The Holy Land
Abraham

Islam: Muhammad (believed to be God's prophet) is a descendent of Abraham.

Christianity: Jesus Christ (believed to be God's son in the form of a man) is a descendent of Abraham.

Judaism (Jews): God's chosen people; Abraham is considered the father of the Jews.

Islam: Muhammad (believed to be God's prophet) is a descendent of Abraham.
Abrahamic Religions

• The world’s three major monotheistic religions:
  • Judaism
  • Christianity
  • Islam

• All three are considered Abrahamic religions
• All of them worship the God of Abraham
• All three consider one city to be their holy city
• What city is it?
  JERUSALEM
Why is Jerusalem Important to Jews?

- In the Torah, God helped the Jews (His chosen people) escape from Egyptian slavery.
- After their escape, God promised them a new homeland (known as the Promised Land).
- It took a while, but the Jews finally conquered this Promised Land.
  - One of the main cities in the Promised Land is Jerusalem!!!
- The Jews built their temple in Jerusalem.
- Around 600 BC, Babylon conquered Jerusalem, exiled the Jews, and the temple was destroyed.
Why is Jerusalem Important to Jews?

• About 60 years later, the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem

• They built a second temple but in 70 AD the Roman Empire conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the second temple

• The Jewish people were scattered and all that remained of the temple was a retaining wall

• Today... that wall is known as the “Western Wall” or the “Wailing Wall” (and it’s in Jerusalem)

• This is the most sacred site in the world for Jewish people

• In 1947, the Jews again returned to Jerusalem with the establishment of the nation of Israel
What structure in Jerusalem exists today that is considered to be a holy site by Jews?
Why is Jerusalem Important to Christians?

• Christianity’s roots are found in Judaism (Jesus was a Jew)

• Many of the reasons that Jerusalem is important to Jews apply to Christians as well

• Jesus lived, died (by crucifixion), and is believed to have been resurrected in Jerusalem

• The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is in Jerusalem

• The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is built on the site of Jesus’s crucifixion and the tomb from which he rose from the dead

• This the most holy site in the world for Christianity
What structure in Jerusalem exists today that is considered to be a holy site by Christians?
Why is Jerusalem Important to Muslims?

• Muhammad traveled to Jerusalem and spent time there
• Muhammad *ascended* to heaven from Jerusalem
• The Dome of the Rock, an important Islamic *shrine*, is also located in Jerusalem
• Jerusalem is the *third* holiest site in Islam (after Mecca and Medina)
What structure in Jerusalem exists today that is considered to be a holy site by Muslims?
Jerusalem

• For over 3,000 years, people have been **fighting** for control of Jerusalem

• Many **wars** have been fought over Jerusalem

• Power and control of the city has **shifted** between religions, empires, and nations

• It is perhaps the most **famous**, historical, important, holy, and controversial city in the world

• “During its long history, Jerusalem has been destroyed at least twice, besieged 23 times, captured and recaptured 44 times, and attacked 52 times” - *Jerusalem Besieged*

• Today, control over Jerusalem remains a topic of tense **debate**