

Scientific Perspectives on World Religions

Religious Studies · Practice Test · 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 Which historical document from 313 CE established religious tolerance for Christianity within the Roman Empire?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