

STUDY QUESTIONS
HUSTON SMITH, THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS
CHAPTER ON JUDAISM.

1. T/F The Jews are among the oldest of Near-Eastern peoples.
2. T/F The land area of Palestine was insignificant compared to Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and the other empires of antiquity.
3. Smith identifies two forms of "the other" that humans must take account of. These two forms are:

A.

B.

4. Smith lists four considerations that would keep "the other" from having significant meaning. These considerations are:

A.

B.

C.

D.

5. For the ancient Jew reality was more like a person/machine.

Will you please circle the word in the above sentence which makes the statement a true one.

6. The basic contribution of early Judaism to the religious thought of the Mediterranean was _____.

7. In one word, what is the importance of Monotheism to the religious life? Smith uses this word quite plainly.

8. The Jews denied to their God two character traits commonly ascribed to deity by other Near Eastern people. These two traits are:

A.

B.

9. In Judaism, the world is created by _____.

To a Jew, Smith says, this means that the physical and emotional world is _____.

10. The viewpoint opposite of the one in 9 above is found in many groups. Name a Greek philosopher and an Indian religion that share the idea that God is good and the world evil.

A.

B.

11. The idea that human attempts to control will fail because of _____ the inherent nature of humanity and the world is characteristic of Judeo-Christian/Chinese religious perspectives.
(Circle the answer that makes the sentence true.)

12. The root meaning of the word 'sinner' in Hebrew means to _____.

13. The Hebrew attitude toward history is that:

A. It is like the cycles of nature, what comes around goes around over and over again.

B. It is made of unique and unrepeatable events.

C. It is neither unique nor cyclic, but essentially chaotic.

D. The Hebrews did not think about history, only about law.

14. Polytheism supports the established order because:

A. If the Gods are not pleased, conditions might be much worse.

B. Priesthoods in polytheistic societies form powerful social groups that tend to preserve their own societal positions.

C. It is hard in a polytheistic system to agree on what a future radically different from the present would look like.

D. To change the existing order means to admit disharmony between the divine world and the human one. Polytheistic systems cannot do that.

15. T/F The Ten Commandments are unique to Christianity and Judaism.

16. T/F Smith presents the four ethical injunctions of the 10 commandments basically as means to maintain social order.

17. T/F In its original meaning, the prophet was someone's mouthpiece or herald.

18. Smith says that prophecy passed through three stages. The

first stage was that of the _____.

19. T/F Even in the collective actions of the first stage of the development of prophets there was a profound sense of morality.
20. T/F The first two stages of prophetic development are differentiated by an absence of ecstatic behavior in the second stage prophets.
21. According to Smith, the difference between pre-writing and writing prophets is that the latter could sense God's judgement of the whole _____.
22. T/F The great writing prophets confronted a situation in which there was both a drastic moral challenge within Jewish life and a drastic danger from external foes.
23. T/F Smith states the prophetic principle as "the perquisite to political stability is social justice..." This principle allowed them to see meaning in political events interpreted by others as simply power plays.
24. The prophetic voices following the destruction of the Jewish kingdom in 586 B.C.E. were faced primarily with which problem:
 - A. Salvaging some meaning from military defeat and the destruction of their nation.
 - B. Keeping alive a spirit of resistance to their conquerors.
 - C. Forming a "government in exile" outside the lands of their conquerors to keep Jewish life and religion alive.
 - D. Encouraging the Jews to forget the past and adapt intelligently to their present circumstances.
25. Smith makes the point that the prophetic interpretation of defeat and exile has two elements. For the prophets the defeat and exile of Judah was for the Jews a _____ experience and for the nations a _____ one.
26. How does Smith define "vicarious suffering?" (Be careful, this is a very strange idea to most of us.)
27. T/F There is an official set of beliefs that one must accept in order to be a Jew.
28. Which of the following does Smith mention as normal uses of ritual in human life?
 - A. It provides prospective on events of deep emotional content.
 - B. It celebrates life, giving our joy a mode of expression.
 - C. It channels feelings in situations where there might otherwise be chaos.
 - D. It gives courage in the face of loss.
29. T/F The word "hallowing" refers to that idea in Judaism that all life is in some sense reflective of God and that that reflective nature of life needs to be emphasized and pointed.

30. In one short paragraph, distinguish piety from piosity.

31. In another short paragraph, explain why nature polytheism is supportive of the established order of society.

32. In Judaism, tradition acts as a way to preserve society against the effects of _____.

33. The Torah is the _____ books of the Bible and is sometimes also called the _____.

34. According to Smith, revelation means _____.
(One word, if you please.)

35. The decisive revelation of God for Judaism occurred during the _____ from Egypt.

36. Smith lists three characteristics of the god disclosed in the Exodus event. These are:

A.

B.

C.

37. T/F The Jews perceived themselves as deserving well of God because they kept his laws.

38. Distinguish between a covenant and a contract.
39. The idea that God's saving action is founded in a special people, place or time is called the "scandal of _____".
40. What arguments does Smith give that the Jewish claim of God's choice of them as agents of revelation does not offend against God's justice?
41. The doctrine that creative life in human society requires a strong variety of cultural and religious perspectives is called _____.
42. T/F The Bible (Christian Old Testament) is the sole source of authority for Judaism.
43. Since the _____ the issue of Jewish particularism has become more acute. That is, the need to justify the existence of a separate Jewish culture has surfaced in a new way.
44. The modern state of Israel was established in 19_____.
45. T/F There was clear agreement among the members of the world-wide Jewish community on the rationale for the establishing of the state of Israel.
46. T/F As part of their adaptability to the different countries they inhabit, Jews use the language of the country in which they live for their worship.
47. T/F Judaism has maintained a monolithic structure; unlike Christianity it has not split into different branches that express the different insights of the religion in slightly different ways.
48. What is the meaning of the word "anthropomorphism," as used on page 273 of Smith?

49. Smith gives two places to look for an explanation when things go wrong: in the nature of the universe and in ourselves. What ethical difference is made by where one looks for an explanation of the tragedy and pain of existence?

50. T/F The belief that human beings are no more than animals never was expressed in ancient Israel.

51. T/F Hebrew thought compares human being to divine being.

52. Hebrew thought approaches human nature as being highly ambivalent, almost to the point of paradox. List at least 3 elements of the paradox as Smith presents it.

1.

2.

3.

53. What does Smith mean when he says, "the events the Hebrew Bible relates are profoundly contextual." Please put in your own words.

54. Smith lists 4 factors which are at stake in the notion that history is the locus of meaning. List the four.

A.

B.

C.

D.

55. T/F Huston Smith sees the Old Testament accounts of God's interference in the

human story as emphasizing the unique nature of the events of human life.

56. The position that God's will includes but transcends the world of nature would have been a Jewish argument against which group of ancient religions?
- A. Early Hinduism
 - B. Greek Philosophy
 - C. Nature Polytheisms
 - D. Zoroastrianism
57. T/F The origin of the idea of social reform as it exists in the Western world is largely due to Hebrew ideas about the relation of God and history.
58. T/F The ethical injunctions of the Ten Commandments are intended to present the final world on the issues with which they deal.
59. T/F Judaism, like Christianity, has within it a major conflict between those who see all authority as coming from scripture and those who don't.
60. The word "disclose" is closest in meaning to what central Jewish religious term?