

Back to the Beginning: Genesis Session 3 Summary and Study Guide

Welcome back to our Bible study series, *Back to the Beginning*, where we continue our slow but insightful journey through Genesis. In this third session, we connect the creation account to broader biblical truths, including a simple science lesson to highlight God’s awesome power. Our aim is not to teach science for its own sake but to glorify God by seeing His hand in the intricacies of creation. Use your Bible and the study notes to follow along, and feel free to explore ahead or reflect as we go. Let’s seek to deepen our understanding and worship of the Creator.

Lesson Objectives

In this session, we will:

1. Explore Hebrews 11:3 to understand how faith reveals that the visible world is made from invisible things.
2. Use a basic science lesson on atoms to illustrate God’s creative genius.
3. Continue studying Genesis 1:3–10, focusing on God’s acts of separation and naming.
4. Reflect on how God calls things into existence and brings light out of darkness, both in creation and salvation.
5. Examine Isaiah 45:1–7 to see God’s sovereignty over light, darkness, peace, and calamity.
- 6.

Part 1: Faith and the Invisible Foundations of Creation

I. Hebrews 11:1–3: The Faith Chapter

Turn to Hebrews 11, often called the “faith chapter.” Read verses 1–3: *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.”*

This passage reminds us that faith allows us to grasp truths beyond our senses. Specifically, verse 3 teaches that the visible universe was created by God’s word from invisible components. Everything we see—trees, mountains, even our bodies—is built from things too small to observe with the naked eye. This glorifies God, showing His power to create complexity from simplicity.

II. Reflection Questions

1. How does faith help you “see” God’s work in the unseen aspects of creation?
2. Why is it significant that the visible world originates from invisible elements?

Part 2: A Science Lesson on Atoms – Glorifying the Creator

To illustrate Hebrews 11:3, let’s explore the building blocks of matter: atoms. Remember, our goal is to marvel at God’s design, not to master science.

III. The Basics of Atoms

Everything in the material world is made of atoms, which are incredibly small and invisible to the naked eye. There are over 100 elements (like iron, copper, oxygen, and hydrogen), each with its own type of atom. However, only about 10–12 elements make up 90–95% of what we interact with daily—cars, pavement, air, trees, and more.

An atom has three main parts:

- **Protons:** Positively charged, located in the nucleus (center).
- **Neutrons:** No charge, also in the nucleus.
- **Electrons:** Negatively charged, orbiting the nucleus at high speeds.

The nucleus is positively charged (from protons), attracting the negative electrons—like opposites attract. Protons and neutrons pack tightly in the nucleus, while electrons buzz around outside, somewhat like planets orbiting the sun (though not exactly).

IV. Examples of Elements

God used these three components—protons, neutrons, and electrons—to create all variety in matter:

- **Carbon** (e.g., graphite in pencils, diamonds, charcoal): 6 protons, 6 neutrons, 6 electrons.
- **Nitrogen** (a gas in air): Add one more of each—7 protons, 7 neutrons, 7 electrons.
- **Oxygen** (breathable air): Add another—8 protons, 8 neutrons, 8 electrons.
- **Ammonia** (strong smell): One nitrogen atom with three hydrogen atoms (1 proton, no neutrons, 1 electron each). Nitrogen and hydrogen are odorless gases, but combined, they create a pungent smell—amazing!

The number of protons defines the element. God “assembled” everything from these basic “sacks” of protons, neutrons, and electrons.



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V. Focus on Iron: A Marvel of Design

Consider iron (found in nails, hammers, steel). It has 26 protons, 30 neutrons, and 26 electrons. Protons repel each other (like charges), but neutrons help hold the nucleus together. The atom of iron is so small that in a common nail, there would be about 2,600,000,000,000,000,000 atoms. The Bible says Christ holds all things together (Colossians 1:17)—this includes atomic forces!

Nuclear reactions (like in power plants or bombs) release energy by splitting nuclei, showing the immense power God embedded in creation.

Now, imagine scaling up an iron atom:

- If the nucleus is the size of a ping pong ball, the closest electron is about 26 feet away.
- The farthest electrons (in the outer orbit) are a third of a mile away.
- Electrons are marble-sized, zipping around this vast space.

What’s between the nucleus and electrons? Nothing—empty space! Atoms are mostly empty, yet they form solid objects. When you hit a nail with a hammer, nothing actually “touches”—electrons repel each other, creating force without contact, like magnets pushing apart. The hammer and the nail are never actually in physical contact with each other. This reveals God’s genius: Solid iron is made from invisible, mostly empty atoms, yet it’s strong and useful. As a former chemistry teacher, this always amazes me—how could such complexity arise from simplicity without a divine Creator?

VI. Reflection Questions

1. How does understanding atoms as mostly empty space increase your awe of God’s creation?
2. What does it mean that God holds the universe together at the atomic level (Colossians 1:17)?

Part 3: Continuing in Genesis 1:3–10

Back to Genesis 1. In verse 1, *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”* Verse 2 describes the earth as formless and void (*tohu* and *bohu*), with darkness over the deep and the Spirit hovering over the waters.

VII. Words in Creation: Create, Form, Make

Watch for these terms as we go through the seven days of creation:

- **Create:** Bringing something new from nothing.
- **Form:** Shaping existing material.
- **Make:** Assembling or producing.

Also, note separations: God divides to bring order.

VIII. Day 1: Light and Separation

God said, *“Let there be light,”* and there was light (verse 3). He saw it was good and separated light from darkness (verse 4). He named light “day” and darkness “night” (verse 5). Evening and morning marked the first day. Note: The day begins with evening, as in Jewish tradition (e.g., Sabbath starts at sunset).

God commanded light into existence from nothing—an imperative to something nonexistent. Romans 4:17 says God *“calls into being that which does not exist.”*

IX. Connections to Salvation

- **2 Corinthians 4:6:** God, who said *“Let light shine out of darkness,”* shines in our hearts the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in Christ. Salvation is like creation—God brings spiritual light from darkness.
- This mirrors how God creates faith and spiritual life in us.
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X. Day 2: The Firmament

God said, *“Let there be an expanse [firmament] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters”* (verse 6). He made the expanse and separated waters below from above (verse 7). He called it “heaven” (verse 8). Evening and morning—the second day.

The Hebrew word for expanse is *raqia*, meaning to beat out metal thinly—like a thin sheet or dome. Ancient peoples thought of the sky as a solid vault, but it refers to the atmosphere or space. Some creationists suggest a water canopy above created a greenhouse effect, explaining pre-flood tropical conditions worldwide and providing flood waters. Whether that’s right or not, it shows God separating for order. God called the *raqia* heaven.

XI. Day 3: Land and Seas

God said, *“Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”* (verse 9). It was so—another separation: land from water (verse 10).

So far, much of creation involves separating existing elements (light/dark, waters above/below, land/sea), not always creating new matter.

XII. Reflection Questions

1. How does God commanding nonexistent light to exist parallel His work in salvation?
2. What does the pattern of separation reveal about God bringing order from chaos?
- 3.

Part 4: God’s Sovereignty in Isaiah 45:1–7

To close, turn to Isaiah 45:1–7. God speaks to Cyrus, a pagan Persian king, whom He uses for His purposes: *“Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed... I will go before you... so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.”* (verses 1–3).

God does this for Israel's sake and to declare: *"I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God"* (verse 5). He wants all to know Him from east to west.

Verse 7: *"The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these."*

God sovereignly creates light/darkness, peace/calamity—for His glory. He could condemn us for rebellion but chose to send a Savior to glorify Himself and adopt us as co-heirs with Christ.

XIII. Reflection Questions

1. How does God using a pagan king like Cyrus show His control over all things?
2. Why does God create both peace and calamity, and how does this relate to His glory?

Study Exercises

1. **Track Key Words:** As you read Genesis 1, list instances of "create," "form," "make," and separations. What patterns emerge?
2. **Reflect on Atoms:** Consider everyday objects (e.g., a nail). How does knowing they're mostly empty space glorify God?
3. **Compare Passages:** Read 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Romans 4:17 alongside Genesis 1:3. Note parallels between physical and spiritual creation.

Conclusion and Next Steps

We've seen God's power in creating from invisible things, bringing light from darkness, and ordering creation through separations. This same God shines salvation's light in our hearts and sovereignly orchestrates all for His glory.

For next week:

- Review Genesis 1:3–10 and complete the exercises.
- Reflect on the questions to prepare insights.
- Consider how creation's wonders point to God's kindness in Christ.

Let's pray: *Lord, thank You for Your Word and the truths of creation. You formed the universe from invisible elements, holding all together by Your power. We're amazed by Your greatness and grateful for the light of salvation through Christ. Help us glorify You in our study and lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.*