

Name _____ Date _____

Genesis: The Judeo-Christian Tradition

Directions: Read the following excerpt.

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. ⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. ¹⁷And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens." ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

²⁴And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

Enuma Elish: Mesopotamian Cosmogony

Directions: Read the following excerpt.

Enuma Elish ("when on high") narrates a chain of events beginning with the separation of order out of chaos and ending with the creation of man. Plot and setting concern the prehuman world of the gods, a framework missing in Genesis, but very much present in other mythologies, like the Greek, Teutonic, and Scandinavian. Many scholars consider Tiamat as an amalgam of earth-mother, demon, sorceress, and Lilith. She can also be viewed as a personification of the primordial ocean, the original waters, often a symbol of chaos.

(The myth begins by stating that the primeval watery chaos, represented by Apsu and Tiamat, is the source of all things. Apsu and Tiamat beget other generations, and with the population explosion in the heavenly realm, trouble ensues.)

When on high the heaven had not been named,
Firm ground below had not been called by name,
Naught but primordial Apsu, their begetter,
(And) Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all,
Their waters commingling as a single body;
No reed hut had been matted, no marsh land had appeared,
When no gods whatever had been brought into being,
Uncalled by name, their destinies undetermined—
Then it was that the gods were formed within them. . . .

The divine brothers banded together,
They disturbed Tiamat as they surged back and forth,
Yea, they troubled the mood of Tiamat
By their hilarity in the Abode of Heaven.
Apsu could not lessen their clamor
And Tiamat was speechless at their (ways).
Their doings were loathsome. . . .

Apsu, opening his mouth,
Said unto resplendent Tiamat:
"Their ways are verily loathsome unto me.
By day I find no relief, nor repose by night.
I will destroy, I will wreck their ways,
That quiet may be restored. Let us have rest!"

(Apsu and Tiamat, . . . resolve to destroy the rebellious children, but Apsu is slain in the battle. Marduk, a new god, becomes the force for good, the champion of heaven, and enemy to the monster Tiamat.)

Alluring was his figure, sparkling the lift of his eyes.
Lordly was his gait, commanding from of old.
When Ea saw him, the father who begot him,
He exulted and glowed, his heart filled with gladness.
He rendered him perfect and endowed him with a double godhead.
Greatly exalted was he above them, exceeding throughout. . . .

Clothed with the halo of ten gods, he was strong to the utmost,

(Marduk was a fit antagonist, indeed, for the mighty Tiamat. The gods in assembly made the new deity king over all and commission him to vanquish the monster.)

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He constructed a bow, marked it as his weapon,
Attached thereto the arrow, fixed its bow-cord.
He raised the mace, made his right hand grasp it;
Bow and quiver he hung at his side.
In front of him he set the lightning,
With a ablazing flame he filled his body.
He then made a net to enfold Tiamat therein. . . .

Towards the raging Tiamat he set his face.
In his lips he held a spell;
A plant to put out poison was grasped in his hand. . . .
"Stand thou up, that I and thou meet in single combat!"
When Tiamat heard this,
She was like one possessed; she took leave of her senses.
In fury Tiamat cried out aloud.
To the roots her legs shook both together.
She recites a charm, keeps casting her spell,
While the gods of battle sharpen their weapons.
They joined issue Tiamat and Marduk, wisest of gods.
They strove in single combat, locked in battle.
The lord spread out his net to enfold her,
The Evil Wind, which followed behind, he let loose in her face.

When Tiamat opened her mouth to consume him,
He drove in the Evil Wind that she close not her lips.
As the fierce winds charged her belly,
Her body was distended and her mouth was wide open.
He released the arrow, it tore her belly,
It cut through her insides, splitting the heart. . . .

The lord trod on the legs of Tiamat,
With his unsparing mace he crushed her skull.
When the arteries of her blood he had severed,
The North Wind bore it to places undisclosed.
On seeing this, his fathers were joyful and jubilant,
They brought gifts of homage, they to him
Then the lord paused to view her dead body,
That he might divide the monster and do artful works.
He split her like a shellfish into two parts:
Half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky,
Pulled down the bar and posted guards.
He bade them to allow not her waters to escape.
He crossed the heavens and surveyed the regions.

Rig Veda

Directions: Read the following excerpt.

This creation hymn, a small sample from the great body of sacred literature of the ancient Hindus (1500 B.C.) is the oldest literary monument of the Indo-European races.

Then¹ even nothingness was not, nor existence.²

There was no air then, nor the heavens beyond it.

What covered it? Where was it? In whose keeping?

Was there then cosmic water, in depths unfathomed?

Then there were neither death nor immortality,

nor was there then the torch of night and day.

The One³ breathed windlessly and self-sustaining.⁴

There was that One then, and there was no other.

At first there was only darkness wrapped in darkness.

All this was only unilluminated water.⁵

That One which came to be, enclosed in nothing,

arose at last, born of the power of heat.⁶

In the beginning desire descended on it—

that was the primal seed, born of the mind.

The sages who have searched their hearts with wisdom

know that which is, is kin⁷ to that which is not.

And they have stretched their cord across the void,

and know what was above, and what below.

Seminal powers made fertile mighty forces.

Below was strength, and over it was impulse.⁸

But, after all, who knows, and who can say

whence it all came and how creation happened?

The gods themselves are later than creation,

so who knows truly whence it has arisen?

Whence all creation had its origin,

he, whether he fashioned it or whether he did not,

he, who surveys it all from highest heaven,

he knows—or maybe even he does not know.

¹In the beginning:

²Asat nor sat.

³Tad ekam, 'That One,' who 'breathes without air.'

⁴Svadha, energy, intrinsic power which makes self-generation possible.

⁵Fluid (salla) and indistinguishable (apraketa)

⁶Tapas, an archaic word which also defines those human austerities or techniques which, like this cosmic heat, generate power.

⁷From 'bond' (bandhu).

⁸This stanza is obscure. And Macdonell suggests that the 'cord' (rashmi) implies the bond of the preceding stanza; thought measures out the distance between the non-existent and the existent and separates the male and female cosmogonic principles: impulse (prayati) above and energy (svadha) below.

(A Vedic Reader For Students, London: Oxford University, 1917, p. 210.)

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OF THE SUPREME DEITY.

3. Gangler thus began his discourse:—"Who is the first, or eldest of the gods?"

"In our language," replied Har, "he is called Alfadir (All-Father, or the Father of all); but in the old Asgard he had twelve names."

"Where is this God?" said Gangler; "what is his power? and what hath he done to display his glory?"

"He liveth," replied Har, "from all ages, he governeth all realms and swayeth all things great and small."

"He hath formed," added Jafnhar, "heaven and earth, and the air, and all things thereunto belonging."

"And what is more," continued Thridi, "he hath made man, and given him a soul which shall live and never perish though the body shall have mouldered away, or have been burnt to ashes. And all that are righteous shall dwell with him in the place called Gimli, or Vingolf; but the wicked shall go to Hel, and thence to Niflhel, which is below, in the ninth world."

"And where did this god remain before he made heaven and earth?" demanded Gangler.

"He was then," replied Har, "with the Hrimthursar." [126]

OF THE PRIMORDIAL STATE OF THE UNIVERSE.

4. "But with what did he begin, or what was the beginning of things?" demanded Gangler.

"Hear," replied Har, "what is said in the Voluspa."

[Pg 260] "'Twas time's first dawn,

When nought yet was,

Nor sand nor sea,

Nor cooling wave;

Earth was not there,

Nor heaven above.

Nought save a void

And yawning gulf.

But verdure none."

"Many ages before the earth was made," added Jafnhar, "was Niflheim formed, in the middle of which lies the spring called Hvergelmir, from which flow twelve rivers, Gjoll being the nearest to the gate of the abode of death."

"But, first of all," continued Thridi, "there was in the southern region (sphere) the world called Muspell. It is a world too luminous and glowing to be entered by those who are not indigenous there. [127] He who sitteth on its borders (or the land's-end) to guard it is named Surtur. In his hand he beareth a flaming falchion, and at the end of the world shall issue forth to combat, and shall vanquish all the gods, and consume the universe with fire."

ORIGIN OF THE HRIMTHURSAR, OR FROST-GIANTS.

5. "Tell me," said Gangler, "what was the state of things ere the races mingled, and nations came into being."

"When the rivers that are called Elivagar had flowed far from their sources," replied Har, "the venom which they rolled along hardened, as does dross that runs from a furnace, and became ice. When the rivers flowed no longer, and the ice stood still, the vapour arising from the venom gathered over it, and froze to rime, and in this [Pg 261]manner were formed, in Ginnungagap, many layers of congealed vapour, piled one over the other."

"That part of Ginnungagap," added Jafnhar, "that lies towards the north was thus filled with heavy masses of gelid vapour and ice, whilst everywhere within were whirlwinds and fleeting mists. But the southern part of Ginnungagap was lighted by the sparks and flakes that flew into it from Muspellheim."

"Thus," continued Thridi, "whilst freezing cold and gathering gloom proceeded from Niflheim, that part of Ginnungagap looking towards Muspellheim was filled with glowing radiancy, the intervening

space remaining calm and light as wind-still air. And when the heated blast met the gelid vapour it melted it into drops, and, by the might of him who sent the heat, these drops quickened into life, and took a human semblance. The being thus formed was named Ymir, but the Frost-giants call him Orgelmir. From him descend the race of the Frost-giants (Hrimthursar), as it is said in the Voluspa, 'From Vidolf come all witches; from Vilmeith all wizards; from Svarthofdi all poison-seethers; and all giants from Ymir.' And the giant Vafthrûdnir, when Gangrad asked, 'Whence came Orgelmir the first of the sons of giants?' answered, 'The Elivagar cast out drops of venom that quickened into a giant. From him spring all our race, and hence are we so strong and mighty.'

"How did the race of Ymir spread itself?" asked Gangler; "or dost thou believe that this giant was a god?"

"We are far from believing him to have been a god," [Pg 262]replied Har, "for he was wicked as are all of his race, whom we call Frost-giants. And it is said that, when Ymir slept, he fell into a sweat, and from the pit of his left arm was born a man and a woman, and one of his feet engendered with the other a son, from whom descend the Frost-giants, and we therefore call Ymir the old Frost-giant."

OF THE COW AUDHUMLA, AND THE BIRTH OF ODIN.

6. "Where dwelt Ymir, and on what did he live?" asked Gangler.

"Immediately after the gelid vapours had been resolved into drops," replied Kar, "there was formed out of them the cow named Audhumla. Four streams of milk ran from her teats, and thus fed she Ymir."

"But on what did the cow feed?" questioned Gangler.

"The cow," answered Har, "supported herself by licking the stones that were covered with salt and hoar frost. The first day that she licked these stones there sprang from them, towards evening, the hairs of a man, the second day a head, and on the third an entire man, who was endowed with beauty, agility and power. He was called Bur, and was the father of Bor, who took for his wife Besla, the daughter of the giant Bolthorn. And they had three sons, Odin, Vili, and Ve; and it is our belief that this Odin, with his brothers, ruleth both heaven and earth, and that Odin is his true name, and that he is the most mighty of

all the gods."

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HOW THE SONS OF BOR SLEW YMIR AND FROM HIS BODY MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH.

7. "Was there," asked Gangler, "any kind of equality or any degree of good understanding between these two races?"

"Far from it," replied Har; "for the sons of Bor slew the giant Ymir, and when he fell there ran so much blood from his wounds, that the whole race of Frost-giants was drowned in it, except a single giant, who saved himself with his household. He is called by the giants Bergelmir. He escaped by going on board his bark, and with him went his wife, and from them are descended the Frost-giants."

8. "And what became of the sons of Bor, whom ye look upon as gods?" asked Gangler.

"To relate this," replied Har, "is no trivial matter. They dragged the body of Ymir into the middle of Ginnungagap, and of it formed the earth. From Ymir's blood they made the seas and waters; from his flesh the land; from his bones the mountains; and his teeth and jaws, together with some bits of broken bones, served them to make the stones and pebbles."

"With the blood that ran from his wounds," added Jafnhar, "they made the vast ocean, in the midst of which they fixed the earth, the ocean encircling it as a ring, and hardy will he be who attempts to pass those waters."

"From his skull," continued Thridi, "they formed the heavens, which they placed over the earth, and set a dwarf at the corner of each of the four quarters. These dwarfs are called East, West, North, and South. They after[Pg 264]wards took the wandering sparks and red hot flakes that had been cast out of Muspellheim, and placed them in the heavens, both above and below, to give light unto the world, and assigned to every other errant coruscation a prescribed locality and motion. Hence it is recorded in ancient lore that from this time were marked out the days, and nights, and seasons."

"Such are the events that took place ere the earth obtained the form it now beareth."

Elder
Eldar
S

"Truly great were the deeds ye tell me of!" exclaimed Gangler; "and wondrous in all its parts is the work thereby accomplished. But how is the earth fashioned?"

"It is round without," replied Har, "and encircled by the deep ocean, the outward shores of which were assigned for a dwelling to the race of giants. But within, round about the earth, they (the sons of Bor) raised a bulwark against turbulent giants, employing for this structure Ymir's eyebrows. To this bulwark they gave the name of Midgard[128] They afterwards tossed Ymir's brains into the air, and they became the clouds, for thus we find it recorded.

"Of Ymir's flesh was formed the earth; of his sweat (blood), the seas; of his bones, the mountains; of his hair the trees; of his skull, the heavens; but with his eyebrows the blithe gods built Midgard for the sons of men, whilst from his brains the lowering clouds were fashioned." [Pg 265]

OF THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST MAN AND WOMAN.

9. "To make heaven and earth, to fix the sun and the moon in the firmament, and mark out the days and seasons, were, indeed, important labours," said Gangler; "but whence came the men who at present dwell in the world?"

"One day," replied Har, "as the sons of Bor were walking along the sea-beach they found two stems of wood, out of which they shaped a man and a woman. The first (Odin) infused into them life and spirit; the second (Vili) endowed them with reason and the power of motion; the third (Ve) gave them speech and features, hearing and vision. The man they called Ask, and the woman, Embla. From these two descend the whole human race whose assigned dwelling was within Midgard. Then the sons of Bor built in the middle of the universe the city called Asgard, where dwell the gods and their kindred, and from that abode work out so many wondrous things, both on the earth and in the heavens above it. There is in that city a place called Hlidskjalf, and when Odin is seated there on his lofty throne he sees over the whole world, discerns all the actions of men, and comprehends whatever he contemplates. His wife is Frigga, the daughter of Fjorgyn, and they and their offspring form the race that we call Æsir, a race that dwells in Asgard the old, and the regions around it, and that we know to be entirely divine.

Wherefore Odin may justly be called All-father, for he is verily the father of all, of gods as well as of men, and to his power all things owe their existence. Earth is his daughter and his wife, and [Pg 266]with her he had his first-born son, Asa-Thor, who is endowed with strength and valour, and therefore quelleth he everything that hath life."

OF NIGHT AND DAY.

10. "A giant called Njorvi," continued Har, "who dwelt in Jotunheim, had a daughter called Night (Nott) who, like all her race, was of a dark and swarthy complexion. She was first wedded to a man called Naglfari, and had by him a son named Aud, and afterwards to another man called Annar, by whom she had a daughter called Earth (Jord). She then espoused Delling, of the Æsir race, and their son was Day, (Dagr) a child light and beauteous like his father. Then took All-father, Night, and Day, her son, and gave them two horses and two cars, and set them up in the heavens that they might drive successively one after the other, each in twelve hours' time, round the world. Night rides first on her horse called Hrimfaxi, that every morn, as he ends his course, bedews the earth with the foam that falls from his bit. The horse made use of by Day is named Skinfaxi, from whose mane is shed light over the earth and the heavens."

OF THE SUN AND MOON.

11. "How doth All-father regulate the course of the sun and moon?" asked Gangler.

"There was formerly a man," replied Har, "named Mundilfari, who had two children so lovely and graceful that he called the male, Mani (moon), and the female, Sol (sun), who espoused the man named Glenur. But [Pg 267]the gods being incensed at Mundilfari's presumption, took his children and placed them in the heavens, and let Sol drive the horses that draw the car of the sun, which the gods had made to give light to the world out of the sparks that flew from Muspellheim. These horses are called Arvak and Alsvid, and under their withers the gods placed two skins filled with air to cool and refresh them, or, according to some ancient traditions, a refrigerant substance called isarnkul.[129] Mani was set to guide the moon in his course, and regulate his increasing and waning aspect. One day he carried off

from the earth two children, named Bil and Hjuki, as they were returning from the spring called Byrgir, carrying between them the bucket called Saegr, on the pole Simul. Vidfinn was the father of these children, who always follow Mani (the moon), as we may easily observe even from the earth."

OF THE WOLVES THAT PURSUE THE SUN AND MOON

12. "But the sun," said Gangler, speeds at such a rate as if she feared that some one was pursuing her for her destruction."

"And well she may," replied Har, "for he that seeks her is not far behind, and she has no way to escape than to run before him."

"But who is he," asked Gangler, "that causes her this anxiety?"

"There are two wolves," answered Har; "the one called Skoll pursues the sun, and it is he that she fears, for he shall one day overtake and devour her; the other, [Pg 268] called Hati, the son of Hrodvitnir, runs before her, and as eagerly pursues the moon that will one day be caught by him."

"Whence come these wolves?" asked Gangler.

"A hag," replied Har, "dwells in a wood, to the eastward of Midgard, called Jarnvid, (the Iron Wood,) which is the abode of a race of witches called Jarnvidjur. This old hag is the mother of many gigantic sons, who are all of them shaped like wolves, two of whom are the wolves thou askest about. There is one of that race, who is said to be the most formidable of all, called Managarm: he will be filled with the life-blood of men who draw near their end, and will swallow up the moon, and stain the heavens and the earth with blood. Then shall the sun grow dim, and the winds howl tumultuously to and fro."

