

Judah has written a well-researched and very readable examination of the evidence that supports our faith in God's revelation — the Bible. I strongly encourage anyone who is searching for the truth to read this book.

— GRANT R. JEFFREY, BEST-SELLING AUTHOR AND
INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED RESEARCHER

Foolish Faith combines a comprehensive scientific accuracy with a good understanding of biblical and philosophical issues, yet it is at the same time clear and comprehensible to the lay reader. Judah takes into account the needs of a reader who may have no familiarity with the Bible or Christianity, giving them additional grounds to trust the Word of God. I believe that this book will encourage many Christians, and will equip them to better understand and defend their faith.

— DR. CARL WIELAND, JOINT CEO,
ANSWERS IN GENESIS MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Foolish Faith proved to be packed with thorough, academically honest investigation. Judah's amalgamation of science and Scripture was so compelling that I invited him to join me on a late-night, open-line television program. I have utmost respect for both the book *Foolish Faith*, and its author.

— RAY DAVID GLENN, HOST AND PRODUCER,
"RISE & SHINE," CTS TELEVISION,
CANADIAN CHRISTIAN TELEVISION

I found *Foolish Faith* to be one of the most interesting and thought-provoking books I have read in a long time. While it is clear that the material in *Foolish Faith* is presenting a certain kind of religious argument and is building toward a particular conclusion, the book is never polemical in the off-putting way that much religious writing can be for non-religious readers like myself. The author's well-articulated and well-documented arguments are not easily dismissed.

— NAOMI GOLD, PH.D. CANDIDATE,
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, RELIGIOUS STUDIES

TESTIMONIALS

My name is Mark – I’m an apologetics researcher with the Josh McDowell Ministry. I just wanted to commend you on your book, *Foolish Faith*. It’s excellent work: readable for laypeople, but it includes the latest apologetics arguments. — MARK, CALIFORNIA

This is just about the greatest book I have seen so far! You’ve put together some great facts that leave unbelief without excuse. They have also encouraged me and strengthened my faith. The convincingly arranged information in this book has been very useful to me. — AMY, ALABAMA

I stumbled upon your book when one of the pages came up from a web search I was doing on religion. I am a Christian and found your book straightforward, positive, intelligent, and very inspiring. I learned a lot, and it buoyed my faith. I was caught off guard by the title, but the tone of the work kept me interested until I realized what an ingenious title it was. — VICKI

Awesome, awesome book! One of the best Christian apologetics books I’ve ever read. I’m interested in buying multiple copies for our office Bible study class — and several skeptic friends. Thanks for publishing this wonderful resource. — TOM

This year my interest in religion was sparked again, and my first avenue was to check things out on the Internet. But I found pro-creation websites were so full of “Bible quotes” and sarcasm, and left me with a “believe in Genesis or risk hell” sort of mentality. And the pro-evolution sites read like university biology textbooks and often seemed very dismissive of the Bible, which didn’t sit well with me. Then I came across your book and was very impressed with its simple language, extensive backing-up of facts, and reasoning without sarcasm or over-simplified metaphor. I still have questions, but your book was fantastic in clarifying many points for me. It gave me a lot of food for thought, and strengthened my faith. Thank you. — DARRYL

Testimonials edited for brevity and clarity

F O L I S H
F A I T H

What 21st Century Man Says about God

F O L I S H
F A I T H

JUDAH ETINGER

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INTRODUCTION

We go about our daily lives understanding almost nothing of the world. Except for children, few of us spend much time wondering why nature is the way it is; where the [universe] came from, or whether it was always here.¹

— Carl Sagan

Today, almost no one asks whether a particular belief is true; the question is whether it is “meaningful to me.” Thus, we have a blizzard of conflicting claims. We have moved away from the belief that everyone has a right to his or her own opinion, towards the notion that every opinion is equally “right.” Every point of view, since it arises from one’s own feelings, is just as valid as another. Whatever a person feels is the truth becomes the truth for him or her.²

As our calendar continues to move forward, the belief in one absolute truth becomes less and less important in society. Thus, an increasingly popular view of God today can be seen clearly in the words of one journalist:

For much of my life I was a skeptic. In fact, I considered myself an atheist. To me, there was far too much evidence that God was merely a product of

wishful thinking, of ancient mythology, of primitive superstition. How could there be a loving God if He consigned people to hell just for not believing in Him? How could miracles contravene the basic laws of nature? Didn't evolution satisfactorily explain how life originated? Doesn't scientific reasoning dispel belief in the supernatural?³

— Lee Strobel, former legal editor of the *Chicago Tribune*

Similarly:

Science involves the study of natural forces only, and ceases to be science when it attempts to explain phenomena by means of supernatural forces.⁴

— American Atheists Website

This quickly growing interpretation of what science is, at the dawn of the new millennium, has made its way from the American Atheists' Website into the mainstream scientific community. But in reality, shouldn't science be a search for the truth, *no matter what the truth might be?*

Many are unaware that today's information age of laptop computers and mobile phones has also revealed sufficient evidence that, surprising as it may be, validates the existence of God. One of the world's most respected cosmologists (who holds the position at Cambridge University once held by Sir Isaac Newton, and who has been hailed by *Time* magazine as "an equal of Einstein") appropriately notes:

I think there are clearly religious implications whenever you start to discuss the origins of the universe. There must be religious overtones. But I think most scientists prefer to shy away from the religious side

FOOLISH FAITH

of it. . . . The odds against a universe that has produced life like ours are immense.⁵

— cosmologist Stephen Hawking

If it could be shown to you through solid and persuasive evidence that God created the universe and everything in it, and continues to play a significant role in that creation, would you believe it?

Footnotes

- 1 Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York, NY: Bantam, 1998), introduction by Carl Sagan.
- 2 This paragraph is derived largely from Erwin W. Lutzer, *Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1998).
- 3 Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998).
- 4 American Atheists Website, <<http://www.atheists.org/bone.pit/creation-science.html>>.
- 5 John Boslough, *Stephen Hawking's Universe* (New York, NY: Quill, 1985).

CHAPTER
ONE

THE
WORLD'S
RELIGIONS

*HOW DID THE
WORLD'S MAJOR
RELIGIONS COME
INTO BEING?*

While philosophy and religion are often looked to for moral guidance, major claims concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe cannot go unnoticed. When science falls short, people turn to the suppositions of philosophy or to the supernatural of religion. What is life's ultimate purpose? Is God the Creator Almighty?

Undoubtedly, many modern people would boldly demand that such questions lie outside the realm of science, and are therefore unanswerable. Of course, others

might claim that Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam or Judaism or Christianity contains all the correct answers.

But what really determines the credibility of any one religion or belief system is the underlying foundation upon which it is built. Just as a house's stability can only be as dependable as the foundation upon which it is constructed, so a belief system may only be as reliable as the foundation upon which it is based.

In addition to summarizing some central doctrines, this first chapter briefly explains how several of the larger worldwide religions, or belief systems, came into being.¹

HINDUISM

“The history of Hinduism began in India about 1500 B.C. Although its literature can be traced only to before 1000 B.C., evidence of Hinduism's earlier [background] is derived from archaeology, comparative philology, and comparative religion.”² According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Hinduism “is both a civilization and a congregation of religions; it has neither a beginning or founder, nor a central authority, hierarchy, or organization. Every attempt at a specific definition of Hinduism has proved unsatisfactory in one way or another, the more so because the finest scholars of Hinduism, including Hindus themselves, have emphasized different aspects of the whole.”³

As a religion, Hinduism involves a combination of diverse doctrines and ways of life; orthodox Hinduism includes an extraordinarily wide selection of beliefs and practices. Hinduism can include:

pantheism — belief which identifies the universe with God

polytheism — the belief in many gods

monotheism — the belief that there is only one God

THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

- agnosticism — the belief that the ultimate cause and the essential nature of things are unknown or unknowable or that human knowledge is limited to experience
- atheism — the denial or disbelief in the existence of any God or gods
- dualism — the belief that there are two independent divine beings or eternal principles, one good and the other evil
- pluralism — recognizing more than one ultimate substance or principle
- monism — the belief in one ultimate substance or principle, such as mind or matter, or the ground of both

Hindus' "only universal obligation, if they are orthodox, is to abide by the rules of their caste [hereditary social divisions] and trust that by doing so, their next birth will be a happier one."⁴

BUDDHISM

Born about 560 B.C. as a prince, son of a king in India, Buddha was married at the age of 19 and had a son in his late twenties. With a growing interest in matters of religion, he left the life of a householder at that time, and went on to search for true salvation. For six years he searched along the two most widely recognized roads to salvation known to India: philosophic meditation and bodily asceticism (life without pleasures), but he yielded no results.

So Buddha decided to take a new approach. He entered into a process of meditation at the foot of a tree (a tree which came to be known most simply as the Bo-tree) and said to himself determinedly, "Though skin, nerves, and bone shall

waste away, and life-blood itself be dried up, here sit I till I attain enlightenment.”⁵

And then suddenly the answer came to him: The stumbling block to his own salvation, and the cause of all human misery, was *desire*, too intense desire (*tanha*, “thirst,” “craving,”) — desire for the wrong things, arising out of the carnal will-to-live-and-have. As this insight grew within him, Buddha realized that *he was now without desire*. He realized that he was the Enlightened One. As he said “I have lived the highest life.”⁶

Following his experience of enlightenment, Buddha had a discussion lasting several days with five of his former colleagues, during which he opened to them this experience. He challenged the five to believe his testimony, to admit that he was an “arahat” (a monk who had experienced enlightenment), and to try to become arahats themselves. The five people were converted, and thus the Buddhist monastic order came into being.

While Buddha wandered about preaching, other conversions continued to follow, until the number rose to 60, and eventually multiplied into the thousands. And as the numbers grew, so did the Buddhist Order rulebook, in which Buddha continually added rules and regulations to organize his new-found religion.⁷

Religiously, Buddha’s interests were not so much in speculative philosophy, but rather in the realm of psychology, as the Buddhist records transmit: “Bear always in mind what it is that I have not made clear, and what it is that I have made clear. And what have I not made clear? I have not made clear that the world is eternal; I have not made clear that the world is not eternal; I have not made clear that the world is finite; I have not made clear that the world is infinite; I have not made clear that the soul and the body are identical; I have not made clear that the monk who has attained (the arahat) exists after

death; I have not made clear that the arahat does not exist after death; I have not made clear that the arahat both exists and does not exist after death; I have not made clear that the arahat neither exists nor does not exist after death. And why have I not made this clear? Because this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion; therefore I have not made this clear.”⁸

Buddha did, however, believe that the universe abounded in gods, goddesses, demons, and other nonhuman powers, whom he believed to be subject to death and rebirth, just as humans were. He also believed in the “law of karma” and in the transmigration of souls. (He later modified both these doctrines, however.)

After 45 years of preaching, teaching, and constructive planning, Buddha's life ended unexpectedly after a meal of pork brought on a sudden mortal illness.⁹

ISLAM

Arabia encompassed a variety of religions before the advent of Islam. In Southern Arabia, an astral cult known as Sabaeism prevailed. In other regions, there were Jews and Christians. But the great majority of Arabs worshiped local gods and goddesses, and believed in angels, fairies, and demonic jinn.

The year A.D. 570 marked the beginning of a whole new set of beliefs for the Arab people, when Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born.

Growing up, Muhammad became disturbed by continuous quarreling over matters of religion and honor among the religious chiefs. Muhammad felt a great need to resolve his religious doubts, and would spend days at a time alone in a cave near the base of Mount Hira.

Suddenly one night (Muslims call it “The Night of Power and Excellence”), there rose in a vision before him an angel

who claimed to be Gabriel, the messenger of God. Muhammad rushed home afterward in great excitement, half-doubting and half-believing. At first Muhammad had fears for his own sanity,¹⁰ but after a period of self-questioning and discouragement lasting for several months, he came to look upon himself as a true prophet and messenger of Allah (Allah is the Arabic word for God).

Thus marked the beginning of the Koran, Muhammad's complete revelation in writing. Muslims (those who adhere to the Islamic faith) recognize both the Koran and much of the Christian Bible as inspired revelations from God. Both books agree that God has spoken through a long series of prophets, from Abraham to Jesus, and all those in between. But the Koran adds Muhammad to the end of the list, making him God's final and most important prophet in the series.¹¹

In likeness to the Christian Bible, the Koran describes Jesus as a virgin-born, miracle-working Messiah, and also identifies Him as "holy" or "faultless." Unlike the Christian Bible, however, the Koran forbids worshiping Jesus as God. Muhammad taught that Jesus was no more than God's messenger, and that God does not have a Son.¹² As well, Jesus did not die on a cross, most Muslims believe, but rather, prior to His scheduled crucifixion, God raised Him to heaven so that He could not be seized. Approved Muslim commentaries suggest that perhaps Judas, the betrayer of Jesus, was actually the one who was crucified. Judas would have been supernaturally disguised so well that even Mary (Jesus' mother) and Jesus' followers were deceived.¹³

These new teachings at the time successfully converted only about 40 people in the first four years of the religion, but by A.D. 630, Muhammad had the company of close to ten thousand people by his side. Following his sudden death two years later, the religion of Islam spread rapidly, due largely to

victory in battle and military conquest, in what is called the *jihad* (“holy war” or “holy struggle”).¹⁴

As the second largest religion in the world today, devout Muslims strictly adhere to the Koran’s prescribed five religious acts of obedience that will help ensure one’s entry into heaven.¹⁵ Known as Islam’s “Five Pillars,” these acts are:

- 1) Repetition of the Creed: “There is no god but Allah; and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.”
- 2) Prayer.
- 3) Almsgiving. In the early days of Islam this was a yearly tax, used as charity for the poor and repairs and administrative expenses for mosques [Muslim places of worship].
- 4) The fast during the sacred month of Ramadan, during which Muslims must abstain from food.
- 5) The pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime.

JUDAISM

The primary source of information regarding the origin of Judaism is found in the *Tanakh* (the Old Testament portion of the Christian Bible¹⁶). The story of the first Jewish person, *Abraham*, who is considered the father of the Jews, is told in the Old Testament biblical Book of Genesis.¹⁷ According to the account, God declared Abraham righteous because of his faith (Gen. 15:6). God chose Abraham and made a covenant with him: Abraham would be the father of not just one nation, but a multitude of nations with descendants as numerous as the stars. This covenant was to be everlasting from generation to generation. God also promised Abraham that his descendants would have their own land (some of which is modern Israel). As a sign that they had accepted the covenant, Abraham and his descendants were to circumcise each

male among them. This covenant was confirmed through Abraham's second son, Isaac, and through his descendants, who are today's Jews.

Today, a Jew is any person whose mother was a Jew. It is important to note, however, that being Jewish does not necessarily have anything to do with what one believes or what one does. A person born to non-Jewish parents who believes everything that Orthodox Jews believe and observes every law and custom of Judaism is still a non-Jew, even in the eyes of the most liberal movements of Judaism.¹⁸ A person born to a Jewish mother who is an atheist and never practices the Jewish religion is still a Jew, even in the eyes of the ultra-Orthodox. In this sense, being Jewish is more like a nationality than a religion.

Jews regard actions as more important than beliefs, although there is certainly a place for belief within Judaism. The closest that anyone has ever come to creating a widely accepted list of Jewish beliefs is Maimonides' 13 principles of faith. Maimonides' 13 principles of faith, which he thought were the minimum requirements of Jewish belief, are as follows:

1. God exists.
2. God is one and unique.
3. God is incorporeal [having no material body or form].
4. God is eternal.
5. Prayer is to be directed to God alone and to no other.
6. The words of the prophets are true.
7. Moses' prophecy supercedes that of any other prophet.
8. The written Torah and oral Torah were given to Moses [teachings that are contained in the Tanakh and other Jewish writings].
9. There will be no other Torah.
10. God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.

11. God will reward the good and punish the wicked.
12. The Messiah [Savior] will come.
13. The dead will be resurrected.

These are very basic and general principles. Yet as basic as these principles are, the necessity of believing in each one of them has been disputed at one time or another by various Jewish movements; the liberal movements of Judaism dispute many of them. All movements of Judaism, however, forbid belief in the Christian Bible's New Testament;¹⁹ only the Bible's Old Testament portion (known as the Tanakh) is accepted, along with the Talmud (a collection of Jewish law and commentary).

Although beliefs are important within Judaism, actions are regarded as more important. According to Orthodox Judaism, these actions include 613 commandments given by God in the Tanakh, as well as laws instituted by the rabbis (the Jewish religious teachers), and long-standing customs such as the well-known Bar Mitzvah that almost every 13-year-old Jewish boy experiences.

The most famous of these 613 commandments are the Ten Commandments, which the Bible states God himself supernaturally engraved on tablets of stone. Many of these commandments, such as "Do not murder" and "Do not steal," serve to form the basis of morality in almost all cultures today.

The biblical Book of Exodus contains one of the most famous stories of the Bible, a story which has recently been dramatized by Hollywood in the feature film *The Prince of Egypt*. Around the second millennium B.C., when the Hebrews had become slaves in the land of Egypt, God came to the rescue. Through a man named Moses, God performed many wondrous miracles which compelled the stubborn Egyptian ruler to finally let the Hebrews go free. Here is a brief description of these miracles, in chronological order:

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- 1) Water turning into blood
- 2) Vast hordes of frogs sweeping across Egypt, so many that even ovens and beds were filled with them
- 3) Dust turning into swarms of gnats
- 4) Swarms of flies sweeping through Egypt (as with the frogs), but not in Goshen (where the Hebrews lived)
- 5) A deadly plague afflicting only Egypt's livestock (horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, and sheep), but not the Hebrews's livestock
- 6) Animals and people of Egypt breaking out with terrible boils
- 7) A severe hailstorm covering only Egypt (but not where the Jews lived), worse than any in Egypt's history, destroying everything in the fields — people, animals, trees, and crops alike
- 8) Locusts covering the entire country — so many that people couldn't see the ground — and devouring everything that escaped the hailstorm.
- 9) A terrible darkness descending on the land of Egypt for three days, with the exception of the Hebrew areas
- 10) A deathly plague killing all the first-born sons of every family in Egypt, with the exception of Hebrew families, who were unaffected by this plague (this event is known today as the Jewish holiday called *Passover*, when death “passed over” the Hebrews and only killed the Egyptians)
- 11) And finally, the escape of the Hebrews through the Red Sea, where a path opened up before the people through the water, and all the people walked through on dry ground.

The Exodus account states that God caused these miracles to happen so that the people might see His power, and so that

His fame might spread throughout the earth (Exod. 9:16), causing people to believe in Him.

CHRISTIANITY

The Christian Bible, a collection of 66 books, from Genesis to Revelation, known as the Old and New Testaments, was written by over 40 authors covering a span of about 1,500 years. The New Testament portion of the Bible is the primary source of history regarding the origin of Christianity, and forms the basis of all Christian doctrine.

The first four books of the New Testament, known as the Gospels, are concerned primarily with telling the story of Jesus Christ. According to the Gospels, Jesus, the central figure and founder of Christianity, claimed to be the only Son of God, who came down from heaven to earth in bodily form.

Jesus' mission was to save mankind from their sins by dying a sacrificial death on the cross (known historically as the Crucifixion). The Bible teaches that Jesus' death was necessary because an innocent life had to substitute for the guilty. Holiness required that sin must not be ignored. As such, God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to live an innocent life and pay the penalty for the sins of the world. Anyone who believes this, Jesus promised, would have eternal life with Him in heaven (John 3).

According to the New Testament, many people in the first century believed Jesus' claims to be the Son of God based on His supernatural power to perform miracles,²⁰ and also based on His resurrection from the dead. Jesus predicted His own death, but said that He would rise again three days later (Matt. 12:38–40), using this as His final proof that He spoke the truth.

Taken from the New Testament, the main doctrines of Christianity today are as follows:²¹

FOOLISH FAITH

- Jesus Christ, God the Son, was born of the virgin Mary and received a human body and a sinless human nature, and in Him perfect humanity and divine nature are found in one personality.
- There is only one true and living God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the creator, ruler, and sustainer of the universe.
- The godhead eternally exists in three persons — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of the same honor, confidence, and obedience. Together, the three persons of the godhead execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of the creation as well as redemption.
- Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and then resurrected to life for the sins of all mankind, and He will return personally and bodily to make the Final Judgement of both believers and non-believers.
- People were originally created in the image and likeness of God. They fell short of the glory of God because of sin, and only through repentance of their sins and acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord will they inherit eternal life, or else suffer eternal condemnation.
- Jesus performed many miracles while living on earth to exhibit His divine nature. These included the resurrection of people from the dead, healing the blind, etc.
- The Bible was written without error by certain people throughout history, under the special inspiration of God, who is the ultimate author of the text. The Bible is the only complete revelation of the truth of God and the final authority for all Christian faith and practice.

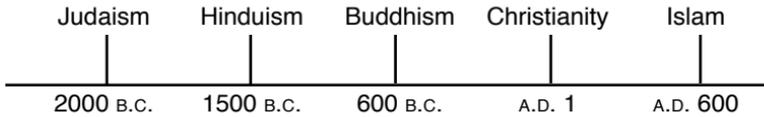
As a result of such sensational beliefs, the claims of the New Testament have by and large become one of the most controversial scholarly debates of modern times. The New Testament has been more thoroughly studied by inquiring minds than any other book written. There are more translations of the Bible into different languages than any other book. There are more ancient, handwritten copies of the Bible still in existence than any other ancient writing.

The impact of Christianity in the first century was such that it became the officially accepted faith of the Western world for the next 1,700 years. The Canadian Constitution declares the supremacy of God in its first sentence: "Whereas Canada is founded upon the principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law. . . ." Likewise, the United States Declaration of Independence recognizes God (the Creator) in its second paragraph: "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator. . . ." And, of course, all U.S. currency is imprinted with the slogan "In God We Trust." The Christian Bible is often used in law courts for the taking of an oath of truth (in Canada and the United States). Amazingly, the Bible remains the number one selling book of all time.

Year after year, North America's popular culture recognizes and celebrates many Christian holidays: the most well-known, of course, is Christmas, celebrated as Jesus Christ's birthday (hence the word *Christmas*). Next is Palm Sunday, celebrated as the day Jesus made His grand entrance into Jerusalem, then Good Friday, in remembrance of Jesus' death on the Cross, and finally Easter Sunday, in remembrance of His resurrection three days later.²²

Finally, the year A.D. 2000 marks two thousand years since Jesus' ministry on earth (A.D. stands for *Anno Domini*, which is Latin for "in the year of our Lord"). Indeed, why *did* the life of Jesus change history from B.C. to A.D. two millennia ago?

FOOLISH FAITH



Above: General timeline showing the rise of each of today's major world religions

Footnotes

- 1 The information in this chapter is derived primarily from *Man's Religions*, by John B. Noss, professor of philosophy at Franklin and Marshall College (New York, NY: Macmillan Company, Revised Edition, 1961).
- 2 "The History of Hinduism," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, <<http://members.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=108344&sctn=9>>
- 3 "Hinduism," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, <<http://members.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=108344&sctn=1>>
- 4 Noss, *Man's Religions*, p. 114.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 161.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 162.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 163–165.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 166.
- 9 Today there are several forms of modernized Buddhism practiced primarily throughout the Asian world.
- 10 Noss, *Man's Religions*, p. 692–693.
- 11 It would be expected then, that Muhammad's message be consistent with that of the previous prophets.
- 12 According to the Christian Bible's New Testament, Jesus contrarily taught that He *was* the Son of God.
- 13 The Christian Bible teaches that it was Jesus who was crucified, a foundational doctrine for all Christian belief. The Bible says that Judas hung himself in guilt for betraying Jesus to the Cross.
- 14 Noss, *Man's Religions*, p. 710; see also "Islam," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, <<http://members.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=108138&sctn=2>>
There is division even amongst Muslims about how exactly to define jihad. For instance, many believe that it is appropriate to engage in war in defense of Islam, while a growing number believe jihad refers only to a "spiritual" battle and has no place in the material world.
- 15 It should be noted that in contradiction to Muhammad's teaching of salvation through specific acts of obedience, Jesus taught a message

THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

- of salvation through faith alone. Muslims often explain the differences between the Koran and the Christian Bible by suggesting that, over time, the text of the Bible has been tampered with. The argument for such tampering generally occurs where the teachings and predictions of Jesus do not line up with the teachings of Muhammad.
- 16 The Christian Bible is made up of two major parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament, called the *Tanakh* by the Jewish people, was written in the period before the rise of Christianity. While the Christian faith is based on both the Old and New Testaments, the Judaic faith is based on only the Old Testament portion; Judaism rejects the teachings of the New Testament.
 - 17 The authenticity of the area and era in which this biblical narrative takes place has been confirmed by recent archaeological discoveries, and dates to approximately 2000 B.C. ("Abraham," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, <<http://members.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=3413&sctn=1>>)
 - 18 However, if a person has gone through the formal process of conversion to Judaism, he or she may be considered Jewish.
 - 19 The writers of the Bible's Old Testament prophesied of a future Savior (Messiah) who would come to rule the world with righteousness and justice. Judaism rejects Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy, whereas Christianity accepts Jesus as the prophesied Messiah who died and rose again, and who will return in the last days to rule the world.
 - 20 Such miracles included healing the blind, healing the crippled, walking on water, and more.
 - 21 Groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons that reject some of these central teachings of the New Testament *cannot* be, and are not considered, Christian denominations.
 - 22 As at Christmas, so also at Easter, popular customs reflect many ancient pagan survivals — in this instance, connected with spring fertility rites, such as the symbols of the Easter egg and the Easter bunny. ("Easter," Encyclopedia Britannica Online, <<http://members.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=108313&sctn=14>>)