

## Abraham 4 — The Gods Organized — the Council Creation, and 'Watched Until They Were Obeyed'

*Abraham 4: c. 1995 BC. Abraham continues the creation account, now from inside the heavenly council he was shown in chapter 3. Genesis 1 retold with every divine verb plural — and the Gods said, and the Gods organized — and creation measured not by 'it was good' but by 'they were obeyed.'*

We've had the Creation twice — Genesis 1 and Moses 2. Abraham 4 isn't a repeat; it's the same event from inside the council Abraham was shown in chapter 3. Two words change everything: the pronoun ("the Gods," letting the plural Elohim mean what it says — a council's work) and the verb ("organized," not created from nothing — the Gods shaped pre-existing material). And each day ends not with "it was good" but with "they were obeyed."

### Insights

- 1. 4:1 — organized, not made from nothing.** *The Gods organized and formed the heavens and the earth.* Creation from nothing entered Christianity from philosophy, not scripture. The Restoration says the raw material is eternal; God's glory is in organizing it ("the elements are eternal," D&C 93:33).
- 2. 4:10 — the elements obeyed.** Where Genesis says "it was good," Abraham says the Gods "saw that they were obeyed." The material world responds to God like a person — willingly. The earth was built obedient, which leaves a question hanging over the chapter: will we?
- 3. 4:14 — completing chapter 3.** The fourth day sets the sun, moon, and stars. Chapter 3 showed the heavens AS THEY NOW ARE (Kolob, the governing stars); chapter 4 shows the moment the Gods set them there. The revealed astronomy is grounded in a revealed history.
- 4. 4:27 — image of the Gods.** Man is made "in the image of the GODS... male and female" — not a solitary deity's image but the whole council's, borne by the pair together. The deep root of heavenly parents and eternal marriage: we are made in the image of a divine family.
- 5. 4:28 — the gardener's charge.** The first words to the pair are a blessing, not a rule: be fruitful, multiply, subdue. "Subdue" (*kavash*) means cultivate toward fruitfulness — the gardener's work, "to dress it and to keep it," not to strip-mine.

### Hebrew Word Studies

**bara / yatzar / asah / tikken** (בָּרָא / יָצַר / אָשַׁע / תִּקֶּן) — **create (the divine-only verb) / form, shape / make / order, arrange** vv. 1, 7, 25. Hebrew has a whole family of making-words, and the Restoration's reading leans on the difference between them. *Bara*, "create," is the one verb used only of God — but even it doesn't require "out of nothing"; Isaiah uses the same *bara* for God "creating" the joy of Jerusalem (Isa. 65:18), which is organizing gladness out of circumstances, not conjuring it from the void. *Yatzar* is the potter's "form" (God "formed man of the dust," Gen. 2:7). *Asah* is plain "make." And *tikken* is "to order, set in right relation." Abraham 4's preferred words are exactly these last ones — organize, form, order, prepare — verbs that work on material already there. Even the Bible quietly agrees: Hebrews says the worlds were framed so that the visible came "not... of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3) — out of the unseen, not out of nothing. And the one verse usually cited for creation from nothing, 2 Maccabees 7:28, actually says God made things "out of things that were not" — again, the unseen. The Restoration didn't invent this reading; it recovered it. God is the great organizer of an eternal world, not a magician pulling matter from an empty hat.

**shama / tov / mishma'at** (שָׁמַע / טוֹב / מִשְׁמַעַת) — **hear-and-obey / good / obedience** vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25. In Hebrew, *shama*, "to hear," already means "to obey" — hearing and heeding are the same act ("to obey is better than sacrifice," 1 Sam. 15:22, uses this root). Genesis grades each creation day with *tov*, "good" — an aesthetic verdict. Abraham 4 swaps it for *mishma'at*, "obedience" — a relational one. That swap is doing real theology. It reframes the entire creation as the first act of obedience in the universe, the elements heeding the Gods before any human ever did. And it makes the cosmos *responsive*, not inert — which is why the Restoration can speak of the earth as a covenant being that "abideth the law of a celestial kingdom" and "transgresseth not the law" (D&C 88:25), and why Enoch heard the earth herself groan and speak (Moses 7:48). Christ's disciples marveled that "even the wind and the sea obey him" (Mk. 4:41); Abraham 4 says they always have. The world was built obedient. Which leaves a quiet question hanging over the whole chapter: the elements heeded their Maker from the first day — will we?

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*tselem* / *zakhar u-neqevah* / *Elohim* (צֶלֶם / הַבְּרָקָנוּ רָכָז / אֱלֹהִים) — **image, statue / male and female / Gods vv. 26-27.** *Tselem*, "image," is the word for a statue — often a king's statue, set up to show whose realm you're standing in; it's also the word for an idol (Num. 33:52). And that's the quiet brilliance of this verse: humanity is the one lawful, God-authorized "image" of the divine. You don't need to carve an idol of the Gods — they already made their image, and it's the person next to you. *Zakhar u-neqevah*, "male and female," is bound right to the image-language, so that image-bearing is something the two carry together. And *Elohim* — "Gods" — is allowed here, uniquely, to mean what its plural form says. Put it together and you get the Restoration's anthropology in one line: we are the living statues of a divine council, made male and female so that the pair can mirror the family of heaven. Paul reaches the same place — "neither is the man without the woman... in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:11) — and the destiny attached to it is staggering: the image of the Gods is meant to grow up into the likeness of the Gods (D&C 132:19-20). You are not a thing God made. You are a portrait of the family you came from.

### Apocryphal Correlations — the old books beside the restored text

**2 Enoch 24-33.** God tells Enoch how he founded the cosmos — bringing the visible out of the invisible, ordering what was unformed. Abraham 4's picture exactly: the Gods organizing an unorganized deep, not conjuring matter from nothing. Unknown in the West until 1896 — unavailable.

**Jubilees 2:1-16.** The creation week with the angels created on day one and present through the work — the plural heavenly company Abraham 4 calls "the Gods." No English until 1888 — unavailable.

**Hebrews 11:3; 2 Maccabees 7:28 (canon).** Even the Bible leans toward "organize": the worlds framed so the visible came "not of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3); God made things "out of things that were not" (2 Macc. 7:28) — out of the unseen. The Restoration's reading has canonical support, not just apocryphal.

*Canon = Moses, the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants. Read per D&C 91. Abraham 4 parallels Moses 2 (see that chapter for the fuller creation apocrypha). 2 Enoch and Jubilees — both unavailable to Joseph — independently show a divine company organizing an existing deep; Hebrews and 2 Maccabees point the same way.*

### Where the threads lead

**The plural image.** Abraham 4:26-27; Moses 2:26-27; D&C 130:22 (the Father and Son have bodies); 1 Cor. 11:11 — the image of God is borne by male and female together.

**An obedient, living earth.** Abraham 4:10; D&C 88:25 (the earth "transgresseth not the law"); Mark 4:41 (wind and sea obey him); Moses 7:48 (the earth groans) — creation as a covenant being.

**Eternal matter.** Abraham 4:1; D&C 93:33; D&C 131:7 ("no such thing as immaterial matter") — God organizes an eternal world rather than making it from nothing.

### How the chapter changes the reader

*Abraham 4 teaches that creation was collaborative — God worked in council, with the Son and the noble and great ones — and you, made "in the image of the Gods," are made FOR council: for shared work, for counsel, for creating together. It also hands you a sturdier way to stand in the world: the elements obeyed, the earth is a covenant being, and you're charged to cultivate, not strip-mine. And its strange refrain — the Gods spoke, then watched until they were obeyed — is the pattern of your own life with God. He commands, then waits. The earth heeded him from the first morning.*