Origins of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
The three major religions that originated in Southwest Asia are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

- All are based on monotheism, a belief in one god.
- Each religion has a sacred text, or book, which is at the core of its faith.
- Each book is a collection of writings compiled over time.
- None was written by the central figure of the faith.
Origins of Judaism

- Judaism is the oldest of the three religions.
- It began as a set of beliefs and laws practiced by ancient Hebrew people in Southwest Asia.
- Its book is the Hebrew Bible.
Jews believe that one day a human leader will come as a messenger of God and bring about a golden age.

They call this leader the messiah.

In Greek versions of the Bible, messiah is written as christos, the anointed one.
Origins of Judaism

- The Bible names Abraham as the father of the Jews.
- There is no other evidence of his life. Scholars place Abraham living sometime between 2000 and 1500 BCE.
- The Bible states that Abraham was born in Ur, in present-day Iraq.
- He later moved to Canaan, in present-day Israel.
Origins of Judaism

- Jews believe Canaan is the Promised Land, which God promised to Abraham and his descendants.
- It is said that Abraham’s grandson Jacob had 12 sons.
- The twelve tribes of Israel began with Jacob’s sons.
- Jacob was later called Israel, and his descendants are called Israelites.
Origins of Judaism

- According to the Bible, the First Temple for Jewish worship was built around 900–1000 BCE and destroyed by Babylonians in 586 BCE.
- The Jews were then sent out of Canaan, but returned after 50 years in exile.
Origins of Judaism

- A Diaspora occurs when a group of people leave their homeland and move to many different locations separately.
- All of the world’s Jewish communities today that do not live in present-day Israel are part of the Jewish Diaspora.
Origins of Judaism

- A new temple was finished 70 years later on the site of the First Temple, but was badly plundered by invading Romans about 54 BCE.
- King Herod, a Jew, ruled Judea for the Romans.
- The second temple was rebuilt in 20 BCE.
Origins of Judaism

- When Romans attacked Jerusalem again in 70 CE, they destroyed Herod’s temple.
- Today, the single remaining temple wall, the Western Wall, is a place of prayer for Jewish pilgrims.
- Jews moved away from the land again, until the modern state of Israel was formed in the late 1940s.
Origins of Christianity

- In 30 CE, a Jew named Jesus began preaching new ideas about Judaism in Roman-controlled Judea.
- The later title of Jesus Christ given to Jesus is a reference to the belief by his followers that he is the Jewish messiah.
Origins of Christianity

- According to the Christian New Testament, Jesus preached only to his fellow Jews.
- His idea was that the old laws of Judaism should be replaced by a simpler system based on love of one’s fellow human beings.
- He began to grow popular. Jewish leaders did not want Jesus and the disciples Jesus to threaten their power and asked the Romans to arrest him.
Origins of Christianity

- The Romans found him guilty of speaking against Jewish laws and sentenced him to death by crucifixion, or by being hung on a cross.
- He died in 33 CE, after preaching for only three years.
Origins of Christianity

- Jesus had 12 close followers, or disciples. Interestingly, a man who had never met Jesus became the person to spread his message around the world.
- Paul of Tarsus had a vision of Jesus after the crucifixion that told him to teach Jesus’ ideas to non-Jews.
- Paul traveled to build churches throughout the ancient world in Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, and other cities.
- The New Testament records Paul’s journeys through a series of letters, or epistles, that he wrote.
The chapters of Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, and Thessalonians, are all letters written by Paul to the people of new, non-Jewish churches established in these locations.

Paul taught them how to live their lives in these letters.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Origins of Christianity</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• By 100 CE, the growth of Christianity was left to a new generation of people who had never known Jesus and who did not know Jewish laws.</td>
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<td>• Roman authorities fought the growth of Christianity.</td>
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<td>• Christians were often arrested and killed.</td>
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<td>• Most Christians practiced their religion in hiding, but their numbers continued to grow and the religion spread.</td>
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Origins of Christianity

- By the early 4th century, Christianity may have reached members of the Roman emperor’s family.
- The Roman Emperor Constantine was not a Christian, but he had his soldiers fight an important battle in 313 CE with a Christian symbol on their shields.
- His army won the battle.
Origins of Christianity

- In the nearly 300 years since his death, many different ideas had developed about how to follow Jesus.
- In 325 CE, Constantine called a meeting for all the Christian leaders to meet in Nicea.
- About 300 men attended the meeting to discuss how Christianity should be practiced.
Origins of Christianity

• The council produced the Nicene Creed, the first attempt at a uniform statement of Christian doctrine.
• When the Christian leaders left this meeting, a new type of Christian church had been formed.
• This new church was said to be Catholic, which means universal.
Origins of Islam

- The Prophet Muhammad was an Arab born in 570 CE, in Mecca, which is in present-day Saudi Arabia.
- He was a merchant known as “al-Amin,” the trustworthy one.
- According to Islamic tradition, in 610 CE, while he was praying in a cave, he had a vision of the angel Gabriel, a figure in the Hebrew Bible.
- The angel gave him messages from God, called Allah in Arabic.
Origins of Islam

- Muhammad spread the messages he received from Allah.
- He was forced to flee Mecca for Medina in 622 CE.
- This flight is known as the Hijrah.
- The Islamic calendar begins at this date.
- By the time he died in 632 CE, Islamic control of central Arabia was well underway.
Origins of Islam

- Before 700 CE, Muhammad’s followers were fighting over his successor.
- The fight split Muslims into the Shi’a and the Sunni.
- The Shi’a comprise 10%—15% of Islamic followers today and the Sunni comprise close to 90%.
Origins of Islam

- The Five Pillars of Islam is the term for the religion’s five main beliefs.
- They are accepted by all Sunnis and Shi’as, but the Shi’as have added several other practices to form the Branches of Religion.
The Five Pillars

1. Believe in only one God and Muhammad is his messenger.
2. Pray in the direction of Mecca five times a day.
3. Donate money to the poor.
4. Fast during the month of Ramadan.
5. Make a journey, or hajj, to Mecca at least once.
Origins of Islam

- Islam has other rules, including what Muslims are allowed to eat and drink.
- Also, the Qur’an, their sacred book, explains a concept called jihad.
- Jihad requires believers to meet the enemies of Islam in combat.
- Enemies can be attacked by the heart, the tongue, the hand, or the sword.
Origins of Islam

- An Islamic Golden Age lasted from 750 to 1400.
- Advances in Islamic learning inspired the European Renaissance.
- The city of Mecca became a major economic center, helping Islam expand.
- Literacy was, for the first time, widespread among the populations of the Middle East.
Origins of Islam

- In 1258, the Islamic city of Baghdad was attacked, conquered, and destroyed by the Mongols, a dynasty from central Asia.
- The Islamic Golden Age began to draw to a close.
Write 3 paragraphs describing the beginnings to the spread of each of the three main religions of the Middle East.