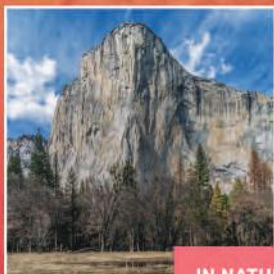


Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR COMPANION . . .



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

SPRING 2025 VOL 32 NO 1 US \$4.99





*“Discipline your son,
he will give*



*and he will give you rest;
delight to your heart.”*

– Proverbs 29:17, ESV

Our Why



Scripture refers to God as our *Creator*. This title signifies His ultimate power and authority over *all* His creation—that everything around us on earth, in the stars, and throughout the universe originates from Him. He is the sole source of Creation, and there is nothing comparable. Because our Creator brought something out of nothing, He has absolute sovereignty over everything.

The Bible remains consistent in portraying God as the Creator. Here are some examples:

- Isaiah 44:24 – “Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: ‘I am the Lord, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.’”
- Jeremiah 10:11, 12 – “Tell them this: ‘These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.’ But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding” (NIV).
- Psalm 96:5 – “For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens” (KJV).
- Isaiah 45:18 – “For this is what the Lord says, He who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it as a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited): ‘I am the Lord, and there is no one else’” (NASB).

By identifying Himself as the Creator, God allows His power and character to be observed through everything He created in this world and beyond. David was aware of this as he wrote, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).

By inviting people to understand something about Him while examining Creation and learning more about the things that were created, they can then begin to grasp the spiritual enrichment of the things that are not seen. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

By publishing articles accompanied by stunning photography with uplifting life lessons backed by Scripture and scientific research, *Creation Illustrated* provides its readers with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the character of our Creator God. Our sole desire is to guide souls to acknowledge God’s divine and benevolent design in nature and His supreme interest in spending eternity with us so that all will be inspired to *worship* Him as our Creator and Redeemer. “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (Revelation 14:7). That’s why.

The Publishers



Funds For Summer Camp, Mission Trips, and Family Vacations

Spring is upon us and summercamp, mission trips, vacations to national parks are not far off. Schools, churches, youth groups, and families need funds for such life-enhancing activities, and we are here to help! Anyone can earn extra funds without having to buy, stock, or deliver anything. Become a *Creation Illustrated* Affiliate and earn 20–30 percent of every *Creation Illustrated* subscription sold! Why wait?

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Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 32, No. 1

Our Purpose . . .

is to share the wonders of God's creation. By revealing fresh insights of His infinite wisdom, gentle touch, undeniable justice, redeeming love, and flawless design, pure truth shall bring renewed peace. Each part of this publication is offered as a reprieve from the daily rigors of life so that all can look to the future with unbridled gratitude and hope.

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Like us:



The cover photo is of a dahlia with dewdrops was taken by Renae Smith.

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Authentic Intelligence

With the rapid onslaught of Artificial Intelligence (AI), society faces confusing moral and ethical dilemmas with daily challenges in attempting to decipher what is real. Fear not. Nature provides ample evidence of the Creator's Authentic Intelligence (CAI).

For example, as we uncover the characteristics of solid granite bedrock that form the foundations of the earth in this edition's "Creation Up-Close" feature, we discover facts that point to God's authentic intelligent design. While some scientists postulate that granite forms through a slow process of cooling and crystallizing molten magma, microscopic examination reveals embedded *radiohalos* (remnants of radioactive millisecond decay) that point to the instantaneous formation of granite—authentic support beneath the rock's surface that the earth was formed rapidly in six literal days.

Also hidden in the intelligent DNA makeup of His creatures, God equipped the lowly opossum with the ability to appear dead in order to ward off predators. The story on these animals shows they can remain still, hardly breathe, foam at the mouth, and even begin to exude a rotten odor to display an authentically intelligent way to deceive the enemy—an illustration of Jesus' admonition to "'be wise as serpents and harmless as doves'" (Matthew 10:16). We are called to be intelligent in avoiding danger and conflict yet authentically gentle and humble in proclaiming the truth.

Even the tiny ants display the Creator's authentic intelligence as they diligently labor to build a nest with myriad tunnels while hauling food supplies to support the colony as told in this issue's children's story. An anthill may appear unassuming, but the Creator wants to teach us intelligent lessons beneath a surface glance as He bids us, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6, KJV).



Countless winged creatures offer vast demonstrations of His authentic intelligence with their ability to migrate, communicate, and multiply according to their kind as being among the first specimens of breathing life on earth as told in the Creation Day Five Part Two article.

In this fast-paced world with electronic gadgets ruling our lives, God supplies restful reprieves to allow us to unplug and regain a grasp on His original intent to be among Creation's soothing and healing surroundings. Such authentic mental, physical, and spiritual refreshment bolsters our intelligence and ability to process the countless blessings that inspire awe and worship toward the One who desires nothing more than an authentic relationship with His created beings.

Join us on a spring-break getaway through the pages of the "Re-creation and Restoration" feature about the Redwoods National Park. The towering trees, rushing river, and vast ocean expanses will clear the mind, revitalize the soul, and inspire the heart to herald uplifting praises to God that are sure to result in intelligent contemplations that bolster the authenticity of your faith.

Such freedom from the woes of this world demonstrate the Lord's commitment to protect us from the wily threats and temptations from the enemy. Jesus watches over His flock like the guard dogs that scan for any danger to the herd of sheep in their care as told in this issue's "My Walk With God" story. The assurance of His loving guidance in our daily lives can be found in His Word—the most authentic and intelligent display of the Creator's plan for our eternal well-being. There's nothing artificial about it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ish". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Ish" clearly distinguishable.

Tom Ish, editor/publisher

Sharing Our Mail

Mailroom staff . . .

I love your magazines! I have not received many of them because I have been moved several times, and the prison system does not forward anything but letters. Without question the mailroom workers have enjoyed your magazine, and I don't begrudge that because they have been inundated with God's love—a totally unexpected group of people to meet in heaven!

Now, my purpose for writing is to let you know to update my address as my cell

number has changed, which is very important to get mail while in this prison. My heartfelt thanks for a wonderful magazine.

Douglas B.

State Farm, Virginia

P.S. I'll be 88 years old soon, and my dear wife will be 86. We'll be married 67 years soon too!

The secret of our loving marriage is: (1) she is a born-again believer, (2) she does not believe in divorce! (Can you imagine my gratitude when she wrote to me shortly after my imprisonment saying I want you to turn to Jesus because I want you to go to heaven with me!), and (3) I did not approach the Lord, He came to me! I simply broke down confessing and claiming! That was 13 years ago.

I was arrested at age 75. Old men get in trouble too. Well, I just decided to acquaint you with one of your subscribers. I pray for all the guys and folks like you! God's blessing on your ministry!

Valentine's Day . . .

I'd like at least 60 copies for Valentine's

day for the women at Dr. Eddie Warrior Correctional Center, as well as for the men I see at Jess Dunne Correctional Center in Oklahoma.

D. Shoffner

Porter, Oklahoma

Can't retire . . .

You people can't retire until our Jesus comes! Thank you.

C. Dye

Wenatchee, Washington

Our support . . .

We wanted to send a short note off to you with our support to help you as you distribute your wonderful magazine to those folks who aren't able to subscribe on their own. We think that it's a wonderful ministry!

V. Sharp

North Charlottesville,
South Carolina

Rescued . . .

Hello, my name is Sonia. I'm currently in prison in Las Vegas, Nevada. I fully believe that the Lord allowed me to get arrested to save my life. It wasn't an arrest; it was a rescue. My spouse at home is in the middle of a battle with cancer.

I am indigent and really would be so grateful if you could provide me copies of your *Creation Illustrated* magazine. I had one donated to me by a fellow inmate. I had never seen anything like it. So beautiful with the illustrations and the combinations of God's creation with scriptures and stories with uplifting wonders. I love it!

Thank you for your hard work. I will keep your entire team in my prayers! The Scripture that really touched me was "I was in prison, and you visited me" (Matthew 25:36).

Sonia F.

Las Vegas, Nevada

Neighbor gift . . .

Some time ago, a generous neighbor gifted us a subscription to your wonderful magazine. We have been enjoying each new issue so much! Thank you for the time and effort you dedicate to sharing the wonders of God's vast Creation. May God bless you always.

The Carmelites
Spokane Valley,
Washington

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We appreciate hearing from our readers. Please let us know how you are using Creation Illustrated.

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A Rock of

C R E A T I O N U P C L O S E,



Three thousand foot tall El Capitan in Yosemite National Park



Gravestones of granite

From the sheer cliffs that tower thousands of feet skyward to the flat surface of a grave marker, granite reveals the powerful yet tender character of our Creator and Redeemer. Only the bravest and most skilled rock climbers dare to scale a mountain's vertical granite face, but many of us have bent down to tenderly touch the flat surface of the granite stone chiseled with the name of a loved one.

The third day of the Creation story tells of the foundations of the earth being exposed. "God said, 'Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear'; and it was so" (Genesis 1:9, NASB). Earth's vast land masses feature an amazing array of rocks and minerals that form the earth's surface, and granite dominates the earth's crust as an extremely hard bedrock.

The common geologic explanation claims that

the Ages

B Y L E S L I E A . S A M S



The world's largest granite building in Madrid, Spain, covers three hundred twenty-three thousand square feet.

granite forms when magma (molten rock deep within the earth's crust) cools slowly and crystallizes over a long period of time creating igneous rock composed primarily of quartz, feldspar, and mica minerals. However, additional research reveals that granite rocks contain microscopic *radiohalos* formed from radioactive decay that only lasts milliseconds and point to a *very* rapid formation of granite that supports a Creation-science worldview.

At a colossal three thousand feet high, the largest natural granite monolith of El Capitan in California's Yosemite National Park stands more than three times taller than the Eiffel Tower. The highest granite tower is the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown, Massachusetts, at a mere 252 feet tall. And the largest granite building in the world is the Palacio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial in Madrid, Spain, that covers a rectangular area of nearly three

hundred twenty-three thousand square feet.

Granite endures the elements well and will not show hardly any signs of wear for hundreds of years. It can be found on all continents standing firm under harsh conditions. Sealants and coverings are not needed to keep this rock durable and stain resistant. The Creator not only made granite strong and unyielding, He made a lot of it.

Seventy-five percent of the earth's crust is granite—mostly plain gray with black specs but also white, black, brown, beige, and amber often with veins of pink, red, or blue. Could the Creator have intentionally painted the most common rock on the globe the same pigments and tones to represent His most beloved creation of all—human beings? We, who have blood pulsing through our veins, are being tested to withstand harsh conditions in a fallen world too. “Behold, I have refined you, . . . I have tested you in the furnace of affliction” (Isaiah 48:10, NASB).

Some rocks (when tested by water, time, pressure, and heat) can become stunningly polished

and nearly flawless gemstones that our human eyes desire. Many people support the huge jewelry industry while seeking adornment with spectacular diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires. Rough, unrefined rocks are not as attractive to us. Admiring outward beauty comes as part of our carnal nature, but such distractions can easily separate us from our work for the Lord. God loves the imperfect and plain in both rocks and in people. Common rocks, spartan in appearance, can be practical and beneficial just as any of God's people can assist in building His kingdom.

Granite has served many purposes throughout the ages including great temples, towering buildings, roadways, monuments, fountains, statues, religious icons, and gravestones. Altars in the Old Testament could have been made from granite due to its resistance to blood stains from sacrifices. Today the use of sturdy and dependable granite has expanded to make superior modern conveniences such as kitchen countertops, mantelpieces, and flooring inside our dwellings.



Granite can display a wide variety of colors.



Jennifer Ish

The publisher at the

But do we know what our own useful purpose is while we inhabit this land? "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10, NASB). While we search for our purpose in day-to-day living, we must turn to Jesus as that treasured cornerstone to find, follow, and build upon His plan for our lives. Plain, humble rocks remind us of Jesus as Isaiah described in 53:2. "He grew up . . . out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him" (NIV).

God made everything for His pleasure and to work in harmony according to His will. Granite exists to serve as a solid testament of the strong, sturdy, and reliable character of God. We, too, must be available to serve the Lord according to His will as a testament of His plan and design for our eternal well-being.

Rocks often serve as foundational building blocks; yet, each pebble and every granite boulder have potential and a purpose even if in our limited

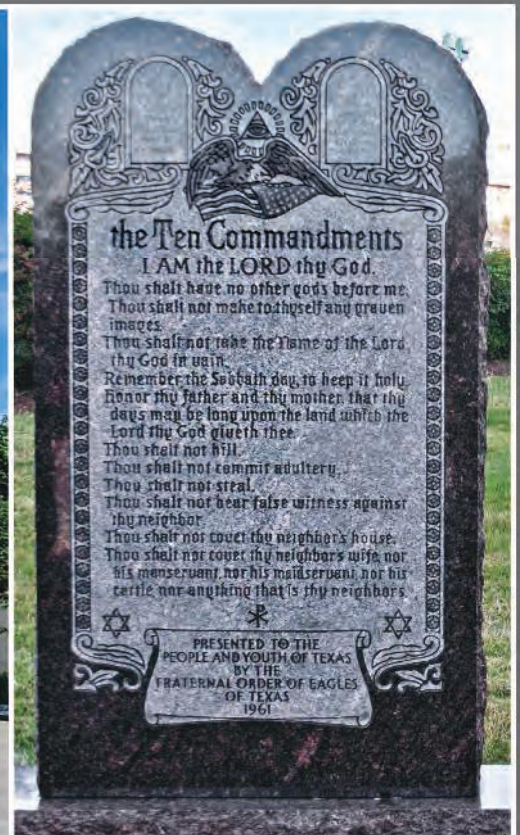
view we see only cold, unyielding obstacles blocking our path. We can easily lose hope and become bitter or hard-hearted as a rock that is of little use to anyone. We were not created to be stone cold but rather cling to the Rock of Ages so His powerful strength, protection, and promise of eternal life can lead others to lean on Him as a solid and reliable bedrock upon which to build a hope-filled future.

God refers to Himself as the *Rock* at least sixty times in the Bible. The psalmist wrote, "I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, . . . my stronghold" (Psalm 18:1, 2, ESV). God's character is unchanging, like a magnificent mountain made of solid granite, but He is never cold or unapproachable. On the other hand, we who become hard as rock can be unforgiving, unapproachable, and incapable of love. So, we must be broken upon the Rock and surrender to His ways.

The Ten Commandments written by the finger of God onto hard rock tablets set the foundation of our



Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial made of white granite



The Ten Commandments made of sunset red granite



We must be broken upon the Rock to be of greater use.



Christ is the Cornerstone and builds His

faith. We cannot easily inscribe words onto granite; yet, a current fad has people painting encouraging messages on small, flat rocks and hiding them under trees or beside a walking path. On a much larger scale, God has embedded messages of hope in rocks and in all Creation waiting to be found by seekers and believers from every corner of the earth to inspire admiration and awe toward Him. Reiterated in Romans 1:25, we are to worship and serve the Creator and not created things.

Everything God created has physical attributes and, more importantly, spiritual significance for His glory. Knowing His heart can help melt the hardness of our stubborn hearts. God wants to give “a new heart and put a new spirit” in us; to remove our hearts of stone and to give us “a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26, NASB). God laid the foundation of our spiritual, eternal world through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is worthy of our loyalty. The Lord God says: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed.

He who believes in it will not be disturbed” (Isaiah 28:16, NASB).

Moreover, when Jesus came, was crucified, and then rose again, the Holy Spirit was sent to dwell in hearts that were soft and pliable revealing “that you are a letter of Christ, . . . written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Corinthians 3:3, NASB). The Rock of our salvation is unchanging, but we must be transformed to be solidly in Christ.

Ponder the conversion of rough rocks into something of greater use. Then consider Jesus wanting such transformation in us as we build up the church, stone by stone, and strengthen each other to serve Him together in our work on earth. Our struggles and our testing make us strong on the inside where we can firmly take a stand to help fulfill His plan of salvation for a hurting world.

God has provided this land and its foundational granite as a proving ground—a rocky place to help us endure and persevere until we



church stone by transformed stone.

The promise of a white stone with a new name for overcomers

reach the Promised Land. "For the Lord your God is bringing [us] into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills" (Deuteronomy 8:7, NASB). The Rock of Ages will stand firm while shielding us with His mighty power along the way. "Hear what the Spirit says . . . To him who overcomes, 'to him I will give . . . a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it'" (Revelation 2:15, NASB).

We should never take granite for granted since this awesome rock demonstrates much usefulness including pointing us to God. "Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock" (Isaiah 26:4, ESV). 

Leslie A. Sams writes from Warren, Ohio, where she explores biblical lessons found in nature while serving as a church school teacher trainer and is the author of The Bible Teacher Basic Training Guide.

Quinta

A L E N S O N C R E A T I O N



Bobby Harrison

Green jay

“**T**hou, even thou,
art Lord alone;
thou hast made
heaven, the heaven
of heavens, with all their host,
the earth, and all things that are
therein, the seas, and all that
is therein, and thou preservest

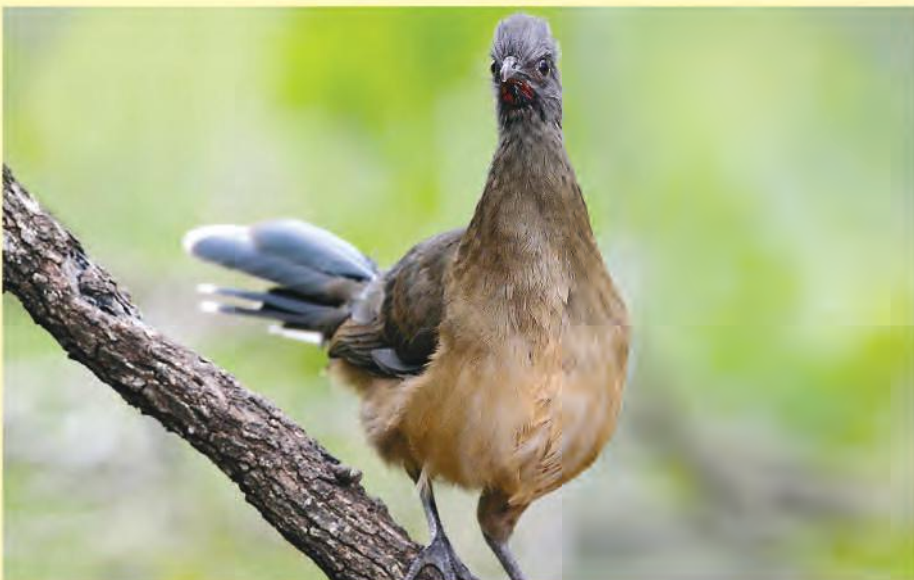
them all; and the host of heaven
worshippeth thee” (Nehemiah 9:6,
KJV).

Deep in the heart of
McAllen, Texas, in the state’s
southernmost tip lies the
beautifully preserved 1930s
era Spanish hacienda, Quinta

Mazatlan, that provides an oasis for
wildlife amid a thriving metropolis.
Once a private home, Quinta
Mazatlan now holds one of the
premier birding hotspots in the Rio
Grand Valley. The hacienda, now
an environmental education center,
is surrounded by a tropical garden
with outlying acreage of a wild
Tamaulipan thorn forest enhanced
with watering and bird-feeding
stations. The habitat provides a
bird magnet attracting a host of Rio
Grande Valley endemics, as well
as birdwatchers from around the
world.

Quinta Mazatlan is
crisscrossed by more than three-
quarters of a mile of trails. Though
birds can be found all along the
trails, the hotspots are Ruby Pond
and the sanctuaries bird-feeding
stations. More than a hundred
sixty different species of birds and
other wildlife gather at this lush
urban sanctuary for life-giving
sustenance, and birders flock to this
small slice of paradise to see the
Rio Grande Valley’s dazzling avian
species.

One of the first birds
you are most likely to encounter
is the plain chachalaca. It is a
robust bird, slightly smaller than
a turkey, with a loud and ruckus
chicken-like cackle. Chachalacas
roam the grounds in small flocks
and are almost constantly in
view. The colorful green jays are
also common, and their scolding
calls are regularly heard along



Bobby Harrison

Chachalaca

Mazatlan

B Y B O B B Y H A R R I S O N

the preserve's trails. The great kiskadee, a large thick-billed, yellow-breasted flycatcher can be seen throughout the sanctuary.

A dainty jewel of Quinta Mazatlan is the buff-bellied hummingbird. These little fluttering gems can often be heard before they are seen if visitors walking along the trails listen for the bird's soft metallic clicks. A sighting at one of the many hummingbird feeders is almost guaranteed. The clay-colored thrush and olive sparrow often skulk in the underbrush in and around watering stations.

While scanning the bushes, keep an eye out for the common pauraque. This amazing bird hunts at dusk and dawn, then roosts on the forest floor during the day. It is so well camouflaged among the leaf litter that the bird is almost impossible to see even when only a few feet away. The protection given to this bird reminds me of 2 Thessalonians 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one."

Other special species include the Altamira oriole, white-tipped dove, green parakeet, and the red-crowned parrot. Also search the forest trails and feeding stations for the more common ladder-backed and golden-fronted woodpeckers, white-winged, common, and Inca doves, and the Couch's and tropical kingbird.

Quinta Mazatlan offers a



Bobby Harrison

Great kiskadee

haven for both bird and man. It remains a place of refuge to enjoy God's wondrous Creation, and to remind us that "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the

beginning to the end" (Ecclesiastes 3:11, KJV). **C**

Bobby Harrison writes from Huntsville, Alabama, as a retired associate professor of photography. Explore more of his amazing work at: www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com



Bobby Harrison

Clay-colored thrush





Overlooked

Opossums

Have you ever driven after midnight and noticed tiny red eyes peering from the roadside? Rural Connecticut living made this a common sight for me. But there is nothing to fear, because these beady eyes belong to a shy and often misunderstood creature—the opossum.

Since this elusive creature is nocturnal, it may go under-appreciated and is often referred to as a *possum*. In my car's headlights the scampering, short-legged, pointed-snout, bare-tailed animal looks like a large rat. Unfortunately, opossums move slowly and might not be able to dodge a vehicle and end up as roadkill.

Nevertheless, our Creator gave this wily creature other defense mechanisms. For example, with fifty sharp teeth (more than any land mammal in North America), it can look mean when threatened by opening its mouth, growling, hissing, and even drooling. If this doesn't scare its enemies, God planned for this lowly critter's protection in an

By Rosanne Pallini-Verlezza

unimaginable way. He promises, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Have you heard the saying *playing possum* that is used when someone pretends to sleep to avoid a situation? This expression comes from the opossum because it can feign death for several hours! Fainting and barely breathing, its mouth falls open, tongue hangs out, bubbles come from its nose, and eyes glaze over. Unbelievably, it even starts to smell! Since opossums aren’t fast, this is an involuntary response to avoid confrontation with coyotes, bobcats, owls, and other predators. The opossum appears to be dead, rotting, and is left alone as this gentle creature would much rather keep to itself.

God’s love is great, and we see this echoed in the details of His creation. With a whitish-gray or brownish-black fluffy body, the opossum’s long face is covered with short white hair that contrasts with its beady black eyes that don’t see well. The creature compensates with its keen sense of hearing thanks to the large, leathery-black ears with pink tips that fold when it sleeps. The sensitive whiskers around its pink nose help the creature feel its way while moving in the dark.

Taking a closer look, opossums have black feet with white toes that might not be quick, but God designed them to be dexterous. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17). Opossums seem to be walking on hands because their front paws have finger-like digits that help hold food. And their hind feet have big toes that work like thumbs that are *opposable* since they can touch the other digits. This gives them the ability to grasp and climb.

Like primates, the opossum’s whitish, scaly tail is *prehensile* and serves almost like a fifth arm that can be useful for carrying dry leaves or sticks to its den. Since the tail is strong and boneless, it can wrap around branches enabling the animal to hold on and keep its balance.

“From the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female’” (Mark 10:6). Adult female opossums are called *Jills*, and the slightly larger adult male opossums are *Jacks*. While opossums live mostly alone, females look for male mates up to three times a year. After mating, females give birth in less than two weeks! This gestation period is the shortest of any mammal in the world.

When born, the premature *kits* are bee-sized, blind, and hairless. They use tiny claws on their front feet to climb up the female’s belly into a flap of skin that forms a pouch (or *marsupium*). If the newborns survive the journey to her pouch, their claws drop off, which avoids injuring the mother; this illustrates God’s detailed care. Once in the pouch, the kits nearly constantly drink their mother’s milk and grow quickly. Females can give birth to as many as twenty babies, but only the first thirteen that make it to the pouch and connect with a mammary gland will survive.

While the male continues its solitary life, God provides the female with the ability to keep her group of babies (or *passel*) with her for almost three months. At around eight weeks old, the bigger ones face the world on their mother’s back but still intermittently drink her milk. They might cling to her tail, but if they fall off as she forages, they might go unnoticed and not survive. However, if they manage to hold on, they are in for a wild ride while being introduced to nuts, fruit, and insects. Now a bit more mature, the young are called *Joeys*.

When we think of marsupials, the kangaroo

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."

—James 1:17

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The opossum's beady eyes (left) do not see well, but its sharp ears help compensate. Defenseless babies (above) remain with their mother for months. A scaly prehensile tail and opposable thumb (below) help the animal grip and maneuver.



“God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise.”

—1 Corinthians 1:27



Opossums can encroach on urban areas (above) and avoid predators like dogs. Their sharp teeth and foreboding snarl (below) can fend off threats. They will pursue food and water wherever it is available (right).



© Thomas Kitchin & Victoria Hurst/keensphoto

comes to mind, but there are around two hundred fifty marsupial species including the opossums, which are the only marsupials in North America. The common or Virginia opossum is most widespread.

Opossums deserve recognition for their long history included in the fossil record. Of course, opossums were known to Native Americans, and in the late 1400s Columbus discovered them while exploring the new world. Settler John Smith wrote the first English description of the opossum in the early 1600s. He got the name from the Algonquian word *apasum*, meaning white animal.

The opossum's scientific name is *Didelphis Virginiana*. *Didelphis* comes from Greek: *di* meaning two and *delphys* meaning womb. *Virginiana* comes from Latin: *of Virginia*—the state where settlers found the creature. Today opossums can be found almost anywhere—woodlands, mountains, along coasts, and even in cities. They are opportunistic eaters attracted to sources of food and water, and they don't stay in the same den for long. Ironically, digging isn't their forte; yet, God provides a way for them to burrow. Psalm 143:8 inspires dependence on such provisions. "For in You do I trust; cause me to know the way in which I should walk." Resourceful and adaptable opossums find holes that are already available in tree hollows, abandoned dens, or human structures.

For a long time I was unaware of the role this mysterious marsupial played in my backyard. God's wisdom was revealed as I learned that even the opossum has a purpose. First, as omnivores they eat things originating from plants and animals including grains, eggs, slugs, beetles, frogs, and lizards. They also consume berries and other fruit; then they excrete the seeds, which helps them disperse for spreading plant growth.

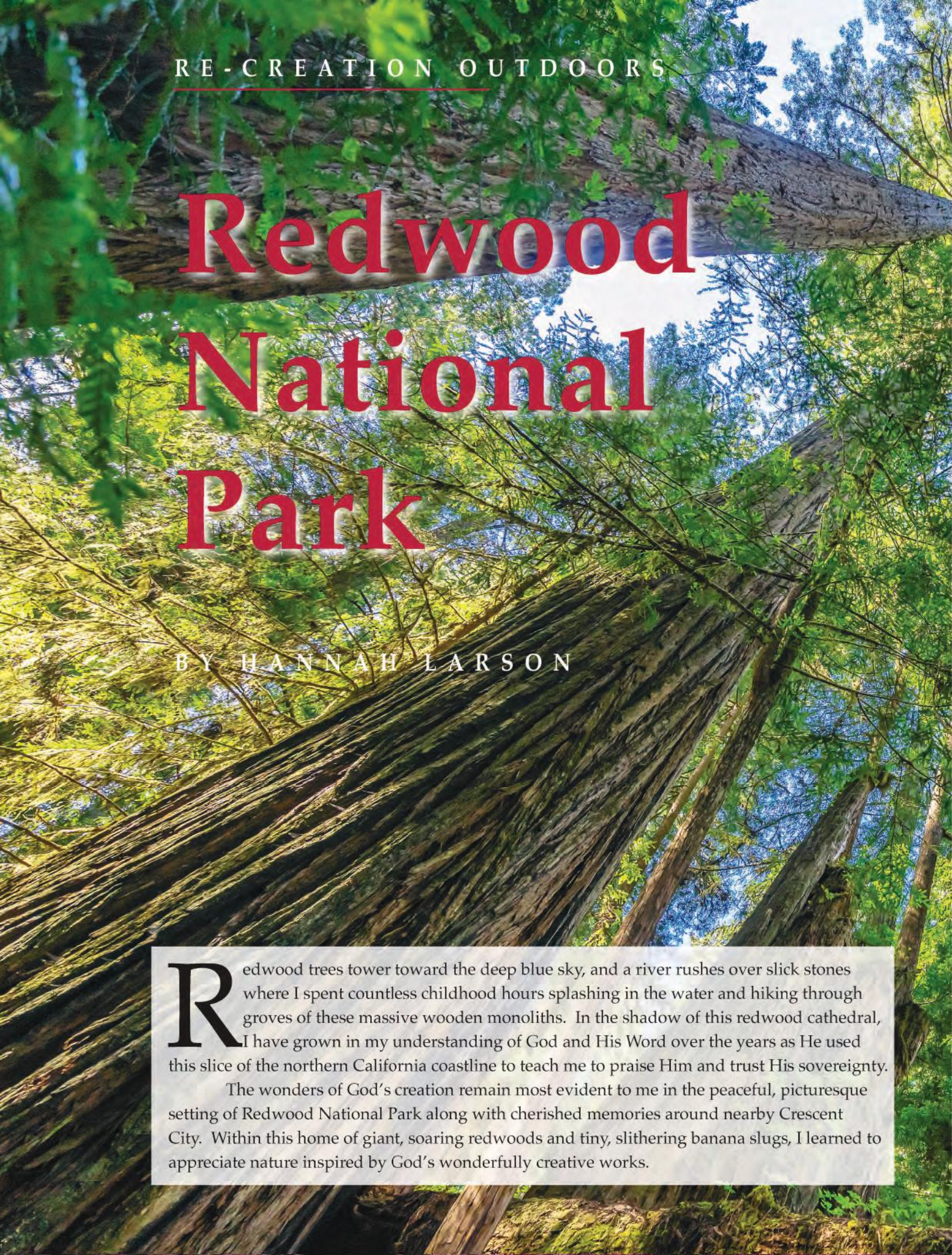
Next, if roaches, mice, rats, or small snakes get

in the way, the opossums might eat them, too, which points to their strong immune system and a blood protein that makes them immune to poisonous snake bites. Furthermore, their body temperature makes them resistant to rabies. Opossums serve as nature's sanitation workers by eating decaying matter that attracts disease-spreading rodents and insects.

Finally, another impressive trait is their ability to clean, groom, and rid themselves of about ninety-five percent or thousands of ticks that hitch a ride in their fur. This is a major blessing since Lyme Disease is generally spread by ticks.

From dusk to dawn these creatures are hard at work while we sleep. They don't hibernate, so much is accomplished during their short one and a half to four years of life. These often overlooked heroes in our ecosystems provide a great reminder that "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27). **C**

Rosanne Pallini-Verlezza writes from Newtown, Connecticut, where she studies nature, teaches, and has authored three books, as well as articles for religious children's magazines. More about her can be found at <https://rverlezza.wixsite.com/ifyougavegodagift>.



RE-CREATION OUTDOORS

Redwood National Park

BY HANNAH LARSON

Redwood trees tower toward the deep blue sky, and a river rushes over slick stones where I spent countless childhood hours splashing in the water and hiking through groves of these massive wooden monoliths. In the shadow of this redwood cathedral, I have grown in my understanding of God and His Word over the years as He used this slice of the northern California coastline to teach me to praise Him and trust His sovereignty.

The wonders of God's creation remain most evident to me in the peaceful, picturesque setting of Redwood National Park along with cherished memories around nearby Crescent City. Within this home of giant, soaring redwoods and tiny, slithering banana slugs, I learned to appreciate nature inspired by God's wonderfully creative works.

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of a massive redwood tree trunk. The trunk is thick and covered in deeply textured, reddish-brown bark. It rises steeply from the bottom left towards the top right of the frame. The upper part of the image is filled with a dense canopy of green needles and branches, with patches of bright blue sky visible through the foliage. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

Established in 1968, the national park combined the Prairie Creek Redwoods, Del Norte Coast Redwoods, and Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Parks totaling close to a hundred forty thousand acres! More than eight hundred species of plants and two hundred native wild animals flourish between the 37 miles of coastline and the mountains over three thousand feet in elevation. Stately Roosevelt elk, curious black bears, and the northern spotted owl rank among the park's favorite creatures.

Driving alongside the immense trees of northern California's redwood forest inspires awe, but walking through groves of these behemoths brings their ancient splendor into sharper focus. One such place is the Grove of Titans that can be accessed via the eastern section of



Roosevelt elk are a common sight in Redwood National Park.

Karen Bulbuk

GROVE OF TITANS

Howland Hill Road—10 miles of dusty, twisting curves where I caught glimpses of the emerald green ferns that blanket the ground including western sword ferns that can reach a height of six feet, lady ferns, deer ferns, and five-fingered ferns.

As I hiked through the Grove of Titans, sidestepping mossy logs and skirting overgrowth that spills onto the dirt trail, sunlight filtered through the trees' green branches and illuminated their deep red bark. These mighty redwoods can reach higher than a thirty-story skyscraper or three hundred twenty feet tall. Some of the trunks grow more than twenty-seven feet wide! It's humbling to realize that a few of these older trees started growing more than two thousand years ago—around the time Jesus lived on the earth!

The commanding, stately stature of the redwoods and their coastal surroundings brings to mind Psalm 96:11–13. “Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the Lord” (NIV). The redwoods of this forest rejoice before the Creator God in their natural heavenly spires, and their magnificence teaches me to praise Him for His creativity on display. Strolling in the shadow of these colossal trees also taught me that all Creation glorifies God, and I had the privilege of joining the forest in giving praise to our Maker. When I walked among the old-growth trees at Stout Memorial Grove, which is also accessed via Howland Hill Road, I recalled Isaiah 55:12 inviting me to join in singing for joy and exalting the Creator. “For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”



Many stalwart stands of redwoods dwarf awe-inspired hikers.



NPS *Hikers wander amid still waters of the Jedediah Smith River.*

“Let the rivers clap their hands.”

Far below these towering trees flows the aquamarine Jedediah Smith River—a pristine waterway framed by a wide rocky beach and a forest of green verdure. To experience the power of this scenic, rushing river, visitors can take a kayak trip or go whitewater rafting through the rushing rapids. I’ve explored different sections of the Jedediah Smith River via kayaking, swimming, or riding in an inflatable rowboat that led me to further appreciate the river and the stunning rocky cliffs that surround it, which all deepened my relationship with God.

First, these four-hour rowing excursions have taught me the importance of perseverance. Rowing continuously over long, calm stretches of the river can be physically and mentally tiring when there is no apparent end in sight. Persistence pays when the vast Pacific Ocean comes into view, which reminds me of the wisdom of Paul’s statement in Galatians 6:9 which says, “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (NIV). Just as God gives me the strength to finish the rowing trip, He will continue to equip me to persist in doing good in other areas of my life. The sight of the sea is an incredibly picturesque reward to receive at the end of the excursion, and I can have confidence that persevering through other difficult challenges will yield similarly satisfying results.

Secondly, I’ve learned while boating and swimming that the river also praises the Lord and inspires me to take delight in yet another aspect of God’s creation. As the psalmist says, “Shout for joy before the Lord, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord” (Psalm 98:7–9, NIV). While standing on the rocks at the water’s edge, I feel a sense of wonder at the peaceful surroundings and marvel at the truth that just like



NPS

Relentless waves crash against the rocky coastline of the park.



Stone Nature Photography

GOD'S LIMITLESS POWER

the trees and the river, I, too, am created to worship and glorify God.

Among all of northern California's picturesque scenes, the wild Pacific Ocean inspires profound awe as the relentless waves batter the lonely coastline and launch salty spray onto its rocky shore. I've waded through tidepools in search of bright-red starfish, watched the frothy foam of the sea sparkle under the summer sun, and caught glimpses of the red-and-white Battery Point lighthouse from afar.

The rocky Point St. George, three miles from Crescent City, has two beaches—a wide one to the north of the point and a small one to the south. While visiting the southern beach, I traipsed the driftwood-strewn shore near the pounding surf and recalled the truth that "Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea—the Lord on high is mighty" (Psalm 93:4, NIV), which underscores God's limitless power that is way stronger than the force of the wild waves.

One of the ways God displays His might is in His total dominion and ability to impact all nature. "You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them" (Psalm 89:9, NIV). Even the obscure, lazy starfish and scampering crabs are subject to His authority. While ruling over the vast ocean and orchestrating the tides, He is also sovereign over my life, and I can trust His power and His plan. Faced with trials and difficult seasons of life that pound like the all-engrossing waves, I can be confident that God is still in control.

Visitors can also relish their time among the redwoods with a 5.5-mile trek through gigantic trees while following a dirt Boy Scout Tree Trail with an abundance of switchbacks. Covered with tree roots, this route requires cautious navigation, but the beautiful forest scene



Rhododendrons bloom plentifully amid the park's lush verdure.



A gleeful hiker reaches out in the Lady Bird Johnson grove.

“The Lord on high is mighty.”

make this moderately challenging trail worth the effort, especially when greeted by the Fern Falls cataract—a small cascade flowing over mossy rocks at the end of the trail. This gentle waterfall is the perfect place to stop and rest before turning around and making the return trip to the trailhead. In fact, the entire experience of the stalwart redwoods, rushing river, and surging sea bestows rest, relaxation, and teachings of the Creator’s character—inspiring gifts to all who venture to this natural gem. **C**

Hannah Larson writes from San Marcos, California, where she enjoys exploring God’s creation. From ziplining alongside Niagara Falls to paddle boarding in Lake Itasca, she seeks thrilling experiences in stunning places. Her favorite national parks include the Great Smoky Mountains, Glacier, and Sequoia because of the spectacular views.

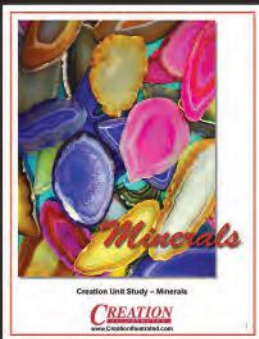
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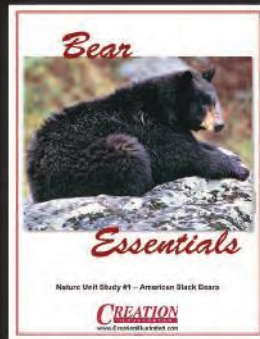


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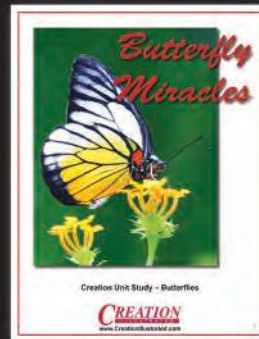
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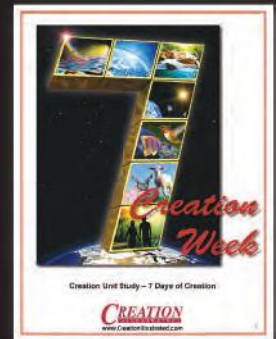
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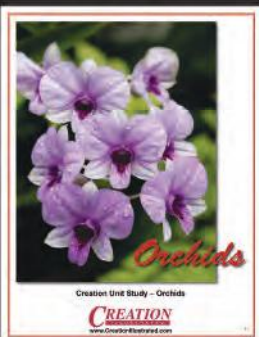
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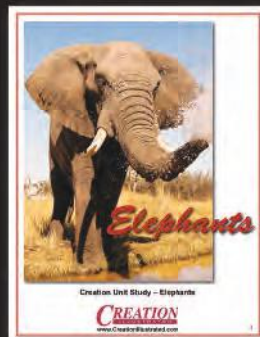
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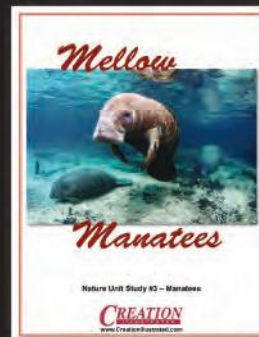
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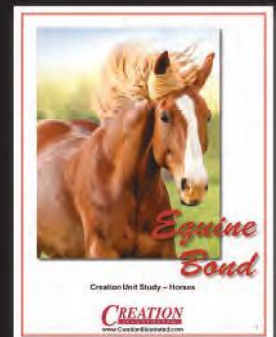
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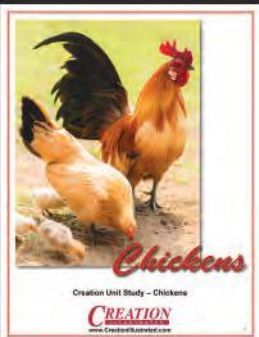
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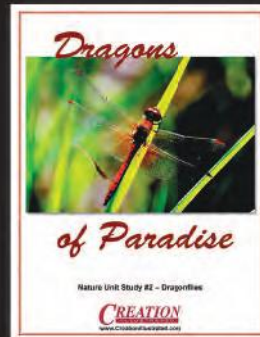
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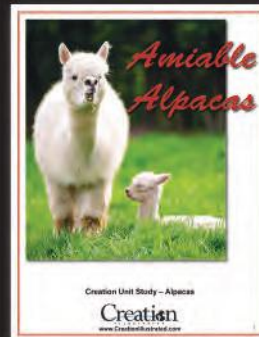
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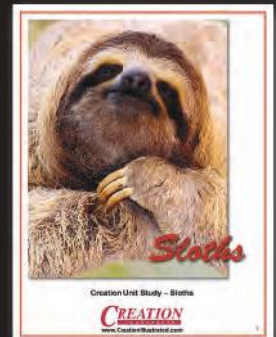
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Dragonflies



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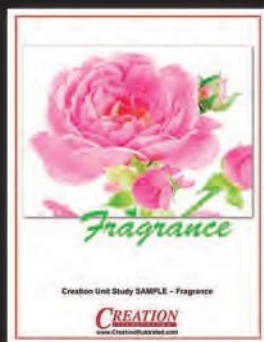
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with Cellphone Addiction!

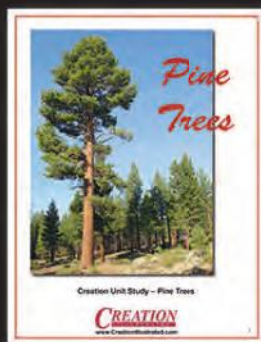
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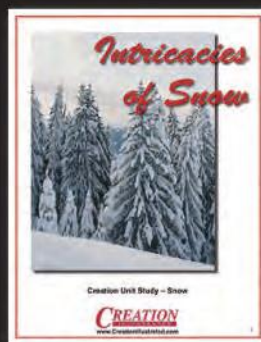
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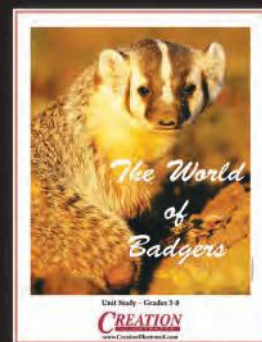
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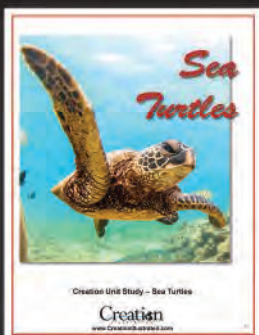
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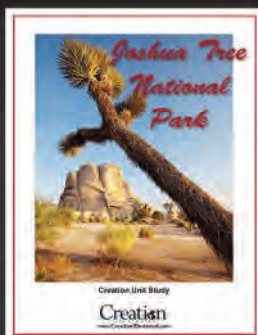
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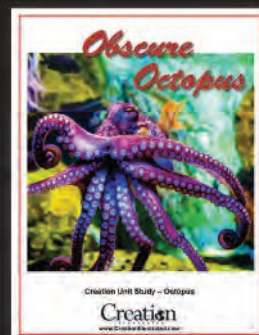
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Sea Turtles



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A huge ostrich in Kenya, Africa

*"And God said, . . .
'let birds fly above
the earth across the
expanse of
the heavens.'
So God
created . . .*

CREATION DAY 5 PART TWO

■ BY CHRISTINE GRAEF
WITH TOM ISH

The Creation of Winged Creatures

Editor's Note: This article is the sixth in our thirteenth series of features that focus on the Creation week. Some days are divided into segments, and next time we will explore Creation day six when God created the wild and domestic animals, creeping things, and humans. Each series of stories varies with new writers and fresh images. We hope you enjoy this closer look at God's handiwork aimed at inspiring you to study His Word in depth.



© Tom & Pat Leeson

Tiny hummingbirds sip nectar together.

Our Lord is an avid birdwatcher, and He invites us throughout His Word to join Him. During the second half of Creation day five, He filled the air with an avian chorus. “And God said, ‘... let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.’ So God created ... every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply ... , and let birds multiply on the earth.’ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day” (Genesis 1:20–23, ESV).

What an exciting time to watch the birds be created on the fifth day of Creation! And they continue to multiply with approximately fifty billion birds on earth (more than six times the human population) among roughly ten thousand

known species from the largest living bird (the ostrich weighing up to three hundred forty pounds) to the smallest bee hummingbird (weighing a scant seven hundredths of an ounce). The joy of bird watching brings positive physical, mental, and spiritual health benefits by connecting people to nature and away from our high-tech society.

The Creator instructs us to “ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you” (Job 12:7, NIV). So, scientists have done exactly that to gain amazing aerodynamic insights in developing modern inventions including airplanes, helicopters, gliders, and drones.

An abundance of birds fly, flutter, soar, and dive throughout the globe in deserts, forests, sea coasts, and cities.



Stunningly colorful lilac-breasted rollers sing during courtship.

Countless colors and sizes of birds have chirped, squawked, and tweeted their way into our lives. So precious are they that God warns, “If you come across a bird’s nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young” (Deuteronomy 22:6, NIV).

Wanting to share the delights of His ornithological world with us, Jesus points to the birds to teach us not to fret or worry. “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them” (Matthew 6:26, NIV). He wants us to understand how faith as small as a small mustard seed results in a place of rest. “When it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the

birds . . . come and perch in its branches” (Matthew 13:32, NIV).

But we are prone to wander. “Like a bird that flees its nest is anyone who flees from home” (Proverbs 27:8, NIV). Our gaze gets lured toward the tree of knowledge that appears to have branches to land on and twigs for building nests. Instead, we find this tree lacks sustenance and living water and leads to anguish. “I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof” (Psalm 102:7, NIV). Facing discouragement, “I cried like a swift or thrush, I moaned like a mourning dove. My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens” (Isaiah 38:14, NIV). The birds innately follow God’s guidance while we tend to follow our own ways. “The stork in the sky knows her appointed seasons, and the dove, the swift and the thrush

*every winged bird
according to its kind.
And God saw that it
was good.
And God blessed
them, saying, 'Be
fruitful and multiply. . .*



God provides ample food for a young pileated woodpecker.

observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord" (Jeremiah 8:7, NIV). We can easily withdraw as the Holy Spirit passes by, not comprehending how much He loves us. The sense of failure and shame weighs us down, earthbound, and separated from the soaring joys of heaven. And we plead, "'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest'" (Psalm 55:6, NIV).

We remain yearning for the promise that seems so distant. "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31, NIV). His Word offers an updraft of encouragement that lifts us above the burdens that drag us down. The Lord is the Source "who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we

can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4, NIV).

As noise from the industrial world drowns out the sounds of nature, birds do not sing louder to be heard. We must stop and listen. From branches up high they chirp, tweet, and sing out their songs with soft melody as they always have done under the watchful care of their Creator. He assures us, "I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the field are mine" (Psalm 50:11, NIV). And he values each one. "'Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God'" (Luke 12:6, NIV). "Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?" (Job 38:41, NIV). Yet, He values us even more.



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Mother's Day in Prison

"I was in prison, and you visited me." —Matthew 25:36



My name is Amie and I am currently incarcerated in Ohio. I recently found one of your magazines on a book shelf and absolutely fell in love with it! I am doing all I can to improve my relationship with God and am a nature lover as well. Seeing your magazines combination of the two is fantastic! The way the wonders of nature and Gods word are woven together is truly inspirational! I am writing to see if I can receive a copy of future issues to ensure I don't miss any. Thank You for your time and consideration!

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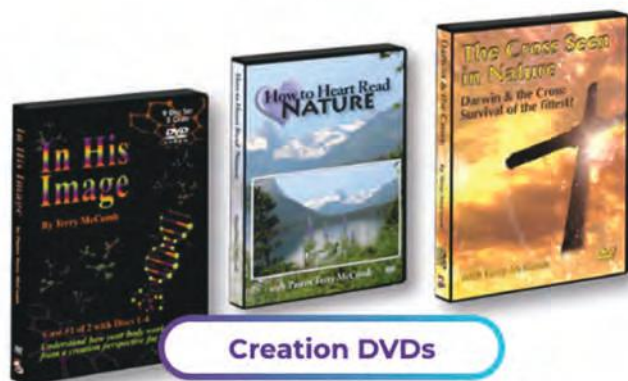
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A hen protects her chicks under her wings.

*and let birds multiply
on the earth.’
And there was
evening and there
was morning,
the fifth day.”*

—Genesis 1:20–23, ESV

“Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Luke 12:7, NIV). And He reminds us that we are not the ones in control. “Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread its wings toward the south? Does the eagle soar at your command and build its nest on high?” (Job 39:26, 27, NIV).

He continually bids us to rely on Him. “Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge” (Psalm 91:3, 4, NIV). Rising from prayer when we are still wounded and feeling entangled, our rescue seems to come slowly as our heartfelt pleading songs feels like they’re blocked by a hardened gray sky. David in his regret cries to God to restore the

joy of his salvation so he can sing of His righteousness (Psalm 51:14, NIV).

Prayers that persist bring us nearer to being free to soar with worshipful praise. As we return to our nest, the light grows brighter with illuminating truth. Discipline is part of our sanctification so that we learn to discern the bait of the enemy. “We have escaped like a bird from the fowler’s snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped” (Psalm 124:7, NIV). Not only discipline from the Lord, but self-discipline to freely choose to lift our eyes to His Word every day.

God uses birds as servants in His assurance to Elijah. “You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there” (1 Kings 17:4, NIV). He also appointed a bird to



Doves hold a special place in Scripture.

show Noah there was land outside the ark where his family and all the animals could disembark. "When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf!" (Genesis 8:11, NIV). Doves have been used to indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit, especially at the baptism of Jesus. "'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him'" (John 1:32, NIV). In fact, doves were the only species of birds that could be offered as a sacrifice in the Mosaic law. (See Leviticus 5:7.)

Furthermore, Scripture compares us to doves as we show God's love to others. "'Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves'" (Matthew 10:16, NIV). They are even used in the imagery of a meaningful relationship. "I slept but my heart was

awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking: 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my flawless one'" (Song of Solomon 5:2, NIV). A day is promised to all creation when "'Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land'" (Song of Solomon 2:12, NIV).

Using imagery that we understand, Christ invites us to the blossoming tree of life that sustains and shelters. "The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches" (Psalm 104:12, NIV). Using His winged creatures, God conveys a powerful message in the last days. "As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: 'Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by



Majestic eagles symbolize strength.

the other three angels!” (Revelation 8:13, NIV).

As we journey through the struggles of life, we have only to remember God shares how His care will bring His flock to safety. “The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach” (Revelation 12:14, NIV).

From the smallest sparrow’s chirp to the crow’s squawk to the seagulls cry or to the eagle’s screech, every song is heard by God, and every flight is by His design to illustrate that every soul is worth saving. As loyal worshipers of their Creator through countless songs of praise, His winged creatures created on

day five of the Creation week are invited to the final victory. “And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ‘Come, gather together for the great supper of God’” (Revelation 19:17, NIV). **C**

Christine Graef writes from Ellsworth, Maine, where she enjoys watching the wonders of nature and how they relate to Scripture and the many powerful life lessons worth sharing with others. Tom Ish is the editor and publisher of Creation Illustrated.



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CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

Providing capsules of research on Creation to encourage the pursuit of Bible-based convictions.

The Creator Designed Instincts

The mallee fowl is a very busy mound-building bird of Australia about the size of a chicken. The male digs a hole about three feet deep using his big feet to scratch out the dirt and sand. Then the female mallee examines the hole, and when she is happy, they both begin to pile leaves and twigs into the pit. After filling the hole with vegetation, the birds wait for rain. After the rain, the male mallee buries the vegetation with sand sealing in the moisture.

As the wet vegetation decays, it produces heat. What they have built is an incubator for their eggs. The mound temperature is checked by the male sticking its heat-sensitive beak and tongue into the mound. It may take up to four months for the mound to reach the right temperature, and it is kept within one degree of ninety-two degree Fahrenheit at all times. The female then starts laying six to thirty large eggs in the nest chamber. After each egg is laid, the male covers it with sand and adjusts the insulating layer of sand to raise or lower the temperature.

After over two months of incubation the chicks hatch and have to dig and find their own way through the mound to the surface. They are on their own with no parental help ever. Within one hour of hatching, the chicks can run and flutter. Within twenty-four hours they can fly!

When the baby mallee fowls matures at two years of age, they find mates and start their own nest. How do they know how to do that? They were never taught by their parents. No one taught them that as soon as they hatched they needed to dig their way out of a mound of rotting vegetation and sand. No one taught them which way was up. How do they know to find shelter in the shade as soon as they get out in the open? How do they know to eat seeds and what kind to eat? How do they know that their beak and tongue can be used to measure the temperature needed to hatch their eggs? How do they know to add sand or remove it to keep a steady temperature? How do they know that wet buried plants rot? How do they know that rotting vegetation causes heat?

The way they know all of this is called *instinct*.

Instinct is knowledge programmed before birth. Where did this programming come from? Humans cannot explain it. Evolution cannot explain it. Such wisdom demands an intelligent beginning. Such intelligence calls for a Creator. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (Psalm 104:24, KJV).

Condensed from an article by Lanny Johnson, Alpha Omega Institute, DiscoverCreation.org

How Penguins Turn Underwater

Penguins are very agile swimmers and able to turn within one body length. Scientists from Tokyo Institute of Technology filmed gentoo penguins swimming to see how they maneuver underwater. They found that penguins turn with their belly facing the inside of the turn, unlike flying birds and airplanes that turn with their bellies facing the outward side of the turn. The penguins also use a combination of upward flapping and pronating (inward rotation) the inside wing, an asymmetrical movement of their two wings to generate a centripetal force—the force that keeps an object moving in a curve.



Evolutionary thought claims that penguins use their wings in a flying movement like birds they supposedly evolved from. However, moving in water is different than air. The upstroke of the wings rather than the down stroke generates more forward propelling force. This new study confirms that penguins turn differently from aerial flying birds. The fact that penguins turn differently to aerial birds and airplanes is a good reminder that penguins were created to be fully functional penguins designed to swim underwater and therefore able to use the appropriate hydrodynamic forces with their wings and bodies.

Condensed from an article by Diane Eager in Creation Research's Fact File, creationresearch.net

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

Providing helpful suggestions on how to better care for God's Creation.

Flood Facts and Figures

Floods create the most common natural disaster in the U.S. and other parts of the world due to heavy rains, snow melt, ice jams, tropical storms, hurricanes, and levee or dam breaks.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), this decade could be record-breaking for flood disasters in the U.S. as there were eighty major flood disasters in the first three years. New analysis shows an increase in the intensity of extreme rainfall events along the Gulf Coast and Mid-Atlantic states. Atmospheric rivers on the West Coast are also expected to increase, which can also cause rapid snow melt.

The national average rate for flood insurance is around a thousand dollars per year with an average increase of 18 percent annually. There was an average payment per claim of \$34,000. A few inches of rain can cause tens of thousands of dollars in damage.

Tips for Simple Living

It is helpful to evaluate your homes' flood risk by determining if you live in a high, moderate, or low-risk area. FEMA has an online resource where you can type your address to find the risk of flooding in your neighborhood. If you live in a high-risk area, your home is more likely to be damaged by a flood than by fire.

Being prepared for flooding is important. Number one is to plan an evacuation route. Use flood maps to help you find high ground and a safe route to get there. Establish out of the area contacts and keep them updated. Prepare an emergency kit for evacuation. The Red Cross provides a helpful list of items in case you need to evacuate for any natural disasters.

Ready your home and make sure your water heater, furnace, heat pump, and electrical panel are not susceptible to flooding. Seal all basement walls with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage. Have back-flow valves installed in drains, toilets, and sinks to prevent floodwater from backing up into your home. Professionals can evaluate your home

to see if constructing barriers may be helpful to stop floodwater from entering.

If you find yourself in a flood, keep listening to the latest information since

conditions can change rapidly. Be prepared to evacuate at

a moment's notice with an emergency supply kit. If a road is flooded, turn around and go another way, as a car can quickly be swept away by less than two feet of moving water. If evacuating, be sure to turn off your power, gas, and water.



Biblical Stewardship

The Bible reveals there was a time when there was only one way to escape the oncoming flood—to simply decide to walk into the Ark that was prepared for those who heeded the warnings.

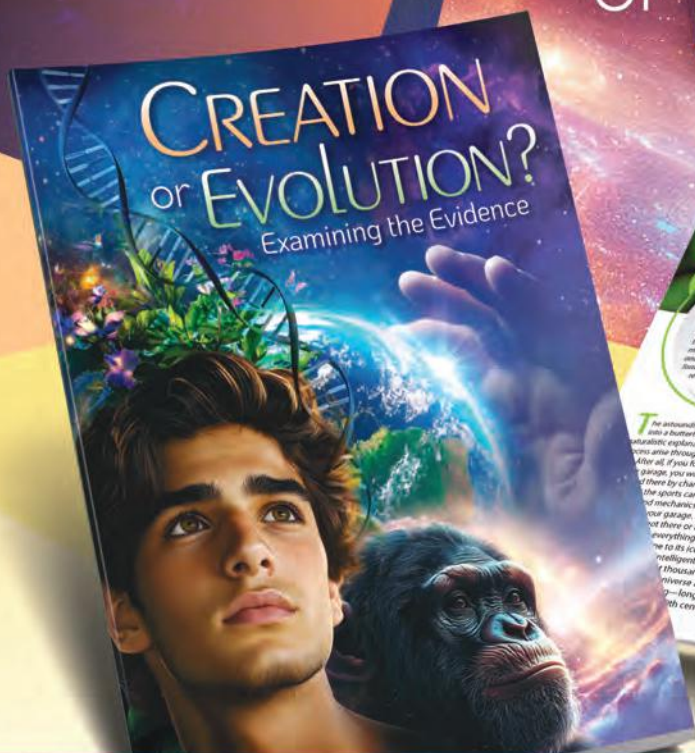
Then "Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others" (2 Peter 2:5, NASB) "went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood" (Genesis 7:7, KJV). Then "the Lord shut him in" (Genesis 7:16, KJV). These souls were saved because "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8, KJV).

Today we are warned that "as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37, KJV). Even though God promised not to destroy the earth again by a flood, we are to be prepared physically, mentally, and spiritually for the end. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin again thee" (Psalm 119:11, KJV).

Then when Jesus, our Redeemer, returns He can say to us as faithful stewards, "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:23, KJV).

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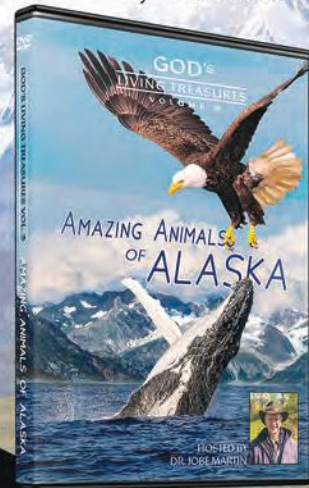
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Four Legged Guardian

In my naivete, I considered the dog trotting up the hill toward our camp to be a confused animal thinking we were his shepherd companion. The actual shepherd passed through the area hours ago while hundreds of sheep meandered in front of us through the juniper trees and brush on the other side of a seasonal creek. The dog stopped in the shade of

a pine tree a couple yards away and settled comfortably in the grass. He leveled his dark eyes on us exhibiting a strong, calm but warning presence as he remained between us and the sheep.

We were camped on land often used by sheepherders and cattle ranchers in the middle of the national forest two miles from a small, isolated lake near Williams,

Arizona. The area is our favorite place to camp on weekdays when everyone else is at work. The only sounds that break the quiet here are the wind rushing through the treetops, the occasional off-road vehicle, and the nighttime melodious howl of coyotes echoing off the mountains.

The first time we met a flock of sheep there was years

B Y N I K O L E H A H N



Camping in a remote area (above) can lead to interesting encounters.

ago while driving on another dirt road behind our current camp as we headed to a trail we had never hiked. Hundreds of sheep covered the roads, and a shepherd wearing a multicolored poncho stood in the middle of them. We waited, and he signaled for us to move when the sheep were off the road.

But now we sat face to face with the flock's protector even though the shepherd was nowhere to be seen. I mistakenly called the creature a sheepdog, but it would more accurately be called a *livestock guardian dog*. Such specialized breeds include great Pyrenees to a Maremma sheepdog. The dogs are friendly to their shepherds but fierce toward strangers. It

is not a dog you want to pet if it approaches you. The tender but fierce heart of this guardian dog reminded me so much of how the Lord loves and leads us; yet, He also disciplines us. "He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11, ESV).

Eighteenth century British preacher Charles Spurgeon once wrote, "No creature has less power to take care of itself than the sheep; even the tiny ant with its foresight can provide for the evil day, but this poor creature must be tended by man or else perish."

I am constantly reminded

of how small and fragile I am when I stand at the base of a great mountain or beneath the heavenly dome of countless stars in the night sky. Nothing is guaranteed in the world with all its demands, uncertainty, stress, and fears; not even the food on our table or the clothes on our backs should be taken for granted. Like we anticipate with the Arizona monsoons where we live, our future always seems to have threatening clouds looming large on the horizon. One thing is constant, however. "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for

the Lord” (Psalm 27:13, 14, NIV).

The guardian dog marked a perimeter around our camp with his scent and stopped momentarily to sit behind us near our tent. He rose again and continued marking spots in an almost perfect circle. Before he laid down to watch us again, he gave us a commanding look. It felt as if he was signaling us to “Stay within this circle. The sheep will stay outside this circle.” He sat down and continued watching. To our horror, the flock of sheep began moving toward us, but the dog had set boundaries to protect his flock while keeping an eye on those who may hurt his sheep.

A livestock guardian dog typically gets introduced to a flock as a puppy and *imprints* itself upon the flock to create a lifelong bond. The way the dog made a

perimeter to protect the sheep and give us a certain amount of freedom to wander reminded me of Jesus’ guidance. He receives our prayers and apparently sometimes responds with a *no* that feels unfair, or He may fence us in for our own good. What we want is sometimes not the best for us. Because He loves like a parent, He won’t give us everything we want, but He provides us everything we need with some left over to help others.

While in this faceoff with a guardian dog and wondering if the dog would get violent, I had to do some quick research on how to act in this situation. Livestock guardian dogs have a relationship with the sheep, where they learn to obey the dog. It can be painful until the sheep learn how to obey. Likewise, James 1:22–25 counsels, “Do not merely listen to the word,

and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do” (NIV).

The flock moved closer to the perimeter, and the tinkling of their bells became more like a warning where they once added peace to our camp. The dog eventually moved away from our camp as the flock moved toward the dip between the hills behind us. But I noticed as he tarried behind the flock near the seasonal creek below us where a smaller sheep



The great Pyrenees guard dog keeps a watchful eye on anyone who is near the herd of sheep.

limped to catch up with the flock. The dog patiently stayed behind the lame sheep ensuring its safety.

Jesus admonishes us to do the same in caring for His sheep as told in John 21:15-17. "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' He said to him a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was

grieved because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'" (ESV).

As the bells distantly faded in the dusk of another day and the sheep and the guardian dog were no longer in sight, I took a deep breath. My husband put together the campfire for the night, and I got up from my chair to prepare supper. I pointed to the empty field below us and said, "There's the shepherd."

The shepherd had returned with his smaller sheepherder dog. As the sun was about to set, he

strode across the field, climbed parallel to our camp, and vanished into the mountains going after the sheep to lead them home. The creatures recognize the one who is trusted for their care just as we recognize the voice of our loving Shepherd. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27, ESV). **C**

Nikole Hahn writes from Chino Valley, Arizona, where she serves as a Digital Engagement and Disciple-Making Coordinator for the mission organization WorldVenture. She is an outdoor enthusiast who enjoys sharing the experiences and lessons she gleanes from Creation.



The shepherd returns to lead the sheep that follow his familiar voice.



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An aerial view of a Ncheta Island village in the Bangweulu Wetlands in northern Zambia

growing a rainbow

from zambia to

Ncheta Island is a small piece of land in the Bangweulu Wetlands in northern Zambia. The island is surrounded by a maze of swamps and meandering waterways navigated by small motorboats and canoes. The island has been stripped of trees and natural ground cover over many years by the local fishermen gathering fuel for fires to smoke their fish. The people of Ncheta Island have few resources apart from rapidly diminishing fish stocks and soil-depleting cassava that they grow year after year. Families have not always had enough food for regular meals or enough fresh water to meet basic needs.

gardens from eden



Villagers help unload tree seedlings from canoes and motorboats.

kitchen garden

your backyard

When we at FARM STEW saw the situation on Ncheta Island, we decided to help by teaching the people how to grow Rainbow Kitchen Gardens. FARM STEW is a US-based nonprofit organization dedicated to sharing resources and knowledge with the world's "least of these" (Matthew 25:40), so that they can become more self-sufficient and live more abundant lives. I started FARM STEW years ago when I traveled to Uganda and realized that with my training in nutrition I could do something concrete to help the people I met there.

First, with the assistance of friends and others who had the right skills, I grew an organization with a unique curriculum and training manual designed to help people living

by joy kauffman, mph



An overhead look at a well designed and flourishing Rainbow Kitchen Garden near a village hut

in poverty all over the world to change their lives. FARM STEW is an acronym that stands for Farming, Attitude, Rest, Meals, Sanitation, Temperance, Enterprise, and Water. The curriculum includes more than four hundred pages translated into eight languages and is being used in more than twenty-one countries.

Among the world's hungry people, 75 percent of them are trying to survive on what they grow. Rural farmers in villages throughout the world can have more abundant lives by learning to properly tend and keep the land. FARM STEW employs local trainers who are familiar with the language and culture of the area to teach families in rural parts of Africa and Latin America more effective agricultural methods, better sanitation, wholesome nutrition, and financial skills.

On Ncheta Island FARM STEW first installed a borehole well that supplied fresh water to three villages. Then the trainers brought seeds, and with plenty of fresh water they helped families plant productive Rainbow Kitchen Gardens that could provide complete nutrition for each meal. Our partner in Zambia who leads Wilderness Gate Missions works together with FARM STEW to help successfully accomplish the various projects.

Now the families of Ncheta Island have a more ambitious project. Together, they are planting a two-and-a-half-acre orchard garden using the principles of agro-forestry to incorporate trees into the plot of land. A perimeter of trees will surround the entire rectangular garden providing a living fence that serves as a windbreak and protection for the young vegetation inside.

Enthusiastic families are planting avocados, papayas, bananas, lemons, and other vegetables and herbs. When the orchard garden begins producing, it will provide a variety



Women of all ages assist with the planting of tree seedlings that are watered by soaker hoses.

of fruits and vegetables for the families tending it, as well as additional produce that can be sold for cash. This project offers a variety of other benefits including reducing soil erosion, improving soil nutrients, and increasing productivity.

Scripture shows that on the third day of Creation God first created life by producing plant-bearing seeds. "Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth'; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:11, 12).

As an additional blessing of their success, the families living on Ncheta Island can help others throughout the world learn to reap great benefits from planting and tending their own Rainbow Kitchen Gardens that provide both nutrition and the satisfaction of being productive.

The carefully researched methods and lessons for planting a nutrient-rich Rainbow Kitchen Garden can be used by families in poorer third-world countries, as well as the United States and throughout the developed world. While the need in wealthier countries is not usually as great, the benefits of growing your own garden produce are still enormous!

By design, a Rainbow Kitchen Garden must contain at least three different vegetables. One should be orange (such as pumpkin, squash, or carrots), one should be green (such as kale, collards, or spinach), and the last is another bright rainbow color like beetroot. Eating a variety of rainbow-colored food offers a diverse healthful diet. The FARM STEW tried and tested garden plan for maximum output in a small space is something that you can do at home with



Young boys eagerly help with the FARM STEW projects that will bring a fruitful harvest.

your family. Spring is the perfect time to get started for the best results, and you can use the diagram provided here as a guide.

Each bed is forty-three inches wide and sixteen and a half feet long with sixteen-inch paths between them. In one bed the bean and greens seeds are sown in three rows with one row exactly in the middle and a row on either side exactly 1.2 feet from the middle. The seed spacing will be different for each plant variety.

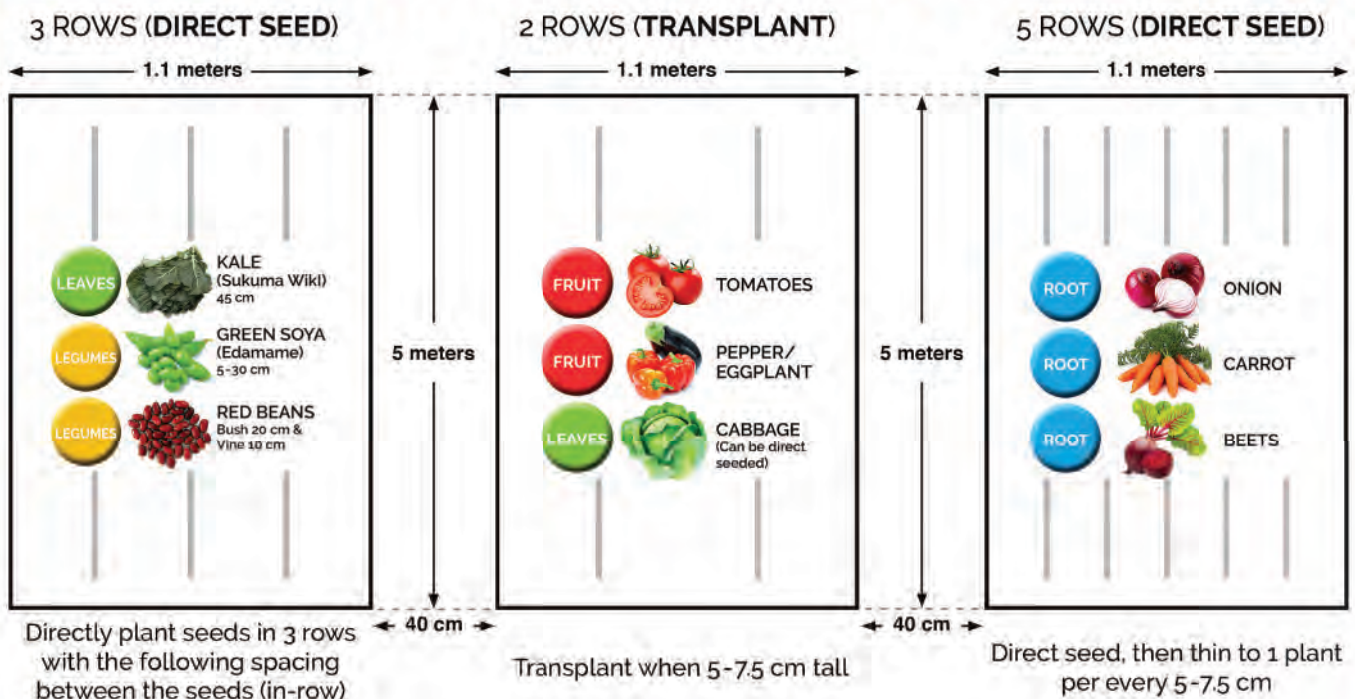
In the middle bed, fruit seedlings (like okra, peppers, and tomatoes) are transplanted in two rows with a distance of 2.4 feet between them. Cabbage and peas can be directly seeded with this same spacing. This will provide the best opportunity for them to get fresh air and sunlight even when the plants are full-grown.

In the third bed, the root crop seeds are planted directly in the soil in rows with 7.2 inches between them. These seeds are so tiny that often they are best mixed with sand to spread them out so fewer seeds get wasted. Then cover the seeds with less than a half inch of compost.

There is so much wisdom in the Bible that can improve our farming and gardening. For example, Proverbs 3:6 indicates that God values straight paths: “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (NASB). In farming, straight rows and proper plant spacing are essential. The greatest enemies of maturing crops are weeds and fungal diseases. Straight rows make weed management easier, and proper spacing allows each mature plant to get the space it needs. And the parable of the sower found in Matthew 13 underscores the importance of good soil preparation, planting, and weeding.

The Bible and the families of Ncheta Island inspire each of us to visit a local garden store,

FARM STEW RAINBOW KITCHEN GARDEN PLAN



The Rainbow Kitchen Garden plan is a result of much research and field testing.

ask a gardening neighbor for seedlings, or order some seeds from a catalog. Generating some compost and preparing the soil must all be done in a timely and orderly fashion as Scripture indicates. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, KJV). When the harvest comes, you will be glad you did all the proper steps outlined in FARM STEW's Recipe Manual curriculum. **C**

Joy Kauffman, MPH, is the founder and executive director of FARM STEW International, an organization that equips families to lift themselves out of extreme poverty to abundant life. She is a public-health nutritionist with a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University, as well as a master gardener. She lives in Colorado when she is not traveling around the world for FARM STEW. Learn more and how you can help at: <https://www.farmstew.org/>

Genesis Cuisine

Quick Quesadillas



Recipes and Photos by Tom Ish



Bean Spinach Quesadilla

- 2 large spinach flour tortillas
- 3 slices cheddar vegan cheese
- 1/3 C. black and pinto beans
- 1 Roma tomato sliced
- 2 Tb. green pimiento olives, sliced

- Dip:**
- 3 Tb. vegan soy sour cream
 - 4 Tb. favorite salsa

Lay one spinach flour tortilla flat in a large frying pan and layer the ingredients starting with the cheese slices each cut into 4 triangles and arranged evenly over the tortilla. Follow with the beans, tomato slices, and green olives. Cover with the other spinach tortilla and heat both sides over medium-low until lightly browned. Cut into triangles and serve with the dipping sauces that can be mixed together. Repeat for as many people you are serving. Be creative with your filling by adding other favorites.



Spicy Jalapeno Quesadilla

- 2 large tomato flour tortillas
- 3 slices mozzarella vegan cheese
- 1 Tb. pickled jalapeno rounds
- 1/4 C. sliced black olives
- 1/4 C. chopped green onions
- 1 Tb. fresh cilantro leaves

- Dip:**
- guacamole

Lay one tomato flour tortilla flat in a large frying pan and layer the ingredients starting with the cheese slices each cut into 4 triangles and arranged evenly over the tortilla. Follow with the other ingredients spaced evenly over the cheese. Cover with the other tortilla and heat both sides until lightly browned. Cut into triangles and serve with your favorite guacamole. Be creative with your filling by adding other favorites.



Fruity Dessert Quesadilla

- 1 large white flour tortilla
- 3 Tb. vegan cream cheese
- 2 Tb. pepper jelly
- Fresh strawberries, sliced
- Fresh mangoes, sliced
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon sugar

- Dip:**
- 1/3 C. non-dairy whipped topping
 - chocolate sauce drizzle

Lightly oil one side of a tortillas and smear the other side with cream cheese and pepper jelly. Evenly space slices of fruit over the pepper jelly on half of the tortilla. Fold tortilla over and place on a large frying pan or counter-top grill. Heat both sides until lightly browned. Lightly sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Cut into triangles and serve with whipped topping and chocolate sauce. Be creative with your filling by adding other favorite fruit slices.



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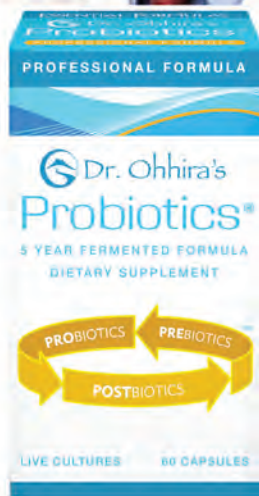


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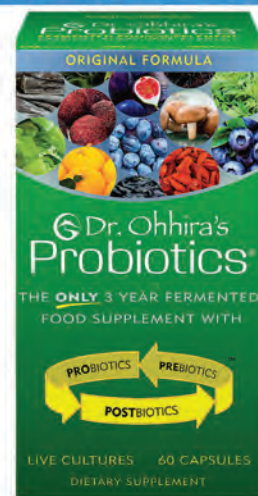
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Alfalfa
Garbanzo
Lentils
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Adzuki
Peas
Winter Rye
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Chia
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Bryan Reynolds

Do you know how many animals, birds, and insects are mentioned in the Bible? One hundred and twenty! Among them are big and strong creatures like horses, lions, and bears. Yet, the Creator used a tiny ant as an example of wisdom and hard work. "Go to the ant, . . . consider its ways and be wise!" (Proverbs 6:6, NIV). If these

insects deserve to be mentioned in Scripture, surely we can benefit from learning more about them.

It is not hard to find ants. These common creatures live everywhere except Antarctica. You might have seen anthills—piles of dirt or sand with a hole on the top. When I found a large anthill (about one foot high) in the forest, I did not recognize it. But as I looked at it, I had a feeling that the hill was



Go To The Ant

moving! No wonder I had this impression; multitudes of ants were crawling all around.

Ants live in colonies that can unite several thousands to several hundred thousands of these tiny insects. Some colonies are even bigger like one super colony in Argentina with billions of ants! Interestingly, all inhabitants dwell peacefully in these colonies. This provides a lesson that ants can teach us—how to live

in harmony with our family, friends, and neighbors. Psalm 133:1 reminds us, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” (NIV).

Every anthill is a result of a lot of hard work by thousands of ants. First, these industrious creatures use their powerful jaws to dig many tunnels underground. Then they carry the dirt in their jaws to the surface. They put this dirt on the top of the



Tatiana Clauvy

A huge anthill reveals an enormous amount of work done by thousands of tiny ants each doing its part.

hill in a special way so it does not slide back into the nest and destroy tunnels. “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Romans 11:33).

I approached the anthill carefully while watching my steps to make sure that I didn’t harm or disturb its dwellers. The ants ignored my presence because they were busy with their tasks—some carrying seeds, others hauling blades of grass. None of them appeared lazy. And this is exactly what the Lord wants us to learn from these creatures—how to be focused and diligent. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters” (Colossians 3:23, NIV).

The ants that I observed each had a special job to do—those that build and clean the nest, those that find and bring food, and those that protect the hill. Their queen, which usually stays underground in the darkness of the nest, has only one job—to lay eggs. Worker ants also take care of the queen and the eggs. And we should follow the ants’ ways of being helpful

and caring. “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phillipians 2:4).

As I watched these hard working ants, I saw one that was dragging a stick about three inches long. This is a unique ability of these creatures; one ant can carry a load that is fifty times heavier than the ant itself. This provision from the Creator makes it possible for ants to do far more than is expected of them, which is a good example to us. “O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all” (Psalms 104:24).

At this moment I noticed that the ant I was admiring was not carrying its load alone; several ants were helping. As they moved toward the entrance of the anthill, more ants joined them. Here is another lesson that we can learn from these insects—how to work together as a team. The Bible teaches us, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: if either of them falls down, one can help the other up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, NIV). Ants

demonstrate remarkable abilities and amazing results when even small creatures achieve much through teamwork.

Being so tiny (from .08 to .2 inches in length), one ant eats about .5 to 1 milligram of food each day. That is about three poppy seeds! Still on this sunny day, the ants that I watched were busy finding, gathering, and storing food for winter. That is exactly how the book of Proverbs describes an ant. "It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest" (Proverbs 6:7, 8, NIV).

Certain worker ants—scouts—are responsible for finding food. Ants can smell food from a distance. After finding food, they release special chemicals (pheromones) to make a *trail* to this food source for other ants. "O Lord, You preserve man and beast. How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!" (Psalms 36:6, 7).



Bryan Reynolds

A single ant (above) drags a fly several times its size back to the nest. Hundreds of ants (left) cover the ground near the nest.



Tatiana Claudy

Ants are not only fascinating creatures, they serve as an important part of nature. Their tunnels help plants to grow because the plants' roots receive more air. Ants clean forests by making use of fallen trees and eating pesky bugs—just the help that promotes the growth and health of other plants.

On my way home, I was thinking about all the useful insights that I received while observing the anthill and its dwellers. "'Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!'" (Revelations 15:3), and even the tiny ants show us a perfect example of how everyone can be helpful and of good service no matter our size! **C**

Tatiana Claudy writes from Pleasant Lake, Indiana, where she enjoys searching God's creation for meaningful and useful lessons that are worth sharing.

ENDURANCE



The dandelion carries its gospel through its seeds to every nation, kindred tongue and people the world over. I found a dandelion plant growing at the 8,000 foot level of Whistler Mt. near Jasper, Alberta. This plant grows here because it lives quietly the qualities of endurance. The ten secrets of endurance found in this book are part of this plant's lifestyle. They are part of its very nature. They all work together enabling this plant to grow where almost nothing else can grow. God's love has in it this quality of endurance. "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you" Jeremiah 31:3.

If we do not resist this enduring love we will be drawn to Him. This divine love was manifested in the humanity of Jesus. He revealed the ten qualities of our dandelion plant by obeying God's ten commandments. "He endured the cross, despising the shame" Hebrews 12:2.

His love implanted in our hearts will make us loving and kind. Those around us may be rude, hateful or selfish. The same hatred that has slain the godly from Abel, the first martyr, to

the cross, will eventually be directed against any who live God's law of love. Jesus encourages us, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" John 16:33.

Dandelions are still blooming around the world in very difficult places. They demonstrate the quality of endurance. Every true follower of Jesus will live this quality of endurance anywhere in our dying world.



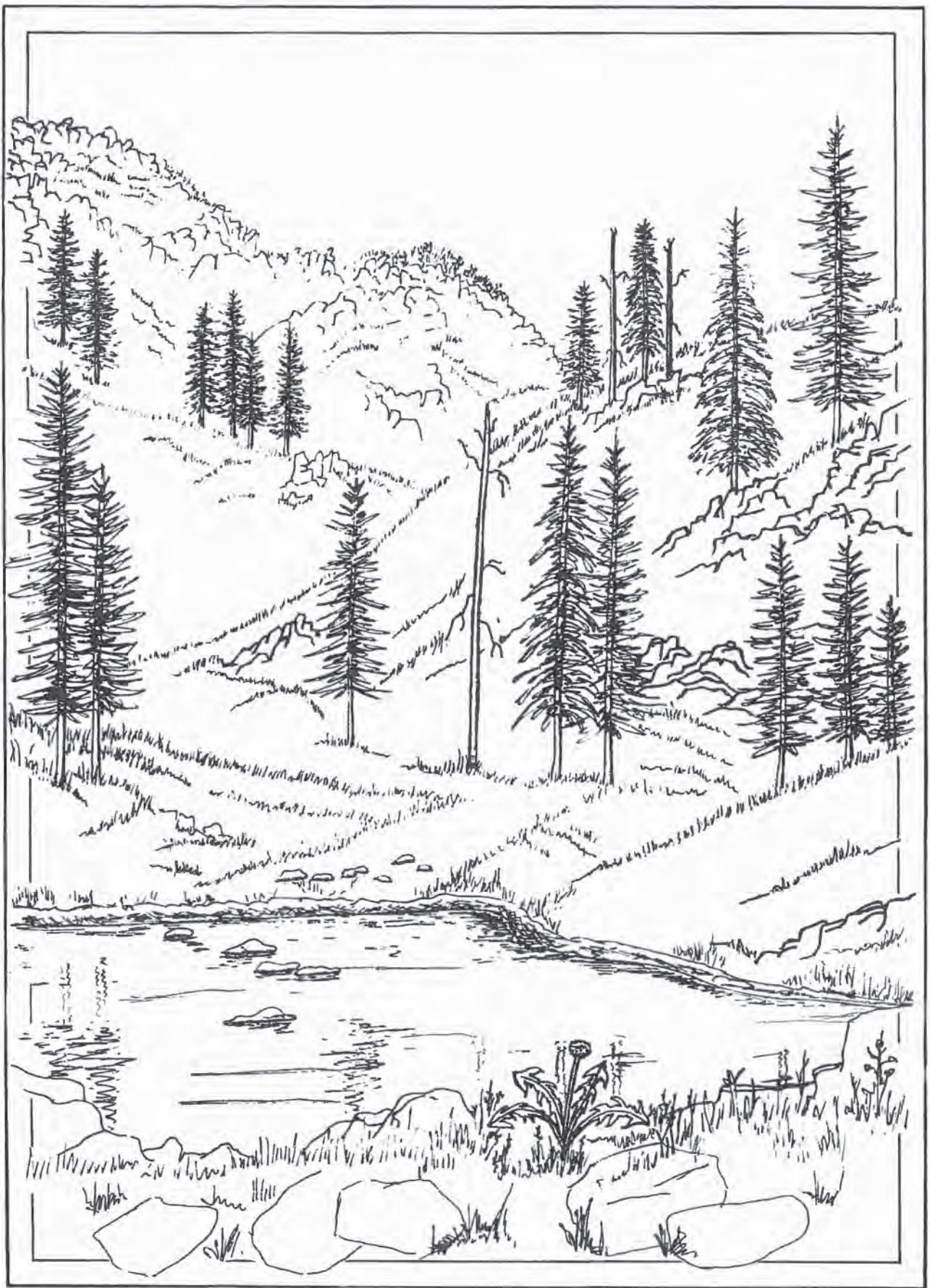
PRACTICAL PROJECT:

Find a healthy looking dandelion plant. Carefully mark the spot where it is growing with a stick stuck into the ground as a marker, so you can find it again. With a pair of scissors cut off the leaves and the flower. Note the day on the calendar and check your marked spot every day to see how long it takes to grow new leaves and flower. When the flower has grown back, repeat this experiment. How many times will the plant regrow? How does this endurance compare with 2 Corinthians 4:7-11; James 1:2-4; 12-14.



This character-building lesson was excerpted from *The Gospel According to a Dandelion* book by Terry and Jean McComb. To order the complete book and others in their series, go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com.





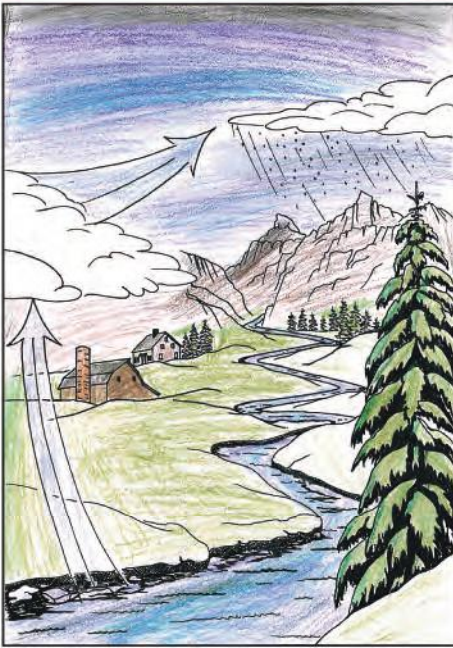
Spring 2025 Coloring Contest

First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____

(deadline & details on page 60)

City: _____ State/Prov. _____

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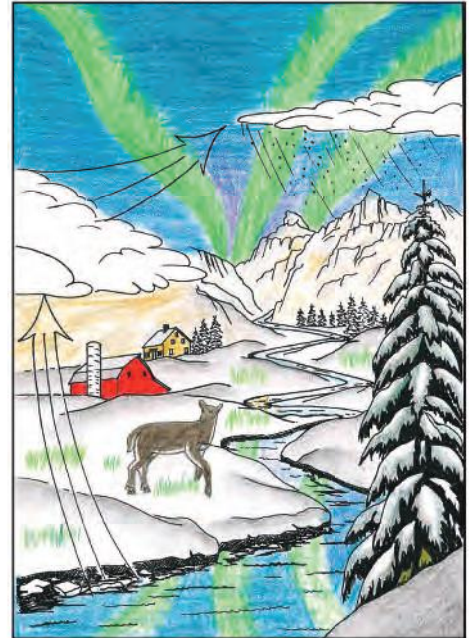
First Place, ages 6–11

Kelly R., age 10

Cypress, Texas



Winners From the Winter 2025 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 12–18

Annalise H., age 12

Cypress, Texas

First Place, ages 19+

Becky C., age 44,

Marianna, Florida

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest for ALL Ages!** Color in the picture on the previous page from the Character-Building Lesson. You can even add other creatures, clouds, sky, etc. Then scan or photograph your work (maximum one per quarter) and email an attached jpeg to: coloring@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Coloring Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The **DEADLINE for spring 2025 entries is May 15, 2025**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of June from spring-edition pictures, the first week of September from summer-edition pictures, the first week of December from fall-edition pictures, and the first week of March from winter-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com

Creation Illustrated Photo Contest

Winners From Winter 2025 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Anthony C., age 10, of Lincolnton, Georgia, said his pet goat, Spottie, makes him think, “When God saw the world it was very good!”

First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

Priya B., age 15, of San Jose, California, wrote “I took this picture during a cable car-ride in the snow-covered mountains of Tbilisi, Georgia. This photograph captures the breathtaking expanse of winter where adventure meets serenity in a frozen moment of beauty.



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Joshua D., age 23, of Jacksonville, Florida, wrote “‘The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. . . . Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb’ (Psalm 19:9, 10, KJV). The marvel of flight in a bee that is less than an inch long is truly a test.”

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Photo Contest for ALL Ages!** Get creative with your camera in nature and email an attached jpeg (maximum one per quarter) to: photos@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Photo Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address and one or two sentences on what your photo says about our Creator. The **DEADLINE for spring 2025 entries is May 15, 2025.** Your work will be uploaded to our Web site where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of June from spring submissions, the first week of September from summer submissions, the first week of December from fall submissions, and the first week of March from winter submissions. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com



STUDY GUIDE

for *Creation Illustrated*, Spring 2025 Edition, Vol. 32, No. 1

This instructional guide is designed to help readers of all ages integrate practical spiritual lessons available through the study of God's handiwork. Studying nature will help lead individuals to a personal, awe-inspiring relationship with Jesus Christ, the Author of Creation.

I. Creation Up Close—"A Rock of the Ages" story, pages 6–11

1. What is granite primarily composed of? p. 7
2. Explain how additional research tells a different timeline about how granite was formed. p. 7
3. What is the largest natural granite monolith? How tall is it? p. 7
4. What percentage of the world's crust is made of granite? p. 8
5. How many times does God refer to Himself as the Rock in Scripture? p. 9
6. What special promise is given to those who "overcome" in Revelation 2:15? p. 11
7. Write out Isaiah 26:4 and try to memorize it. Explain why you should not take granite for granted. p. 11

II. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—"Overlooked Opossums" story, pages 14–19

1. Describe the dexterous design of the opossum's paws. What do opposable feet allow them to do? p. 16
2. What type of tail does an opossum have, and how does it help them? p. 16
3. What are the names given to female, male, baby, and young opossums? p. 16
4. What is the gestation period of the opossum? How does this compare with other mammals? p. 16
5. Describe the newly born kit's life as it matures. How long does the female keep her group of joeys? p. 16
6. List some unique traits of opossums that help them function as natural sanitation workers. p. 19

III. Re-Creation Outdoors—"Redwood National Park" story, pages 20–25

1. When and how was Redwood National Park established? How many acres does it encompass? p. 21
2. How many species of plants and native wild animals inhabit the national park? List some of the species of plants and favorite creatures found in the park. pp. 21, 22
3. How tall and how large are the trunks of some of the redwood trees growing in Redwood National Park? How many years ago did they start growing? p. 22
4. What is the river's name that is fun to explore and ride kayaks on through the redwoods? p. 23
5. How does the wild Pacific Ocean inspire those who visit? Where is a good beach located to explore tidepools and a driftwood-strewn shoreline? p. 24
6. What special treat is waiting at the end of the 5.5-mile Boy Scout Tree Trail? pp. 24, 25

IV. The Creation Week—"Creation Day 5, Part 2—The Creation of Winged Creatures" story, pages 28–36

1. How many birds are on earth compared to humans? p. 29
2. List some of the benefits and joys of birdwatching. p. 29
3. What scriptures encourage us to have birds teach us? Provide examples of inventions inspired by studying birds. What did Jesus want us to learn from watching birds? pp. 29, 30
4. What bird did God use as a servant? p. 34
5. What does the dove symbolize in the scriptures? List the scriptures that talk about the dove. p. 35
6. Describe the special lessons that God uses birds to convey in the last days found in Revelation. pp. 35, 36

Springtime Family Fun Activities

Spring is one of the best times to go birdwatching. The year-round resident birds are there, and you also get migrating birds passing through on their way further north. Pick a day when the weather is mild. Birds are more active when the weather is enjoyable for them and you. Birds are most active when they are waking up at dawn. So, in order to see the most birds, you need to get up early. They are finding food to build up energy lost at night trying to stay warm. Toward sunset is also a good time to watch birds.

Here are some birdwatching tips:

- Utilize a colorful bird guidebook or a smart-phone app to help identify different birds.
- Take a walk on a trail or drive through a wildlife area to spot various bird species.
- Create your own birding journal by sketching the birds you encounter and include details about their location and habitat.
- Listen to the various bird songs and try mimicking the sounds birds make to see if they respond.
- Participate in a bird count by keeping track of the birds you see in your yard, a park, or at school; then report what you find and contribute to this *citizen science* effort.
- Take a guided tour at a state park or popular birding area to learn more about certain species of birds.
- Use binoculars to get a closer and clearer view of birds in their natural habitat.
- Create a bird-friendly backyard by providing bird feeders, bird houses, and birdbaths.

Extra tips for beginner bird watchers:

- Get to know the common birds in your area.
- Be patient and take your time observing.
- Consider joining a birdwatching club.



G	S	J	L	E	T	I	N	A	R	G	E
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P	R	Z	X	U	O	V	A	Q	M	O	Z

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

The puzzle at the left contains words that are associated with this edition of *Creation Illustrated*. Simply find the words listed below and circle them. They can be spelled backward, forward, up, down, or diagonally. When you are finished, try to find the story or other part of the magazine from which each word came.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. ANTS | 11. NEST |
| 2. BIRDS | 12. OPOSSUMS |
| 3. COLONIES | 13. OPPOSABLE |
| 4. FLY | 14. PARK |
| 5. GARDENS | 15. PASSEL |
| 6. GRANITE | 16. PREHENSILE |
| 7. GROVE | 17. RAINBOW |
| 8. GUARD | 18. ROCKS |
| 9. KITS | 19. SHEEP |
| 10. MARSUPIUM | 20. SOAR |

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Who is speaking? _____

What are you learning about God from this message? _____

Draw something that you heard today... _____

Words I don't know: _____

How can I apply what I learned to my life... _____

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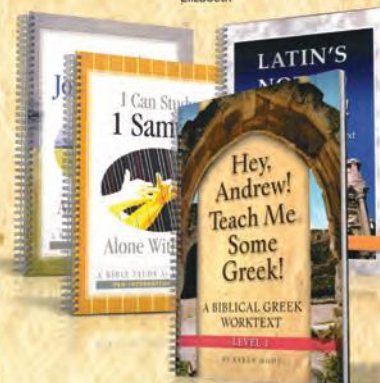
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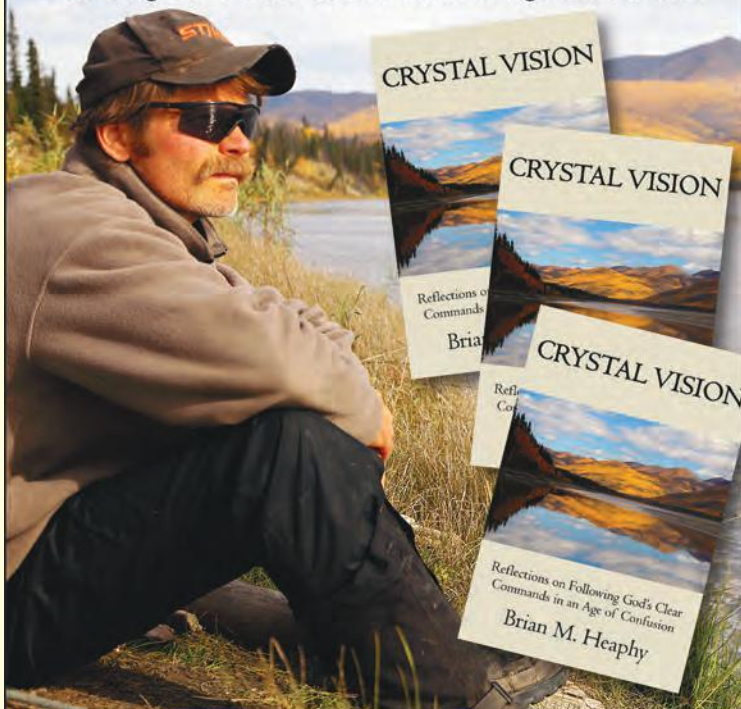


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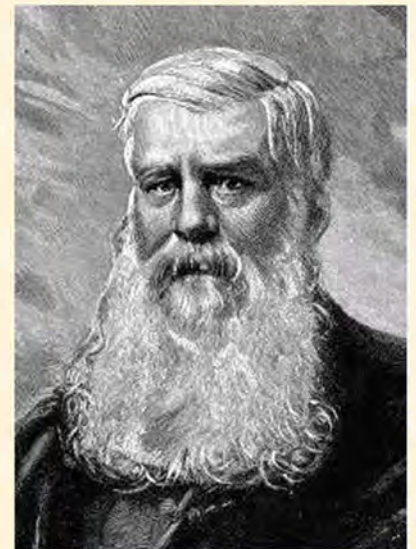
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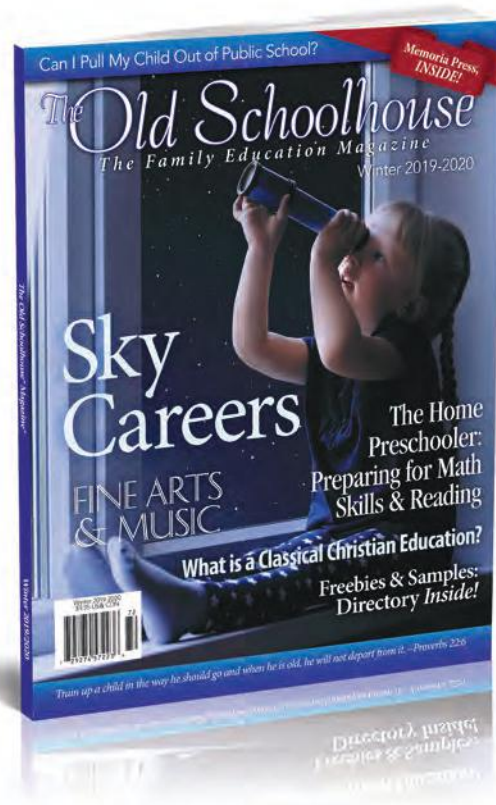
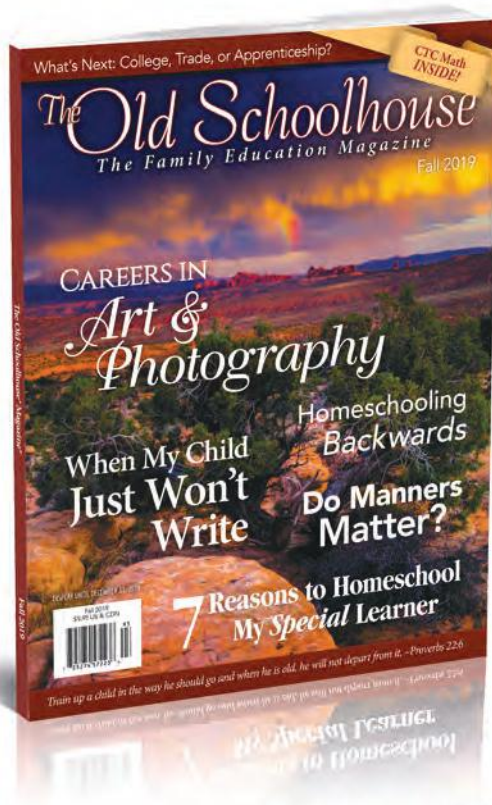
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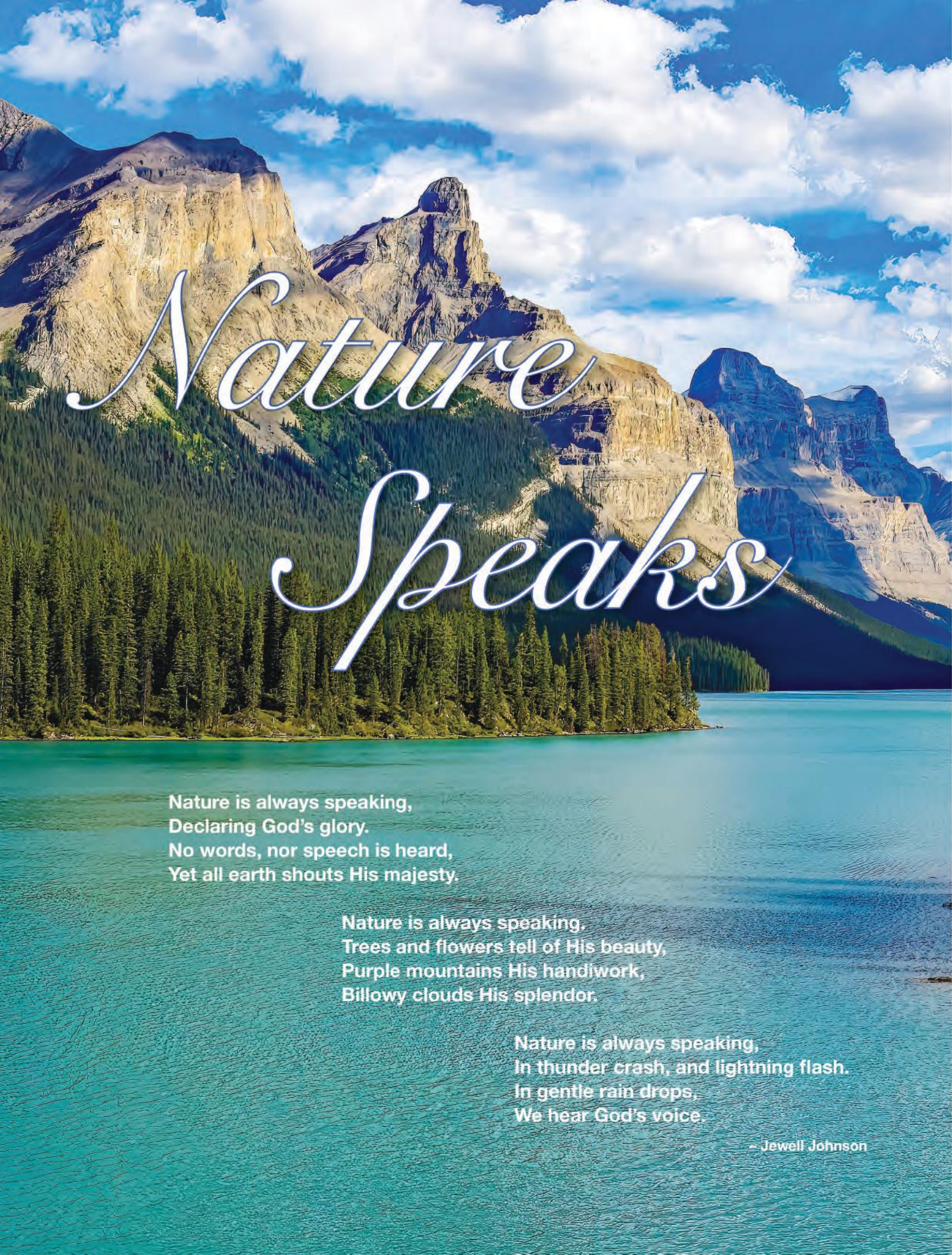
"A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher."

Luke 6:40

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Nature is always speaking,
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Billowy clouds His splendor.

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— Jewell Johnson





*"As a mother comforts her child,
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— Isaiah 66:13, NIV

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