

Dear Phil

A PROBLEM WITH THE CREATION ACCOUNT IN GENESIS?

How could there be light on the first day of Creation if the sun was not created until the fourth day? Since God is light, was He the light source for the first three days? —DENNIS

Dear Dennis,

Good observation! Lots of people don't notice that the sun wasn't created until the fourth day. Before I answer your question directly, let's make sure we understand what kind of literature Genesis is, and the meaning of the Hebrew word for day (*yom*) in Genesis 1.

The genre of Genesis 1–11 is historical narrative. Narrative means that it tells a story, in this case, the story of the world's creation, fall, destruction by the flood, and the dispersion of the nations. Historical means that Moses intended his readers to understand that the events of his story actually took place in the real world. Jesus' references to Genesis 1-11 confirm that Moses wrote Genesis and that it is an accurate historical narrative (e.g., Mark 10:3-9; 12:26; Luke 16:29-31). According to Jesus, "Scripture cannot be broken," which means it will never be shown to be false (John 10:35). Therefore, we must accept whatever Genesis says about creation as true.

The Hebrew word *yom* means "day." You may have heard that

the word *yom* can refer to a "long, indefinite period of time." It is true that *yom*, in the phrase "Day of the Lord," refers to an extended period of time in which God pours out His wrath upon the wicked and His blessing upon the righteous. But whenever a Hebrew writer refers to the evening and the morning of a *yom*, he always—no exceptions—means a 24-hour day. Further, Moses also listed the days of creation as a consecutive series of days: second, third, fourth, and so on. When a Hebrew writer lists a series of consecutive days that have evenings and mornings, they always refer to 24-hour days. In sum, the genre of Genesis 1–11 and the use of *yom* in Genesis 1 make it clear that Moses intended us to understand that God created the universe and all that is in it in six, consecutive, 24-hour earth-days.

Now, in response to your question, it is possible that the light on Days 1–3 came from God. But I surely wouldn't base it on 1 John 1:5. That verse does not teach that God is an electromagnetic wave/particle energy form. When John says "God

is light," he is speaking metaphorically about God's holiness or purity.

The main reason I don't think the light was the shining of God's glory is that God said "Let there be light." The phrase "Let there be" appears to involve God's out-of-nothing, creative activity (see Gen. 1:6, 14). It seems more likely to me that, after God created the earth and the time-space continuum we call the universe (Gen. 1:1-2), He created light. Since Gen. 1:4 says God "separated the light from the darkness," it appears that when God created light, it may have been diffuse, filling the entire created universe. When God separated the light from the darkness, He gathered or focused at least some of the light so that it emanated from a specific location in space and shone upon the earth during Days 1-3. As the earth rotated on its axis, the effect of an evening and a morning took place. The sun, which God created on Day 4, was not necessary for there to be an evening and a morning on Day 1. All that was necessary was a localized light source and a rotating earth.

Theologically, the order of creation is quite significant. God created light before He created the sun. This destroys the pagan idea that the sun is the source of all light and life. Light came before the sun! Do you see how this would be a strong argument against Egyptian sun-worship? If you would like more helpful information on this topic, I encourage you to visit the most helpful creationist website I know: www.answersingenesis.org.

What an awesome God we serve!

PHILIP ■

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