Learning Targets
• To point out the enormous influence on world history of the religious and cultural traditions developed in Eurasia and North Africa between 500 B.C.E. and 500 C.E.
• To examine the reasons behind the development of these religious and cultural traditions
• To consider the common ground and significant differences between these religious and cultural traditions and examine possible reasons behind them

Big Picture Questions
1. Is a secular outlook on the world an essentially modern phenomenon, or does it have precedents in the second-wave era?
2. “Religion is a double-edged sword, both supporting and undermining political authority and social elites.” How would you support both sides of this statement?
3. How would you define the appeal of the religious/cultural traditions discussed in this chapter? To what groups were they attractive, and why?
4. In what different ways did these religious or cultural traditions define the purposes of human life?
5. Fundamentally, religions are basically alike. Does the material of this chapter support or challenge this idea?

Margin Review Questions
1. What different answers to the problem of disorder arose in classical China?
2. Why has Confucianism been defined as a “humanistic philosophy” rather than a supernatural religion?
3. How did the Daoist outlook differ from that of Confucianism?
4. In what ways did the religious traditions of South Asia change over the centuries?
5. In what ways did Buddhism reflect Hindu traditions, and in what ways did it challenge them?
6. What is the difference between the Theravada and Mahayana expressions of Buddhism?
7. What new emphases characterized Hinduism as it responded to the challenge of Buddhism?
8. What aspects of Zoroastrianism and Judaism subsequently found a place in Christianity and Islam?
9. What was distinctive about the Jewish religious tradition?
10. What are the distinctive features of the Greek intellectual tradition?
11. How would you compare the lives and teachings of Jesus and the Buddha? In what different ways did the two religions evolve after the deaths of their founders?
12. In what ways was Christianity transformed in the five centuries following the death of Jesus?

Key Terms
Ban Zhao: A major female Confucian author of Han dynasty China (45–116 C.E.) whose works give insight into the implication of Confucian thinking for women. (pron. bahn joe)
Bhagavad Gita: A great Hindu epic text, part of the much larger Mahabharata, which affirms the performance of caste duties as a path to religious liberation. (pron. BAH-gah-vahd GHEE-tah)
Church of the East: A theologically and organizationally distinct Christian church based in Syria and Persia but with followers in southern India and Central Asia.
Confucianism: The Chinese philosophy first enunciated by Confucius, advocating the moral example of superiors as the key element of social order.
Daoism: A Chinese philosophy/popular religion that advocates simplicity and understanding of the world of nature, founded by the legendary figure Laotzu. (pron. dow-ism)
Greek rationalism: A secularizing system of scientific and philosophic thought that developed in classical Greece in the period 600 to 300 B.C.E.; it emphasized the power of education and human reason to understand the world in nonreligious terms.
Jesus of Nazareth: The prophet/god of Christianity (ca. 4 B.C.E.–ca. 30 C.E.).
Judaism: The monotheistic religion developed by the Hebrews, emphasizing a sole personal god (Yahweh) with concerns for social justice.
Legalism: A Chinese philosophy distinguished by an adherence to clear laws with vigorous punishments.

Mahayana: “Great Vehicle,” the popular development of Buddhism in the early centuries of the Common Era, which gives a much greater role to supernatural beings and proved to be more popular than original (Theravada) Buddhism. (pron. mah-hah-YAH-nah)

moksha: In Hindu belief, liberation from separate existence and union with Brahman. (pron. mokeshuh)

nirvana: The end goal of Buddhism, in which individual identity is “extinguished” into a state of serenity and great compassion. (pron. neerVAH-nah)

Saint Paul: The first great popularizer of Christianity (10–65 C.E.).

Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha): The Indian prince turned ascetic (ca. 566–ca. 486 B.C.E.) who founded Buddhism. (pron. sidd-ARTH-uh gow-TAHM-uh)

Socrates: The first great Greek philosopher to turn rationalism toward questions of human existence (469–399 B.C.E.).

Theravada: “The Teaching of the Elders,” the early form of Buddhism according to which the Buddha was a wise teacher but not divine and which emphasizes practices rather than beliefs. (pron. THAIR-ah-VAH-dah)

Upanishads: Indian mystical and philosophical works, written between 800 and 400 B.C.E. (pron. ooh-PAHN-ish-ahds)

Vedas: The earliest religious texts of India, a collection of ancient poems, hymns, and rituals that were transmitted orally before being written down ca. 600 B.C.E. (pron. VAY-dahs)

Zoroastrianism: Persian monotheistic religion founded by the prophet Zarathustra. (pron. zoroh-AST-ree-an-ism)