

It's difficult to say definitively whether hierarchical power dynamics and network connections or religious doctrines, were more important in shaping the development of religions. Both factors likely played significant roles. Hierarchical power dynamics and network connections can influence how religious institutions are structured and how they interact with other institutions in society. For example, a religion with a centralized authority structure and strong connections to political power may be able to exert more influence over its followers and society at large than a decentralized religion with weak connections to political power. At the same time, religious doctrines can shape the beliefs and practices of individual followers and the broader cultural norms and values of a society. For example, a religion that emphasizes the importance of charity and compassion may inspire its followers to engage in acts of service and contribute to developing a more compassionate society.

It's hard to tell for sure what would have happened if choices had been made in terms of the "what ifs." But it's likely that some choices, like Constantine's conversion to Christianity and making it the official religion of the Roman Empire, had a big influence on the growth and spread of Christianity. It's likely that without these incidents, Christianity would not have emerged as the dominant religion in the West and that history would have taken a very different turn. If Constantine had converted to Mithraism instead of Christianity, Mithraism would likely have become the dominant religion in the Roman Empire. Mithraism was a popular religion among the Roman military and had a strong following among soldiers and veterans. If the emperor had publicly embraced Mithraism, it's possible that it would have gained more legitimacy and support from the wider Roman population.

Mithraism had some similarities to Christianity, such as the belief in a savior figure, but it also had some significant differences. For example, Mithraism was an exclusive religion that only men could join, and it emphasized the importance of discipline and loyalty to the emperor. These differences may have influenced the development of Roman society and culture if Mithraism had become the dominant religion instead of Christianity. It's also possible that the

spread of Mithraism could have had significant implications for the later development of Western religions. Mithraism may have influenced the development of later religions, such as Islam, which also have a strong emphasis on discipline and loyalty to a higher power. However, it's important to note that the development of religions is complex, and it's difficult to predict with certainty how things would have unfolded if different historical events had taken place.