

John Morreall & Tamara Sonn

THE
RELIGION TOOLKIT

A Complete Guide to Religious Studies



 WILEY-BLACKWELL

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FOR JORDAN

*Wherever we are,
whatever the tune,
we dance in the light
of the very same moon.*

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TIMELINE

3000–1500 BCE	Cities are built in the Indus Valley.
c.2100 BCE	Abraham is called by God.
c.2000 BCE	Jacob, a descendant of Abraham through his son Isaac, is born; later he is called Israel. Thus the descendants of Abraham through this line are called the people of Israel (or Israelites).
c.1900 BCE	Joseph, a son of Jacob, is sold into slavery in Egypt. The Israelites eventually become captives there.
c.1766–1046 BCE	The Shang Dynasty.
c.1440 BCE	Led by Moses, the Israelites leave Egypt and after 40 years settle in the land of Canaan. During the trip, the Exodus, God describes himself to Moses as Yahweh.
1200–900 BCE	Early Vedic Period – the first Vedas are compiled.
c.1046–256 BCE	The Zhou Dynasty.
c.1010 BCE	David becomes king of the Israelites, and makes Jerusalem his capital.
c.970 BCE	David's son Solomon becomes king and later builds a temple in Jerusalem to honor the God of Israel.
930 BCE	After Solomon's death, his kingdom is divided into a northern kingdom led by the tribes of Israel and a southern kingdom led by the tribe of Judah.
900–600 BCE	Late Vedic period – the religion of the Brahmins emphasizes sacrifice and social obligation.
800–300 BCE	The 11 major Upanishads are written; they include the ideas of reincarnation and karma.
722 BCE	The kingdom of Israel is destroyed by the Assyrians.
612 BCE	The Babylonians conquer the Assyrians.
c.604 BCE	Lao Tzu is born.
586 BCE	The Babylonians defeat the kingdom of Judah, capture Jerusalem, and destroy Solomon's temple. Many members of the kingdom of Judah are taken into captivity in Babylon (the Exile).
c.566–486 BCE	Siddhartha Gautama is born, becomes enlightened, and preaches in India.
551–479 BCE	Confucius lives.
c.538 BCE	Many of the exiled members of the tribe of Judah return to Jerusalem, and begin the rebuilding of the temple.

c.486 BCE	The first Buddhist council meets.
c.383 BCE	The second Buddhist council meets, leading to divisions in the community.
371–289 BCE	Mencius lives.
369–286 BCE	Zhuang Tzu lives.
c.330 BCE	The Jews (as the descendants of the tribe of Judah are called) are conquered by Alexander the Great. Greek culture – Hellenism – starts to influence Jewish culture.
c.300 BCE	Buddhism spreads to Southeast Asia.
c.269–232 BCE	Indian emperor Ashoka the Great converts to Buddhism and rules over most of the Indian subcontinent. He sends missionaries to Sri Lanka.
c.250 BCE	The work of translating the Bible from Hebrew into Greek begins. This Greek Bible is called the Septuagint.
c.200 BCE–200 CE	The Laws of Manu are compiled.
1st century BCE	Buddhism enters China and Southeast Asia.
c.100 BCE	The <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> is composed.
63 BCE	Roman rulers defeat the Greeks, beginning 700 years of Roman rule of the land they name Palestine.
c.5 BCE	Jesus of Nazareth is born.
c.30 CE	Jesus begins teaching a new interpretation of the law of God to his fellow Jews.
c.32	Jesus is executed by the Roman rulers of Palestine.
c.48	The followers of Jesus hold a meeting in Jerusalem and accept Gentiles (non-Jews) into their community.
70	A Jewish rebellion against the Roman rulers ends with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.
c.70	The first Gospel is written – Mark.
c.80–90	The Gospels of Matthew and Luke are written.
c.90–100	The Book of Revelation and the Gospel of John are written.
c.150–250	Nagarjuna develops his Doctrine of Emptiness.
161–180	Under the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, there is widespread persecution of Christians.
175	The Five Classics, carved in stone, are displayed in China's capital.
c.200	The Mishnah is compiled and committed to writing.
c.250	The third Buddhist council leads to split between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

312	The Roman emperor Constantine defeats his rival, Maxentius, after having his soldiers paint a Christian symbol on their equipment.
313	Constantine issues the Edict of Milan, making Christianity legal in the Roman empire.
325	Constantine holds a meeting of Christian leaders ("ecumenical council"), at Nicea, to overcome disagreement in their interpretations. They agree on a list of beliefs known as the Nicene Creed.
350–650	The Gupta Dynasty rules in India. Buddhist philosophy and art flourish.
367	Saint Athanasius compiles a list of the 27 books now known as the New Testament.
381	At an ecumenical council at Constantinople, Christian leaders continue their debates and revise the Nicene creed to its current form.
4th century	Vajrayana Buddhism begins.
c.400	The Palestinian Talmud is completed.
	Buddhism enters Korea.
431	Christian leaders meet at Chalcedon, and declare Mary, the mother of Jesus, to be Theotokos, "God-bearer," "Mother of God."
449	Pope Leo asserts the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over other bishops.
520	The Buddhist missionary Bodhidharma arrives in China.
527	Korea accepts Buddhism.
552	Buddhism enters Japan from Korea.
c.570	Muhammad is born in Mecca.
572–621	Prince Shotoku sponsors Buddhism in Japan.
c.589	Chinese Buddhist commentaries are written.
6th century	Burma accepts Theravada Buddhism.
600	The Babylonian Talmud is completed.
600s	Mahayana Buddhism is adopted in Indonesia.
c.600–650	Buddhism enters and spreads in Tibet.
c.600–1600	Devotional Hinduism becomes popular.
610	Muhammad receives his first revelation from God and begins to teach a new interpretation of the will of God.
618–907	T'ang Dynasty, the golden age of Buddhism in China.
	Pure Land and Chan Buddhism develop.
622	Muhammad and his followers complete their emigration (<i>hijra</i>) from Mecca to Medina, marked as the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

630	Muhammad gains control over Mecca, and rededicates its shrine – the Kaaba – to the one God/Allah.
632	Muhammad dies. His close companion Abu Bakr is recognized by the majority as “Leader of the Believers.”
	Muhammad’s companion Umar succeeds Abu Bakr as Leader of the Believers, and begins the process of expanding Muslim rule throughout the region.
638	Muslim forces defeat the Romans and take control of Jerusalem.
644	Muslims complete their defeat of Persian forces.
c.650	God’s revelation through Muhammad, known as the Qur’an, is committed to writing.
661	The Umayyads take control of the Islamic empire, establishing their capital at Damascus and continuing expansion of Islamic sovereignty.
700s	Buddhism becomes the state religion of Japan.
711	The Umayyads establish control of part of Spain.
732	Muslim westward expansion is halted at the Battle of Tours.
740	Mahayana Buddhism is established in Tibet.
750	The Umayyad dynasty (“caliphate”) is replaced by the Abbasids, who will establish Baghdad as their capital.
c.792–794	Indian Mahayana Buddhism is chosen as the form of Buddhism for Tibet.
800	Charlemagne is crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by Pope Leo III.
845	Chinese emperor Wu Tsang persecutes Buddhists.
early 900s	Korea institutes a Buddhist constitution.
1054	The Eastern Orthodox and the Western Catholic churches split.
1095	Pope Urban II authorizes the first Crusade to recover the “Holy Land” from Muslims.
1099	European Christian “Crusaders” capture Jerusalem.
c.1150	Buddhism is almost extinct in India.
1185–1333	Kamakura period in Japan.
	Rinzai, Soto Zen, Pure Land, True Pure Land, and Nichiren Buddhism.
1187	Jerusalem is recaptured by a Muslim army led by Salah al-Din (Saladin).
1231–1259	Mongols invade Korea and destroy Buddhist scriptures.
1253	Mongolian leader Kublai Khan accepts Tibetan Buddhism.
1258	The Mongols destroy Baghdad and end Abbasid rule.
1360	Theravada Buddhism becomes the state religion of Thailand.
1392	Confucianism is made the state religion of Korea.

14th century	Theravada Buddhism comes into Laos.
1453	The Ottoman Turks conquer Constantinople and change its name to Istanbul.
1492	The king and queen of Spain expel Muslims and Jews.
1498	Europeans enter southern Asia with the arrival of Vasco da Gama.
15th century	Theravada Buddhism spreads in Cambodia.
1517	Martin Luther writes his 95 Theses in Wittenberg, Germany, beginning the Protestant Reformation.
	The Ottomans claim leadership of the Muslim world.
1526	The Mughal Empire begins in India.
1534	The Act of Supremacy is passed – King Henry VIII becomes head of the English Church.
1536	John Calvin publishes his <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> .
1545–1563	The Catholic Council of Trent meets to respond to the Protestant Reformation.
1578	The first Dalai Lama is recognized.
1617–1682	Dalai Lamas begin to rule Tibet.
1618–1648	Protestants and Catholics fight the Thirty Years War in Germany.
c.1700	The British East India Company is formed.
1722	The Saffavid Dynasty is established in Persia.
1730–1760	The “Great Awakening” – a revival movement among Protestants in the United States.
1757	British rule is established in Calcutta.
1828	The French take control of Algeria.
1844	The first Buddhist text is published in the United States, translated by Henry David Thoreau.
1857	The British take control of India.
	The unsuccessful National War of Independence is launched by Indians against the British.
1876	Queen Victoria of England is declared Empress of India.
1895	The Vedanta Society is founded by Vivekananda, to promote Hinduism as a world religion and India as a single nation.
1897	The World Zionist Organization is formed in Basel, Switzerland, advocating emigration to Palestine and creation of a homeland for Jews in response to ongoing discrimination and persistent persecution of Jews in Europe.
1882	The British take control of Egypt.
1910–1945	Reformations of Korean and Chinese Buddhism.
1919	The British take control of Palestine and Mesopotamia (Iraq), and the French take control of Syria and Lebanon, betraying promises of independence made to Arabs in return for their assistance in defeating Turkey and Germany in World War I.



1920	Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi starts non-violent campaign against British rule of India.
1931	Zen Buddhist Society is formed in New York.
1939–1945	World War II; culmination of persecution of Jews in Europe in the Holocaust/Shoah, leading to rapid escalation of emigration of European Jews to Palestine and, in turn, conflict with local inhabitants of Palestine.
1945	Religious freedom introduced in Japan.
1947	Britain partitions India into independent states for Hindus and Muslims. The Muslim sections are named East and West Pakistan, separated by over 1,000 miles. Both India and Pakistan are declared independent of Britain.
1948	The United Nations partitions Palestine into Jewish and Arab sections, against the will of local Arab inhabitants. Israel declares itself an independent Jewish state; the Arabs declare war.
	Gandhi is assassinated.
	The World Council of Churches is formed.
1949	The Chinese communist government begins suppressing religions.
1950	Tenzin Gyatso becomes the 14th Dalai Lama.
	China invades Tibet and suppresses Buddhism.
1959	The Dalai Lama goes into exile.
1960–1965	The Roman Catholic Church is modernized by the Second Vatican Council.
1966–1976	The Cultural Revolution suppresses religion, traditional culture in China.
1971	Civil war results in the separation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan. East Pakistan becomes the independent country of Bangladesh.
1976	Death of Mao Zedong.
1989	The International Network of Engaged Buddhists is founded.
1995	The U.K. Association of Buddhist Studies is formed.



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JM
TS

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THE RELIGION TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION

Prepare to Be Surprised



"That's what they all say, honey."

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