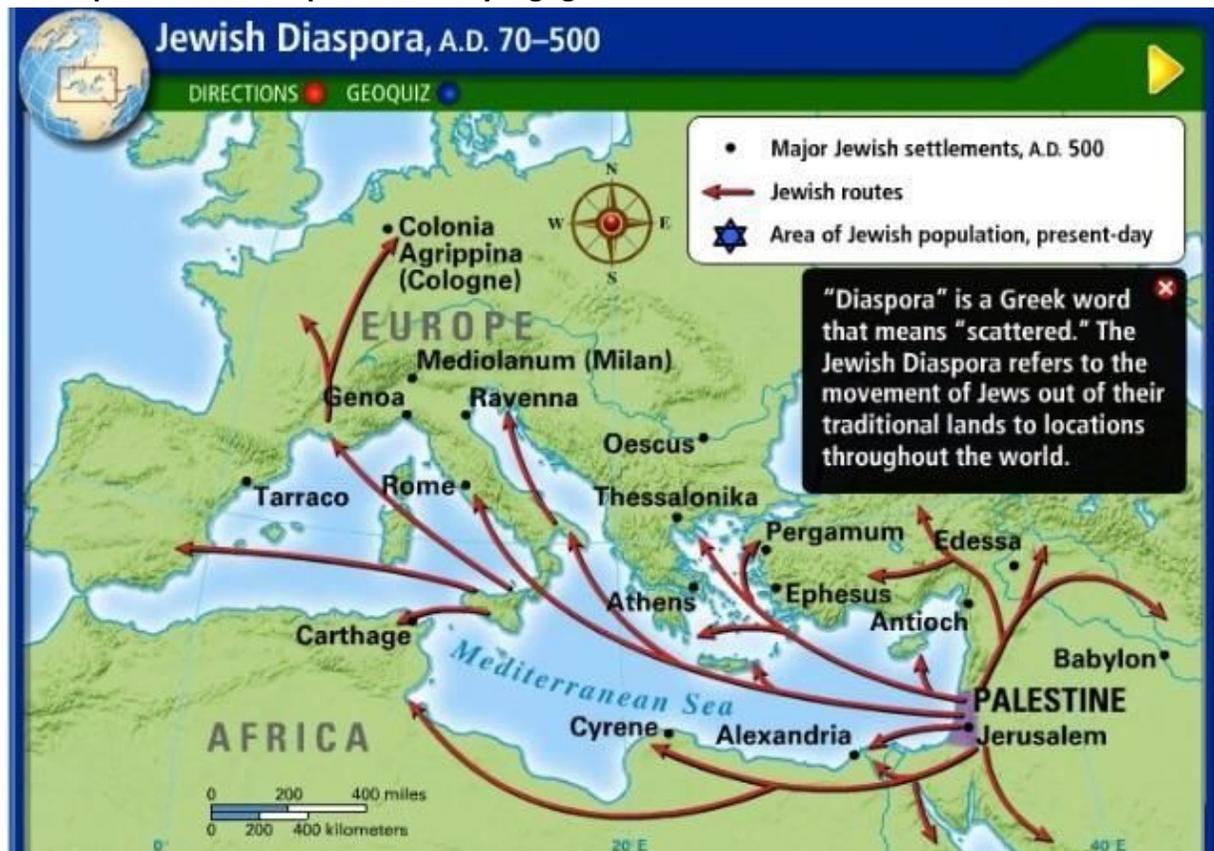
**Judaism**

Judaism traces its founding back to a man named Abram who was born in Mesopotamia around 2000 BCE (about 4000 years ago). The Torah--the Jewish holy book--says that God told Abram that he would take his people, the Hebrews, and lead them out of their homeland to a new home, Canaan, which would be their paradise. God would later revisit Abram and form a covenant--or agreement--with Abram. He would change his name to Abraham, which means father of many, and God would always protect Abraham and all of his followers for generations to come if they promised to always worship God.

The Spread of Judaism came largely through what is known as the Jewish Diaspora. This refers to the continuous exile and forced migration of the Jewish people. Many rulers of various civilizations came to despise Judaism and it's followers for a number of reasons though most important was probably that Judaism taught its followers to question everything, including their leaders. Kings and Queens of the ancient world, as well as many leaders of the modern world, did not appreciate this teaching of Judaism and sought to keep Judaism and Jewish people enslaved or out of their society altogether.

The Diaspora would spread Judaism all over the Middle East, into Europe, and eventually overseas to the Western Hemisphere over thousands of years.

**Jewish places of worship are called Synagogues.**



## Christianity

Christianity essentially began around 2000 years ago with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. The Bible, the main text of Christianity, states that Jesus was born to a Jewish woman named Mary, now known as the Virgin Mary. Jesus would go on to become a religious leader in Israel/Palestine. He and his followers claimed that he was the son of God sent to teach people about the true way to live and ultimately to die for people's sins.

Jesus' teachings of love and peace brought him many followers, most notable being the 13 apostles, but it also brought him negative attention from local leaders. Many leaders of Judaism were scared that Jesus would become more important than them and they feared they would lose power. Thus Jesus was executed for these transgressions against the mainstream.

What Jesus' enemies could not have predicted however, was that this execution would lead the creation of a new religion called Christianity. Jesus' followers solidified after his death and his apostles spent their time spreading his word and gaining new followers. Christianity spread like wildfire around the Middle East and into Europe throughout the early centuries of the common era.

**Christian places of worship are called Churches.**



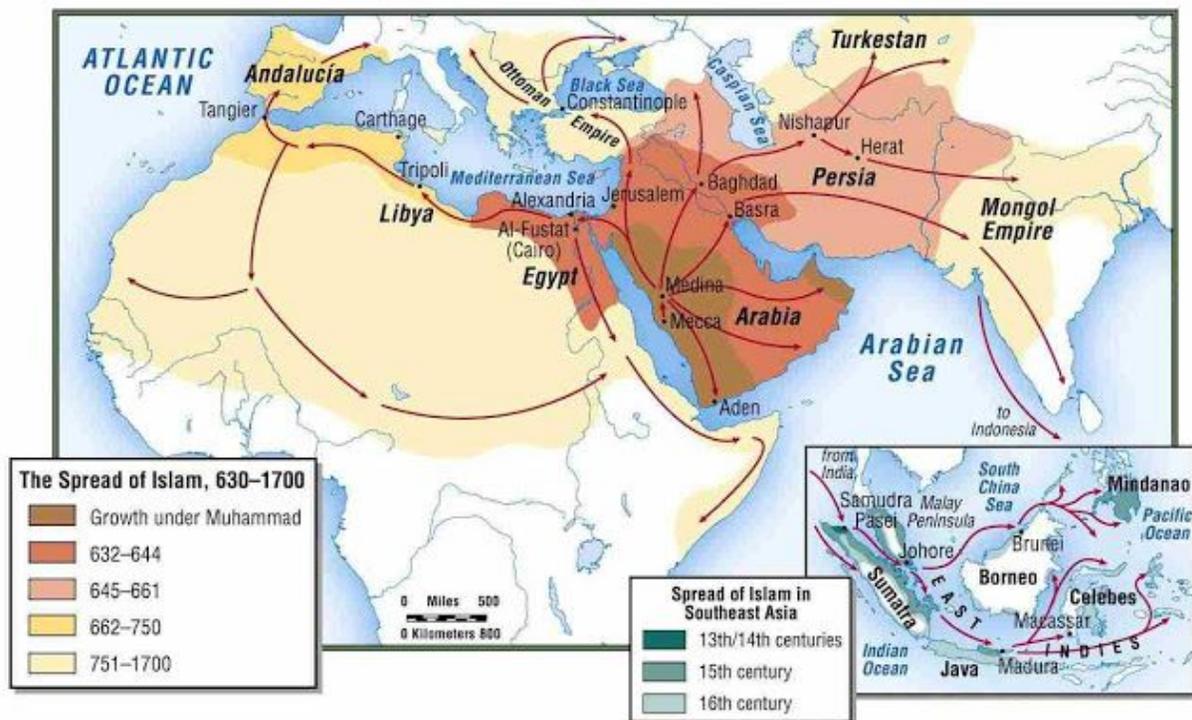
**Islam**

**Islam was founded by Muhammad (c. 570-632 C.E.),** a merchant from the city of **Mecca, now in modern-day Saudi Arabia.** Mecca was a well-established trading city along the Silk Road. The Kaaba (in Mecca) is the focus of pilgrimage for Muslims.

**The Qu’ran (Koran), the holy book of Islam,** gives us very little detail about Muhammad’s life; however, the hadiths, or sayings of the Prophet, which were largely compiled in the centuries following Muhammad’s death, provide a larger narrative for the events in his life. **Muhammad was born in 570 C.E.** in Mecca, and his early life was unremarkable. He married a wealthy widow named Khadija. **Around 610 C.E., Muhammad had his first religious experience, where he was instructed to recite by the Angel Gabriel.** After a period of introspection and self-doubt, Muhammad accepted his role as God’s prophet and **began to preach word of the one God, or Allah in Arabic. His first convert was his wife.**

Islam, more than any of the other three major Monotheistic Religions, was **spread through warfare.** In the **early 600’s, Muslim leaders conquered much of the Arabian Peninsula** in the Middle East and established Muslim rule of the area. **Later, Muslim traders from these kingdoms spread Islam to those they traded with in India, southeast Asia, and Africa.**

**Muslim places of worship are called mosques.**



Common themes among the three:

**Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are the three most popular Monotheistic Religions--religions with only 1 God-- in the world.** Since they can all trace their origins back

to Abraham, they are often called the **Abrahamic Religions**. Additionally, they all originated in the **Middle East** and all 3 have important religious sites in **Israel and Palestine, especially in the city of Jerusalem**.

**Analyze the role and importance of key people (Abraham, Moses, kings, prophets, Jesus, apostles, Muhammad, caliphs) and texts (Hebrew Bible, Bible, Qur'an) in the origins and early spread of the three major monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam).**

**Judaism:**

Judaism was founded by Abraham. The holy text of Judaism is called the Torah or the Hebrew Bible. It is also sometimes called the Old Testament. Judaism largely spread due to the forced migration, or Diaspora, of the Jewish people who were run out of many different countries. The most famous of those being when Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt and to the Middle East.

**Christianity:**

Christianity was founded by Jesus and his Apostles. The crucifixion of Jesus led to a solidifying of his followers, the apostles, who then spread his word around the Middle East and Europe. Christianity was later spread even further when it was adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire by the Emperor Constantine. The holy text of Christianity is called the Bible and particularly the New Testament.

**Islam:**

Islam was founded by the prophet Muhammad, a prophet is a religious leader who claims to speak to the gods, and he first spread the religion as the leader of a new Muslim kingdom. Later leaders of such kingdoms, called caliphs, would spread Islam through conquest and trade. The holy text of Islam is called the Qur'an.