Religion and Culture

- Greek and Roman culture did not directly generate a lasting major religion, though Christianity arose in the classical Mediterranean context. Greco-Roman religion used epic poems and mythology to explore human foibles and passions.
- An emphasis on rationality, especially in philosophy, science, and a strong artistic and architectural tradition, permeated classical Mediterranean culture.
- Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are the most well-known Greek philosophers.

Economy and Society in the Mediterranean

- Greek and Roman societies mirrored many standard social features of an agricultural economy, including a large peasant and a land-owning aristocracy, and dependence on trade and commerce.
- Differing versions of the patriarchal family structure existed in both Greek and Roman culture.
- Distinctive features included slavery and a slightly less oppressive attitude toward women than was true in classical China.

Toward the Fall of Rome

- Rome began to decline after about 180 BCE. Symptoms were gradual, including loss of territory and economic reversals.
- Ultimately, invaders periodically roamed Rome until the empire finally collapsed.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. While the types of government in the early Greek polis (city-states) varied, they were LEAST likely to have been
   (A) aristocracies.
   (B) monarchies.
   (C) tyrannies.
   (D) theocracies.
   (E) democracies.

2. The major impact of Alexander the Great's conquests was the
   (A) elimination of foreign influences from Greek culture.
   (B) establishment of a unified government for the eastern Mediterranean.
   (C) birth of mystery religions and the forced migration of the Jews.
   (D) spread of Greek culture throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
   (E) destruction of regional trade and commerce.

3. In comparison to the Hindus, Persians, and Chinese, religiously the Greeks
   (A) most resembled Hinduism's polytheism with its caste system.
   (B) never developed a major religion.
   (C) developed a compassionate system similar to Buddhism.
   (D) sought universal harmony in a manner similar to Daoism.
   (E) avoided portraying gods with human characteristics.

4. Greco-Roman philosophers attempted to understand human nature through
   (A) emotion, especially the desire for love and brotherhood.
   (B) its rigid adherence to societal norms with rewards and punishments.
   (C) human sin, salvation, and redemption.
   (D) human relationships to the state and society at large.
   (E) rational observation and deduction.

5. Mediterranean agriculture under the Greeks and Romans was
   (A) extremely efficient and self-sufficient, supplying large surpluses for trade.
   (B) not as dependent on irrigation as were other classical civilizations.
   (C) heavily reliant on imported grain stuffs and the export of cash crops.
   (D) yielded insufficient surpluses to support high urban populations.
   (E) favored the small farmers instead of the large, landed estates.

6. Roman classic culture
   (A) owed a great deal of its diversity to trade with China.
   (B) developed in relative isolation.
   (C) borrowed heavily, especially from the Greek and Hellenistic states.
   (D) influenced heavily the cultures of Africa and southwest Asia.
   (E) was highly innovative in the arts and sciences.

7. Greco-Roman art and culture emphasized all of these qualities EXCEPT
   (A) human achievement and striving.
   (B) public utility and usefulness.
   (C) order, symmetry, and balance.
   (D) realism.
   (E) atheism.

8. Rome successfully expanded for all of these reasons EXCEPT
   (A) it possessed a disciplined, trained military.

9. What sentence best describes both Roman and Chinese gender relations?
   (A) Roman and Chinese women had numerous political rights.
   (B) While subordinate to men, Roman women were considerably freer and less oppressed than were their Chinese counterparts.
   (C) Both cultures were patriarchal—husbands resided with their wives' families.
   (D) Over the centuries, women's lives improved and their rights increased.
   (E) Rome and China were patriarchal societies where elite women had considerable influence.

10. With regard to merchants, classical civilizations in Rome, Greece, and China
    (A) accorded them high social status.
    (B) saw little use for their talents in otherwise largely agricultural societies.
    (C) were ambivalent toward merchants despite their vital roles in commerce.
    (D) rewarded merchant success through upward social mobility.
    (E) made them state bureaucrats.

Free-Response Question

Compare and contrast the Greek, Confucian, and Hindu ethical systems.
Decline and Fall in Rome

Decline in Rome was particularly complex. Although its causes have been much debated, certain issues may have contributed: population declined, leadership faltered, the economy flagged, tax collection became more difficult, a series of plagues swept the empire, and a sense of despondency pervaded much of the citizenry.

When Germanic tribes invaded in the 400s, there was little power or will to resist.

Developments also varied between the eastern and western portions of the Empire, as the Mediterranean world fell apart. The eastern, or Byzantine Empire, continued for another 1,000 years after the western empire collapsed.

The New Religious Map

The period of classical decline saw the rapid expansion of Buddhism and Christianity. This religious change had wider cultural, social, and political implications.

Later, Islam appeared and spread, following the previous spread of Hinduism across south and southeast Asia.

The World Around 500 C.E.

Developments around 500 C.E. produced three major themes for world history in subsequent periods.

First, there was a collapse of classical civilizations. Societies across Eurasia faced the task of reviving or reworking their key institutions and values after decline and invasion.

Second, new religions arose and older ones spread. These would form the basis of future civilizations.

Finally, new developments across the globe, whether through indigenous developments or contacts with older centers led to the rise of new civilizations.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. The two American centers of civilization included central Mexico and the
   (A) Mississippi area.
   (B) Yucatan peninsula.
   (C) American southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah).
   (D) Andean river valleys and plateaus of Ecuador and Peru.
   (E) Rio Plata and Paraná river systems of Argentina.

2. The core or mother civilization for other civilizations in Mesopotamia was the
   (A) Olmecs.
   (B) Toltecs.
   (C) Aztecs.
   (D) Mayas.
   (E) Chavin peoples.

3. In Ethiopia, trade and contacts
   (A) insulated the culture from African influences.

4. Shinto
   (A) is an extremely developed form of animistic nature worship.
   (B) arrived in Japan with the first official embassy from China.
   (C) is a branch of Buddhism.
   (D) is a warrior’s religion and glorifies the military way of life.
   (E) was pivotal in the transmission of Chinese culture to Japan.

5. At the end of the Classical Age
   (A) belief systems failed to survive the collapse of classical civilizations.
   (B) only the Mediterranean Greco-Roman civilization experienced upheavals.
   (C) the Huns (Hsiung-Nu) destroyed all great Eurasian classical civilizations.
   (D) there was a religious upsurge as a result of social and economic problems.
   (E) trade ceased to be important.

6. As the Han Empire collapsed
   (A) Daoists established political control of the various Chinese states.
   (B) nomads swept into China replacing the Han with a “barbarian” dynasty.
   (C) landowners and warlords dominated the successor governments.
   (D) Christianity was introduced to China and began to spread.
   (E) internal warfare subsided.

7. In India during the period after the Guptan collapse,
   (A) Buddhism reasserted its influence, replacing Hinduism.
   (B) the caste system lost its influence.
   (C) Hinduism maintained cultural cohesion when the central state collapsed.
   (D) invaders rarely assimilated into Hindu culture.
   (E) trade and commercial activities collapsed.

8. Christianity differed from classic Mediterranean culture in all of these ways EXCEPT
   (A) it offered salvation to the poor and slaves.
   (B) it adapted classical Roman governmental institutions to organize the church.
   (C) it emphasized eternal salvation instead of the pursuits of the secular world.
   (D) it granted equal importance to the souls of men and women.
   (E) it provided a common culture to unify all classes.

9. All of these contributed to the decline and fall of Rome EXCEPT
   (A) the spread of Christianity.
   (B) nomadic invasions.
   (C) the collapse of effective government.
   (D) plagues which decimated populations.
   (E) economic disruptions.

10. The fall of the Roman Empire
    (A) left behind a common culture unifying the Mediterranean basin.
    (B) left the Persian Empire in control of the eastern Mediterranean.
    (C) divided Christianity into Catholic and Orthodox (Greek) sects.
    (D) had little effect on artistic and cultural traditions.
    (E) divided the Mediterranean into three different cultural zones.

Free-Response Question

Compare and contrast the collapses of the Roman Empire and Han China.