

Scientific Perspectives on World Religions

Religious Studies · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. Which archaeological site provides the earliest known evidence of complex ritual behavior, dating back to approximately 10,000 BCE?

- A) Göbekli Tepe**
- B) Stonehenge
- C) Great Ziggurat of Ur
- D) Knossos

2. The Rigveda, one of the oldest religious texts in the world, is written in which ancient language?

- A) Sanskrit**
- B) Latin
- C) Pali
- D) Aramaic

3. Anthropological evidence suggests that the transition from hunter-gatherer societies to agrarian societies correlated with a shift toward which type of religious structure?

- A) Polytheism**
- B) Animism
- C) Monism
- D) Shamanism

4. The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered between 1946 and 1956, provide the oldest known manuscripts of texts later included in which religious canon?

- A) Hebrew Bible**
- B) Quran
- C) New Testament
- D) Vedas

5. What is the primary linguistic root shared by the majority of European languages, which is also reflected in the reconstructed proto-religion of ancient Indo-European cultures?

- A) Proto-Indo-European**
- B) Sino-Tibetan
- C) Afroasiatic
- D) Dravidian

6. The 'Great Schism' of 1054 CE, a definitive moment in Christian history, officially split the church into which two primary denominations?

A) Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox

B) Protestant and Anglican

C) Lutheran and Calvinist

D) Baptist and Methodist

7. Archaeological carbon dating places the composition of the earliest Buddhist texts, the Pali Canon, to what general period?

A) First century BCE

B) Fifth century CE

C) Tenth century BCE

D) Second century CE

8. In the study of religious evolution, 'syncretism' is defined as what?

A) The blending of two or more religious belief systems

B) The total abandonment of ritual practices

C) The rise of secularism in government

D) The isolation of a religious group

9. The archaeological remains of the Indus Valley Civilization (2600-1900 BCE) feature seals depicting figures in postures that resemble which later meditative practice?

A) Yoga

B) Zen sitting

C) Sufi whirling

D) Christian contemplation

10. Which historical document from 313 CE established religious tolerance for Christianity within the Roman Empire?

A) Edict of Milan

B) Council of Nicaea

C) Treaty of Westphalia

D) Magna Carta

11. The concept of 'Axial Age,' coined by Karl Jaspers, refers to a period of global ideological transformation roughly between:

A) 800 BCE and 200 BCE

B) 100 CE and 500 CE

C) 1000 CE and 1500 CE

D) 500 BCE and 1000 BCE

12. Which major religion is historically linked to the Achaemenid Empire of ancient Persia, originating with the prophet Zarathustra?

A) Zoroastrianism

B) Manichaeism

C) Mithraism

D) Jainism

13. Genetic and linguistic studies of the Hebrew population point to the origins of the Jewish people within which geographic region?

A) The Levant

B) The Indus Valley

C) The Nile Delta

D) The Iberian Peninsula

14. The transition of Islam from a regional movement to a caliphate-based empire occurred most rapidly during the reign of which historical figure?

A) Rashidun Caliphs

B) Saladin

C) Suleiman the Magnificent

D) Genghis Khan

15. Epigraphic evidence suggests that the earliest written forms of the Arabic script evolved from which earlier writing system?

A) Nabataean Aramaic

B) Hieroglyphics

C) Cuneiform

D) Greek Uncial