

Another question which is sometimes raised is that of the supposed absence of the sun until the fourth day of creation. It is said that the Bible indicates that the sun was not created until the fourth day, and that this would have made a long period of plant growth prior to that impossible. Actually this is no problem at all when we realize that the Biblical text does not say that the sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day. It is readily admitted by all Bible scholars that the Hebrew word used here (Genesis 1:16) is asah, and that this Hebrew word is (correctly) translated in numerous ways in our English Bibles. It is very probable that here in 1:16 the word "made" (asah) is intended in the sense of "set" or "established," in reference to the sun and moon's becoming visible in the sky, after having been hidden by the earlier blanket of vapor which is referred to in verse 7. In this connection we should remember (a) that 1:1 says "the heavens," as well as the earth, were created "in the beginning," and (b) there were regular, alternating periods of light and darkness, as described in 1:4-5, prior to the latter five days of creation. It is very reasonable to believe that the sun was responsible for these alternating periods of light and darkness, just as it is today, but that the blanket of vapor did not allow the sun to be seen as such in the sky until the fourth day.

In support of this interpretation we should observe the varied uses of the Hebrew word asah in the Old Testament. Besides the 631 times it is translated in the King James Old Testament as "to make" (e.g., Genesis 3:7 and 21), it is also used 1292 times in the sense of "to do" (e.g., Exodus 22:30), 50 times as "to deal" (e.g., Exod. 21:9; Ruth 1:8; Ezek. 8:18), 5 times as "to bestow" (e.g., II Chron. 24:7), 3 times as "to bring to pass" (e.g., Gen. 50:20), 50 times as "to execute" (e.g., I Sam. 28:18), 7 times as "to maintain" (e.g., I Kings 8:59), 3 times as "to set" (e.g., II Chron. 2:18), and 2 times as "to appoint" (e.g., Job 14:5). Another excellent example of the use of the word asah in the sense of "to appoint" is found in I Kings 12:31, where it is said that Jeroboam appointed priests when he set up his new centers of worship. Even a brief examination of the passages where the word is used will show the reader that it usually does not mean anything like an original creating process, so it is unreasonable to insist that it has to be taken as an original creative process in Genesis 1:16. Thus note no. 4 on page 3 of the Scofield Reference Bible (note no. 6 on page 1 of the New Scofield Reference Bible) states that in verses 14-18 no "original creative act" is implied, and that "the sense is 'made to appear; made visible.'"

One of the most frequently encountered arguments used in recent years for literal, 24-hour creative days is the so-called "numerical adjective argument." This argument is based on the fact that in every other place in the Bible where the Hebrew or Greek word "day" is used with an ordinal number ("first day," "second day," etc.) it refers to literal, 24-hour days. This is taken to mean that the numerical adjectives in Genesis one likewise indicate literal days. In reply to this we should note that there is no other Scripture passage where ordinal numbers could be used with figurative days. The Bible uses ordinal numbers with literal days, such as in Leviticus 23:36,