

One further word about the fact that only three general categories of plants are mentioned is in order. Botanical taxonomists classify all known plants into more than 350 thousand species. One may with propriety ask whether 350 thousand species of plants were intended to be included within this simple three-point classification. I should like to suggest that the list in Genesis was not intended to be exhaustive, but only representative of all plants. Yet, as a representative list, in which part is given for the whole (as in the figure of speech called synecdoche), its implications are clear: God is the Creator of all plant-life.

Event #8 (recorded in Genesis 1:14-19) -- God's Mediate Creation of the appearance of the sun, the moon, and the stars (as viewed from earth's surface).

We have already spoke of God's creation of the firmament or expanse; and have proposed the idea that the expanse is earth's atmosphere. We have also mentioned the mineralogical evidence that the atmosphere during earth's early history was largely composed of carbon dioxide. And we have suggested that, with a carbon dioxide blanket (which would cause a slight increase in atmospheric temperature), much of the water on the earth's surface would be in the form of water vapor, and the weather would be continually cloudy.

As soon as the created plants began to grow, they commenced, by means of the process of photosynthesis, to consume the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and to produce free oxygen. Of course, through the process of cellular respiration, they also took in oxygen and released carbon dioxide. However, since the rate of photosynthesis slightly exceeded the rate of respiration, the atmosphere, over a long period of time, was gradually converted from one containing a very large percentage of carbon dioxide and almost no oxygen, to one containing very little carbon dioxide (33 thousands of one percent, on average), and a sizable amount of oxygen (almost 21 percent).

As the carbon dioxide percentage decreased, the temperature decreased also. Gradually the water vapor condensed, and the thick clouds began to dissipate. Then at some point in the process, the cloud cover broke up, and the sun, moon, and stars became visible from the surface of the earth. And thus the now-visible sun, moon, and stars became light-bearers, to clearly distinguish day from night, to give light upon the earth, to signify