

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Monotheistic Religions

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

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Judaism began with Abraham, who led the Hebrew people to the Promised Land. This land was called Canaan and was on the land in the Mediterranean where Israel is today. The Jewish people (also known as the Hebrews) were unusual at the time for believing in only one god. Most everyone else around them worshiped multiple deities. In about 2000 BCE, there was a long drought and famine in Canaan, so the Jewish people migrated to Egypt to find water and work. When they returned to Canaan in 1200 BCE, they found that people had moved in while they were gone. The Jews claimed rights to the land, based on their history there, but the Canaanites didn't want to give it up, so they fought for it. The land of Israel, claimed by both Jews (Israelis) and Palestinians, is still being fought over today.

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The Jewish faith is based largely on five books that make up the Torah. The Torah is just one of three texts that comprise the Hebrew Bible. When Christianity emerged as an offshoot of Judaism, Christians didn't write a brand-new bible. They added to the Hebrew Bible, which they call the Old Testament. The parts Christians added are called the New Testament. The Ten Commandments are the same in both the Jewish and Christian religions.

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Notes

There is little doubt that Jesus was a real, historical figure. He was a Jew who was angered by the hypocrisy he saw around him. He was upset that people followed the laws of the Torah without spiritually connecting with God, and he didn't think they did enough to help those who were sick and poor. One of Jesus's most famous speeches is called the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon, Jesus described his golden rule: Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.

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Eventually, Jesus attracted a large group of followers who called him a messiah, a savior, or liberator of the Jewish people. This caught the attention of the Roman authorities, who thought he might start an open rebellion. They tried him in court, found him guilty and crucified him, the typical way that Romans put people to death.

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According to the Christian Bible, three days after he died, Jesus was resurrected, or brought back to life. In the following days, he appeared to various people and told the apostles (his close followers and students) to spread his teachings throughout the world. Jesus also promised to come to Earth again.

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Another powerful prophet, Muhammad, is the man who created the Muslim faith. He was born in Mecca, a city in present-day Saudi Arabia, in 570 CE. According to Islam, the angel Gabriel appeared to him when he was 40, bringing the message of God. For the next 23 years, the angel visited Muhammad on many occasions, each time giving him new messages from God. These were written down into the Quran. Like Jesus, Muhammad's role was to teach the people and demonstrate the correct way to behave.

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The Islamic faith, the religion of Muslims, dates back to the time just after Muhammad's death, around 650 CE. The Five Pillars of Islam can be compared to the Ten Commandments of Judaism and Christianity; they are said to be laws straight from the mouth of God about how a person should behave. Muslims believe that Moses and Jesus were prophets, but that Muhammad was the last prophet. The Quran includes many of the same stories as the Old Testament, which is part of the Jewish and Christian faiths. So there are a great deal of similarities between the three religions.

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