

Back to the Beginning: Genesis Session 11 Review and Study Guide

We've been moving slowly through Genesis—now in our 11th session and just reaching Genesis 2:4. But taking time to dig deep is worth it. Grab your Bible and the notes (the ones with the garden on the front—we're on page 7). Let's explore Genesis 2:4–7, comparing it to chapter 1, and uncover truths about God's names, creation's stages, and how we're formed.

Lesson Objectives

- Understand Genesis 2:4–7 as a fresh angle on creation, focusing on “generations” as stages.
- Explore the words for God's creative acts: created, made, formed, and separated.
- Learn about God's names—Yahweh, Elohim, Adonai—and their meanings.
- Reflect on humanity formed from dust and given the breath of life.
- See connections to Jesus as fully human and divine.

Part 1: The Generations of Heaven and Earth

Let's read Genesis 2:4–7: “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh God made earth and heaven. Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet grown. For Yahweh God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. Then Yahweh God formed man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And so the man became a living being.”

The word “generations” here means stages or developments—like family generations, but for creation. It shows the sequence: light, separation of waters and land, plants, etc. This passage views chapter 1 from a different angle, emphasizing details like no rain yet—just a mist or stream watering the ground.

Compare to chapter 1: Plants on Day 3, after separating waters and land. Here, it recaps with a focus on humanity's role. No contradictions—just a complementary perspective.

Reflection Questions

- How does viewing creation as “generations” (stages) help you see God's orderly process?
- Why might God recap creation from a different angle in chapter 2?

Part 2: Words for God's Creative Acts

Genesis uses varied words for God's work: “created” (from nothing), “made” (assembling), “formed” (shaping material), and much was “separated” (dividing existing elements—like light from dark, waters above/below, land from sea, and ultimately, woman taken out of man).

In verse 4, it's "created" and "made." No new creation here—just organizing what existed. Verse 5 notes no shrubs or plants yet because no rain and no man to cultivate—tying creation to humanity's purpose. A mist (or stream) watered everything pre-rain, perhaps explaining the pre-flood world's different climate.

Reflection Questions

- What do the different words (created, made, formed, separated) reveal about God's methods?
- How does the mist watering the ground fit with chapter 1's creation order?

Part 3: The Names of God – Yahweh Elohim

Verse 4 introduces "Yahweh God" (or "LORD God" in many Bibles)—the first use of Yahweh. In chapter 1, it's Elohim (plural, hinting at the Trinity).

- **Elohim:** General term for God, emphasizing power and creation.
- **Yahweh:** God's personal, covenant name, from "I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Pronounced "Yahweh" by scholars; older Bibles say "Jehovah." Means self-existent, eternal One.
- **Adonai:** Means "Lord" or master—used when "lord" has only a capital L (human authority) or capital L-o-r-d (divine Lord).

Hebrew originally had no vowels—just consonants (YHWH for Yahweh). Vowels were added later; Jews avoid pronouncing it to honor "Do not take the Lord's name in vain," saying "Adonai" instead.

Yahweh combines with Elohim here as "Yahweh Elohim"—the personal, relational Creator.

Reflection Questions

- Why introduce Yahweh here, after Elohim in chapter 1?
- How does knowing God's names (Yahweh, Elohim) deepen your worship?

Part 4: Formed from Dust, Given Life

Verse 7: Yahweh God formed man from the dust of the ground (Hebrew: adam from adamah—man from ground). "Formed" means shaping existing material, not creating from nothing.

God breathed the breath of life into Adam's nostrils, making him a living soul (nephesh—being with life).

Animals have "breath of life" (Genesis 6:17), but humanity's is unique—eternal soul. Humans contain earth's elements, returning to dust at death, but the spirit lives on.

Jesus, the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15), was fully human (earthy body) and fully God—100% both. His resurrection body had new abilities (passing through walls?), yet He overcame natural laws even pre-resurrection (walking on water).

Reflection Questions

- What does being formed from dust and given God’s breath mean for our value and destiny?
- How does Jesus as fully human and divine fulfill what Adam marred?

Part 5: God’s Word as Communication

God focused on words from the beginning—the Son is the Word (John 1). He preserved His Word in writing for us to read, study, and let the Spirit apply.

Translators labor to bring it from Hebrew/Greek to English and other languages. Appreciate your Bible—read it daily.

Study Exercises

- Read Genesis 2:4–7 alongside chapter 1. Note similarities/differences in perspective.
- Research Yahweh and Elohim in a concordance—see where each is used.
- Meditate on Genesis 2:7 and 1 Corinthians 15:45–49 (first and second Adam).
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer in English, reflecting on its Hebrew roots.