

Back to the Beginning: Genesis Session 4 Study Guide

This session of our *Back to the Beginning* Bible study series continues our exploration of Genesis 1, reviewing key passages and diving into Days 1 through 4 of creation. We'll examine God's actions throughout the chapter and uncover deeper meanings in words like "seasons." Use your Bible, the provided notes, and the new sheet listing God's actions to engage with the material. Whether you study ahead or reflect during our time together, let's seek to appreciate God's creative work and its implications for our worship.

Lesson Objectives

- Review foundational passages connecting creation to faith and salvation.
- Identify and reflect on God's specific actions in Genesis 1.
- Explore Days 1–4 of creation, focusing on separations, naming, and purposes.
- Understand the Hebrew word "*moed*" (seasons) as appointed times for meetings and worship.
- Encourage personal Bible study to deepen understanding of God's word.

Part 1: Review of Key Passages

To set the stage, let's revisit some passages we've discussed that highlight God's creative power and its spiritual significance.

Hebrews 11:3 reminds us that by faith we understand the worlds were formed from invisible things, which ties into our science lesson on atoms—protons, neutrons, and electrons—as the building blocks God used for all matter.

Romans 4:17 describes God calling into existence things that do not exist, just as He did with light in Genesis 1.

In 2 Corinthians 4:6, the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness also shines the light of the gospel in our hearts, awakening us to salvation through His Spirit and Word.

Isaiah 45:1–7 declares God's sovereignty, using even a pagan king like Cyrus to accomplish His purposes. God forms light and creates darkness, brings peace and calamity—all to reveal Himself as the one true God, with no other beside Him.

These truths remind us that the Creator God is also our Savior, who desires fellowship with us.

Reflection Questions

- How do these passages connect physical creation to spiritual realities like faith and salvation?
- Why is it encouraging that God calls things into existence and shines light into darkness?

Part 2: God's Actions in Genesis 1

As we study Genesis 1, pay attention to what God does. The new sheet lists verbs like "created," "said," "saw," "separated," "called," "made," and more. These actions reveal God's intentionality and authority. For example, God creates from nothing, speaks commands that are obeyed, sees and declares things good, separates to bring order, and names to establish identity. Notice patterns—God often speaks, acts, evaluates, and separates.

I encourage you to use the back of your notes or this sheet for personal study. Open your Bible and trace these actions; it will bless you to see God's methodical work.

Reflection Questions

- What patterns do you notice in God's actions, and what do they reveal about His character?

- How does listing these verbs help you appreciate the creation narrative?

Part 3: Day 1 – Light and Separation

Genesis 1:1–2 sets the scene: God created the heavens and earth, which was formless and void, with darkness over the deep and the Spirit hovering over the waters—indicating something momentous is about to happen.

On Day 1 (verses 3–5), God said, “Let there be light,” and light appeared. He saw it was good (Hebrew: *tov*, meaning good; *tov me’od* for very good). He separated light from darkness and named them “day” and “night.” Evening and morning marked the first day.

Notice the order: Darkness was first, then light—perhaps symbolizing how God brings light out of chaos. Some suggest this explains why evening precedes morning, aligning with Jewish days starting at sunset.

Reflection Questions

- Why might God begin with darkness before introducing light?
- How does this day foreshadow spiritual themes, like light emerging from darkness in our lives?

Part 4: Day 2 – The Expanse and Waters

On Day 2 (verses 6–8), God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters to separate waters from waters.” He made the expanse and separated waters below from above, and it was so. He called the expanse “heaven.” Evening and morning—the second day.

The Hebrew word for expanse is *raqia*, meaning something beaten thin like metal, reflecting ancient views of the sky as a dome. To the Hebrews, it appeared as a firmament holding back upper waters.

Some creationists propose this describes a water canopy above the atmosphere, creating a greenhouse effect for a uniformly warm, tropical Earth pre-flood. Evidence like tropical fossils under Arctic tundra supports this. During the flood, this canopy collapsed, combining with fountains from the deep to cover the earth. While not definitive, it explains certain phenomena.

The English “firmament” comes from Latin, meaning something firm, but biblically, it’s space dividing waters.

Firmament used in Daniel 12:3 and Psalm 191. It would be worth your time to turn to those references and read what the Bible says about the firmament there.

Reflection Questions

- What does the separation of waters reveal about God bringing order?
- How might the water canopy theory fit with biblical and scientific observations?

Part 5: Day 3 – Land, Seas, and Vegetation

On Day 3 (verses 9–13), God said, “Let the waters below be gathered into one place, and let dry land appear.” It was so—another separation: land from seas. God called the dry land “earth” and the waters “seas,” and saw it was good.

Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them.” The earth brought forth grass, herbs, and trees yielding seed after their kind. God saw it was good. Evening and morning—the third day.

Notice “after their kind”—plants reproduce according to their type. A corn seed yields corn, not carrots. This underscores creation’s order: Kinds remain distinct, challenging ideas of macro-evolution. The intricate machinery within a cell further points to design, not chance. Every plant type has its own method of distribution of seeds. Maple trees use the “helicopter” approach whereas violets and poppies use a spring loaded mechanism to scatter seeds.

Reflection Questions

- Why emphasize plants yielding seed “after their kind”?
- How does this day’s creation reflect God’s provision for ongoing life?

Part 6: Day 4 – Lights in the Sky

On Day 4 (verses 14–19), God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate day from night, and let them be for signs, seasons, days, and years; to give light on the earth.” It was so.

God made two great lights: the greater (sun) to rule the day, the lesser (moon) to rule the night—and the stars. He placed them in the expanse to give light, rule day and night, and separate light from darkness. God saw it was good. Evening and morning—the fourth day.

Day 4 is central in the seven-day structure, possibly emphasizing a key point. The word “seasons” is Hebrew *moed*, meaning appointed times or meetings, not just weather seasons like spring or fall.

Examples:

- Genesis 17:21 and 21:2: Sarah bears Isaac at the “appointed time” (*moed*).
- Exodus 13:10: Keep Passover at its “appointed time” yearly.
- Exodus 27:21: Tabernacle as “tent of meeting” (*moed*), for appointed gatherings.

These celestial bodies enable calendars for festivals, worship, and holy days—like Passover or Sabbath. Easter’s date ties to the first Sunday after the full moon following the spring equinox, based on lunar and solar cycles. This tells us that God designed the heavens for fellowship—appointed times to gather and worship Him. Our Lord’s Day (first day of the week) relies on this celestial order.

Reflection Questions

- How does understanding “seasons” as appointed times change your view of Day 4?
- Why might God place this on the central day, and how does it relate to worship?

Study Exercises

- Use the new sheet to trace God’s actions (created, said, saw, etc.) in Genesis 1. Note patterns and what they teach about God.
- Research *moed* references (e.g., Genesis 17:21, Exodus 13:10). How do they connect creation to worship?
- Reflect on cross-references in your Bible for Genesis 1:14–19 to explore signs and seasons further.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Genesis 1 shows God’s orderly creation through speaking, separating, and naming, culminating in lights for appointed times of worship. This same God calls us into fellowship through salvation.

For next week:

- Review Days 1–4 and fill in your thoughts on the note sheet.
- Study the notes and questions personally for deeper insight.
- Consider how creation’s order reflects God’s desire for relationship.