

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR GETAWAY ...



IN NATURE




IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

WINTER 2022 VOL 28 NO 4 US \$4.99



A photograph of a red fox looking down at its reflection in a pool of water. A tree branch with a knot hole hangs over the water. The fox's reflection is clearly visible in the water below.

*“As water reflects the face,
so one’s life reflects
the heart.”*

— Proverbs 27:19, NIV



Our Why



When we started *Creation Illustrated* twenty-nine years ago, social media did not exist. Cell phones just started to become affordable to a few business people, and the clunky gadgets were the size of a lady's shoe. Life seemed simpler without everyone gripping such devices everywhere they went.

Today a serious cell-phone and social-media addiction onslaught has parents and educators puzzled, worried, and exasperated. Digital marketing experts estimate that most Americans are exposed to around four thousand to ten thousand ads each day. Many additional distractions compete for attention such as video games, TV screens the size of a dining room table, and violent visual content that should make everyone at that table lose their appetite.

As of 2020 the average daily social-media consumption among Internet users worldwide was 145 minutes per day (more than two and a half hours). Imagine how things might be if that time were used to read to a child, to enjoy nature outdoors, or to explore Scripture.

We prayerfully and diligently seek to draw readers closer to their Creator with stunning and captivating images wrapped in meaningful prose. We try to stand out as a better choice amid the thousands of confusing and counterfeit messages vying for attention—similar to Jesus' example of offering compassion and humility amid a prideful nation. We have found the best way to do this is to weave Scripture into personal experiences with God in His creation so that readers of any age will be halted in their tracks, will loosen the grip on their devices, and will reach for an uplifting and pleasing *getaway* so their senses will be soothed with embraces of nature and God's Word.

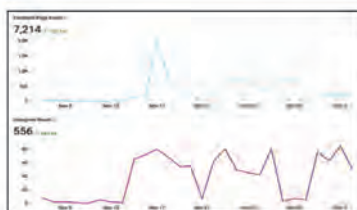
Some of our readers share that they can't wait to drink in the beauty and absorb the messages in each story. One reader recently said she enjoys a relaxing bath while reading it cover to cover. Several subscribers enjoy giving *Creation Illustrated* to help loved ones carve time away from the computer screen and cell phone—to unplug from the superficial and reconnect to the Source of satisfaction.

But how do we find *new* readers in this digital age where attention spans wane to mere seconds? We follow Jesus' example to mingle and search where souls are suffering from the stranglehold of Satan—on social media. This may seem to be a dichotomy (using social media in order to rescue people from social media), but that's where people are.

So, we have recently hired a social-media agency with expertise to help us successfully navigate this online wilderness as we do not have the time or know-how to figure out all of the digital gymnastics of Google analytics, search engine optimization (SEO), FaceBook algorithms, Instagram and Pinterest posts, pay-per-click advertisements, and meta trades for engagement.

But why invest precious funds in such high-tech tactics? The answer can be found in "Our Purpose" statement on the facing page. Have you read it? It is in all 112 issues of *Creation Illustrated* since our beginning in 1993. That's why.

The Publishers



Understanding and maximizing social-media is not easy or cheap. We welcome any tax-deductible donations to help defray the cost of these necessary efforts. Simply go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com, click on donations, and choose "Where Needed Most." No gift is too large or too small. Thank you for joining us in this contemporary form of outreach.

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 28, No. 4

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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... IN NATURE

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Our Why | 2 |
| Giving Thanks | 4 |
| Sharing Our Mail | 5 |
| Elusive Eagles | 6 |
| Creation Up-Close | 14 ▶ |
| Re-Creation Outdoors | 20 |



... IN SCRIPTURE



| | |
|------|----------------------|
| ◀ 28 | Creation Day 7 |
| | The Creation of |
| | Rest and Worship |
| 38 | Creation Highlights |
| 39 | Creation Stewardship |

... IN LIVING

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Lens On Creation | 40 |
| My Walk With God | 42 |
| Gardens From Eden | 46 |
| Genesis Cuisine | 52 ▶ |
| Children's Story | 54 |
| Character Lesson | 58 |
| Contests | 60 |
| Study Guide | 62 |



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The cover photo of a snowy owl hiding behind its wing was taken by James Cumming.

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Regenerate

At the outset of every New Year, resolutions aimed at new beginnings, new growth, and new commitments reign supreme in the minds and hearts of earnest souls worldwide. At the core of many such resolutions exists a fundamental determination to improve—bolstering health, enhancing appearances, stabilizing finances, and even rekindling spiritual growth.

Such noble desires often rely on self determination rooted in survival-of-the-fittest parameters. Yet, the gospel with its core of grace, hope, faith, and love rely on self surrender rooted in a sacrifice-of-the-meek milieu that promises genuine regeneration.

This edition's "Creation Up Close" feature reveals the amazingly rapid regeneration of antler cells that annually result in regal racks on the crowns of deer, elk, and moose. Clamor with *shed* hunters who prize such discarded finds while discovering that we, too, will become regenerated by the grace of God and shed our crowns at His feet one day.

But daily overwhelming trials can interrupt desires to grow and end up wounding the soul that can sink into depths of discouragement. Physical wounds add to such challenges as depicted in the "Elusive Eagles" story about a bald eagle that was shot out of the sky. Rescuers nursed the stately creature to full regeneration until it could soar in the heavens once again. We discover that we have a Rescuer who can restore us to full regeneration, revival, and renewal if we let Him apply the salve of salvation to our soul's sores.


One such downtrodden person shares her struggle during a snowy hike on a familiar trail. Initially disinterested in the wonders of nature around her, she treks beyond the boundaries of self and discovers the restorative benefits of the surrounding beauty and finishes a series of "Trail Encounters" rebounded, regenerated, and ready to embrace the blessings bestowed on her in this edition's "My Walk With God" article.

Even the hidden things of Creation can regenerate and rejuvenate in a symbiotic fashion such as the mushrooms dotting a garden that help enhance the soil beneath the surface to provide for a productive garden as told in the "Gardens From Eden" story called "Guardians of the Garden."

But sometimes the soil is not so rich or well cultivated like in the arid desert expanses that stretch throughout the southwest. Nevertheless, prickly, stalwart trees stand as well-placed sentinels in sandy sanctuaries like Joshua Trees National Park. As victims of the harsh elements, these specimens endure scarcity while finding just enough sustenance to regenerate at a slow and steady pace. Come on a "Journey to Joshua" in our "Re-Creation Outdoors" article to discover how the Creator provides balance and hope in even the most destitute situations.

We can rest assured from this edition's Creation week feature that no matter how downtrodden, wounded, defeated, or destitute we may become, the Creator designed a sanctuary in time on the last day of the Creation week where we can learn how to stop working, start resting, begin kneeling, and continue adoring the One who desires nothing more than to welcome us into the full regeneration of our souls for all eternity.




Tom Ish, editor/publisher

Accepted Christ . . .

I would like to start by saying *thank you* for publishing your magazine and making it available to inmates all over the country.

As I am incarcerated, I look for ways to not be defined by the confines of these concrete walls, doors, gates, and fences of steel. I may be locked in, but I have never been freer than I am now. I have accepted Christ as my Saviour and have broken free from my addictions that got me here.

Your magazine has been uplifting and given me hope for what is to come. It also takes

me to another place in my mind. May God bless you for all the lives you've touched with great stories and amazing pictures. I am also writing to ask for a subscription or any back issues you could send my way. Thank you for the consideration and making your magazine available to people like me. It is true charity and love.

Your brother in Christ,
M. Forrester
Plainfield Corr. Facility
Plainfield, Indiana

Classroom use . . .

I love using the variety of pictures in *Creation Illustrated* to stimulate student writing. I cut out the pictures and placed them in a bag. The students choose a picture and then write a story based upon the picture. This helps students by stimulating their imagination.

L. Abbott, Principal
Hoover Christian
School
Birmingham, Alabama

Check reissued . . .

A check dated December 16, 2020, was not cashed, and acknowledgment for

the donation was not received. I see by your explanation in the magazine that there were problems with the postal service. I am re-issuing a check as a donation. I'm sure James 1:5, 6 and Proverbs 3:6 will aid in this situation.

M. Tufts

Dale City, Virginia
Editors note: Thank you for these encouraging Bible texts. We also greatly appreciate you re-issuing your donation. We also welcome your prayers as we continue to deal with this challenge of our mail not being properly forwarded.

Hospital gift . . .

Thank you very much for directing copies of your wonderful magazine to me. Enclosed is a note for the individual (donated funds from a prison inmate) who made it possible. The magazines are informative and thought provoking with beautiful illustrations. I know the children will definitely enjoy using them. It also brings the family together, as they are given to the patients for personal pleasure

and development. Again, thank you so much for your part in sending us the materials.

Sister M. P. Hogan,
Chaplain
St. Joseph's Children's
Hospital
Paterson, New Jersey

Son's interest . . .

Thank you for all the time and hard work you put into your beautiful magazine! The pictures are always inspiring to me and also to our eight-year-old son. We have eight children, but he is the one who most takes an interest in nature.

Every time we get a new issue of *Creation*, he spends a few hours coloring the picture but has never sent it in to the contest. But this time is different. He says I must send it in, because he hopes he might be a winner!

K. Stoltzfus
Lykens, Pennsylvania

God-honoring . . .

I just love your magazine! It's so beautiful and God-honoring—the best. Congratulations to all of you.

R. Heikel
Calgary, Alberta

Dear Friends:

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

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Elusive Eagles

When opening the blinds to let in the morning light, I noticed overhead some dark ominous-appearing clouds. Clicking on the TV to get the latest weather, I instead got a report on a fallen eagle. My focus suddenly switched from the weather to being captivated by the plight of this wounded raptor.

The commentator reported that the eagle had been shot in flight and in falling to the ground had broken its neck. I immediately became indignant. Our nation's bird—the symbol of our freedom—how could any true American do such a thing?

Moreover, these amazing creatures exemplify vital characteristics as part of God's creation. "God created . . . every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1: 21, NASB). With laser focus on their target, these stalwart avians fly up to thirty miles per hour and can dive at speeds near a hundred miles per hour to seize their prey. Once they

By Carole Rodgers

find a suitable mate, it's not uncommon for them to remain loyal and paired for life. Bald eagle courtship involves elaborate, spectacular mating calls and aerobatics by the males. The flight includes swoops, chases, and cartwheels in which the pair fly high, lock talons, free-fall, and separate just before hitting the ground.

While building their nests in tall trees or on steep cliffs, they yearly add sticks to their recycled nests until the massive construction projects reach about nine feet in diameter and close to two thousand pounds in weight. As expectant parents, the pair works together incubating the eggs, and for the first two weeks after the young hatch, at least one of the parents remains with the chicks almost constantly. The male and female birds appear identical in plumage, but females are about twenty-five percent larger than males.

Found near large bodies of open water with an abundant food supply and old-growth trees for nesting, these raptors subsist mainly on fish snatched from the water with talons and pecked apart with a large, hooked yellow beak. They will remain there year-round unless their home body of water freezes during the winter making it impossible to catch food; then the eagles migrate to the south or to the coast. The range of these stalwart creatures includes most of Canada and Alaska, the contiguous United States, and northern Mexico. A typical territory defended by a mature pair will be up to a mile and a half of waterside habitat.

Compared to most other raptors that mostly nest in April or May, bald eagles begin to nest by mid-February with eggs hatching from mid-April to

early May. The young fledge in June or July and will remain close to the nest and attended by their parents. Juvenile eagles start dispersing away from their parents about eight weeks after they fledge, and the average lifespan of bald eagles in the wild is around twenty years.

The bald eagle has been the national bird and emblem of the United States since 1782, and being native to the Americas, this avian symbol helped separate the new nation's identity from the Old World. Prior to this, the eagle long held spiritual significance for native people of North America. Its feathers are still central to many tribal religious and spiritual customs. In fact, eagles are considered spiritual messengers between gods and humans by some cultures.

With the onslaught of industry and urban sprawl in the late twentieth century, bald eagles were on the brink of extirpation in the contiguous United States. But populations have since recovered with regulations in place and DDT pesticides banned that hurt the reproduction of the birds. The bald eagle was removed from the list of endangered species in 1995 and put on the list of threatened species until 2007. There are roughly twice as many bald eagles in North America than the golden eagles, with the bald species estimated to number at least one hundred and fifty thousand individual birds.

But in the news story I saw, an innocent specimen and symbol of freedom, focus, loyalty, and ingenuity had been shot down. Fortunately someone reported the tragedy to an animal rescue shelter, and a team dispatched to search for the fallen eagle found it and took it to receive care. "'And yet not one of

*“And yet not one of them will fall to the ground
apart from your Father.”*

—Matthew 10: 29, NASB



An eagle pair (above) build their massive nest, while a precision catch is made with the talons of a skilled raptor (left). The seal of the US is blazoned with the national bird (below).



“He, Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.”

—Matthew 8:17, NASB



Rescuers carefully band the leg of an eagle (above). The shrill voice of the eagle is distinct (right). And finally the handler is ready to release the raptor into the wild (below).



© Tom & Pat Leeson



them will fall to the ground apart from your Father'" (Matthew 10: 29, NASB). For three years the team lovingly nursed the eagle until it once again could be ready for flight.

However, during the recovery period two distinct changes had taken place. First, due to its injury, the eagle had lost its voice. Surprisingly for their size and strength, the eagle's call is rather weak—a high-pitched whistling or piping sound. Secondly, a tracking device had been implanted in the eagle so researchers could monitor its travel.

Finally the time had come—a grand moment to all who had participated in this raptor rescue project. One of the workers, with his team mates following close behind, proudly carried the eagle into an open field. Upon being released the eagle first took just a hop or two on the ground while slowly and cautiously turning its head to survey its surroundings. Three years out of flight is a long time for such an independent bird. Onlookers seemed to hold their breath, and then it happened. The eagle stretched its wings while hopping and flapping until suddenly, with the wind beneath its feathers, the stately creature fully took to the air and began soaring amid the cheers and tears of the watching crowd.

As if taking a farewell fly-by, the healed eagle circled above the spectators as if it were testing everything to be in good working order before embarking on a new journey. Apparently satisfied, the eagle lifted ever higher in the sky and then soared straight away toward its distant home. It had been born again!

I found myself in tears as I discovered in the eagle's story our very own story. We were made

to soar throughout eternity, but no sooner had humankind embarked on its journey in the Garden of Eden with the Creator when we, too, were shot down by an evil-devising enemy. "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5: 8, NASB). Yes, incapacitated and left wounded, broken, and lost. Lost, that is, until God the Father looked down with a loving heart and in His mercy sent a Rescuer—a team of one, His Son Jesus Christ—to save us. "'For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost'" (Luke 19: 10, NASB).

Christ found us, and He stayed with us for three years, bringing healing and wholeness just as the rescue team did for the eagle. "'He, Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases'" (Matthew 8: 17, NASB). And when His work was done, before releasing us, He made a promise. He promised to implant within the heart of every person born again by His healing touch His own wonderful tracking device—the Holy Spirit. "'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever'" (John 14: 16, NASB). And once His Spirit is securely in place, there's nowhere we can go that He is not with us, compassionately tracking us, ever watching over us, and keeping us in His loving care. Even to this day that rescue team of One is still standing by ready and willing to bring healing and wholeness. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10: 10, KJV). All it takes is surrendering and entrusting our lives to His healing touch.

Like the eagle, we, too, lose our natural carnal voice. When Christ heals us to soar with the buoyancy

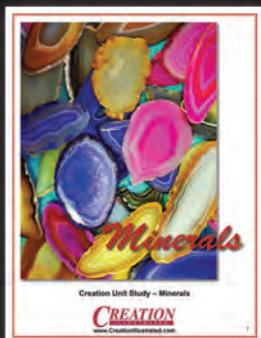
of His spirit under our wings, He gives us a new voice—His voice of love, joy, and peace; then He sends us back out into life’s wilderness to be an eagle-eye in saving souls—to be His voice. There is no sin and no circumstance of life that is greater than His loving grace and mercy. And by that grace and mercy we are challenged to “lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us” (Hebrews 12: 1). We shall not only run the race but take wing and soar high above all of life’s daunting situations and any threats of sin. We may at first tremble and want to take just a hop or two, but we need not fear, for He is the wind beneath our wings. We were made to fly! “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles” (Isaiah 40: 31, NIV).

The bald eagle was chosen as America’s symbol because it has great strength and majestic features. It represents freedom. In Christ, the “hope of glory” (Colossians 1: 27, NIV), we are not only healed and given new life here on earth, but we are promised life eternal. The knowledge that we are children of the One and only holy and majestic King of kings and Lord of lords, and with Christ living within us, we can take on His blessed features!

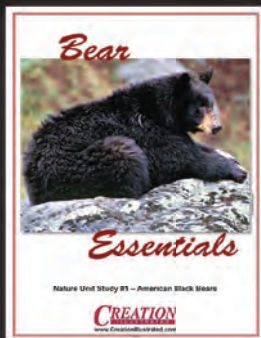
If you ever have the opportunity, seize the thrill of observing these most remarkable creatures in the wild. Glory not only in the beauty and wonder of the eagles, but ponder what God wants to do in and through our lives—to make us soar like the eagles! Then voice this psalm of praise and worship: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; who pardons all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from the pit; who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; who satisfies your years with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle” (Psalm 103: 1–5, NASB). **C**

Carole Rodgers writes from Olympia, Washington, where she enjoys seizing opportunities to find meaningful lessons in God’s creation.

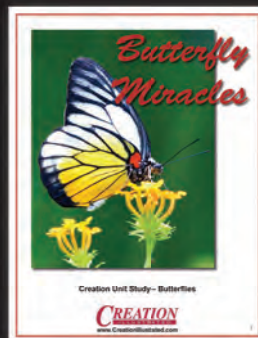




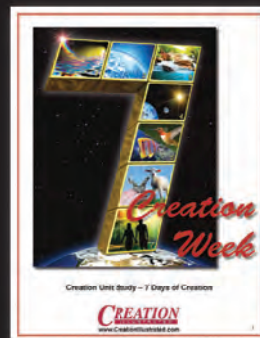
Minerals



Bears



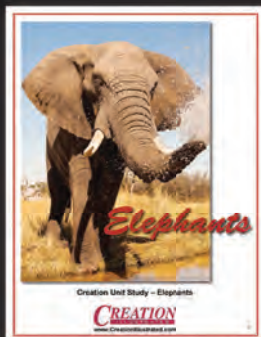
Butterflies



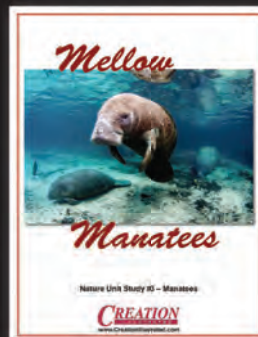
Creation Week



Orchids



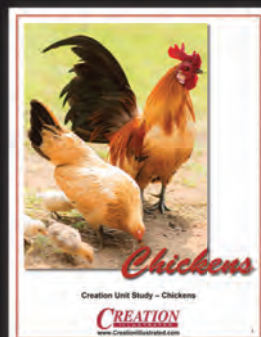
Elephants



Manatees



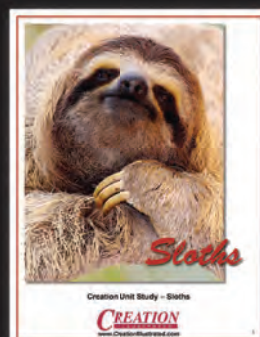
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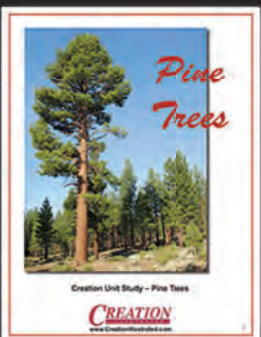
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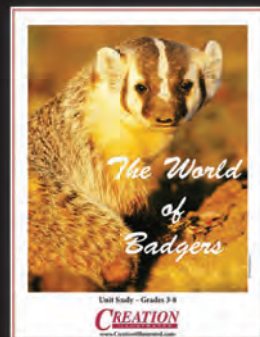
Fragrance



Pine Trees



Snow



Badgers

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:
Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee..." —Job 12:7, 8

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Trophies of F

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



Hordes of shed hunters gallop into the hills of Sun River Wildlife Management Area in Montana.

A massive archway of

Elk trophy hunters have been lined up in cars for days at the Sun River Wildlife Management Area near the heart of Montana. They've camped beside the road for weeks, and now dozens of horses, along with countless trucks, ATV's, and even people on foot, crowd the gate guarded by Montana state officials. Anticipation has built to a fever pitch for this annual event.

"It's like Black Friday," some have said, likening the scene to over-zealous shoppers clamoring

to be among the first to seize that coveted prize.

When the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks staff open the gate at high noon on May 15, off go the hunters whooping and hollering into the sagebrush-strewn hills. But these hunters are not carrying rifles; so, what could they be after?

The prized trophies found in this vast area are called *sheds*—or, as most people know them, antlers. The elk, deer, and moose that populate the wildlife management area have wintered here, shed their antlers, and then moved on to summer feeding

Regeneration

B Y S A N D Y M A Y L E



elk antlers at the Jackson Hole, Wyoming, town square.



A bull moose dons a strong rack of shovel-shaped antlers.

grounds. Shed hunters scour and scrounge for racks of antlers to either sell to dealers for over ten dollars a pound, to keep for themselves for crafting into art pieces, to take home and display on their walls, or to simply add to the heap of antlers they've been collecting over the years.

Each year male members of the deer family *Cervidae* (which includes elk, moose, white-tailed deer and other species) grow and eventually shed their antlers in a process called *antlerogenesis*, which is different from the horns on cattle, goats, and sheep.

There is one exception in that both male and female caribou (or reindeer) grow antlers. In the eyes of shed hunters, antlerogenesis is definitely something to get excited about!

Branched bones attached to a deer's skull form the antlers that prove vital during the deer breeding season when males spar with each other to determine dominance. The number of points or tines branching off of the main beam that grows out of the animal's skull can further indicate the age, power, and seniority of the creature amid its herd. When referring to an

antler rack, hunters on the east side of the United States count all the points on both sides of the rack, whereas hunters in the west side of the U.S. count only one side. In Montana just one side of the antler rack is counted for both whitetail and mule deer. So, an eight-point buck in the east would be only a four-point buck in the west.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, antlers have the fastest bone growth in the world, and the largest racks are found on moose, whose antlers can gain a pound a day and weigh as much as forty pounds each!

Antlerogenesis is a process of biological regeneration—the renewal of lost or injured body parts. It’s a process mirrored by the spiritual regeneration we call rebirth. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of *regeneration* and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

This annual cycle of antlerogenesis follows

a seasonal timeline. In spring the previous year’s antlers have been shed and new antlers start growing immediately when triggered by increasing daylight called *photoperiodism* along with subsequent testosterone production. The new antlers begin as a bulb of soft cartilage covered and nourished by a skin-like membrane called velvet because it is covered with short, velvety hairs that make the antlers appear much larger than normal. The velvet is rich with nerves and blood vessels that are warm to the touch. Antlers at this early stage of growth can be pliable, can easily bleed, and can get damaged.

Just as the blood-rich velvet nourishes the growing antlers into new life, the blood of Christ brings to us redemption, “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Then there is cleansing. “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son



A thick layer of velvet coats a growing rack of antlers.



Hannah Jones

cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Then peace with God follows. "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:19, 20, NIV). Then we gain fellowship with God, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Ephesians. 2:13, NIV). And ultimately we are free from the power of Satan. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11, KJV).

Throughout the summer deer must have access to high protein food sources to realize their full growth potential. But how can believers use available resources to grow spiritually to reach their full potential? Getting into the Word provides rich growth nutrients for the soul. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16, ESV). Other vital growth factors include pursuing fellowship with other believers and "not giving up meeting together,

as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25, NIV), by seizing every opportunity to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Ephesians 6:18, NIV), and by developing spiritual attributes to "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5–8, NIV).

As summer wears on and the days grow shorter, antler growth slows, and they begin to harden—a process called *mineralization*. By late summer, growth is completed, and blood stops flowing to the antlers. The velvet dries, becomes itchy, and gets rubbed off by the deer against trees or



A shed ready to be claimed



A buck loses the velvet covering on his antlers.



Bull elk spar for superiority among the herd

fenceposts, resulting in hard, polished antlers. During the fall breeding season called the *rut*, bucks use their hardened antlers to joust with other males.

By early winter, with breeding season over, cells start to demineralize between the skull and the antler. This causes the connection to weaken and the antlers to fall off. Because lengthening daylight triggers hormonal changes in the deer, new growth starts the annual process to repeat itself.

Antlers have some amazing characteristics. For instance, white-tailed deer may grow deformed antlers as a result of an injury, and for reasons that aren't fully understood, injuries to a front leg cause antler deformation on the same side as the injury. Injuries to a rear leg often result in deformation of the opposite antler. Antler growth may also offer astounding potential in aiding research. In the *Pittsburgh Quarterly's* "What a Rack! The True and Weird Story of Antlers," Bridget Fertal writes that "The nerves within the early growing antlers grow

extremely quickly—ten times faster than those in humans. This, as well as the regenerative properties of antlers, has put deer under the lens of scientists. In the 1960s, biologists transplanted the cells that generate deer antlers onto another part of the deer's head, as well as another deer's leg. Misplaced antlers grew in those locations. . . . Additionally, if the cells are attached to another creature's body, an antler-like growth will appear. This was proven when the cells were transplanted onto a mouse, which grew antler-like appendages. This study has continued to the present day, as scientists hope that these cells will uncover secrets to human nerve-growth expediency and limb regeneration."

In an article called "All About Deer Hunting" by outdoorsman Brad Herndon on realtree.com, he notes, "Numerous research scientists are studying [antlers'] growth and composition since they are one of the fastest-growing tissues on earth. Only a few cancers grow as fast, so scientists hope to find a link



Researchers seek the secrets to rapid cell growth in antlers.



A regal rack crowns a mature elk.

between the two that would lead to a cure for cancer. . . . There are hopes the extracts from velvet antlers will eventually provide relief to [people suffering from osteoarthritis], and possibly slow cartilage breakdown. . . . [Antlers] may someday be responsible for giving us relief from, or a cure for, some serious diseases."

While antlers are regenerated annually, fortunately the salvation process doesn't need to start over again each year. Still, believers can undergo periodic spiritual renewal. During these times the Holy Spirit's work in us causes us to shed former ways of thinking, old habits, and ungodly desires. As these things drop away, God replaces them with His perspectives and desires. Scripture speaks of obtaining a renewed spirit (Psalm 51:10), renewed youth (Psalm 103:5), renewed strength (Isaiah 40:31), renewed mind (Romans 12:2), and being renewed daily (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Just as a well-nourished and maturing deer

grows a more impressive rack of antlers each year until he reaches his prime, spiritually-nourished and maturing believers also grow. Season after season, we're being changed from glory to glory. "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18, ESV). Ultimately, we are presented before the throne of God as His trophies of regeneration. **C**

Sandy Mayle writes from Erie, Pennsylvania, where she develops new insights about unique discoveries in God's creation in order to share useful lessons with Bible students.



RE-CREATION OUTDOORS

Journey

BY KATE ELWELL

Barren, scrubby, wasted, dead. Those were the words that began growing in my mind as we drove through the entrance of Joshua Tree National Park. The thirsty landscape lay littered with scraggly creosote bushes and the occasional Joshua cholla cactus that somehow found sustenance from the parched ground. Giant rock and dirt piles blocked the horizon as if dumped from some heavenly quarry. Had we driven eighteen hours from Portland, Oregon, for this?

At first glance the desert often suffers misinterpretation as a wasteland. As I soon learned, the vast arid acreage is far from it. Rather, the apparently forsaken expanse

A large Joshua tree with its characteristic spiky leaves and branching structure dominates the left side of the frame. The background shows a vast desert landscape with rolling hills and other smaller Joshua trees under a clear, warm-toned sky. The title 'To Joshua' is written in a large, green, serif font with a subtle glow effect, positioned in the upper right quadrant.

To Joshua

flourishes as a place of interdependent life and beauty waiting for the attentive observer to catch a glimpse of its subtle yet stunning and intricate splendor that welcomed me with an echo of Isaiah 35:1, 2. "The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing."

Each type of desert is unique and contains its own spellbinding beauty. Joshua Tree National Park's 1,235 square miles encompass portions of two deserts, the Colorado and the Mojave, which are mainly separated by elevation. The dry, creosote-hewn Colorado, where



Art Robertson



Bazaar rock outcroppings (left) punctuate the park's landscape.

BRANCHES SPLAYED OUT

our journey began, sits below 3,000 feet in elevation. As we drove higher into the park and crossed into the wetter Mojave Desert, the landscape began to change. Beavertail cactus with their magenta blooms greeted us from the rocky crags, along with piñon pine, California juniper, and desert scrub oak. Wildflowers of every hue and nearly seven hundred fifty different species of vascular plants grew from seemingly impossible places. Various lizards, hare, roadrunners, and quail regularly crossed our path as the wilderness sprang to life.

Even the geography took on a new shape. The haphazard rock piles transitioned to golden granite monoliths ominously rising from the sand. These rounded boulders, once formed by cooling magma shaped by underground waterways and then worn by above-ground elemental extremes, provide an otherworldly backdrop. The land and vegetation around these great rocks began to change, as well. The creosote thinned, and the park's namesake lanky, spike-coated trees began to appear.

Yucca brevifolia, better known as Joshua trees, grow in what scientists called a forest, but this was unlike any forest I had ever seen. Each tree sprang up acres away from the next. They didn't branch and leaf like the deciduous hardwood tree varieties I had known back home in New York. Each specimen seemed an island unto itself—independent and stalwart. They fit no mold with their haphazard branches splayed out in grotesque fashion. To my inexperienced mind, they looked sturdy and self-reliant—an apt metaphor to my current state of being. I had come West with the age-old hope of escaping my home in New York and exploring the world for myself on a journey of self-discovery and headstrong independence. Instead, the reality I found far from my traditional, conservative, and rural upbringing both surprised and angered me.

I studied at a Bible college while diving into the intricacies of urban darkness that ruled



Cholla and other cacti find enough moisture to subsist in the foreboding desert.

“I will even make a road in the wilderness . . .”

the streets of Portland, Oregon. Prostitution ran rampant just blocks from the entrance of the school I attended. Homeless street kids my age gathered each night in Pioneer Square to discuss how they would get their next high. I came here to get to know my God and myself and instead found countless godless, hopeless lives. My journey of self-discovery led me not to becoming a beautiful, independent creature. To the contrary, like the ill-defined Joshua tree, I seemed to be sprouting gangly and prickly branches of bitterness and self-doubt in my heavy heart. I soon discovered the desert had only begun to whisper its secrets to me. God, through His stunning creation, has a way of making us see beyond ourselves, which guides us to a deeper understanding of Him and our place in His kingdom as promised in Isaiah 43:19. “Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

As I began exploring my surroundings more closely, I learned how truly reliant Joshua trees are on everything around them in the desert’s delicate ecosystem. Dependent on tedious conditions in which to survive, each miniscule part of the desert relies on symbiotic relationships with other arid elements for food, water, shelter, and ever-fleeting shade. The Joshua tree stands as a prime example of interdependence.

Like its biblical namesake (Israel’s hopeful warrior leader), the Joshua tree lifts its arms to guide others to life. It offers a promised land of sorts to the lizards, birds, rodents, and insects that clamor for shade, water, food, and life. But in order to offer consoling branches of protection, its flower bud must first be destroyed either by producing a flower or by a damaging insect or environmental calamity. Without just the right circumstances and a certain level of suffering, the Joshua tree will not grow. When February and March conditions allow, the trees



First Two Photos © Jason Stone

A Joshua tree blossom (left) adorns an otherwise prickly tree. Snowcapped mountains form a contrasting backdrop to the barren

SYMBIOSIS AND SACRIFICE

send out a stunning array of white blossoms from the tip of each spiked branch. From these flowers a few seeds will fall and germinate; and if the support is there, a new life will form, not as an island but as part of a community.

Through this rare desert tree God began teaching me the truth of Romans 12:1, 2. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” The world pushes the importance of self-reliance and independence, which promotes the absurdity of selfishness and pain. This marvelous creation surrounding me told a very different story, one of symbiosis and sacrifice. But my journey was only beginning; the desert had so much more to teach me personally.

Our initial destination was one of the park’s nine campgrounds. Many of Joshua Tree National Park’s campgrounds are built around its signature *inselbergs* or isolated rock knobs that abruptly rise from the level surrounding plain, and our resting place was no exception. We propped our tents upon the quartz monzonite ground with no means of our driving stakes through the solid rock. We tossed our equipment inside to weigh the tent down. Camping spots at Joshua Tree National Park are limited, especially during the busy late winter months when rock climbers travel from around the world to scale the vertical portions of this unique national landmark.

Our group was among them, since our main purpose in coming here was to climb rocks. Joshua Tree National Park remains one of the nation’s premiere rock-climbing destinations with thousands of named climbing routes for avid enthusiasts of the sport at every level. Several



n, rocky environ with sparsely spaced Joshua trees.



Yellow nolina beargrass blossoms point to a craggy peak where rock climbers find a perch.

“The Lord directs the steps of the godly.”

rock-climbing guide companies service the park and offer everything from multiday beginner classes to one-on-one instruction. Gear is available for rent or purchase in the nearby village of Joshua Tree. With over eight thousand climbs from which to choose (including many short ones due to the nature of its monoliths), the most difficult part of climbing Joshua tree is deciding where to start. A few classic climbs include Real Hidden Valley and Turtle Rock with a range of beginner through expert options.

Not all climbing requires ropes, as bouldering and scrambling offer ways to experience Joshua tree’s unique geology without investing in equipment. *Bouldering* takes place typically on rocks less than twenty feet tall and involves facing problems en route to the top of the boulder. *Scrambling* is a method of ascending rock faces that sometimes requires the use of hands. Real Hidden Valley and its vicinity provide prime options for both activities.

While climbing may seem an independent sport (the way survival in the Joshua tree habitat appears), it is best and most safely experienced in community. Spotters and belayers are there to double check harnesses, knots, ropes, and to keep climbers from hitting the ground if they slip. Not until I had all precautions in order could I begin scaling the sheer walls toward a pinnacle a hundred and fifty feet above. The exhilaration of rock climbing is like no other. While it’s exhausting as legs and arms press against the coarse granite, the perfect combination of push and pull come together to defy gravity and move me ever higher until the peak is finally in sight. The climax of elation (with chalk-dust smeared hands shaking and sweat dripping from my face) came as I reached the top. The risk of falling was far outweighed by the thrill of accomplishment, but I trust God will direct my every move as assured in Psalm 37:23, 24. “The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they



Bouldering on granite outcroppings provides a great attraction to the park that is scattered with stalwart Joshua trees.

THE VAST CANOPY OF STARS

stumble, they will never fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand” (NLT). Upon safely reaching the top, I enjoy a speedy rappel down the side so the process could begin again.

After each long day of climbing, hiking, bouldering, and scrambling, our group returned to our campsite. The desert nights and moisture-free air made a perfect backdrop for sleeping with the vast canopy of stars as our tent. While night temperatures can dip below freezing during the winter months, by February low temperatures average in the mid-forties. Joshua Tree National Park is just as, if not more, stunning by night than it is by day. Secluded from much of California’s chronic light pollution, the desert night sky alights with billions of sparkling stars brightly dancing in the heavens. Sleeping atop giant rock boulders with the Milky Way Galaxy as my blanket, I couldn’t help but join in praising God with David’s psalm: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psalm 19:1–4).

The richly intertwined life of what I once saw as a barren desert offered a much-needed reminder that in our darkest and most lonely times, God has surrounded us in life-giving community. Self reliance doesn’t sustain life in the desert. The only hope of survival is interdependence, trust, and symbiosis—a vital illustration of our connections with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. **C**

Kate Elwell writes from Amelia Court House, Virginia, where she gleans vital spiritual lessons from life experiences. This story is updated and reprinted from the Winter 2014 edition of Creation Illustrated.



Joshua Tree National Park History

Write a short essay on the history of Joshua Tree National Park and how it got its name.



Bible Study on Trees

In the Bible, citing for God's Creation is talked about in several places. Name some stories in the Bible that relate to Creation stewardship and what God wants us to do about it.

Study verses after the Bible trees are mentioned and how we should care for the environment in the King James Version.

There are several references in the Bible that might identify various trees. Look up these verses and list what kind of tree is being referred to.

Look up the following Bible texts and list what the text says.

Text:

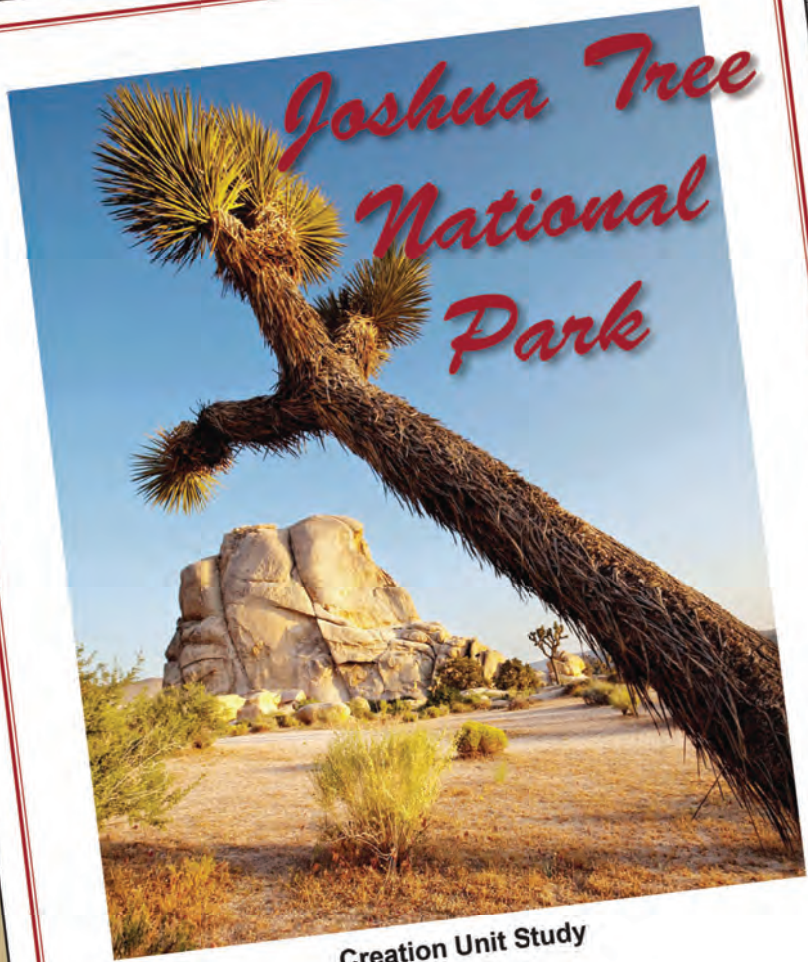
- Genesis 1:25
- Song of Solomon 2:3
- Leviticus 19:9
- Deuteronomy 4:19
- Leviticus 19:9
- Leviticus 19:9
- Matthew 21:19-22

What tree is being referred to:

Extra credit question:

What other way is the word tree used in the KJV of the Bible? Write the definition. List the books where this definition is used.

List three new things you discovered from the Bible lesson on trees.



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The earth was finished.

*“Thus the heavens
and the earth were
finished, and all the
host of them.*

*And on the
seventh day God
ended his work . . .*

CREATION DAY 7

■ BY JENNIFER ISH

The Creation of Rest and Worship

Editor's Note: This article is the eighth in our eleventh series of features that focus on the Creation week. Some days are divided into segments, and in the next issue we will begin a new series and explore the first day of the Creation week when God created light. 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.



Male and female created he them.

As the rest God sanctioned on day seven of the Creation week the same as the rest Jesus spoke of in Matthew 11:28 where He says, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? To explore this important notion, we must first understand some crucial aspects about the end of the Creation week.

Scripture chronicles in the latter part of day six, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27, KJV). This sweeping statement is further explained in Genesis 2:21 when Adam awoke from “a deep sleep” after recognizing he did not have a helpmate. As his eyes focused again, he likely gazed upon the beautiful woman that the Creator had just made

from Adam’s very own rib. Ultimately, at the completion of His creative work, “God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (Genesis 1:31, KJV).

God had just performed His crowning act of creating humankind in His very own image to enjoy and care for this remarkable new earth as instructed in Genesis 1:28–30. The Creator could have stopped there at the end of this most astounding stretch of six days of Creation. But the full divine blueprint contained another vital component of God’s plans. The Creation week story continues, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the



He wrote it on tables of stone.

seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:1–3, KJV).

There was no logical reason for a seventh day. The earth's movement around the sun gives us our yearly cycle, and the moon's phases demarcates a monthly cycle—both basically divisible by six. So, there are no natural explanations for the seven-day weekly cycle other than God wanted it to be this way. Does Scripture tell us why we have this day? And what is our role concerning it as God's created beings?

It is exciting to realize that Adam and Eve got to watch their Creator complete His master plan! They were witnesses as He established one more day.

The Creator elevated the paramount need to reflect upon what had just happened and to bond with His creation and humans He had just made in His own image! The couple was gifted with the ability to procreate and to use their powerful minds as thoughtful stewards of the flora and fauna surrounding them in their new home. As the union of this first marriage began as husband and wife at the end of the Creation week, so, too, did the day of sanctified rest and quality relationships.

Perhaps we can imagine in our mind's eye the Creator gently leading Adam and Eve into the fullness of *His rest* on the first full day that the three of them began together. As the sun set on the sixth day to end what was "very good" (Genesis 1:31), the evening and morning of the seventh day began. Night before day is

*which he had made;
and he rested on the
seventh day from all
his work which he
had made.
And God blessed the
seventh day, . . .*



Work must stop.

the cycle that was established throughout the Creation week.

As the heavenly Father introduced Adam and Eve to this brand new and uniquely special day, He might have told them something similar to what He said in Mark 2:27, 28. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (KJV). He might have continued to share all that He intended for them to understand about the deep and wonderful blessings before them when they rest and reflect on all that He had done for them. He also likely instructed them to follow His example to work six days and to rest on the seventh. We know this was important to Him because later His own finger wrote it on tables of stone as a powerful reminder that He is the

Creator (See Exodus 20.), and we all need to follow His ten parameters of love and safety that have always been true. "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6, KJV). He intentionally designed the Creation week for optimal function, proper maintenance, and meaningful growth for all Creation to last and flourish. If operated in a way that is different from the Designer's instructions, there is a risk of malfunction or collapse. This applies to the animals, birds, fish, plants, and other resources provided in His divine design.

God's chosen specifications in time and space of a weekly cycle is obviously for our good, but did God really need to rest? What type of rest is this that He carved out in every week since the beginning of time? In our limited English understanding of biblical terms, it is easy



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Michelle
Lockhart Unit

I'm God's Jore,

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Rest is vital for growth.

*and sanctified it:
because that in it
he had rested
from all his work
which God created
and made”*

—Genesis 2:1–3, KJV

to give the word *rest* a modern definition of sleep, naps, fatigue relief, or lounging around. But assigning this meaning to Genesis 2:2, 3 would be a mistake. The Hebrew word is *šābaṭ* (shaw-bath), which simply means *stop working*.

In this *šābaṭ* of twenty-four hours, the Creator established a time of repose. Professors take sabbaticals from their university responsibilities, which is drawn from this same definition—a time to cease from normal daily work and activities in order to reflect and be refreshed.

But why did God bless this day? After all, He did not bless days one through six. The Hebrew word for blessed is *bārak* (baw-rak), which means to kneel and to bless God with adoration. Then God took a final step and *sanctified* this special day. This Hebrew word is *qāḏaš*

(kaw-dash), which means to honor as sacred, dedicate, consecrate, and set apart. He obviously wanted it to be different from the other six days.

So, now we have some understanding of what our heavenly Creator intended for the closing of each week beginning with the very first one. He set the example by ushering the crowning act of Creation made in His image to cease from their work, to kneel with adoration and blessings toward their Creator, and to hallow this time He set apart. Some call it a “sanctuary in time.”

Furthermore, the Holy Scriptures give us over a hundred texts that speak about God being the Creator; so, this must be important. All of these scriptures referencing God as Creator point us back to Genesis 1 and 2. He continually



Steve Lackie

God insisted that even the animals rest.

identifies Himself throughout the Bible as our Creator—not just *a creator*, but *the Creator*. The word *rest* appears in the Bible 257 times; so, it, too, must be important. In fact, it is *so* important that He insisted even the animals, family members, and workers be given this day of rest. “In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates” (Deuteronomy 5:14, KJV). There have even been anecdotal observations of creatures being less active on the Sabbath. So, to stop each week and worship our Creator and Redeemer remains part of His blueprint and the plan of salvation for His children—especially today when the world is in constant turmoil. It is

necessary for our physical, mental, and spiritual health, as well as to relationship building with family, friends, and God.

Regarding our original question, Jesus invites us thousands of years later after the Creation week, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, KJV). The Greek word for rest here is *anapauo*, which means to rest, to relax, to calm, or to refresh and is very similar to the Hebrew word for rest used at Creation. But let’s continue to the next verse. Matthew 11:29 says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (KJV). The rest here is the Greek word *anapausis*, which also infers *re-creation*—an appropriate addendum to the original rest that applies to our fallen condition.



A Sabbath rest is part of our DNA.

While attending college in the early 1980's, I had the wonderful opportunity to form a lasting friendship with my roommate who had come from Denmark to attend one quarter of college in the US. She introduced me to a special Danish word and experience called *hygge* (hyoo-guh). In Denmark they say *hygge* is in their blood and is part of their DNA. My Danish roommate had her candles to light often in our dorm room while we played soft classical music; Pachelbel's Canon in D was a favorite. This helped create an atmosphere of a special *hug* with a feeling of warmth and peace amid the hectic demands of academia. The simple definition of *hygge* is to pause and create an experience of immense comfort, which is also a perfectly fitting definition for the final day of Creation.

Today with the 24-7, non-stop pressures of secular society, this rest is not only inviting; it can be life saving—not just for daily life but for eternal life. This same Jesus who spoke His compassionate plea nearly two thousand years ago was also among the Creatorship who knows our inner workings and needs more than anyone. He knows we need to rest while adoring our Creator, as well as the rest that leads to restoration and regeneration—to be re-created into His image. What a wonderful hug and *hygge* from our heavenly Creator and Savior! Yes, we were designed from the beginning for a Sabbath rest; it is part of our DNA. **C**

Jennifer Ish is associate editor, lead researcher, and circulation manager for Creation Illustrated.



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Is the Earth Special?

The search for extraterrestrial life can be fascinating to many people and is known as astrobiology. Yet, the earth remains the only place in the universe where humans and life have been detected. The recent discovery of *exoplanets* outside of our solar system opens options for further research.

Astrobiologists identify some of the parameters that are necessary for a planet to be considered potentially habitable including an energy source, liquid water, an atmosphere, a rocky surface, and orbital parameters. Genesis chapter one provides an account of God's creative activity that comprises the organization of our world and the creation of different life forms that inhabit it. This account invites interaction with a wealth of scientific information acquired in the study of planetary habitability.

At its most fundamental level, we can affirm that Genesis is extremely advanced in the connection between environmental prerequisites for habitability and life itself. In the text, the initial conditions of the earth are presented in Hebrew as *tohu wa bohu* or "unformed and unfilled" (see Genesis 1:2) followed by a symmetric account of the organization of different spaces being filled with living creatures. Therefore, Genesis 1 articulates the *forming* of the planet as essential and integrally connected to it being *filled*.

The text is also exceptionally relatable to the modern understanding of habitability in presenting the sequence of steps God took to make the planet habitable. The first days of Creation could provide the chapter index for a textbook on planetary habitability, starting with light as the energy source (day 1), liquid water and atmosphere (day 2), the terrestrial nature of our planet and the emergence of dry land (day 3), and the establishment of orbital parameters that control the yearly, seasonal, and daily cycles (day 4).

The biblical text adamantly portrays our world as the result of God's intentional plan and

direct intervention. However, mechanistic accounts of origins tend to characterize natural processes as either undirected or coincidental. For those who fully accept the revelation of Scripture that God recently fashioned the earth and filled it with life in six days and resting on the seventh, there remains an important question. How do we relate with modeling and observations that reconstruct the origin of our planet from a long chronology perspective? Scientific insight helps us open the black box of planetary habitability and appreciate the beauty and complexity of life.

The Bible cuts through the noise and reveals in straightforward terms why this is so—because God wanted it and did it. The Lord created the heavens; He fashioned and made the earth; He founded it; He did not create it to be empty; He formed it to be inhabited. (See Isaiah 45:18.)

Condensed from an article "Change in Species—Biblical or Not?" by Ronny Nalin, PhD, Geoscience Research Institute, www.grisda.org.

Genetics Points to a Young Earth

The new Y-chromosome genetic data brings a huge challenge to the secular-science community. Dr. Nathaniel Jeanson at Answers in Genesis recently stated, "I'm anxious to see how the evolutionists try to dismiss this second, independent line of genetic evidence for the young-earth timescale. Not only do they have to explain why the data contradict evolution, they have to also explain why the data are such a tight match with the predictions of biblical creation. And they have to do it both for DNA inherited through females, and now also for DNA inherited through males."

"The empirical genetics research, especially done within the creationist community over the past ten years, is truly a sound dismissal of evolutionary Recent African Origins (RAO) speculation and a huge confirmation for the story of humankind documented in the literal history of the Bible."

Condensed from an online *Creation Nuggets* article by Brian Mariani, November 18, 2021, Alpha Omega Institute, www.discovercreation.org.



CREATION STEWARDSHIP

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

Sharing Facts and Figures

Geothermal energy is derived from the natural subterranean heat of the earth coming to the surface. Some key places it can be found include geysers, volcanoes, and heat stored in rocks in the earth's crust.

History reveals geothermal energy being used by ancient native American, Roman, and Chinese cultures. The Paleo-Indians were among the first humans in North America to use geothermal resources at hot springs that served as a source of healing, warmth, and cleansing. In Bath, England, the ancient Romans built a temple and Roman bath house for public bathing.

The water is sourced from rainfall on the nearby hills, which then percolates down through limestone aquifers to a depth of 8,900 to 14,100 feet below the earth's surface. Geothermal energy raises the water temperature between 156 and 204 degrees Fahrenheit. Under pressure the heated water rises through fissures and faults in the limestone until it bubbles up from the ground into the baths.



Today geothermal energy applications are used foremost for heating, cooling, and electricity generation. Countries that use geothermal wells include Iceland, New Zealand, and Japan. Iceland is a pioneer of using geothermal energy for heating. Their power facilities currently generate 25 percent of the country's total electricity production.

The US generates more electricity from geothermal electricity than any other country. California, Nevada, Utah, and Hawaii have the most geothermal energy capacity. The US, Indonesia, Philippines, Turkey, New Zealand, and Mexico produced 72 percent of the global geothermal capacity in 2020.

Hydrothermal energy often comes from

underground water reservoirs where steam is often used to spin turbines that generate electricity. Ground heat pumps for cooling and heating use 75 percent less energy than traditional systems. The temperature is a steady 54 degrees Fahrenheit anywhere from ten to a thousand feet beneath the surface. When the air is hotter than 54 degrees, a geothermal system can dump heat into the earth; when it is colder than 54 degrees, it will draw heat from the earth.

Tips For Simple Living

One day more populations may have the opportunity to utilize geothermal energy for our homes, greenhouses, or workplace as it is a growing energy source. In Bolivia geothermal energy is utilized for earth greenhouses called *Walipini* (pit greenhouses). These simply built units cost about three hundred dollars in materials and help provide food for families in the high Andes year-round.

Russ Finch is the creator of Greenhouse in the Snow and has been perfecting geothermal greenhouses for more than thirty-five years. Now they sell kits from their Alliance, Nebraska, headquarters and now have licensed them to France and Canada. The goal is year-around food production. Taking a lesson from the past to utilize geothermal sources helps make energy production possible without using fossil fuels.

Biblical Stewardship of Creation

When God gave the earth to humans to “subdue it; have dominion . . . over every living thing” (Genesis 1:28), He also said to replenish the earth. Often we think of this admonition in terms of people and animals, but we can also think of agriculture, food sources, and energy. The Hebrew word for replenish is *mālā’*, which has some interesting meanings such as accomplish, confirm, satisfy, and complete.

Ever since the Fall, we can praise God for the gift of creativity and ingenuity in discovering ways to farm, build shelters, and utilize energy as a means of our commitment to stewardship of His resources.

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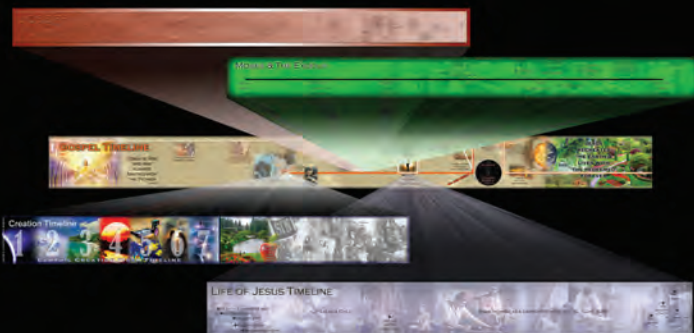
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A L E N S O N C R E A T I O N



American avocet

National Monument in Colorado. Ancient discoveries serve as a reminder that the land was once home to dinosaurs. Sauropods, Hadrosaurs, and Tyrannosaurus Rex once roamed the peaceful land that now encompasses Ouray. These days, however, the wildlife is quite different and far less threatening.

The bottomland of the Green River is a haven for resident and migratory birds and a respite for the weary soul that seeks solitude from a monotonous world. Again, the words of Isaiah ring clear. "The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen" (Isaiah 43:20, KJV).

Ouray was created for just that purpose—to provide shelter and food for waterfowl during their nesting season and others on the wing that sojourn north and south each year. With the creation of such refuges, all life benefits. The river supports 19 square miles of bottomlands and one of the most significant stands of riparian cottonwoods along the entire Colorado River drainage.

The riparian habitat provides a shelter and retreat for more than two hundred species of birds, as well as a variety of mammals such as elk, mule deer, river otter, and prairie dogs. Of



Lewis's woodpecker

"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants" (Isaiah 44:3, NIV). The words of Isaiah speak loudly in my heart and mind as I stand on the banks of the Green River. Fed by clear-flowing streams and rivers from the mountains of Wyoming, the waters descend to the barren desert of northeastern Utah. There the refreshing river becomes the life-blood of Ouray National Wildlife Refuge—an oasis in a barren land.

Straddling the Green River, Ouray provides a peaceful place for avian arrivals. However, fossil remains reveal that this was not always so. Only a short distance away from Ouray is Dinosaur

Wildlife Refuge

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

course, for me it is always the birds that bring me to such amazing places. Some waterbird species including northern pintails, cinnamon teal, blue-winged teal, ruddy ducks, western grebes, and sandhill cranes converge on the refuge during spring to build nests and raise their young. Without such havens the diversity of avian life in our world would dwindle quickly.

Other feathered species can be found in abundance on the refuge, as well. Among my favorites are the secretive American bittern, black-crowned night heron, the gangly-looking black-necked stilts, and American avocets.

Passerines also populate the area throughout the seasons. Marsh wren, yellow-headed blackbird, and the common yellowthroat warbler reside along the river and among the refuge's reedy wetlands. Yellow warbler, black-head grosbeak, and the Lewis woodpecker prefer the riparian woodlands while the Savannah sparrow, western meadowlark, and ringed-necked pheasant inhabit the semidesert shrub and grasslands. All these species and more can be observed throughout the refuge and even easily found along a 12-mile, self-guided auto tour route that traverses Ouray's varied habitats.


Ouray National Wildlife Refuge prospers because a river of



Bobby Harrison

Western grebe

life meanders through the barren landscape transforming it into a bastion of life.

Visitors with an open heart to God's design see the words of Scripture brought to life through the words of prophet Ezekiel. "And wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes" (Ezekiel 47:9, ESV). 

Bobby Harrison writes from Oakwood University where he is an associate professor of photography. He also serves as CEO of The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker Foundation. Enjoy more of his work at:

www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com



Bobby Harrison

Black-headed grosbeak



Trail Encounters

There's a trail on our property that's *experienced* a lot with me—tears, smiles, depression, and joy. I walk it in a variety of moods. Sometimes I sing; sometimes I pray; sometimes I just ponder life. Today I walk it slowly with my shoulders hunched against the cold December air.

“Lord, where are You?” I cry deep within my soul. “Life isn’t making any sense right now. Are You really at work, or am I just left to fate—a frail heart unprotected from the cold realities of life?”

I kick against a drift of snow and shove my hands deeper

into my coat pockets. Right now I don’t care to hear the chickadee’s cheerful call, to see the scrub oak branches encased in a crystal sheath of ice, to smell the pungent scent of wood smoke, or to feel the tingly breeze against my cheek. All I want is answers and a way out of my present circumstances. The beauty of my trail isn’t doing a thing for me today. Or is it?

Pulled out of my self-centeredness by the gentle working of God’s Holy Spirit, I suddenly begin to take notice of the scenery around me—hand-crafted by God and laden with spiritual lessons only He could put there. Like those stalwart mountains rising up to the north—I gaze intently at

their mighty grandeur. Though firmly fixed to the geology of the area now, they haven’t been there forever. But God has! “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Psalm 90:2).

I stop my weary trudging to soak in the beauty of towering peaks and eternal truth that God is God. He has always been God. He will always be God. So, He’s in charge. Way back before there was even such a thing as a mountain, He knew what my life would look like. He fashioned my days for me with a specific and worthwhile purpose as told in Psalm 139:16.



"Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (NIV). Doubt begins to fade away as I reconsider if I am left to fate. I don't think so!

Still gazing intently at the snowcapped mountains, I take note of their stability. They rise up like a barrier, a protection, a solid place of refuge. "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever" (Psalm 125:2).

A warm sense of security washes over me at the thought of God surrounding my life. His presence acts as a barrier and protection from my spiritual enemies and from all that could harm or impede His ultimate plan for me. Like a solid place of refuge, He is there in difficult

circumstances. By knowing this, can I claim to be left unprotected? Absolutely not!

As I continue my walk, the trail winds through a forest grove of pines. I breathe deeply of the tangy scent of sap and pine needles. Somewhere in a branch above I hear a chickadee give its cheerful call again. This time I tune my ears to really listen.

Words from Matthew 6:26 slowly come to my mind: "'Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?'"

Lately I've been vigorously intent on my own desires—hoarding and grasping to myself the things I want. It's time for a change in focus! I need to stop my fruitless efforts and zero in on God—making Him my deepest

desire, strongest passion, and greatest goal as admonished in the first commandment. "'You shall have no other gods before Me'" (Exodus 20:3). Searching for Him above all else, I can be assured that He will provide all I truly need. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (KJV). If He withholds something, perhaps it isn't for my eternal well being.

I look up and spot the little chickadee hopping around on a pine bough high above me. He cocks his black-capped head and looks at me with bright, shiny eyes. A smile tugs at my lips. How can I ever feel uncared for? I can simply be fed from God's vast supply—just as this little, unfettered bird is.

I keep on walking down my trail. Suddenly I'm more eager to see what else God has to show

me today! But then I quickly come up against a drift of snow lying right in my path. I stop and give a heavy sigh. Somehow this seems to symbolize the hindering circumstances in my life. Right now there's a certain path I want to be journeying along, but I feel walled in by a mass of unexpected delays and disappointments. Doubt and frustration begin to well up inside me again.

But wait! God offers more words of Scripture in my mind: "Fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word" (Psalm 148:8). All is at God's command. Even mounds of icy snow. So, something that at first seems to hinder me can actually be used in God's hands for good.


I scoop up a handful of snow and let it sift through my gloved fingers. Each tiny flake contains life-giving moisture. When spring comes, the warmth will melt them into the ground, and they will nourish the verdure.



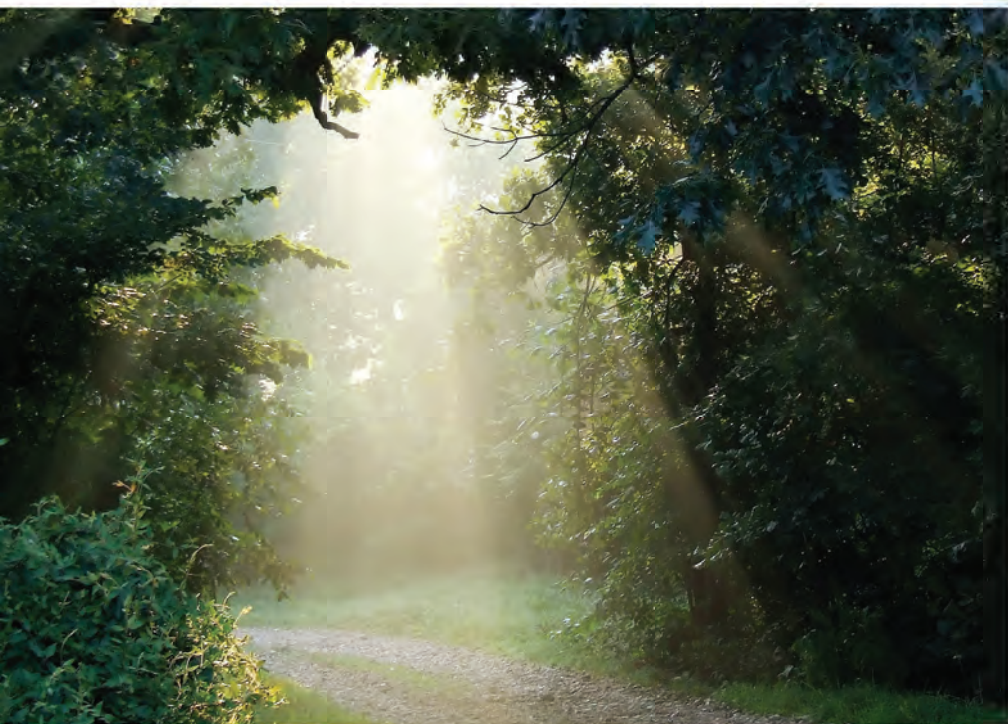
Beauty and life will abound amid the flowers and grass.

God has yet another lesson for me in this pile of snow. One day it will melt away leaving a perfectly clear path. In the same way, God will one day clear my life's path too. When the time and season are right, He will lead me in the way He wants me to

go. And when that time comes, I just might discover that the path I was so intent on taking isn't the one that will truly bring me joy after all! Suddenly the hindering circumstances take on a sparkle of worth—like the snow glistening under a ray of sunlight. Under God's guidance everything in my life has a purpose!

Now back home I turn to go indoors with peace enveloping my soul in a warm embrace. What has my trail revealed today? A burdened heart encountering a gracious God. Finally I'm beginning to grasp the truth He's extending to me; He's in control of my life! "The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice" (Psalm 97:1). Tomorrow I'll walk my trail with joy even if nothing outward has changed. 

Susannah Cumiford writes from Tijeras, New Mexico, where she seeks to discover and share the spiritual lessons God places in nature.





A once flourishing garden lays dormant during the winter months.

guardians of

The mushrooms that appeared in my vegetable garden arrived as surprising visitors. I did not plant them. They just sprang up as gray, miniature umbrellas showing off razor thin lines that glistened in the sun like fine silver. I knelt in the morning dew curiously examining them and wondering what they were called.

A novice to vegetable gardening, another question nagged at me; "What is their purpose?" Little did I know that my curiosity would help me discover the intricacies of these tiny fungi and even lead me on a journey regarding my own identity and purpose as I continued to grow in the garden of our Lord.

This journey began with a strong desire to have a small backyard vegetable garden. So, while February snowflakes were still blowing outside our windows, my little grandsons and I planted an assortment of vegetable and tomato seeds in sprouting pots, placed them near a

gardens from eden



Starting seedlings on a window sill breeds anticipation for the growing season.

the garden

sunny window, watched over them like expectant parents, and wondered about the new life that we hoped God would help begin in our home.

Within weeks empty seed shells were being lifted by green sprouts. Excited to witness the gift of God's creation unfolding before our eyes, we saw how quickly the little shoots would transform into strong plants. When May arrived, we transferred the plants into the deep, rich soil that filled our raised garden beds.

How quickly the garden flourished! Soon we had long cucumber vines spilling over the boundaries of the wooden bed. Full, leafy squash plants burst with bright yellow flowers, and tomato plants eagerly climbed up their support poles. Then one memorable morning in June, I noticed the mushrooms had arrived.

Only one or two little gray mushrooms appeared near the tomato plants in the

by colleen lasky



Colleen Lasky

Soon the squash, cucumber, and tomato plants flourish in the summer sun.

beginning, but the fungi grew into small colonies during the weeks that followed. Further inspection revealed little yellow mushrooms growing near the squash and cucumber plants. Had I watered too much or too little? My first instinct was to pull them all out of the ground, but wisdom slowed me down. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, KJV). My two original questions returned with a renewed energy now—what were they called, and what was their purpose for being here?

I did not have a gardening mentor, so I turned to research. The little yellow mushroom proved easy to identify as a common gilled mushroom called *cone cap*. In contrast, the little gray mushroom made me work very hard to learn its identity. Eventually, out of sheer determination, I was able to label the gray mushroom as *hare's foot inkcap*, which are also considered common gilled mushrooms frequently seen in Britain and Ireland. Ever present is the notion that many mushroom varieties can be poisonous; so, common sense dictates that great care remains paramount when dealing with any kind of mushroom.

Further research caused me to rejoice in my decision to not pull all the mushrooms as soon as they arrived. I discovered that these types of mushrooms are wonderful helpers to the gardener! To begin with, they provide a sure sign that a vegetable garden is healthy and balanced. This notion alone caused a novice like me to feel a moment of relief.

Still, as I was about to unearth them, their purpose goes far beyond giving a little nod of approval that all is well. In fact, there exists a little city of both vegetable roots and mushroom fibers interacting with each other below the surface of the soil. As the vegetable roots provided life-supporting oxygen to the mushroom fibers, the mushrooms seemed to return the favor by breaking down wood chips in the soil to provide quality nutrients for the plants. I couldn't



Colleen Lasky

Helpful hare's foot inkcap mushrooms intertwine with the twigs of the other plants.

help but smile warmly when I learned about this symbiotic relationship connecting beneath the surface because as a child of God, I, too, must generously engage in helpful relationships. "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NIV).

Despite all the positive gardening experiences I had so far, I did have moments of doubt. One afternoon when I could feel the hot sun hovering over me, I noticed all the gray mushrooms had disappeared. Was this an indication that my garden had become unhealthy? To my delight that wasn't the case at all. The next morning I noticed new mushrooms had bountifully sprouted up in place of the old mushrooms precisely where and when they were needed the most. In addition to providing important nutrients to the garden plants, mushrooms also help soak up excess water in the garden soil.

I further marveled at the short span of a mushroom's life, which often lasts only a day. The many generations of mushrooms that come and go within one gardening season left me in awe. Basically they show up right on cue and provide marvelous work for the garden; then they die to become one with the earth at the end of their life cycle. As Scripture states, "There is a time to be born and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:2, NIV).

One evening during vespers as the sun began to set in a colorful sky, my husband and I sat on the front porch discussing the genius works of our Creator.

"You know," I said with a smile, "it is very humbling to consider that our own purpose as Christians is not so very different from common mushroom fungi! We are called to be born on a certain day in history; we are called to do wonderful things in the Lord's garden according to His desires; then we die and get replaced by a new generation."



Cucumbers, squash, and tomatoes provide a bountiful harvest.

He agreed while sharing my amazement and the wonders regarding our Creator God. In fact, it seemed in that moment as if all the surrounding acres were caught up in the same celebration of their Creator that we were experiencing together. "Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy" (Psalm 96:12, NIV).

The mushrooms helped the garden flourish! Tomatoes showed up in great bunches, quickly turning from green to red seeming to sing a song about generous giving. The cucumbers came in great numbers, and the squash vines wound around with the promise of a good harvest day. Soon I was able to show the female squash flowers to my little grandsons and explain that one day they will be edible zucchinis as I showed the stem below the flower that was thickening. "Whoa!" they said with wide eyes.

When harvest day finally arrived, the mushrooms still remained hard at work. When we picked large bouquets of fragrant, green basil to share with neighbors, the mushrooms stood guardians of the garden. When we picked tomatoes and popped them into our mouths while they were still warm, the mushrooms stayed hard at work like true and steady friends. They stayed with us until the last cucumber was harvested and the very last tomato was plucked from the vine. Then they were gone, and they did not return.

The experience of growing a vegetable garden with God by our sides afforded blessings in so many ways, but the unexpected gift of the mushrooms that He sent to help us on our gardening journey touched my heart profoundly. They reminded me about the importance of prudence, patience, and moment-by-moment thanksgiving. They caused me to reflect on my own identity as a Christian and how I am also being called to become a guardian of God's garden by bearing the gospel of God's grace with every word and each human encounter. His



The beginnings of seedlings starts all over again in winter.

whole Creation seems to sing out the mushroom's message, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35, NIV).

As I grow little seedlings on my windowsill this winter, I will greatly anticipate the return of the garden mushrooms that helped me reflect on purposeful living as shared in Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13. "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God" (NIV). **C**

Colleen Lasky writes from Brooklyn Heights, Ohio, where she studies the wonders of Creation in her backyard ecosystem in order to harvest gems of wisdom worth sharing. She has also been published in Focus on the Family magazine.

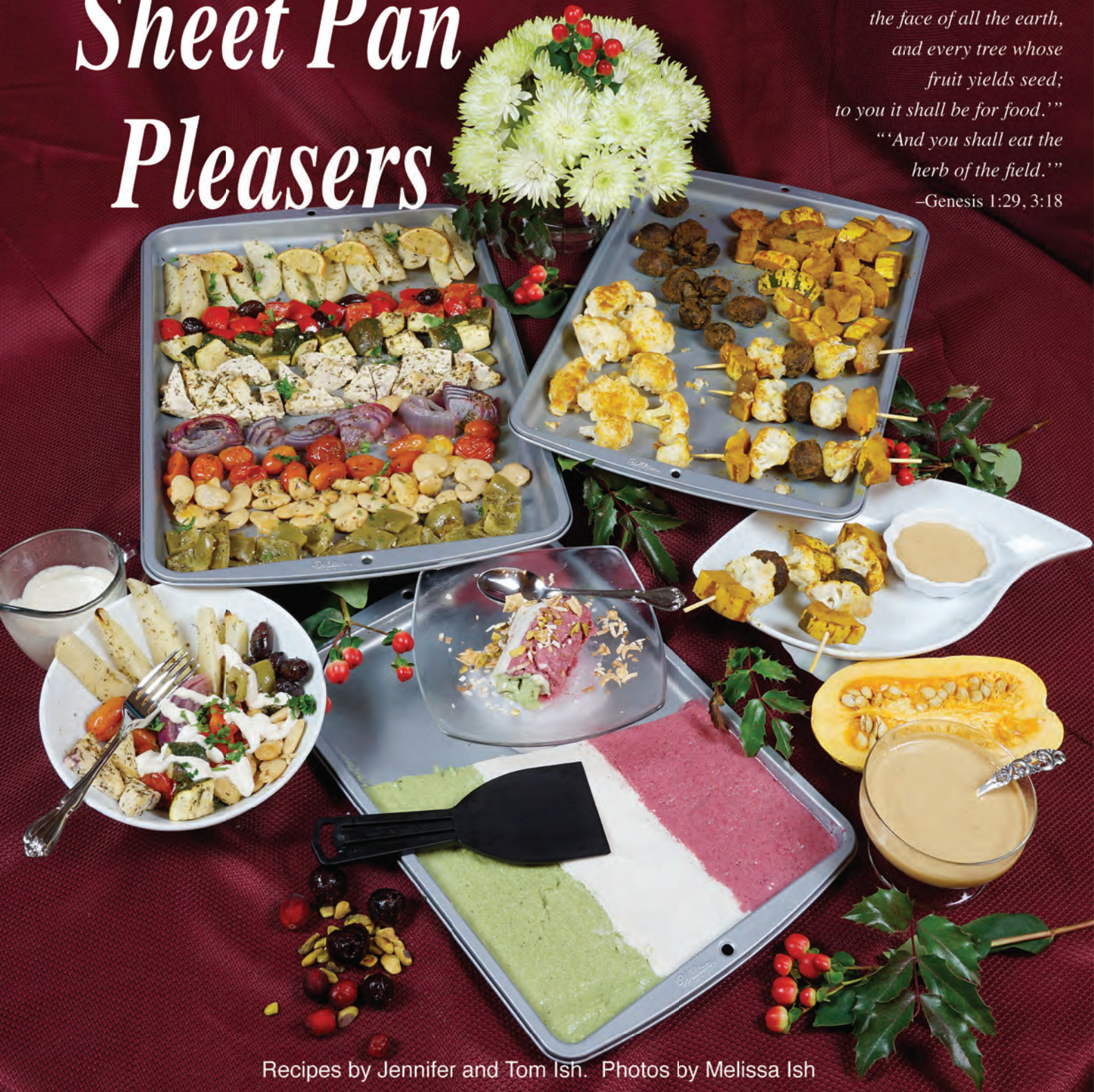
Genesis Cuisine

Sheet Pan Pleasers

*“See, I have given you every herb
that yields seed which is on
the face of all the earth,
and every tree whose
fruit yields seed;
to you it shall be for food.”*

*“And you shall eat the
herb of the field.”*

—Genesis 1:29, 3:18



Recipes by Jennifer and Tom Ish. Photos by Melissa Ish



Sheet Pan Vegetable Satay Appetizers

- 1 pkg. cremini mushrooms
- 1 small delicata squash
- 3 C. cauliflower florets
- 1/4 C. olive oil
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 1/4 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. onion powder
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder

- Peanut Dipping Sauce:**
- 1/3 C. peanut butter
 - 1/4 C. milk or orange juice
 - 1 lime juiced and zested
 - 1 Tb. grated fresh ginger
 - 2 Tb. Tamari or liquid aminos
 - 2 Tb. maple syrup
 - 1 clove garlic, minced

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Combine oil and seasonings. Prepare vegetables into bite-sized pieces and mix to coat well with seasoned oil. Place them on a parchment-lined sheet pan and roast for 20 to 25 min. or until tender but not mushy. Mix all peanut sauce ingredients well while vegetables are roasting. After vegetables slightly cool, skewer with bamboo skewers. Serve on a platter with peanut dipping sauce.



Mediterranean Sheet Pan

- 2 med. potatoes, cut in wedges
- 1/2 green and red pepper chunks
- 1/2 red onion, sliced
- 1/2 pkg. firm tofu, cut in triangles
- 1 med. zucchini, cut in chunks
- 1/2 C. cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 C. kalamata olives
- 1 can butter beans

- Marinade:**
- 1/3 C. olive oil
 - 1/4 C. lemon juice and zest
 - 1 Tb. oregano, dried or fresh
 - 1 Tb. fresh dill weed, chopped
 - 1 tsp. ea. onion and garlic powder
 - 1 tsp. salt

- Tahini Non-dairy Yogurt Sauce:**
- Blend 1/2 C. yogurt, 2 Tb. tahini, 1 Tb. lemon juice, and 1/2 tsp. salt.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix marinade ingredients in a bowl and separately coat each kind of vegetable and the tofu. Arrange marinated vegetables, tofu, butter beans, and olives on a sheet pan and roast for 30 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Enjoy this with a drizzle of the Tahini non-dairy yogurt sauce and your favorite bread.



Sheet Pan Frozen Ice Rolls

- Cherry-Cranberry Ice:**
- 1 can coconut milk
 - 1/2 C. frozen sweet cherries
 - 1/2 C. frozen cranberries
 - 1/3 C. agave or sweetener of choice
 - 1/2 tsp. almond flavoring
 - 1/2 tsp. guar gum
- Vanilla Ice:**
- 1 can coconut milk
 - 1 C. oat milk

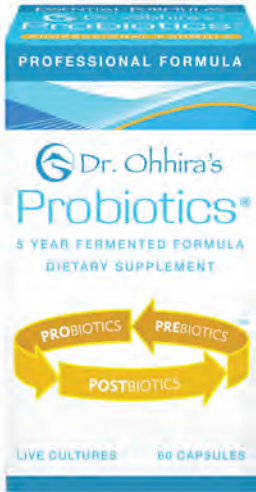
- 1/4 C. agave or sweetener of choice
 - 1 tsp. vanilla flavoring
 - 1/2 tsp. guar gum
- Kulfi-Pistachio Ice:**
- 1 C. pistachio nuts, ground fine
 - 1 can coconut milk
 - 1/4 C. agave or sweetener of choice
 - 1 tsp. cardamon
 - 1/2 tsp. Chinese Five Spice
 - 1/2 tsp. guar gum

Mix each ice flavor well, pour into metal bread pans, and place in freezer. Stir each flavor every 15 minutes. Place a sheet pan in freezer. When flavored ices are firm, spread quarter-inch thick strips of each flavor on sheet pan and refreeze. Before serving, remove pan from freezer, and using a putty knife, cut and roll strips. Serve with favorite toppings.

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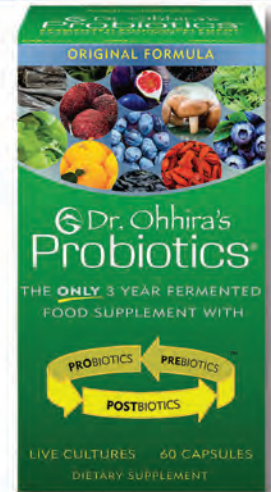
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Editor's Note: This is part three in a series of children's articles about a farm dog named Sporty by Floyd Sayler. The first story, "Winning Sporty's Heart," appeared in the Winter 2018 edition of Creation Illustrated. The second story called "My Faithful Companion" appeared in the Fall 2020 edition.

Growing up on a farm in southern Saskatchewan holds many happy memories. Our farm dog, Sporty, reigns as one of the happiest as my faithful companion and work partner in herding the cows and calves we raised. My cherished relationship with Sporty reached a new height when I was ten years old.

It was milking time, and the cows were in a distant pasture nearly a mile from our home. I had to cross a wheat field that had been harvested to get to the fenced pasture. I opened the gate and sent Sporty to round up the cows, which he did very efficiently. He had become very useful in so many ways and saved me many steps when mustering the cattle.

As we were heading home, the cows behaved

C H I L D R E N ' S S T O R Y



A Four-legged Angel

very well as they tracked toward the barn. A bull among the herd never created a problem; however this day, for some reason, the bull didn't want the cows to head home. He would get in front of the cows and try to steer them back toward the pasture. I threw some stones at him to get him heading in the right direction with the rest of the herd, but he seemed determined to keep the cows from going where I wanted.



B Y F L O Y D S A Y L E R



Then he suddenly faced me and began to paw the ground and let out a low bellow, or *beller*, as the farmhands usually said it. What was I to do? There were no trees to climb and no fence to slip through to escape from a mad bull. He began slowly moving toward me while pawing the ground and sounding out his angry bellowing. Sporty was right beside me watching what was happening.

I realized that Sporty was my only hope of escape from being gored by that mad bull. So I said, "Get him, Sporty, get him." Quick as a flash he was off to deal with the threatening situation. But instead of attacking the bull face on, he went around behind the bull and attacked him from the rear.

"Oh no!" I thought. "He is going to chase the bull right at me." But little did I know that Sporty knew better how to handle that bull than I did. Just as God tells us in Isaiah 55:8, He knows everything better than us. "'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord."

What happened next was truly amazing. When Sporty attacked the bull from the rear, he gave

the bull a quick, painful bite that caused the bull to let out a loud roar as he swung around to face what was attacking him from behind. Once having managed to get the bull facing home, Sporty quickly skipped around behind the bull and viciously attacked him by sinking his teeth into the bull's tail well above the reach of the lethal hind kicks that the bull would try to deliver. I watched in amazement as Sporty rode the tail of the galloping bull until he was well on his way home far ahead of the rest of the herd. When Sporty finally let go of the bull, the massive creature didn't dare slow his pace but kept running until he reached the open gate to the farmyard.

Having executed his job, Sporty came back to my side for the usual pat on his head and shoulders along with a word of appreciation. However, this time I gave him a big hug and thanked him for saving my life! He didn't linger long for any extra petting because he saw some calves that were starting to stray from the herd, and he trotted off to corral them back on course. Apparently to him it was all in a day's work.

Sporty is long gone, but memories of his faithful service and friendship linger to this day. Sporty's constant watch care and protection during my younger years will always be a reminder of what the Bible says about our God and Creator in Psalm 59:16, "You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble." And I am thankful that God gave me this four-legged angel to be used by Him for my defense when I needed it. **C**

Floyd Sayler is from Oliver, British Columbia, where he and his wife, Evelyn, have explored God's wondrous Creation and shared a multitude of blessings through their prolific and insightful writing. For twenty-five years readers of Creation Illustrated have been edified by their submissions to this publication. The dedicated duo's far-reaching literary contributions to Creation Illustrated jointly total fifty-four articles beginning in 1997 and continuing to 2022. Their efforts encompass seven "Children's Story" articles, thirteen "Creation Week" stories, six "Creatures Near and Dear To Us" articles, two "Re-creation Outdoors" stories, seven "Gardens From Eden" stories, and twelve poems. Although somewhat retired from writing articles for Creation Illustrated and other journals, the Saylers

have also authored a number of theological booklets that they have published on their own. Floyd's first writing success dates back to seventh grade when he won an essay contest about why he considered church school better than public school. As editors and publishers of Creation Illustrated, we cannot fully express our gratitude for the Saylers' ever-willingness to assist and share their talents and skills in gleaned Bible-based character-building lessons from Creation. We trust the seeds of their meaningful contributions will continue to sprout in countless lives while being watered by the Holy Spirit to one day result in a bountiful harvest of souls.



Evelyn and Floyd Sayler





Tracks in the Snow

It is fun to play detective when there are tracks in the snow. Animals and birds leave their footprints in the snow. We can tell who has been there and what they were doing by the tracks they leave behind.

Tracks in the snow accurately tell what animal has been there and the path it took. Take a walk in a park or woods as a family after a new snowfall and see how many different tracks of birds or animals you find. Try to identify them.

When we use the telephone it leaves an electronic track telling who we called and how long we talked. In the computer world on the internet we also leave electronic tracks telling which websites we went to and how long we were there.

Parents, are our daily footprints safe for our children to follow? Can our younger children safely follow in the steps of older brother and sister? "Ponder well the path of your feet." Proverbs 4:26.

Elk, deer and moose with their long legs get

around well in the snow; but when the snow becomes waist deep they walk single file, one following the other. In this way well beaten paths are formed in the snow. These paths provide them a quick escape if pursued by a predator.

In a similar way children tend to follow one another. Group pressure at school inclines us to follow one another in dress, diet, language and other habits. This may be dangerous. Scripture cautions, "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil" Exodus 23:2. The majority vote is not always safe. "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" Proverbs 14:12. Every person thinks his way is right. See Proverbs 21:2. There are many voices saying follow me. How can we know the right way? "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" Proverbs 3:6.

How I live each day leaves a trail behind. My use of time is like footprints revealing habit patterns showing if I am following Him who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" John 14:6.



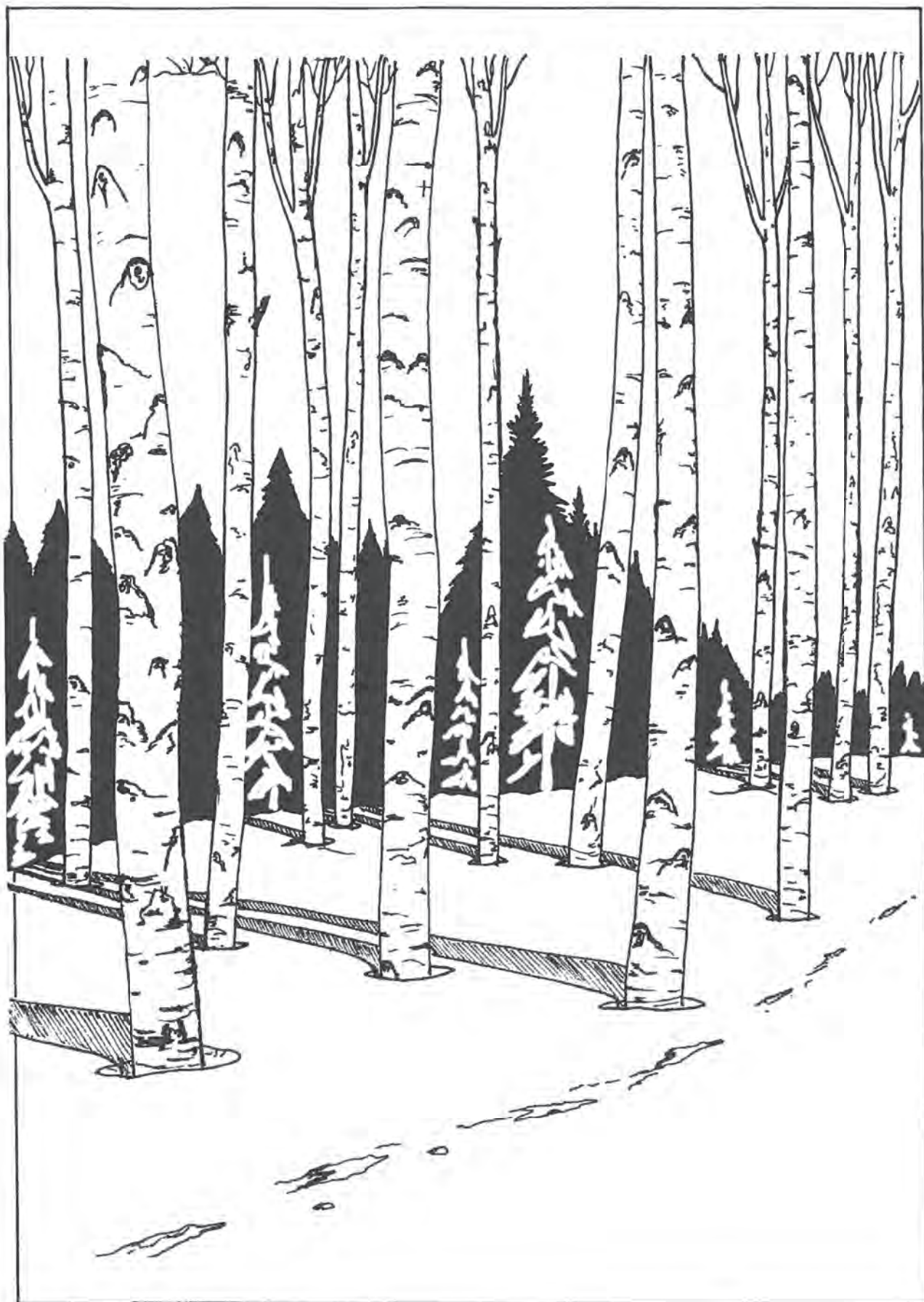
FAMILY PROJECT:

Make a large circle in the snow. Now cut the circle in 8 or so pieces like cutting a pie. When completed, the leader goes to the center of the circle. He becomes IT. He now will try to catch any of the other family players who have scattered all around the outside of the circle. The key rule of the game is you must stay within the lines. If anyone runs outside the lines while being chased they are now IT. All will have to run when one is chased. What affects one affects all. This game teaches cooperation and the importance of staying within the lines (the laws) even when pursued.



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





Winter 2022 Coloring Contest

(deadline & details on page 60)

First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____

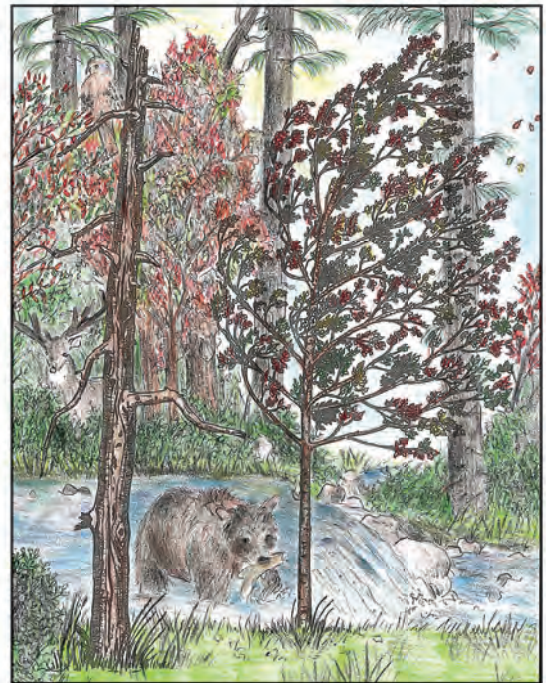
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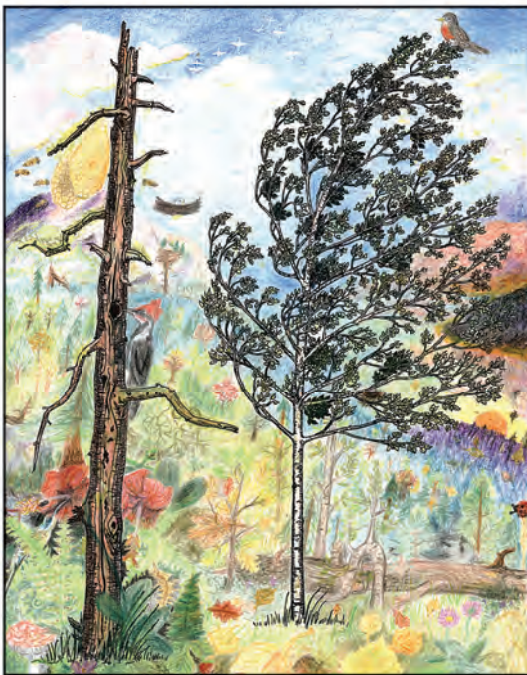


First Place, ages 6–11
Logan M., age 7, Ormand, Florida

Winners From the Fall 2021 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 12–18
Laura S., age 15, Kykens, Pennsylvania



First Place, ages 19+
Peter R., age 34, Manton, California

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 Winter 2022 entries is February 15, 2022**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site and Facebook pages where you and others can vote for (Like) 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 March from winter-edition pictures, the first week of June from spring-edition pictures, the first week of September from summer-edition pictures, and the first week of December from fall-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site after 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 Fall 2021 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Thaddeus P., age 7, of San Antonio, Texas, wrote, "This picture reminds me of Psalm 91:4. 'He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection'" (NLT).

First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

Moriah W., age 16, of Thornton, Colorado



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Matt B., age 44, of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, wrote, "I took this picture near Telluride, Colorado. The aspen trees in this photo point us heavenward and remind us that all of creation glorifies God as Creator and exists to glorify Him. As the psalmist proclaimed in Psalm 19:1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork'" (ESV).



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 Winter 2022 entries is February 15, 2022**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site and Facebook pages where you and others can vote for (Like) 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 March from winter submissions, the first week of June from spring submissions, the first week of September from summer submissions, and the first week of December from fall submissions. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site after 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*, Winter 2022 Edition, Vol. 28, No. 4

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. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—“Elusive Eagles” story, pages 6–12

1. How many miles per hour can a bald eagle fly, and at what speed can it dive to seize its prey? p. 7
2. When bald eagles build their nests how big in diameter can they be? How much can these nests weight? p. 8
3. Which is larger, a male or female bald eagle? How much larger? p. 8
4. When was the bald eagle removed from the endangered species list? How many exist today? p. 8
5. List the many similar comparisons that the wounded eagle has with our own human story of living in this fallen world and how we are rescued and healed. pp. 11, 12

II. Creation Up Close—“Trophies of Regeneration” story, pages 14–19

1. Describe what the annual Montana shed hunt event is like. What is done with the shed trophies? pp. 14, 15
2. List the three members of the Cervidae family where the males shed their antlers. In which species of animal do both the males and females shed? p. 15
3. What are their antlers for? What does their size indicate? How does counting points differ in the US? pp. 15, 16
4. How fast do antlers grow? How much can a moose rack weigh? What do the terms antlerogenesis, photoperiodism, mineralization, and demineralization mean? pp. 16–18
5. List the stages of antlerogenesis and share how this regeneration mirrors spiritual regeneration. pp. 16–19

III. Re-Creation and Restoration Outdoors—“Journey to Joshua” story, pages 20–26

1. How many square miles encompass this national park, and what two deserts are included? pp. 21, 22
2. How many different species of plants grow there? p. 22
3. What is the scientific name for the Joshua tree? Explain the type of forest that the Joshua tree grows in. p. 22
4. How did God teach the author through this rare tree and the lessons of the desert ecosystem? pp. 23, 24
5. How many different rock climbs are available in the park? Describe what bouldering is. pp. 24, 25

For a Full Unit Study on Joshua Tree NP, go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com



IV. The Creation Week—“Creation Day 7—Rest and Worship” story, pages 28–36

1. How many series of Creation week stories have been published in *Creation Illustrated*? p. 28
2. What gives us our yearly cycle, monthly cycle, and weekly cycle? p. 30
3. When did the Creator establish that each new day is to begin? pp. 30, 31
4. What are the Hebrew words for *rest*, *blessed*, and *sanctified*, and what is the fuller meaning of these words? p. 34
5. How many times does *rest* appear in the Bible? List some important reasons why we all need to rest. pp. 35, 36
6. What is the Greek word for *rest* found in Matthew 11:28, 29, and what does it mean? p. 35

Winter Family Fun Activities

Spending time playing and recreating outdoors in the wintertime is just as important as any other season. Just dress in proper layers and go enjoy the fresh air and natural sunlight. It will help make your family happier and healthier. Here are a few ideas that your family may enjoy doing this winter.

- Create a mini snow obstacle course over mounds, around trees, under playground equipment, etc. Time each person that goes through the course to see who can finish it in the best time.
- Find a safe and family-friendly sledding hill.
- Try out snowshoeing, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, or snowboarding. Often local sporting goods stores have rental gear so you can try it out before buying your own equipment.
- Visit a local park or use your backyard for some fun games of snow tag, building snow forts, and, of course, building a snowman.
- And don't forget good old fashioned snowball throwing without causing anyone harm.

If you don't live in the snow country, then get creative with outdoor hikes, games, scavenger hunts, visiting the zoo, etc.

Another fun group activity is to build scenes of Bible stories out of snow and see who can guess your story. Have some food dye to color the snow, which can help in depicting the Bible story such as Joseph's coat of many colors.

While outdoors, gather some items to make nature ornaments to hang in your trees. Gather evergreens and berry branches then smear them with a mixture of bird seed, peanut butter, suet, nuts, and dried fruit. Hang these in your trees using string or wire for the birds to enjoy.

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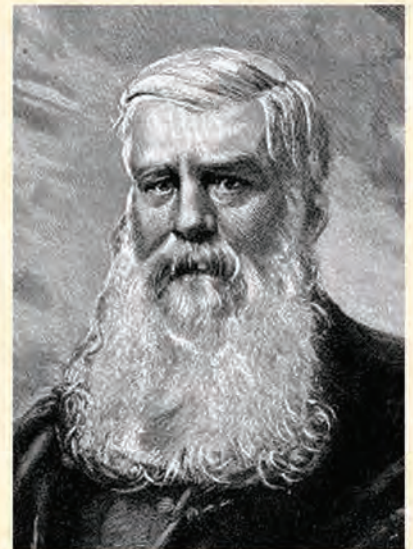
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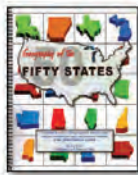
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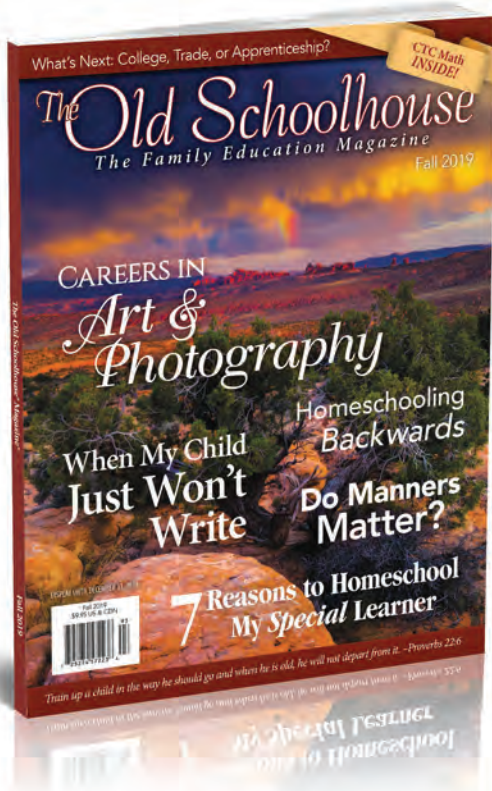
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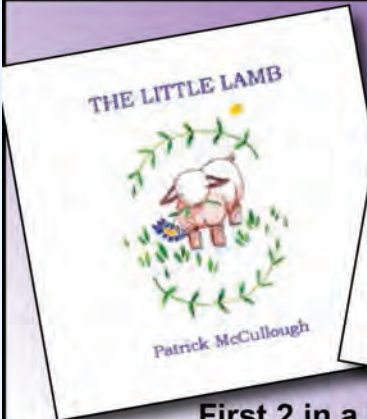
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For each flake has different facets that reflect the sun's bright glow.
And each tiny little snowflake has been made one-of-a-kind,
To fulfill the special purpose its Creator had in mind.

When they all are packed together in a mighty drift of snow,
They reflect the sunlight's brilliance in a glorious, dazzling glow.
All God's children are like snowflakes, and as they His truth proclaim;
In their lives, God's love reflected will bring glory to His name.

And each character perfected like the snowflakes from above,
Will reflect a different facet of the Savior's matchless love.
When the remnant of His people press together into one,
Then the world will see God's glory as the radiance of the Son.

— Evelyn Sayler



of Snow

***“Look at the birds of the air,
for they neither sow nor reap
nor gather into barns;
yet your heavenly Father
feeds them.”***

– Matthew 6:26



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