**OLD TESTAMENT**

*Introduction: The Old Testament, or the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), consists of 24 books, representing the first half (not by size but by order) of Christian Bible, which includes the between 15 and 25 books of the New Testament (the number varies depending on various Christian Bibles). The first five books of the Old Testament are known as the Pentateuch, or Torah, and chronicle the story of creation, the fall of man from Eden, and the early history of the Hebrew, or Jewish, people. The Book of Genesis is the first book of the Torah, followed by Exodus (excerpts of each are below). The three other books of the Torah are Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Old Testament was written by multiple authors and, while tapping into older writings and oral traditions, was finalized between the sixth and third centuries BCE.*

**Genesis 1-2**

**The Beginning**

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4God saw that the light was good, and he 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—the first day.

6And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” 7So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. 10God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

11Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. 12The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. 16God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” 21So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” 23And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. 25God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1-2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26a)] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27So God created mankind in his own image,
    in the image of God he created them;
    male and female he created them.

28God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

2By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

# Exodus 19-20

### At Mount Sinai

19 On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. 2After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

3Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 4‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. 5Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6you[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=exodus+19&version=NIV#fen-NIV-2033a)] will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

7So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. 8The people all responded together, “We will do everything the Lord has said.” So Moses brought their answer back to the Lord.

9The Lord said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you.” Then Moses told the Lord what the people had said.

### The Ten Commandments

And God spoke all these words:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

1“You shall have no other gods before[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=exodus+20&version=NIV#fen-NIV-2055a)] me.

2 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

3“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

4“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

5“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

6“You shall not murder.

7“You shall not commit adultery.

8“You shall not steal.

9“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

10“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”

Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

Questions:

How is the Genesis story of creation similar to the Hindu myth of Perusha (go back to the first week of syllabus for the pages in the text)? How does it differ?

According to the Book of Genesis, what role did God give man? How did this idea of man’s origins affect attitudes about man’s place in creation?

What theme unifies the first four of the Ten Commandments? Why is this theme important?