

MAPPING HISTORY

AP® Causation

How does Map 4.1 suggest the political, economic, and geographic factors that might account for the relatively rapid spread of Christianity?

Map 4.1 The Spread of Early Christianity and Buddhism

In the five centuries after the birth of Jesus, Christianity found converts from Spain to Northeast Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and India. In the Roman Empire, Axum, and Armenia, the new religion enjoyed state support as well. Subsequently, Christianity took root solidly in Europe and after 1000 C.E. in Russia. Meanwhile, Buddhism was spreading from its South Asian homeland to various parts of Asia, even as it was weakening in India itself.

READING THE MAP: From its start on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, in which direction did Christianity spread the farthest?

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Compare this map with Map 7.1: The Silk Roads and Map 7.2: The Sea Roads, and identify regions where Christianity and Buddhism spread along these long-distance trade routes.

AP® EXAM TIP

Be ready to provide examples of how political power was used to promote religion, and vice versa.

In the Roman world, the strangest and most offensive feature of the new faith was its exclusive monotheism and its antagonism to all other supernatural powers, particularly the cult of the emperors. Christians' denial of these other gods caused them to be tagged as "atheists" and was one reason behind the empire's intermittent persecution of Christians during the first three centuries of the Common Era. All of that ended with Emperor Constantine's conversion in the early fourth century C.E. and the proclamation of Christianity as the state religion in 380 C.E.

Roman rulers sought to use an increasingly popular Christianity as glue to hold together a very diverse population in a weakening imperial state. Constantine and



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his successors thus provided Christians with newfound security and opportunities. The emperor Theodosius (r. 379–395 C.E.) enforced a ban on all polytheistic ritual sacrifices and ordered the temples that practiced them closed. Christians, by contrast, received patronage for their buildings, official approval for their doctrines, suppression of their rivals, and prestige from imperial recognition. All of this set in motion a process by which the Roman Empire, and later all of Europe, became overwhelmingly Christian. At the time, however, Christianity was expanding at least as rapidly to the east and south as it was to the west. In 500, few observers could have predicted that the future of Christianity would lie primarily in Europe.

The spread of Buddhism in India was quite different from that of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Even though Ashoka's support gave Buddhism a considerable boost, it was never promoted to the exclusion of other faiths. Ashoka sought harmony among India's diverse population through religious tolerance rather than religious uniformity. The kind of monotheistic intolerance that Christianity exhibited in the Roman world was quite foreign to Indian religious practice. Whereas Buddhism later died out in India as it was absorbed into a reviving Hinduism, no renewal of Roman polytheism occurred in the West, and Christianity became an enduring element of European civilization. Nonetheless, Christianity did adopt some elements of religious practice from the Roman world, including, perhaps, the cult of saints and the dating of the birth of Jesus to the winter solstice. Finally, both of these new religions spread widely beyond their places of origin. Buddhism provided a network of cultural connections across much of Asia, while Christianity during its early centuries established an Afro-Eurasian presence.

Institutions, Controversies, and Divisions

As Christianity spread within the Roman Empire and beyond, it developed a hierarchical organization, with patriarchs, bishops, and priests—all men—replacing the house churches of the early years, in which women played a more prominent part. At least in some places, however, women continued to exercise leadership and even priestly roles, prompting Pope Gelasius in 494 to speak out sharply against those who encouraged women “to officiate at the sacred altars, and to take part in all matters imputed to the offices of the male sex, to which they do not belong.”²²



The First Christian Emperor Constantine Following Constantine's conversion, artists used both Roman imperial and Christian symbols to present him as a Christian emperor. In this circa fourth-century carving from what is now Croatia, Constantine is portrayed sitting on an imperial throne holding a Christian cross while a man lies prostrate before him. (DEA/A. DAGLI ORTI/Getty Images)

AP® Analyzing Evidence

How does the use of Christian iconography in the image explain how Constantine would use religion to keep the empire intact?

AP® EXAM TIP

The structures of leadership within Christianity—and in all major belief systems—are important concepts.

AP® EXAM TIP

You should know the factors that led to divisions within major belief systems.

In general, though, the exclusion of women from the priesthood established a male-dominated clergy and a patriarchal church, which has lasted into the twenty-first century.

The emerging Christian movement was, however, anything but unified. Its immense geographic reach, accompanied by inevitable differences in language, culture, and political regime, ensured that a single focus for Christian belief and practice was difficult to achieve. Doctrinal differences also tore at the unity of Christianity and embroiled church authorities in frequent controversy about the nature of Jesus (was he human, divine, or both?), his relationship to God (equal or inferior?), and the always-perplexing concept of the Trinity (God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). There was debate as well about what writings belonged in the official New Testament, as dozens of letters, gospels, poems, and songs circulated among the early Christian communities. A series of church councils—at Nicaea (325 C.E.), Chalcedon (451 C.E.), and Constantinople (553 C.E.), for example—sought to define an orthodox, or correct, position on these and other issues, declaring those who disagreed as *anathema* and expelling them from the Church. The Church of the East, for example, adopted Nestorianism, which emphasized the human side of Jesus' nature, an idea rejected by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Beyond these theological debates, political and cultural differences generated division even among the orthodox. The bishop of Rome gradually emerged as the dominant leader, or pope, of the Church in the western half of the empire, but his authority was sharply contested in the East. This division contributed to the later split between the Latin, or Roman Catholic, and the Greek, or Eastern Orthodox, branches of Christendom, a division that continues to the present. Thus the Christian world of 500 C.E. was not only geographically extensive but also politically and theologically very diverse and highly fragmented.

Buddhists too clashed over various interpretations of the Buddha's teachings, and a series of councils failed to prevent the division between Theravada, Mahayana, and other approaches. A considerable proliferation of different sects, practices, teachings, and meditation techniques subsequently emerged within the Buddhist world, but these divisions generally lacked the "clear-cut distinction between 'right' and 'wrong' ideas" that characterized conflicts within the Christian world.²³ Although Buddhist states and warrior classes (such as the famous samurai of Japan) sometimes engaged in warfare, religious differences among Buddhists seldom provided the basis for the bitterness and violence that often accompanied religious conflict within

Christendom. Nor did Buddhists develop the kind of overall religious hierarchy that characterized Christianity, although communities of monks and nuns, organized in monasteries, created elaborate rules to govern their internal affairs.

AP® Comparison

How might a historian understand the appeal of Buddhism and Christianity as opposed to the more rationalist approaches of Greek and Confucian philosophy?

REFLECTIONS

Religion and Historians

To put it mildly, religion has always been a sensitive subject, and no less so for historians than for anyone else. Seeking to understand the religious dimension of human life has generated various tensions and misunderstandings between scholars and believers.

One of these tensions involves the question of change. Most religions present themselves as timeless revelations from the beyond, partaking of eternity or at least reflecting ancient practice. In the eyes of historians, however, the religious aspect of human life changes as much as any other. The Hindu tradition changed from a religion of ritual and sacrifice to one of devotion and worship. Buddhism became more conventionally religious, with an emphasis on the supernatural, as it evolved from Theravada to Mahayana forms. A male-dominated hierarchical Christian Church, with its pope, bishops, priests, and state support, was very different from the small house churches that suffered persecution by imperial authorities in the early Christian centuries. The implication—that religions are largely a human phenomenon—has been troublesome to some believers.

Historians, on the other hand, have sometimes been uncomfortable in the face of claims by believers that they have actually experienced a divine reality. Certainly, modern scholars are in no position to validate or refute the spiritual claims of religious leaders and their many followers, but we need to take them seriously. Although we will never know precisely what happened to the Buddha as he sat in meditation in northern India or what transpired when Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness, clearly those experiences changed the two men and motivated their subsequent actions. Millions of their followers have also acted on the basis of what they perceived to be a compelling encounter with an unseen realm. This interior dimension of human experience, though difficult to grasp with any precision and impossible to verify, has been a significant mover and shaper of the historical process.

Yet a third problem arises from debates within particular religious traditions about which group most accurately represents the “real” or authentic version of the faith. Historians usually refuse to take sides in such disputes. They simply notice with interest that most human cultural traditions generate conflicting views, some of which become the basis for serious conflict in societies.

Reconciling personal religious convictions with the perspectives of modern historical scholarship is no easy task. At the very least, all of us can appreciate the immense human effort that has gone into the making of religious traditions, and we can acknowledge their enormous significance in the unfolding of the human story. They have shaped the meanings that billions of people over thousands of years have attached to the world they inhabit. These religious traditions have justified the vast

social inequalities and oppressive states of human civilizations, but they have also enabled human beings to endure the multiple sufferings that attend human life, and on occasion they have stimulated reform and rebellion. And the religions born in second-wave civilizations have guided much of humankind in its endless efforts to penetrate the mysteries of the world beyond and of the world within.

Chapter Review

AP® Key Terms

Legalism, 142	Zoroastrianism, 156
Confucianism, 144	Judaism, 157
Ban Zhao, 145	Greek rationalism, 159
Daoism, 147	Socrates, 159
Vedas, 149	Plato, 161
Upanishads, 149	Aristotle, 161
Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha), 151	Jesus of Nazareth, 164
Theravada Buddhism, 153	Saint Paul, 165
Mahayana Buddhism, 153	Perpetua, 167
Bhagavad Gita, 154	Church of the East, 167
<i>bhakti</i> movement, 154	

Big Picture Questions

1. How does a secular outlook on the world have its roots in the second-wave era? How did this outlook interact with pre-existing religious traditions?
2. "Religion is a double-edged sword, both supporting and undermining political authority and social elites." How would you support, refute, or modify this statement using evidence from the chapter?
3. How would you define the political, social, and/or economic appeal of the belief systems discussed in this chapter? To what groups were they attractive, and why?
4. Imagine that you were a Christian traveler in the Eurasian world of 500 c.e. writing home about your encounter with other religious traditions. What similarities and differences might you notice between Christianity and the other religious traditions?
5. **AP® Making Connections:** What relationships can you see between the political dimensions of second-wave civilizations described in Chapter 3 and their cultural or religious aspects discussed in this chapter?

Next Steps: For Further Study

Karen Armstrong, *The Great Transformation* (2006). A comparative and historical study of the major religions by a well-known scholar.

Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (2011). An impressive but controversial account of the origins of religion in general and those of second-wave civilizations in particular.

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Barmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First 3000 Years* (2009). A magisterial account of Jewish and Christian history.

Huston Smith, *An Illustrated World's Religions* (1994). A sympathetic account of major world religions, beautifully illustrated, by a prominent scholar of comparative religion.

Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (1983). A classic work, first published more than half a century ago, about the major philosophies of old China.

Jonathan S. Walters, *Finding Buddhists in Global History* (1998). A brief account that situates Buddhism in a world history framework.

Annenberg Learner, "Early Belief Systems," found at www.learner.org. Explores the origins of the religious impulse and many of the traditions covered in this chapter.

Hinduism Today Videos, "The History of Hindu India, Part One: From Ancient Times," directed and produced by Sushma Khadepaun in collaboration with Professor Shiva Bajpai. A thoughtful examination of the origins and development of the Hindu tradition.

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SOURCE 4.2 A Classical Indian Buddha

By the time of India's Gupta dynasty (320–550 C.E.), Greco-Roman influence in Buddhist art was fading, replaced by more completely Indian images of the Buddha. Such representations became the “classic” model illustrated in Source 4.2, which dates from the sixth century C.E. The Buddha's right hand with palm facing the viewer indicates reassurance, or “have no fear.” The partially webbed fingers are among the *lakshanas*, or signs of a Buddha image, that denote the Buddha's unique status. So too is the hair knot on the top of his head, symbolizing enlightenment.

An Indian Buddha



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA/Purchase, Florence Waterbury Bequest, 1969 (69.222).
Photo: Bruce White/Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

Questions to Consider

1. The elongated earlobes reflect the heavy, luxurious earrings that the Buddha wore earlier in his life before becoming the enlightened one. Why might the artist have included this detail in his depiction of the Buddha?
2. The creator of this statue intended to convey the Buddha's calm and detached posture toward the world. What features of the statue might illustrate this posture?

AP® ANALYZING HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

1. Compare this Gupta depiction of the Buddha with one other image or description of the Buddha in this chapter. Analyze one reason for the difference.
2. Analyze the purpose of this statue for observers in the Gupta Empire.



SOURCE 4.3 The Reputation of the Buddha in Ancient Buddhist Stories

Various perceptions of the Buddha found expression not only in artistic form, but also in the growing body of Buddhist texts, known as the Pali Canon, originally passed on orally and reduced to writing during the first century B.C.E. Source 4.3 recounts a conversation derived from one of these texts between the Buddha and a wandering holy man, Sakuludayin, about the qualities of various religious leaders in the area.

The Greater Discourse to Sakuludayin | ca. 1st century B.C.E.

[Sakuludayin reported:] And some said this: This recluse Gotama [the Buddha] is the head of an order, the head of a group, the teacher of a group, the well-known and famous founder of a sect regarded by many as a saint. He is honoured, respected, revered, and venerated by his disciples, and his disciples live in dependence on him. . . .

Once the recluse Gotama was teaching his Dhamma [truth, wisdom, teachings] to an assembly of several hundred followers and there a certain disciple of his cleared his throat. Thereupon one of his companions in the holy life nudged him with his knee. "Be quiet, venerable sir, make no noise; the Blessed One, the Teacher, is teaching us the Dhamma."

When the recluse Gotama is teaching the Dhamma to an assembly of several hundred followers, on that occasion there is no sound of his disciples' coughing or clearing their throats. For

then that large assembly is poised in expectancy . . . just as though a man were at a crossroads pressing out pure honey and a large group of people were poised in expectancy. . . .

"But, [asked the Buddha] how many qualities do you see in me because of which my disciples honour, respect, revere, and venerate me?" [Sakuludayin replied] "Venerable sir, I see five qualities in the Blessed One: . . . First, venerable sir, the Blessed One eats little. . . . Again, the Blessed One is content with any kind of robe. . . . Again, the Blessed One is content with any kind of resting place. . . . Again, venerable sir, the Blessed One is secluded and commends seclusion."

Source: Bhikkhu Nanamola and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 631–32.

Questions to Consider

1. How might you summarize the perception of the Buddha reflected in this source?

AP® ANALYZING HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

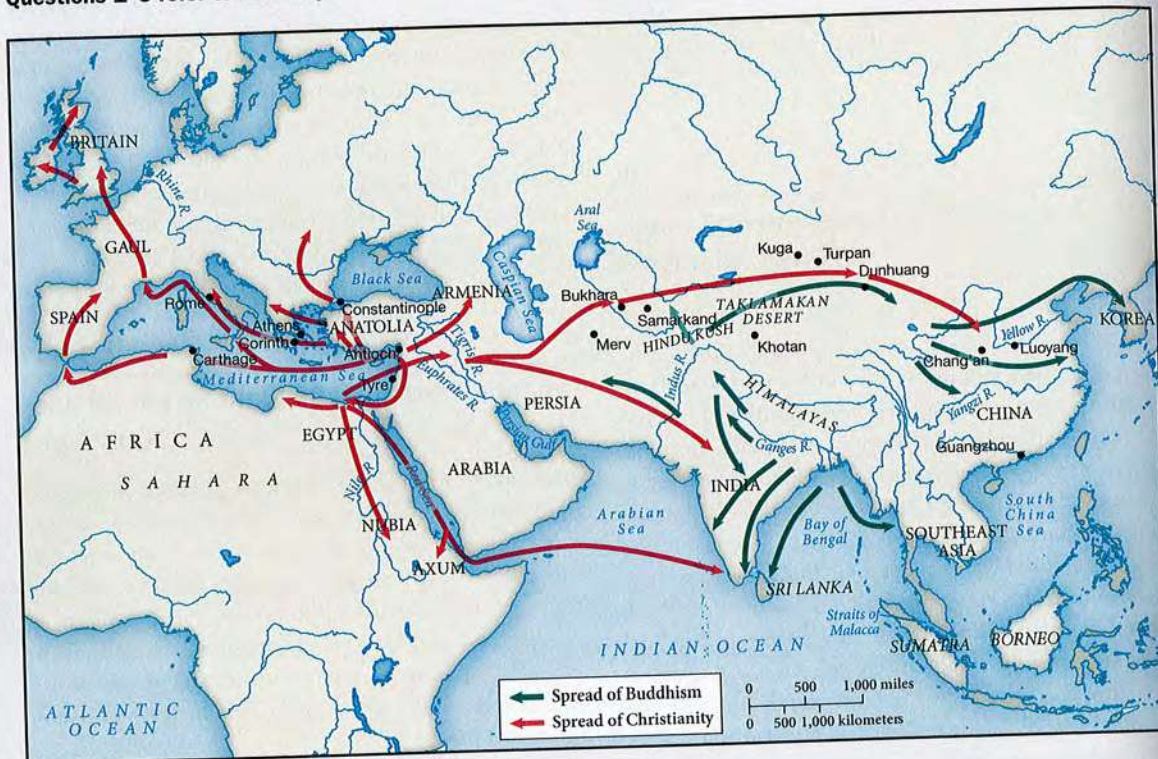
1. Evaluate the extent to which the attitudes toward wealth depicted in this story differ from the attitude toward wealth expressed in the statue in Source 4.2.
2. Analyze the ways in which this story might have appealed to a broad audience.



Multiple-Choice Questions

Choose the correct answer for each question.

Questions 1–3 refer to this map.



The Spread of Early Christianity and Buddhism

- Which of the following best describes the pattern shown on this map?
 - Independent development of religion
 - Differentiation of religious concepts
 - Gradual diffusion of religion
 - Variations of beliefs within a religion
- Which of the following contributed most to the disruption of the patterns shown on the map during the third and fourth centuries C.E.?
 - The reduction of Silk Road trade as classical-era empires fell
 - The persecution of Buddhism by Tang dynasty China
 - The spread of Islam into Western Asia and Africa
 - The persecution of Christianity under the Roman Empire

3. As Christianity and Buddhism spread throughout Eurasia, they had which common impact on social structures?

- a. Christianity and Buddhism favored the elites of society in their teachings on achieving a good afterlife.
- b. Christianity and Buddhism offered women an escape from traditional gender roles through monastic living.
- c. Christianity and Buddhism promoted the violent upheaval of traditional social structures.
- d. Christianity and Buddhism encouraged women to remain content with their established roles in the household and society.

Questions 4–5 refer to this passage.

The Master said, "If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good."

— Confucius, *The Analects*, ca. 479–221 B.C.E.

4. The sentiments expressed in the excerpt above are best illustrated by which of the following tenets of Confucianism?

- a. Strict laws and government are the way to achieve social order.
- b. Order in society and government comes from looking toward the relationship between humans and nature.
- c. The only way to achieve social order is through the elimination of desire.
- d. Order in society and government comes from the promotion of proper rituals and behavior.

5. Which of the following contributed to the rise of Confucianism as the dominant political philosophy in classical China?

- a. The discrediting of Legalism because of the harsh policies of the Qin dynasty led to the rise of Confucianism.
- b. The violent overthrow of the Xia dynasty led to the search for social order, leading to the rise of Confucianism.
- c. The Huang He Rebellion led to a government crackdown on Daoism and paved the way for the rise of Confucianism.
- d. The restrictive policies of the Zhou government contributed to the suppression of other popular schools of philosophy.



Short-Answer Questions

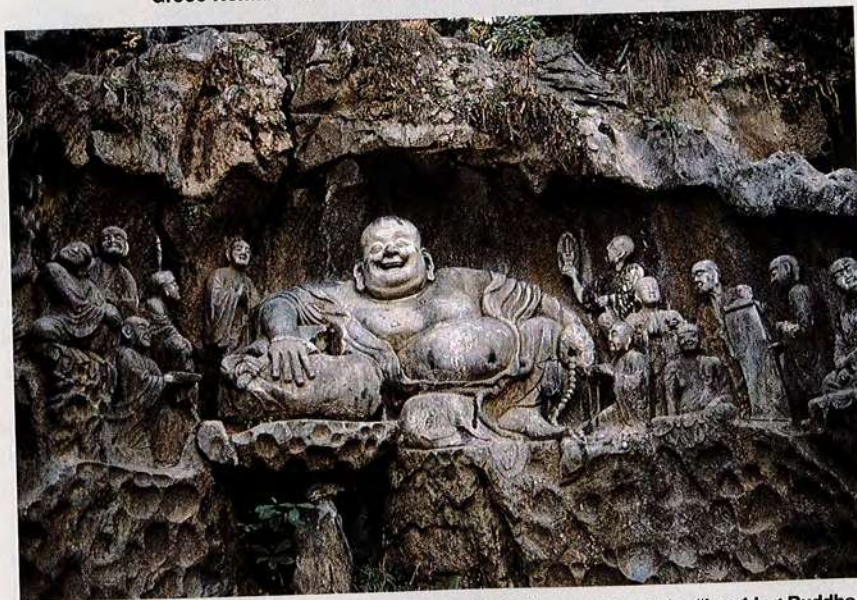
Read each question carefully and write a short response.
Use complete sentences.

1. Use the following two images and your knowledge of world history to answer all parts of the question that follows.



Siddhartha at the Bodhi Tree, 100–200 A.D. (stone)/Indian School/Cleveland Museum of Art, OH, USA/
Bridgeman Images

Gandharan relief of temptation of the Buddha, reflecting Greco-Roman influence, 2nd or 3rd century C.E.



Earl & Nazima Kowal/Getty Images

The Maitreya Buddha, or Buddha of the Future, in the Chinese style as the "laughing Buddha," said to be modeled after a Chinese monk, Feilai Feng caves, 10th–14th centuries C.E.

- the
- A. Identify ONE common historical process in the period 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E. that is reflected in both images.
 - B. Explain ONE way in which images such as these can be seen as examples of the changes that occurred in Buddhism as it spread from its place of origin.
 - C. Explain ONE change that occurred in the beliefs and teachings of Buddhism as it spread from its origins in India into East Asia.

2. Use the passage below and your knowledge of world history to answer all parts of the question that follows.

Most religions present themselves as timeless revelations from the beyond, partaking of eternity or at least reflecting ancient practice. In the eyes of historians, however, the religious aspect of human life changes as much as any other. The Hindu tradition changed from a religion of ritual and sacrifice to one of devotion and worship. Buddhism became more conventionally religious, with an emphasis on the supernatural, as it evolved from Theravada to Mahayana forms. A male-dominated hierarchical Christian Church, with its pope, bishops, priests, and state support, was very different from the small house churches that suffered persecution by imperial authorities in the early Christian centuries.

— Robert W. Strayer and Eric Nelson, *Ways of the World*

- A. Identify ONE example of a religion or belief system that challenges the assertion made by the authors in the passage.
 - B. Explain ONE example of a religion or belief system that changed its practices as described by the authors in the passage, other than the examples given above.
 - C. Explain ONE example of how a religion or belief system changed as it interacted with new societies and ideas.
3. Use your knowledge of world history to answer all parts of the question that follows.
- A. Identify ONE way in which Zoroastrianism influenced the development of Judaism in the period from roughly the sixth to fourth century B.C.E.
 - B. Explain ONE way in which Zoroastrianism and Judaism influenced Christianity in the first century C.E.
 - C. Explain ONE way in which Christianity changed as it spread across Afro-Eurasia.