

The Creation Completed (Finished)



SABBATH—JANUARY 12

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1; Psalm 8:3; Romans 8:19–22; Leviticus 11:14–22; Genesis 2:1–3; Mark 2:28.

MEMORY VERSE: “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day he rested from all of his work” (Genesis 2:2, NIV).

THIS WEEK'S LESSON REVIEWS THE BIBLE'S SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE LAST THREE CREATION DAYS AND THE SABBATH REST. This description is found in Genesis 1:1–2:1–3. But there are many verses in other parts of the Bible that speak about them. One of the most impressive parts of the Creation story is the division of the days of Creation. Why did God choose to make the seven-day period that we call a week?

The Bible does not tell us directly. But we can look for clues (hints). Perhaps the most important clue is the Sabbath itself. The Sabbath makes a special time for relationship between God and people. It may be that God established the week for common work. But God also set aside a regular period of time as a reminder of our relationship to Him. (Read Mark 2:28.) The Sabbath would help people to remember that God is the true Creator and Giver and that we are completely dependent upon Him.

Whatever the reason, it is clear that the Genesis Creation story shows that Creation was very well and carefully planned. Nothing was left to chance (accident).

SUNDAY—JANUARY 13**SUN, MOON, AND STARS**
(Genesis 1:14–19)

Read Genesis 1:14–19. What took place on the fourth day of Creation? Why was the sun created on the fourth day, instead of on the first? How are we to make sense of this?

The fourth day has probably been discussed more than any of the other six Creation days. If the sun was created on the fourth day, how could there be actual “days” before this if there was no sun? But if the sun already had been there, then what happened on the fourth day?

There are many possible answers to these questions. The first possible answer is that the sun was created on the fourth day, and the light for the first three days came from God’s presence or from a supernova.¹ Revelation 21:23 supports this idea. The sun is not needed in the new earth because God is there. The second possible answer is that the sun, moon, and stars were given their “jobs” at that time. Psalm 8:3 seems to support this view. Hebrew scholar C. John Collins writes that the Hebrew wording of Genesis 1:14 may support either one of these two possible views. (Read C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* [Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing Company, 2006], page 57.)

The third possible answer is that

the sun was already in its orbit but was hidden by clouds or volcanic dust and was not able to be seen until the fourth day. We can compare² this possible event with what happens on the planet Venus because very nearly the same thing happens today.

This verse does not seem to clearly support or rule out any of these interpretations. But this does not stop strong opinions on the topic. We should accept the fact that our understanding is limited. Accepting this, especially in the area of Creation, should not be that hard to achieve. After all, think about how many scientific mysteries there are today. They are right here for experimental science to study and yet still remain mysteries. How much more mysterious is something hidden so far in the past?



God created the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day.

1. supernova—the explosion of a star that causes the star to become extremely bright.

2. compare—to show how two things are the same or different.

MONDAY—JANUARY 14**CREATION OF AIR AND WATER ANIMALS (Genesis 1:20–23)**

Read Genesis 1:20–23. What proof is there in these verses that would suggest “accidents”?

The waters and the atmosphere were filled with fish and birds on the fifth day of Creation. Many thinkers have seen a relationship between the second and fifth Creation days. The waters were separated by the atmosphere on the second day. And both were filled with living things on the fifth day. The Creation events seem to have followed a well-designed plan. This shows God’s perfect work in planning Creation. Nothing in the Creation story leaves any room for “accidents.”

Both sea animals and birds are said to be plentiful. This shows that many different kinds of living things were created on the fifth day. Each living thing also was blessed with the ability to be fruitful and create more of its own kind. There was no single parent from which all other living things came. But each kind seems to have had the ability to produce (bear) a variety³ of living things—or different kinds of the same thing. For example, more than 400 named kinds of pigeons have been developed from the common pigeon. At least 27 kinds of goldfish are known to exist (be). God clearly gave each of His living things the ability to bear many different kinds of younger ones.

This makes the Creation a beautiful and interesting place in which to live.

In verse 21, God says that the creatures He made were good. This suggests they were well-designed, beautiful, and an important part of the Creation. An example of one of the most beautiful living creatures is the bird. Birds are truly wonderful and well designed. Their feathers are light-weight but strong, and stiff yet flexible. The parts of a flight feather are held together by many sets of tiny barbs (sharp hooks) that are strong but light-weight. A bird’s lung is so designed that it can receive oxygen as the bird breathes air in and out. This helps to give a bird the high level of oxygen required for powered flight. The oxygen level also is raised because of air sacs in some of the bird’s bones. These sacs work to help the flow of oxygen and, at the same time, to lighten the body of the bird. This makes flying easier to



On the fifth day, God filled the waters with fish, and He filled the atmosphere with birds.

3. variety—a particular kind of person or thing, such as a different variety of oranges or many varieties of snakes.

do and control. Birds are wonderfully made. Through them, we can see the perfection of God's plan.

With all this in mind, read Matthew 10:29–31. What comfort can you find in these words?

TUESDAY—JANUARY 15

CREATION OF THE LAND ANIMALS (Genesis 1:24–31)

In Genesis 1:24–31, land animals and people were created on the sixth day. As the second and fifth days seem to be connected, so does the dividing of the land and sea on the third day seem to be connected with the filling of the land on the sixth day. This also reminds us of the perfect order of Creation events. And that God is the Author of perfect order. (Read 1 Corinthians 14:33.)

As with the wording of the verses about the living things created on the fifth day, the wording of the verses about what God created on the sixth day also shows that many kinds of things were created on the sixth day of Creation, as well. Many kinds of beasts, cattle, and creeping things were created. This shows that there is no single parent of all land animals. Instead, God created many special and separate groups.

Notice the wording “according to its [their] kind” (Genesis 1:11, 21, 24, 25, NKJV). Some have tried to use this wording to support the idea of fixed “kinds.” This is an idea taken from Greek thought. The Greeks of Bible

times thought that each person was an imperfect example of an unchanging ideal (perfect model), known as a type (kind). But, the sameness of one kind does not agree with the Bible teaching that all of nature suffers from the curse of sin (Romans 8:19–22). We know that animal groups have changed. A good example are the curses of Genesis 3. (Ellen G. White wrote about the “threefold curse” on the earth [the curse after the Fall, after Cain’s sin, and after the Flood].) Another example is bad bacteria and wild animals that cause so much suffering and problems in the world. You can understand the true meaning of the phrase “according to their kind” by reading the complete story in the Bible.

Read Genesis 6:20; Genesis 7:14; and Leviticus 11:14–22. How is the wording “after its kind” (NKJV) understood? How do these examples help us to understand the wording in Genesis 1?

The wording “after his kind” (KJV) does not mean that animals give birth to the same kind. Rather, it means that there were different kinds of living things involved in the different stories. Some Bible translations use the wording “of various [different] kinds,” which seems more true to the meaning of the Bible. The wording shows that there were many different kinds of living things on the sixth day. This means that from the time of Creation, there have been many kinds of plants and animals.



God created land animals and people on the sixth day.

WEDNESDAY—JANUARY 16

CREATION COMPLETED (FINISHED) (Genesis 2:1–3)

So, Creation was finished in six days. (We will study the creation of humans later.) Then we find that the Bible first speaks of the seventh day.

Read Genesis 2:1–3. Notice especially verse 1, which shows that all of what God had done was finished. What does this teach us about the importance of the seventh day?

The Hebrew word for rest in this verse is *shabath*, which is closely related to the word for Sabbath. It shows that the work of creating the world was stopped. God was not tired. Nor did He need a rest. He was finished with His work of creating, and so He stopped. This shows that

God's special blessing rests on the seventh day. It is not only "blessed" but also "sanctified" (made holy). This means that the seventh day was to be set apart for God. So, God gave special meaning to the Sabbath in honor of the relationship between God and humans.

Read Mark 2:27, 28. What did Jesus say was the purpose of the Sabbath?

Notice that the Sabbath was not made because God had a need. Instead, it was created because humans had a need, and God helped to fill this need. At the end of that first week, God rested from His acts of Creation and devoted His time to His relationship with His creatures. Humans needed the relationship with their Maker in order to understand their place in the universe. Imagine the joy and wonder that Adam and Eve experienced as they talked with God and saw the world that He had made. After sin, the wisdom of the Sabbath rest became even clearer. We need the Sabbath rest in order to prevent us from forgetting God, getting too interested in riches, and overworking.

God commands us to give one-seventh of our lives to remember the act of Creation. What should that tell us about why Sabbath keeping is important? How can you learn to have a deeper and richer experience with the Lord through resting on the Sabbath as He Himself did?



Humans need special time with their Maker in order to understand their place in the universe.

THURSDAY—JANUARY 17

THE LITERAL (REAL) DAY (Genesis 1:5, 8, 31)

Read Genesis 1:5, 8, 31. What are the different parts of a Creation day? Does anything in these verses suggest that these are not real 24-hour days as we experience them today?

The nature of the days of Creation has been the subject of much discussion. Some have questioned whether each of the Creation days were really 24 hours or whether they might represent much longer periods of time. The verses' description of the Creation days gives the answer to that question. The days have an evening (dark period) and a morning (light period) and are numbered in order. That is, the days are shown very clearly to be days just as we now experience them. They have an evening and a

morning, or a period of darkness and a period of light. It is difficult to see how the statement could be clearer in describing the days of the week. The wording, "there was evening, and there was morning" (NirV), shows that each day lasts 24 hours.

Read Leviticus 23:3. What example do we have that all seven days of the Creation week were the same kind of days as those we experience?

The ancient Hebrews did not doubt the nature of the Sabbath day. They knew that it was a day of ordinary length but carried a special blessing from God. Even many Bible thinkers who do not accept the idea of these days as real 24-hour days often admit that the writers of the Bible wrote about them as real days.

So crucial to our relationship with God is our trust of God and of His Word. If we cannot trust the Word of God on something as clear as the Genesis Creation occurring over a period of six real days, what can we trust Him on?

FRIDAY—JANUARY 18

ADDITIONAL STUDY: The days of the Creation week are counted according to a dark period, known as the evening, and a light period, known as the morning. We do not have any good reason to interpret these days other than as being the same as the days we experience today. Some have

used such verses as Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 when arguing that each Creation day really is 1,000 years. This reasoning is not suggested by the verses. And it does nothing to support those who argue that these days mean billions of years.

Also, suppose the days in Genesis actually did show long periods of time. Then one would expect to find that the order of the fossil record matches the order of the living organisms created in the successive six Creation “days.” For example, the first fossils should be plants, which were created on the third “day.” Next should be the fossils of the first water animals and the air animals. Finally, we should find the fossils of the first land animals. The fossil record does not follow this order. Sea animal fossils come before plants. And land animal fossils come before birds. The first fossil fruit trees and other flowering plants appear after all these other groups. And humans come last in both stories.

“Of each successive day of creation, the Holy Bible says that each day has an evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs [Leaders in Bible Times] and Prophets [Special Messengers]*, page 112.

“But unbelievers argue that the events of the first week required

seven long periods. This argument is opposed to the foundation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It makes unclear that which God has made clear. It is the worst kind of unfaithfulness. For many who pretend to believe the record of creation, it is unfaithfulness in hiding.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 3, page 91.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Even if you do not believe that the days of Creation were real 24-hour days, two points are clear: nothing was done by accident in the act of Creation. And there was no common parent for all kinds of living things. But evolution,⁴ according to Charles Darwin, teaches the opposite of these two things: life is an accident. And there is a common parent for all kinds of living things. With this in mind, how could a person interpret Genesis from Darwin’s point of view?
- ② Why is it important to understand that science, which does so much good, is still just a human undertaking (project)?
- ③ All science has to study is a fallen world, one that is very different in many ways from the original creation. Why is it important for us to remember that truth?

4. evolution—a theory (unproven idea) that the differences between modern plants and animals exist because of changes that happened by a natural process over a very long time.