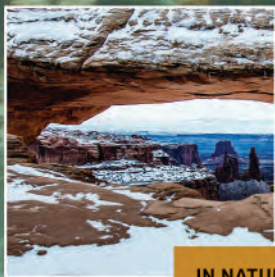


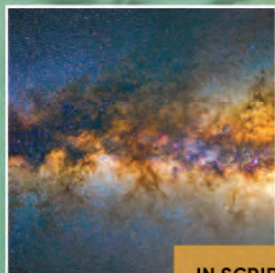
Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR GETAWAY . . .



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

WINTER 2023 VOL 29 NO 4 US \$4.99



*“I have learned to be
whatever*



*content
the circumstances.”*

– Philippians 4:11, NIV



Our Why



During challenging economic downturns and inflation, many businesses scramble to adjust prices, staffing, and inventory to meet fluctuating costs. Not so at Creation Illustrated Ministries.

While we practice careful stewardship of all our resources, we've been taught by the Provider of the universe to "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6). This has worked for nearly thirty years, and we are not going to react to fear-laden economic threats at the peril of our faith.

So, how do we determine pricing? In the fall of 1993 when we started *Creation Illustrated* magazine, the price for a one-year subscription was \$12.50. We soon learned that was not enough to cover many additional costs of producing and promoting a full-color publication. So, after two years, we had to increase the price to \$14.50.

Then we were approached by someone who wanted to use *Creation Illustrated* as a fundraising tool for schools, church youth groups, and homeschool organizations. This required raising the price to \$19.95 in 1996 to allow for fundraising commissions to be paid out.

So, amid all of the economic upheavals of the past two and a half decades, postage costs doubling, and countless paper price increases, ***Creation Illustrated* has not raised its subscription price for 26 years** even though the average inflation rate for magazines is 3.20 percent per year.

While most magazines fill their pages with about sixty percent advertising, ***Creation Illustrated* has no outside advertising in its print edition** and only about ten percent in its digital edition.

Why? We choose to provide uncluttered getaways to nature, peace, and hope in a hurting world. We believe that leading readers to worship the Creator is our main mission. So, we have sacrificed salaries, vacations, and fought hard to keep *Creation Illustrated* subscriptions affordable and easy to share. The joy of sharing *Creation Illustrated* with others proves to be contagious for many subscribers. Some give over forty gift subscriptions! We are so grateful for those who spread eternal hope through this publication while adding donations whenever possible. This helps keep the price down for everyone.

So, as we approach thirty years of publishing with our commitment to reveal the glory of God through His creation, we prayerfully pondered whether to raise our subscription prices or to continue to trust in His providence and faithfulness. We chose the latter.

That's why.

The Publishers

The needs continue! While the Christmas holiday season and year-end giving for 2022 have passed, the need to reach out with the saving message of our Creator and Redeemer continues throughout the year. Every quarter we ship thousands of copies of *Creation Illustrated* that are funded by donations. Hospital chaplains, teachers, students, and prisoners depend on the support of those who are able to give. So, we invite every reader of this publication to find a way to help us with the cost of meeting these vital needs as we continue to serve during *every* season of the year. Simply use the envelope in the center of this issue or logon to our secure donations page at **www.CreationIllustrated.com**. **Thank you for helping!**

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 29, 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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The cover photo of a Siberian tiger lurking in the snow was taken by
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Reflect

The winter months often force us indoors where we have time to *mentally* reflect on the past while planning for the future. Such contemplation helps to build commitment and character traits that impact our lives and those around us.

On the fourth day of the Creation week, God placed in the heavens a greater light, the sun, to be *physically* reflected on the face of a lesser light, the moon. Such a dominate daily display of an object lesson for us to reflect the character of His Son cannot be overlooked as revealed in this edition's Creation week story. Our very existence depends on the influence these heavenly orbs have on earth. How we reflect the life of Christ to others can have an eternal influence on the souls around us.

Other objects in nature reflect biblical events as reminders of their historic and prophetic significance. This issue's outdoor adventure article highlights numerous landmarks in Arches National Park (such as the Garden of Eden, Tower of Babel, and Fiery Furnace) that physically reflect or represent a likeness to a biblical story. This causes visitors from around the world of various religious backgrounds to reflect on these formations and learn of their biblical reference—a unique way to share His Word with a weary world.

Some unique wintry reflections reveal the intricacy of frost formations as examined in the Creation Up Close feature called "Winter Art." Take some time to explore the wonders of winter that reflect the vast realm of creativity found in nature. A chilly winter walk can provide new discoveries that are worth sharing or praising God about.

One such nature enthusiast found herself a bit trapped at home by the whipping winds of the North Sea off the northeast coast of Scotland. But after venturing outdoors for a few invigorating slaps of horizontal rain on her cheeks, she decided to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4) and reflect the spirit of the apostles who suffered persecution, yet reflected Christ's likeness to "count it all joy when you fall into various trials" (James 1:2).

Such personal growth can even be pursued through an online mental health course centered around a gardening theme. The object lessons found in this issue's gardening feature point participants toward new approaches to thought processes that reflect real progress and growth similar to the stages of growing a garden.

But what about pest control? The "Spiders With a Purpose" children's story shows that what may appear creepy can actually be beneficial by helping to get rid of other pests. That's right. What appears to be a pest actually controls pests.

So, sometimes what appears on the outside does not reflect what is on the inside. One such case is the "Wiley Weasel" that appears to be cute and cuddly when it is actually a vicious killer as told in this edition's creature article. "They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves" (Matthew 7:15, NIV).

We must continually pray for a clean heart and mind that will be reflected by our outward actions. "As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person" (Proverbs 27:19, NLT).



A photo reflecting back to 2014 shows publishers Tom, Melissa, and Jennifer Ish examining the heavens.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ish".

Tom Ish, editor/publisher

Pass it along . . .

More and more I'm enjoying your magazine and love passing it along to others. Thank you for all the work you do. *Creation Illustrated* got me looking at the world in a deeper way, and everywhere I find a fascinating aspect of Creation that I see with new appreciation—all of it worth a story.

We could probably do articles every day and never come to the end of discovering how magnificent a God we have who came up with all this. Attached

is an article for your consideration on the discovery of the amazing humming voice of the giraffe.

C. Graef

Ellsworth, Maine

Always admired . . .

I have always admired your ministry, but am very busy with our own ministry—International Children's Care. We are also located in Washington near Vancouver. I pray that God will continue to bless your ministry.

I am really enjoying the first issue that I downloaded (Winter 2021) and will share your ministry with others. Isn't it wonderful how God gives each of us a small part to play in His orchestra to heal this broken world!

R. Fleck

Battle Ground
Washington

My prayer . . .

I received your free digital copy; thank you so much! I just looked through it, and I am really impressed with the photography. The whole earth is truly filled with God's glory, and you've done a great job at capturing

the magnificence of His handiwork in the photos. I'm looking forward to reading the articles later today or tomorrow.

Here is my prayer for you: Father, thank You so much for Jennifer and Tom Ish. Please perfect everything that concerns them and their ministry. Please provide whatever they're needing. May they know how much You love them. Please bless them and their loved ones beyond all they can ask or think. And wherever the enemy may be trying to attack them, please put a hedge of protection around them so that no enemy can penetrate. In the mighty name of our Lord Jesus I pray. Amen.

S. Burritt

Los Angeles, California

Spirit-inspired . . .

I just recently received the winter issue of CI that included my article "Trophies of Regeneration." You found such wonderful photos to accompany it! And I appreciate the editing that caught the difference between the way hunters in Eastern

and Western U.S. count the points of the antlers. I never knew this. I pray the entire article was interesting to your readers and useful to the Holy Spirit.

This lovely issue is full of good, Spirit-inspired writing. Thanks for all your hard work.

S. Mayle

Erie, Pennsylvania

Kindergarten . . .

My daughter is a kindergarten teacher in a Christian school. She mentioned she may incorporate some of your homeschool materials into her curriculum.

Blessings on your ministry.

J. Van Houten

Hudsonville, Michigan
Editor's Note: That's nice your daughter is wanting to use CI with her young students. At that age, reading the stories and asking the children questions would work well. Then they could cut out pictures from the magazine and make collages or note cards to share. Our Creation Unit Studies that are used by many homeschoolers, as well as Christian school teachers, are more for fifth through eighth graders.

Dear Friends:

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

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Window

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



Boyhood sledding is now in the author's past.



Intricate frost patterns fascinate any onlooker.

Some people cherish winter as the best season of the year. As a youth, simple joys of sled and slope thrilled me and filled a lot of frigid time outdoors, but as sledding faded into the past, so did my enjoyment of the cold. Now, as I experience my sixty-fifth winter, I think I'm finally relearning to appreciate this season's annual blessings. Watch with me as winter's unique characteristics crystallize into captivating and stunning artistic creations as the mercury drops below freezing.

Getting out of the house to relish the freshness of winter remains a challenge though, especially when the air is so c-c-c-c-cold. Tempted to just enjoy the chilly spectacles of the season from the warm side of the windows, I gaze at the sparkling crystal diamonds as the sunlight and streetlights illuminate the freshly fallen snow or follow sweet little songbirds as they flit between the feeders and evergreens or perhaps notice a deer as it strides across a yard blanketed in white. In Newfoundland the only kind we have are the largest members of the deer family—the majestic moose.

Frost Art

B Y L A W R E N C E B U R N S



Other scenes are cause to explore winter's wonders.

But believe it or not, a spectacular winter marvel can be enjoyed without even looking beyond the window itself. Window frost presents dazzling ice-crystal patterns when water vapor freezes on the clear panes. Different from icicles which form when dripping liquid water freezes, frost manifests in various types of crystalline formations:

- Advection frost (or wind frost) forms on objects like poles in cold, windy conditions.
- Hoar frost (or radiation frost) is the most common type often seen on grass, plants, and in your freezer.

- White frost is made up of needle-like ice crystals.
- Frost beard is a rare type of ice crystal that looks like white hair!

Window frost can also be called ice flowers or fern frost. It forms when a pane of glass has very cold air on one side and fairly moist, warm air on the other. Imperfections in the glass can affect the way the frost *nucleates* when water vapor molecules start to gather in tiny clusters and grow in *fractal* patterns. A fractal can be defined as basically a self-similarity; looking more closely, you'll discover smaller versions

of the whole. An example of a fractal in nature is the branching pattern of trees. One branch can look like a small-scale version of a whole tree.

The spontaneous formation of ice crystals presents an amazing interaction of properties designed into H₂O molecules—just a tiny example of the Creator’s ways that are beyond our comprehension as told in Isaiah 40:28. “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. There is no searching of His understanding.” How can something so miniscule and fragile be so artistic and fascinating? “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! . . . His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

To make the most of this crystalline experience, take a closer look with a magnifying glass, but hold your breath as you draw close to the window so you don’t melt the frost. Like so many things in God’s grand creation, the closer we look, the more evidence we see of the divine Designer as

“He showers snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes” (Psalm 147:16, NASB 2020). You will be amazed at discovering the variety of shapes, patterns, and textures of window frost that may inspire you to want to share these fleeting frozen marvels via macro photography.

Winter photography can be especially rewarding. The nice part about capturing window frost in a photo is that you’re always on the comfortable side of the barrier between you and the wintry chill that makes those careful camera adjustments easier with unfrozen fingers.

Here are some photographic tips to consider when capturing the season’s artistic wonders. Before the frost forms, be sure the window pane is clean on both sides. A window with two independent sliding panes of glass is ideal. When the camera is set and the shot is composed, slide the inside window pane out of the way and click the photo. This minimizes the chance that the outer pane with the frost will get foggy. A camera with macro or extreme close-up



Window frost patterns resemble various nature scenes like this tropical rain forest.

capability and a tripod really help because some of the most dramatic compositions of window frost are only an inch or two across. To make sure your photo is in focus corner to corner, be sure the lens is precisely perpendicular to the window pane and set the aperture to f5.6 or f6.3 to increase the depth of field.

Two key elements in window-frost photography are lighting and composition. In the northern hemisphere, the best opportunity to capture window frost is early in the day on the west or north side of your house. Have fun experimenting with different combinations of outdoor light, indoor light, and the camera's white-balance settings. The colors of your photos can range from deep blue to silver to gold. And careful use of indoor lighting can provide some attractive highlights. A dark, out-of-focus object like an evergreen tree outside the window contrasts nicely with the bright frost and makes interesting lighter and darker areas. Keep the background in mind as you choose the part of the window to compose your photograph.

When you examine the photos you've taken, does the window frost remind you of other things in nature? The photos illustrating this article are color and contrast enhanced, but the shapes, textures, and patterns of the ice crystals have not been altered in any way. See if you can find the one with a shooting star. Can you detect a storm at sea with waves rolling in one after another? Can you find the ice-crystal tropical rain forest image?

As consuming as this fascinating activity may be, we don't want to get stuck indoors. Often many of us who venture outside in winter tend to keep it as brief as possible, trudging along with our heads down while peeking through hoods and thick scarves. But in the song, "I Saw God Today," George Strait sings, "His fingerprints are everywhere. Look (around) to stop and stare . . . (I) stood there for a minute, taking in the sky. . . ." So, let's not forget to take in the sky. There are some awe-inspiring things to see in winter just by looking up! And one of them involves ice crystals just like those that form on your window.



Shooting star



Frost formations appear as crashing waves.



A twenty-two degree halo of ice crystals glows as a rainbow.



Frost needles and other formations adorn winter scenes.

Ice crystal halos may appear during the day around the sun, but take care in protecting your eyes with proper sunglasses while you avoid looking directly at the sun. At night you might notice a halo around the moon known as a lunar halo (or winter halo). Light from the sun or moon is refracted (or bent) as it passes through ice crystals. Suspended in a thin layer of high cirrus clouds, each crystal acts like a prism. Since refraction happens when crystals are at just the right angle relative to the light source, sun and moon halos are also known as twenty-two-degree halos. They typically appear as white light but occasionally don the colors of a rainbow.

Isn't it reassuring that God's rainbow in the cloud promised in Genesis 9:13 can show up day or night any time of the year? This reminds us that God's faithfulness in keeping His promises remains there for us during all the seasons of our lives.

But frost was not always an illustration or symbol of blessings. In Psalm 78:47 we are reminded that God used frost to help free the Israelites from

slavery in Egypt when "He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost." The Creator also underscored His omnipotence and authorship of the universe by asking Job, "'From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth?'" (Job 38:29).

Nevertheless, winter does provide some cool opportunities to view the Creator's handiwork while experiencing His faithfulness in granting us year-round joy! "The faithful love of the Lord never ends! . . . His mercies begin afresh each morning" (Lamentations 3:22, 23, NLT). Let His creative, powerful, and caring touch crystallize in our hearts and minds to help us each be renewed and transformed while exploring His season of frost. **C**

Lawrence Burns writes from Corner Brook, Newfoundland, Canada, where he developed a keen interest in photography, nature, and in the Designer of creation for most of his life while he and his wife also serve as ministry coordinators in the area.

Wakodahatchee-

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



Boat-tailed grackle

“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).

Sometimes I am amazed where I find wildlife—especially with an abundance of winged creatures. While I prefer the great outdoors and as far away from civilization as possible, my quest to photograph birds sometimes takes me to the heart of densely

populated areas. One such place is nestled in the heart of Delray, Florida, amid a vast megametropolis that stretches from Palm Beach to Fort Lauderdale along the southeast tip of the state.

There, amid the sprawling conurbation lies a man-made reclamation wetland created to filter treated wastewater as it seeps into the underground aquifer. In the Seminole tongue, this wetland is called Wakodahatchee, meaning *created waters*. The fifty-six acres refuge consist wholly of a man-made water impoundment filled with native reeds and water lilies. Such an oasis is a magnet for Florida fish, mammalian, and avian fauna. Over the decades since its creation, this wetland haven has emerged as one of South Florida’s hottest birding locales and home to more than a hundred seventy-eight winged species.

The habitat of open ponds, emergent marshes, and cypress forests makes it an ideal feeding and nesting area for a multitude of birds in the area. As one walks along the wetland’s mile-long boardwalk, even casual naturalists are brought eye to eye with Florida’s most iconic wildlife.

It is not uncommon to see the secretive least bittern or the sora rail striding through the reedy marsh. There among the reeds seeing these birds that blend so well into their surroundings reminds me of the words of the



American white pelican

-Created Waters

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

psalmist, "You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Psalms 31:20).

There in the secret places of Wakodahatchee, the birds find safety. The wetlands attract other water birds such as the American white pelican; great blue, little blue, and green heron; great and snowy egrets; and white ibis that can be easily seen as they stalk prey along the waters edge.

The colorful roseate spoonbill and the gangly wood stork stroll among the cypress branches while the anhinga perches on the bowed root of a mangrove tree drying its waterlogged wings in the warmth of the sunlight. This inviting ecosystem also brings in plenty of osprey, red-shouldered hawks, boat-tailed grackles, and a plethora of passerines from gnatcatchers to warblers.

A walk through Wakodahatchee's created waters triggers a reassuring reminder who remains the Creator of all things—He who made heaven and earth and all things in it for our enjoyment.

Man was given dominion over the earth and the responsibility to be the caretaker of God's creation. And though we have failed in so many ways, Wakodahatchee is an example of how we can be successful in

adhering to and completing our divine mission.

Let us not forget that "God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Corithians 9:8, NIV). **C**

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



Bobby Harrison

Green Backed Heron



Bobby Harrison

White ibis



RE-CREATION OUTDOORS

Awesome Arches

BY DEBORAH REW

Have you ever stood in awe at the foot of the Tower of Babel or wandered the Garden of Eden? Have you walked through Devil's Garden to see the Dark Angel or explored the Fiery Furnace? If so, you know I'm describing features of Arches National Park in Utah. This mystical red-rock land provides a unique opportunity to connect nature to ancient Bible stories and life-changing spiritual concepts.

Traveling to Utah to spend ten days driving through the state's five national parks in one trip proved to be a soul-enriching experience beyond measure. But even while enjoying all of the distinctive highlights of each park with my husband, our imaginations could not dream of a landscape that sparks more awe-inspiring wonder than the 2,000 sandstone arches, carved pinnacles, rock windows, and mazes of Arches National Park.

Edward Abbey, a seasonal park ranger at Arches back in the mid-1950s, wrote the famous book *Desert Solitaire* in which he described Arches as "an illogical geologic freak, a happening—a something that happened and will never happen quite that way again." When writing about the jaw-dropping scene of the Delicate Arch, Abbey said, "For a little while we are again able to see, as the child sees, a world of marvels."

While exploring Arches, I welcomed the reminders of the Bible stories I learned as a child, but I was also challenged to meditate on the spiritual implications found in such a harsh environment—especially formations such as Devil's Garden and Dark Angel.



Delicate Arch (previous pages) and the Tower of Babel (above) pierce the horizon.

Deborah Rew



Snow in the desert adorns Mesa Arch with dazzling contrasts.

RED MONOLITHS

The main road in the national park winds nineteen miles through the prominent parts of the 120 square miles of preserved expanse. Near the third viewpoint, the impressive Tower of Babel formation pierces the horizon. Genesis 11 tells the story of humankind gathering in one place to build a city and tower to reach the heavens. At the time, the Bible says all people spoke the same language, but God confused their communication so they would stop building the tower and instead scatter their population over the earth. “That is why it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world” (Genesis 11:9, NIV).

After a right turn onto Windows Road, a lookout on the left offers a view called Garden of Eden. Among the red monoliths and tall pinnacles stand hoodoos named Adam and Eve. The garden certainly isn’t what one would imagine from the Genesis account of lush verdure and rushing water, but the variety of shapes do form a rock garden that holds a rare Edenic quality. Wander through it to locate the balanced rock called Devil’s Golf Ball—a sharp contrast to any concept of the biblical Eden.

Whoever named these formations must have known that the dangerous heat and lack of water would more likely describe a hell on earth. At the end of the park road lies the Devil’s Garden—an inhospitable landscape that gave plenty of physical and spiritual warnings to early explorers. They couldn’t have survived long without lots of water and protection from the heat. Likewise, we can’t survive the onslaught of this destitute world without the protection of the spiritual armor described in Ephesians 6:10–18 or the ample water Jesus promises in John 4:14. “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (NIV).

The most popular hike in Arches National Park is the Fiery Furnace trek that includes



Keith Brogan



A full moon appears to rest on a pinnacle at Turret Arch.

NPS/Neal Herbert

“A spring of water welling up to eternal life” (NIV).

a labyrinth of narrow sandstone canyons, fins, and arches that turn a fiery-hot red at sunset. Visitors can only hike this area with a ranger or by getting a private permit. I hope to do it one day as it requires a certain level of fitness and agility, but according to reviews, kids love the maze. As long as you are with a ranger, you won't get lost, and the two-hour hike gets you up close and personal with the harsh land.

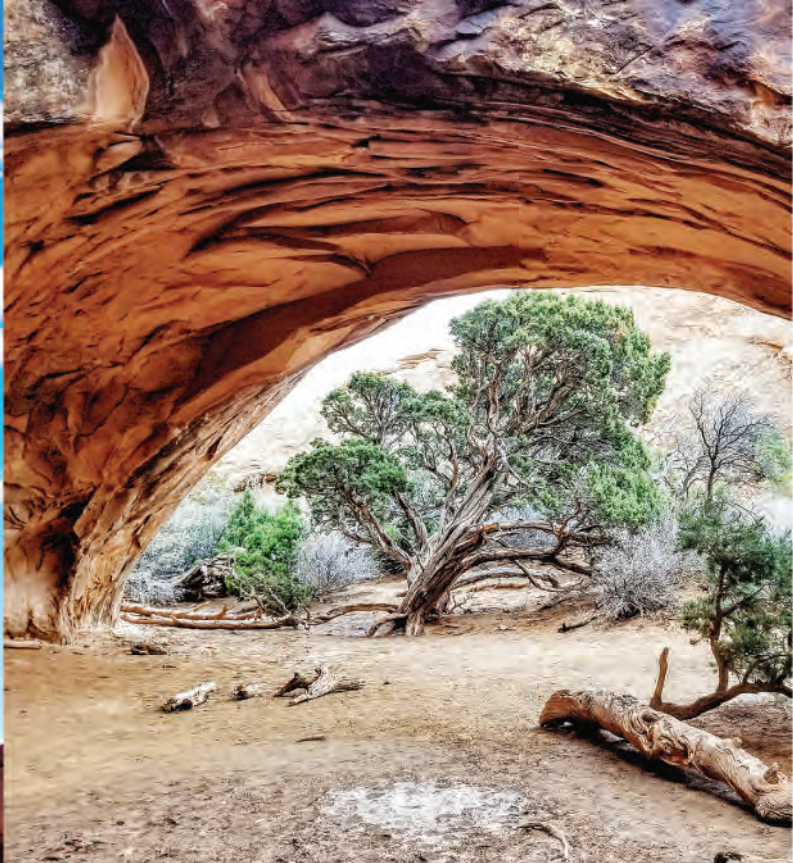
The name did not originally refer to the Bible story in the book of Daniel, but that is the first thought that came to my mind. Seeing the Fiery Furnace for the first time is astounding, and reading the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:8–25 is just as extraordinary. After the men refused to worship King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the king threw them into a blazing furnace seven times hotter than normal. But God protected the men, causing the king to praise the Lord and command that no one could say anything against their God. Standing beneath the flaming red spires of Arches' Fiery Furnace demonstrated to me God's ultimate power, whether it is in the natural forces that shaped the sandstone, in the vastness of the desert that dwarfs humankind, or in the Bible stories brought to life by the features in the park.

The foreboding, parched heat-scorched rockscapes can suddenly become transformed during the winter months when temperatures plummet and snowfall creates dramatic, contrasting highlights on all of the red-rock formations. Even with only a few inches of white, the frozen drifts can present hazardous hiking and driving conditions. But the spectacle—especially under a full moon—makes the already other-worldly landscape into a mystery juxtaposing the purity of snow against the tumultuous, weather-beaten rocks.

Arches National Park is unique in the world, with more than two thousand documented



Balanced Rock is a popular site in the center of the park. Deborah Rew



Navajo Arch could be used as a shelter from the elements.

HIDDEN CANYONS

arches making it the densest concentration of natural stone arches in the world, according to the National Park Service. The park appeals to geologists, historians, and archaeologists who have an interest in the Native American cultures that first inhabited the land. Although signs of the archaic groups have been found throughout western America dating back several thousand years, the first groups to have a major presence were the Anasazi and Fremont peoples in about A.D. 200 to A.D. 1300. Excellent examples of rock art (pictographs) and other artifacts exist within the hidden canyons, and as recent as the 1850s, the Ute and Navajo lived in the area and drove out the first white settlers.

By the 1880's a town named Moab established a foothold. Resources state the name could refer to the biblical name for the "land beyond the Jordan" or that it came from a Paiute word meaning "mosquito water." Loren "Bish" Taylor wrote descriptive editorials about the Arches area in his Moab newspaper and, along with John "Doc" Williams, began advocating for a protected area. Prospector Alexander Ringhoffer began a campaign for national park status with the railroad, and in 1929 President Herbert Hoover signed a proclamation to establish Arches National Monument. The park expanded, and in 1971 Congress made it Arches National Park. Now more than one and a half million people visit the park annually.

Arches truly is awesome! Here are a few interesting facts about the delicate ecosystem that inspires wonder and shows off our Creator's handiwork:

- The entire park is an ancient seabed. When the seawater dried up, it left behind sand dunes that petrified or formed into the rock being shaped by weather today.
- The dirt called *cryptobiotic crust* is claimed to be alive with its mosses, fungi, lichen, green algae, and cyanobacteria. It stays dormant during dry weather and activates when it rains.



Keith Brogan



NPS/Sarah Karinen

Plants and creatures at ground level like this cushion buckwheat should not be overlooked.

“See, as the child sees, a world of marvels.”

- Only eight to ten inches of rain fall in Arches every year. Animals and plants have adapted to the arid land like the Great Basin Spadefoot Toad that spends most of its life buried under the soil to retain precious water in its skin. They only come out after a rain to mate and lay eggs.
- This high desert land is home to 754 species of plants and animals including mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians, and fish.

The best time to visit southeastern Utah is fall, winter, or early spring. The temperatures can be quite pleasant, and there won't be large crowds. Currently, the park is being “loved to death,” and timed-entry tickets are required between April 3 and October 3. Allow at least a day to experience most of the sites, and the park remains open day or night.

One day I envision visiting these sites again with my grandchildren, reading the Bible stories that pertain to some of the formations and talking about various science topics relating to the park. Of course, if they are up to it, they will have a *blast* hiking the Fiery Furnace. Maybe we can camp under the millions of stars that shine so brightly in the high desert celestial sky.

I don't think anyone could ever forget seeing the ethereal, stark beauty and being blessed by the spiritually enriching moments within the park where imaginations can soar freely, and souls can be blessed just as ours were during our encounter with the Creator in the phenomenal desert of Arches National Park. **C**

Deborah Rew writes from Evergreen, Colorado, where she has written, edited, and published curriculum, grants, public relations pieces, and articles for a variety of newspapers and magazines. Now she enjoys combining her passions of travel, photography, and writing to nourish the souls of nature lovers all over the world.





Wily

Weasels

The vast land glistened in white. Through the night several inches of new snow fell on the prairies of North Dakota. Caught up in the pure-looking wilderness, I barely noticed a white blur that ran in front of the car as it disappeared into the edge of a marsh.

I thought, "That sure looked like one of those long-tailed weasels with its pristine white winter coat." I consoled my disappointment in not being able to see it better. Just then I noticed two black eyes peering at me from less than twenty feet away. The long-tailed weasel stood perfectly still while gazing at me. But why? Then I noticed a mouse the weasel had dropped while running in front of my car. That weasel did not want to miss its meal. Holding my breath, I reached for my camera with a long telescopic lens and began shooting photos.

Long-tailed weasels may appear as cute and cuddly furry creatures, but they constantly slink around as ferocious killers feeding on mice, ground-squirrels, chipmunks, and even tackling rabbits that are much bigger than they are. Wildlife observers

By Wayne Easley

say these wily weasels pounce with a whirlwind of activity when they capture their prey and try to get on top of the victim to quickly sever an artery or vein that will bring a quick death. Many believe that ounce for ounce these varmints are one of the most ferocious of all animals. Some biologists have even dubbed them, "nature's psychopaths!"

Weasels eat so much that they must stay aggressive and kill indiscriminately, or they will die! And yet, they appear to be adorable furry animals that look at you as if to say, "Let me be your friend, and we can have fun together." But don't let their small size and winsome ways fool you. This deception points to another psychopath mentioned in the Bible.

Revelation 12: 9 shows us the results of evil intensions. "The great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Verse twelve warns, "'For the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short'" (NRSV). And remember, Satan uses some of the same games and strategies that are employed by the cute little weasel. He tricks us with lies and clever tactics and then wants to devour us, which relates to the weasel's historical and cultural stigma in being associated with misfortune, as well as sneaky, conniving, and untrustworthy behavior.

Appearance can be used as a major deception that is to be avoided as Satan tries to be attractive and does everything to try to capture our allegiance. "'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves'" (Matthew 7:15). But once we are in the clutches of the enemy, he will try ever so hard to destroy us. So extreme vigilance is taught in 1 Peter 5:8 to "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the

devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (NIV).

Weasels find homes in rock piles, hollow logs, junk heaps, and abandoned buildings. They are adept at making tunnels under the snow and ice. While they do a lot of their hunting at night, they can sometimes be seen in the daytime. In areas like North Dakota where winters can be severe, long-tailed weasels acquire an attractive white coat with just the tip of the tail in black. This tends to help them blend into their environment. A hawk flying overhead may catch a glimpse of that black tail and dive down for an attack only to come up empty.

Later when spring arrives, the weasel's coat turns to more somber tones like browns and maroons. This shows us that the Creator God not only loves us but also cares for the creatures He has created. He has plans for their well being too.

Certainly weasels do not change their evil ways when they don their furry white coats for winter. To the contrary, biblical symbolism tells us that when Jesus grants us His white robe of righteousness, we have become clean and will appear like Him. While on the mount of transfiguration with some of His disciples, the glory of God shone through Him, and He became exceedingly white. Notice the verse in Mark 9: 3 where it reads, "His (Jesus') clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them." That is what Jesus wants for us—a beautiful white robe showing we have become like Him. Isaiah 61:10 explains it like this. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness."

Ironically, white ermine pelts (from the weasel family) are often used for royal robes as the

“Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

—1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)



A swift attack by a long-tailed weasel (above) makes a gopher meet a sudden death. The alert and wily creature (left) watches for predators like birds of prey and stays close to hiding places like fallen trees (below) to escape an early demise.



© Tom & Pat Leeson

Steve Lackie

*“They shall not hurt nor destroy
in all My holy mountain.”*

—Isaiah 65:25



Wayne Easley

One of the largest species of weasels, the tayra of central America (above), can weigh fifteen pounds. All species are very good at slinking around in their environment including the mink (far right).



Steve Lackie



© Tom & Pat Leeson

most coveted fur for court presentations and official portraits to project power, wealth, and purity. A symbolic legend states that an ermine would “rather die than be defiled or soiled,” which was symbolically transferred through the furry adornments to portray royal “moral purity”—hardly the character of a vicious and sly creature.

The weasel family to which the long-tailed weasel belongs includes a number of other creatures that can be found on virtually every region of the world except Africa, the Middle East, Australia, and Antarctica. The group encompasses badgers, otters, ferrets, ermines, and mink. It even includes a very imposing animal called the wolverine that can do battle with bears in the Pacific Northwest. Most of these animals are short-legged, have small rounded ears, and are equipped with massive claws. Most of them mark their territories by using a scent gland, the spray of which does not go into the air but rather is rubbed physically onto their territories.

Not long ago I was exploring in a very remote part of Costa Rica when I heard a sound. I wheeled around and less than thirty feet away stood a tayra (one of the largest of the weasels) watching me intently. The Spanish call them tolomucos. I hardly moved as I cautiously arranged my tripod and long-lensed camera into position to get some pictures of the creature with its impressive claws.

Another interesting fact related to the weasels is that the fertilized embryo for the first few months of gestation goes through what is called *diapause*, meaning birth is delayed. For many in the weasel family, gestation takes about the same amount of time as with human birth. This extended gestation period allows the offspring to be born when there is plenty of food available—another example of the Creator’s care for His creation.

Now we come to a final question. Will there be weasels in the new earth? Remember, here on this earth they are blood-thirsty creatures that spend a lot of time hunting and killing. However, there is a wonderfully reassuring text in Isaiah 65:25 that tells us, “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox.” This text certainly points to the probability that several creatures that were once vicious killers will be transformed and join us in the new heaven and new earth. Isaiah continues, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,” says the Lord.” **C**

Wayne Easley writes from Harvey, North Dakota, where he continues to serve as a pastor after retiring and living for a number of years in Costa Rica. His wildlife photography and stories from many parts of the world have regularly appeared in Creation Illustrated.



Wayne Easley

CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

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

Modern Cosmology and the Bible

From the viewpoint of modern cosmology, the universe is about fourteen billion years old. How does this relate to the biblical account of the creation of the world? The fact that we observe star systems so far away that light takes millions and billions of years to reach our eyes is strong evidence that the age of the universe is much bigger than the several thousand years that have passed since Creation week.

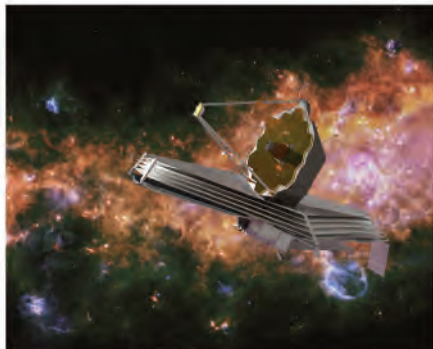
Based on an in-depth study of the Hebrew text in Genesis 1, many theologians tend to conclude that the creation of the universe took place before the events of Creation week. They suggest that there is a time gap of indefinite duration between the events described in Genesis 1:1, 2 and the rest of the narrative in the chapter. The age of the universe can be much bigger than several thousand years, although the Bible doesn't comment about this gap or the events that took place during this indefinite period of time. This theory has been called the passive gap theory.

On the other hand, the idea that the universe was created during Creation week just a few thousand years ago is often called the no gap theory. From this view, the processes that took place during Creation week go beyond the scope of modern science. Our knowledge is far from complete, especially when it comes to the creation of our universe.

Condensed from "The Big Bang Standard Cosmological Model and the Bible," by Alekssei Popov, Geoscience Research Institute, November 2022, www.grisda.org

Cosmic Origin Views

When describing an image of the Carina



Nebula, Katie Mack, the Hawking Chair in Cosmology and Science Communication at the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, wrote: "Where Hubble's view showed

us the edges of the clouds, the James Webb Space Telescope lets us peer within to watch the process of creation as it happens—to see, like never before, how new light is born from the stuff of the stars. We came from that. We are made of that. This is our cosmic origin story, viewed 8,000 light-years away, in another part of the galaxy, but, nonetheless, entirely ours."

At Creation Research, we believe the Creator of the cosmos tells us clearly that our bodies are made of the stuff of the earth, which He created three days before He made the stars. As well as serving humankind for signs, times, and seasons (Genesis 1: 14), the stars and other heavenly bodies are there to declare the glory of God (Psalm 19). Through technology like the new space telescope, our generation has been privileged to see more wonderful and glorious things in the heavens. The images produced by this telescope are truly superb and definitely worth studying, but they are not our "cosmic origin story."

Condensed from *Creation Research News*, July 2022, www.creationresearch.net

The Big Bang and Galaxies

The James Webb Space Telescope shows us more of the universe, but it also reveals the hollowness of modern secular cosmology. We're seeing more inconsistency between the observed data and the model's implications.

If the overall Big Bang story is true, then when the universe first created itself, no galaxies existed. In other words, if we could look far enough back, we would see a universe dominated by immature galaxies. Secular astronomers were shocked when massive, mature galaxies were found to exist when the universe was supposedly five billion years old. Now they have to grapple with galaxies that existed just 230 million years after the Big Bang. So, the Big Bang's claims of being a legitimate scientific model are faltering.

Condensed from a *Discover Creation* blog 2022, Alpha Omega Institute, www.discovercreation.org and www.CreationAstronomy.com

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

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

Sharing Facts and Figures

Smart phones are quite common in making life more efficient, but what about *smart food*? In difficult economic times when inflation forces up grocery bills, we need to be smarter and more efficient about food. In America as much as forty percent of all food ends up wasted. This is more than a hundred billion pounds equaling \$400 billion lost each year,



which doesn't sound very smart or efficient. Contrasting this waste with the fact that 38 million Americans go hungry, it is time to become *food smart*.

America's largest grocery chain, Kroger, promised four years ago to eliminate food waste by 2025. Kroger's food waste is estimated at \$140 billion annually, which gets passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices. The IRS classifies this as tax deductible for corporations, which means taxpayers cover the losses for food that ends up in dumpsters.

Another big problem with food waste is when it ends up in landfills and generates methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas. Food takes up more space in U.S. landfills than anything else. The EPA estimates that the U.S. food loss waste equals 170 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, similar to what is emitted by 42 coal-fired power plants!

With food bills increasing and the desire to save money, learning to decrease food waste has huge benefits. Eighty percent of Americans discard good food because they misunderstand expiration labels. An average American family of four throws away \$1,600 of produce each year. So, some states are passing new laws to help curb food waste. In Vermont a new law has seen food donations increase 40 percent when they put in place a "Universal Recycling Law," which bans scrap food waste.

Tips for Simple Living

Smart eating starts with smart shopping. Plan your meals, and shop with a list to decrease impulsive

buying. Buying bulk staples, growing your own food, and learning how to properly preserve it can help decrease food waste and save money. Start planning your garden in the winter by purchasing your seeds.

Learn what the dates on your purchased food mean. "Best If Used By" deals with the quality of the food; it is still safe to consume beyond that date. "Use By" applies to products that are perishable or may have food safety concerns.

Instead of throwing food in the garbage, invest in a food composter for your home. Some states are asking households to separate food waste from other garbage so all food waste can be composted and not put into landfills. Freeze food that can't be eaten right away. Keep a ziplock bag with bits of leftovers in your freezer for future stews and soups.

Teach children to "take all you want, and eat all you take." Be creative with food leftovers and have the family decide before they leave the table what should be done to use up the leftovers.

Biblical Stewardship of Creation

Wealth, its misuse, and waste is the focus of some important lessons Jesus taught during His ministry. In the gospel of Luke, Jesus leads us through a few stories that highlight the importance of using our talents, money, and opportunities well. If food is an asset, then we can learn from Luke 16-19 that not wasting our time, money, opportunities, and even our food is important to God.

Jesus led by example that food is valuable and should not be wasted. When He fed the 5,000, He had all leftovers picked up. "And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, 'Gather the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten" (John 6:12, 13, ESV). Jesus did not want anything to be lost because He knew that sharing food offers a wonderful and practical opportunity to bless others. Jesus also specifically commended the feeding of the poor in Matthew 25:35. We can all be better stewards of the food the Creator provides.



The moon captures attention in the night sky.

*“And God said,
Let there be lights
in the firmament of
the heaven to divide
the day from the
night; and let them
be for signs, and
for seasons, and for
days, and years: . . .*

CREATION DAY 4

■ BY SARAH FAY BUCKLAND, PHD

The Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Stars

Editor's Note: This article is the fourth in our twelfth series of features that focus on the Creation week. Some days are divided into segments, and in the next issue we will explore the fifth day of the Creation week when God created fish and birds. 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.



Jeremy Nickerson

Millions of stars in the heavens declare the glory of God.

“**A**nd God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day” (Genesis 1:14–19, KJV).

Gazing up into the seemingly endless night sky hoping to spot a

shooting star remains a quest that many hold from our days of childhood. The wonders of the sunrise, the mysteries of the planets beyond the earth, and the dreams to inhabit spheres beyond our own capture the hearts and imaginations of humankind throughout the ages. Although idealized for their aesthetic value and eccentric philosophical wonderings, the sun, moon, and stars have far more imminent value to our very survival here on earth than most people realize.

From the simplest of actions that we take for granted, like standing up without falling off the face of the earth due to gravity to not experiencing boiling or freezing temperatures, our daily lives on earth depend on Creation’s intricate design and balance maintained in the



Antiquated sun dials are far from the finely tuned chronometers of today that use the sun.

heavens. So, just how important was day four of the Creation week to our existence? Let's take a journey above into the heavens to explore the scientific wonders of Creation day four!

In an eloquent fashion, the psalmist poetically describes our sun "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race" (Psalm 19:5, KJV). Just as this picture-perfect text depicts our sun, earth's closest star has inspired awe and wonder for civilizations past, not only for its beauty but also for its power being harnessed over centuries to aid humankind.

While many admire our sun's reliability for physical life, many do not contemplate the spiritual lessons we can learn from just studying that fiery orb.

For one, the degree of consistency and precision very loudly declare a deliberate design by our Creator God. While we may recognize the reliability of the sunrise and sunset, careful scrutiny reveals that the degree of precision by which our solar system functions is mindboggling. For instance, some of the most precise standards used by NASA researchers to measure time on earth (e.g., Universal Time 1 with precisions of five millionths of a second or better) are calibrated with astronomical reference points based on the rotation of earth on its axis with respect to the sun because of the reliability and regularity of these processes.

But the reliability of our sun is not limited to the daily clockwork of sunrise and sunset from earth's perspective but also in powering biological mechanisms.

*and let them be for
lights in the firmament
of the heaven to give
light upon the earth:
and it was so.
And God made
two great lights; the
greater light to rule
the day, . . .*



Even with solar flares the sun's temperature remains fairly steady.

The sun's temperature and its luminosity provide just the right conditions to support a broad range of ecosystems found on the earth. Unlike some stars, the sun's most vital power is emitted in the visible light portion of the electromagnetic spectrum, as it is not too red or too blue. This provides precisely the optimal energy range required by chlorophyll in plants on earth to manufacture food more efficiently via photosynthesis. With a different type of star, photosynthesis on earth as we know it would be drastically altered with uncertain outcomes.

Fittingly described in Genesis as "the greater light" that rules the day, the sun is the largest object in our solar system (1.4 million kilometers in diameter), which has an immense gravitational pull that holds the entire solar system together

with its orbiting planets. Despite its large size, the sun remains incredibly stable in its temperature with flares being far less extreme compared to other stars. Even NASA describes the sun's unique temperature characteristics as a *mystery*. Research by the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research found that the variation in solar irradiance was only 0.07 percent, while other stars showed much larger variations typically about five times greater. If our sun experienced extreme flares as characterized by other stars, it would have the capacity to drastically vary temperature on earth to uninhabitable conditions.

The size of the flares and temperature of our sun fit perfectly with the needs of planet Earth. For instance, if the sun were as large as red supergiant



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The moon has a vital impact on tides.

*and the lesser light
to rule the night: he
made the stars also.
And God set them in
the firmament of the
heaven to give light
upon the earth, and to
rule over the day and
over the night, . . .*

stars like Betelgeuse, all the inner planets would be engulfed. And if our sun were a brighter blue-white supergiant like Rigel, the earth would experience excessive amounts of high-frequency radiation. If the sun were smaller, its light energy would be too faint to support life at the sun's present distance; while if closer, the tides produced would be dangerous. So, the placement of the sun as a single great light reveals a special design feature showing our Creator's forethought. Furthermore, in other galaxies major stars often exist as multiples. If our solar system contained more than one major star, the temperatures experienced would not be habitable to support life as we know it.

Coupled with the ideal nature of the sun's size and temperature, the

distance of the sun from the earth is even more incredible to consider. So finely tuned is the sun's distance from the earth that, if there were just a five percent difference, the earth would be subject to the same fate as Venus—a runaway greenhouse effect—with temperatures rising to nearly nine hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Conversely, if the earth were about twenty percent farther from the sun, it would experience runaway glaciations of the kind that has left Mars sterile.

This ideal *Goldilocks* position of the sun from the earth plays an important role in maintaining earth's climate balance as the primary controller of wind currents, rain patterns, and temperature variations. On the seasonal scale, the earth's tilt relative to the sun enables the cycle of four seasons. Without this tilt, the equatorial



The seasons and plant growth depend on the sun, moon, and even the stars.

regions would quickly overheat, and the polar regions would become too cold. On the inter-annual scale, our sun operates on an eleven-year solar cycle that helps to maintain balances in temperature at longer intervals. The sun's distance from the earth is also perfect to facilitate liquid water on earth—the only planet where liquid water has been found in abundance (70 percent of the earth's surface).

The importance of water for life can never be overstated, as it not only sustains life but helps regulate the earth's temperature and weather systems. If the mass, color, distance, size, or radiation of the sun were even slightly different, life would cease to exist on earth. In fact, science shows that the probability of coexistence of all these vital life-sustaining factors is impossible by chance. With all

these precise characteristics, no wonder the psalmist said: "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1, KJV).

These amazing clockwork phenomena are not limited to the sun but include our nearest neighbor—the moon. While earth's moon is often idealized in poetry, tales, and fables for its dreamy silver rays, many observers do not realize the amazing multiple functions our moon also performs for the well-being of our planet and our own survival.

One vital example of the moon's impact on making our lives more habitable is the ideal clockwork of tides produced by the moon's gravitational pull that provides tidal heights and strength to be perfectly suited to balance the earth's temperature. Lunar tides flow and ebb precisely every 6 hours and 12.5 minutes daily without



Jeremy Nickerson

The moon can totally eclipse the sun due to its size and distant distance from earth.

fail. In addition to providing temperature stability, tides also sustain food supplies for sea creatures that enable efficiency in fishing. Research has suggested that the impact of the moon's gravitational characteristics even affect crop yields and growth.

An additional amazing design of Creation points to the ratio of the moon's distance to the sun's distance from the earth enables us to be able to experience total eclipses. Although being four hundred times smaller than the sun, the moon is still able to completely block the sun's light from earth's perspective because the moon is around one hundred times closer to the earth than the sun.

God creating these celestial bodies—the sun providing a greater light to rule the day and the lesser

light reflected by the moon—even has significance to human health. The day-night cycle has been found to be immensely beneficial to sustaining optimal health of living organisms. Biorhythms depending on the precise light-darkness circadian cycle influence our sleep patterns, learning capacity, memory, and even regulating our gene expression.

While the Genesis account contains only a miniscule reference to the other stars, saying: "he made the stars also" (Genesis 1:16, KJV), these seemingly insignificant dots spotting our night sky from the earth's perspective are no small feature of Creation. Compared to earth's sun, there are many stars in our galaxy and the wider universe that are exceedingly larger and much more brilliant. For instance, the galaxy called

*and to divide the light
from the darkness:
and God saw that it
was good.
And the evening
and the morning
were the
fourth day.”*

– Genesis 1:14–19, KJV



NASA/PL-Caltech

The giant star Zeta Ophiuchi hugely affects nearby dust clouds.

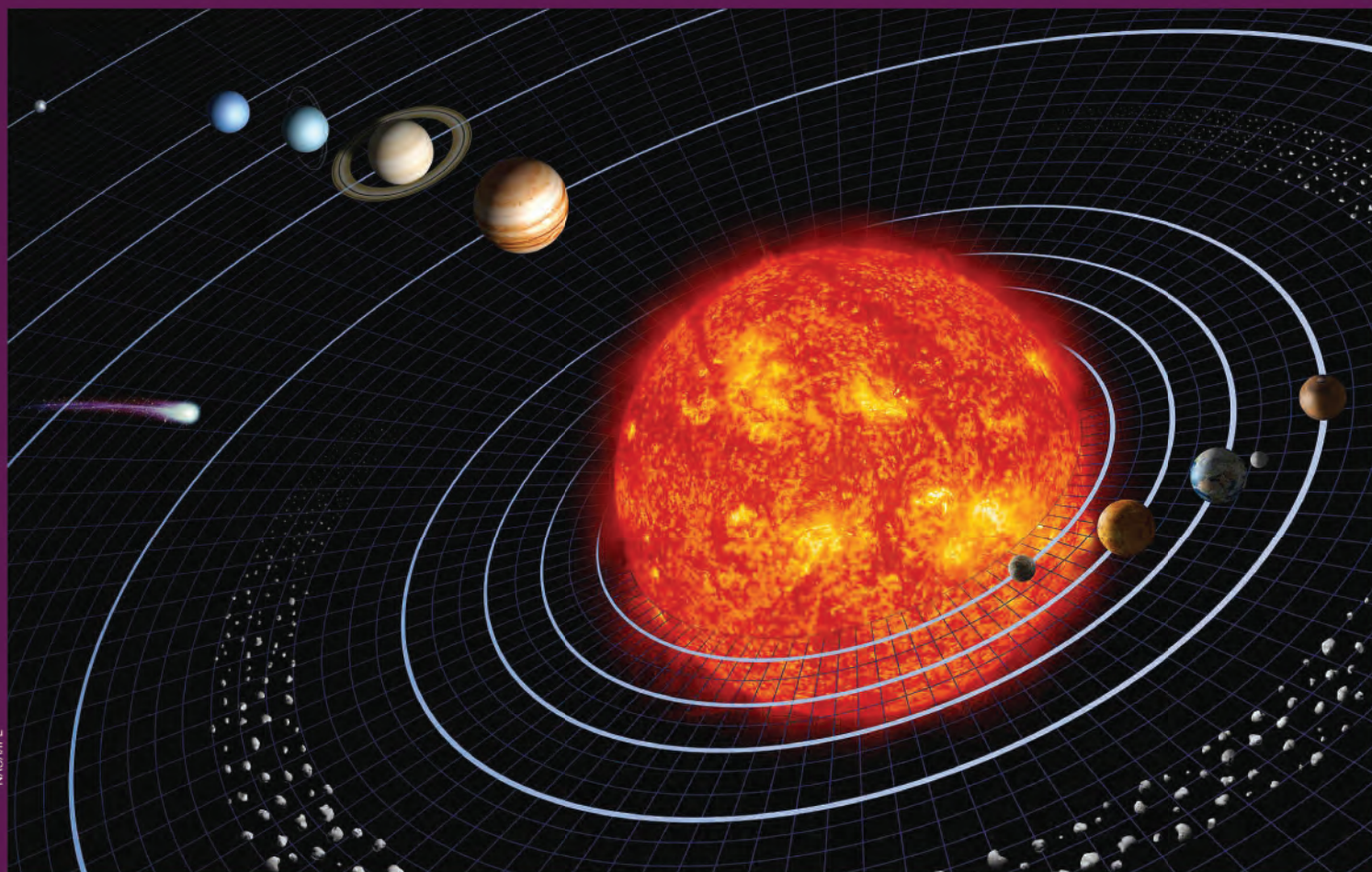
the Large Magellanic Cloud contains the largest and brightest star known as R136a1. This *blue* star radiates around nine times hotter than the sun's surface, shines almost nine million times brighter, and proves to be over two hundred fifty times more massive than our sun!

Along with the sun, the rest of the planetary system, apart from the earth, would need to have been created on day four in order for gravitational balance and protections to exist. In all their positions and orbits, the planets further reveal God's infinite knowledge and benevolence. For instance, a key feature of design in engineering is the consideration of *system safety* factors. The positioning of large planets, such as Jupiter, serves to protect earth from being hit by too many comets that would have

resulted in mass extinctions over time.

Despite the immense power contained in the stars and the planets, the Genesis narrative placed these elements as merely a side note; yet, the stars give us a glimpse of the matchless wisdom of God. Life on earth would not exist if these stars were positioned closer to the earth.

In conclusion, it is clear that the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1). When we look around us, we see design and balance, not disorder. We see intricate intentionality, not irregularity, and we find harmony carefully orchestrated and not havoc. The regularity of the sun, moon, and stars echo the words in Jeremiah 33:19, 20: "The Lord said to me, 'I have made a covenant with the day and with the night,



Our solar system is designed with amazing balance in planetary orbits and distances (not to scale).

so that they always come at their proper times; and that covenant can never be broken" (GNT). No matter what changes throughout millennia here on earth, there remains a harmonious balance in the heavens upheld by the Word of our Creator.

Amid all this, Creation day four should evoke a deep sense of awe and reverence for the power and providence of God. As the psalmist said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4, KJV). With all the wonder shown in the created heavenly realm, how comforting it is that the same Mighty Arms that continue to uphold the universe are

waiting to lovingly embrace each of us if we surrender to His will. **C**

Sarah Fay Buckland, PhD, writes from the island of Jamaica, where she is an environmental researcher, Spanish language enthusiast, and inspirational author. She holds a doctoral degree in geography from the University of the West Indies and is a published researcher in the field specializing in drought risk management. She has an avid interest in exploring how patterns of regularity in God's creation can be used to help farmers prepare for and manage risks. Sarah merges her research career as a ministry tool, as she believes that scientific explorations in the natural world are among the most powerful testaments to the wisdom and love of our Creator.



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<p>DAY TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FROM PILATE TO HEROD & BACK TO PILATE AGAIN <p>JESUS WAS ON THE CROSS FROM 9AM UNTIL 3PM WHEN HE DIED</p> <p>DAY TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN</p>	<p>JESUS' BODY REMAINED IN THE TOMB ALL OF THE HOURS OF THE SABBATH "RESTING", "SLEEPING", DEAD, WHILE 100 SOLDIERS GUARDED HIS TOMB</p> <p>HE WAS BURIED BEFORE THE SABBATH</p>	<p>JESUS AROSE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, SOMETIME BEFORE DAYLIGHT</p> <p>MARY MAGDALENE CAME TO THE TOMB BEFORE DAYLIGHT, AND FOUND THE TOMB EMPTY, BUT DOES NOT SEE JESUS</p> <p>PETER AND JOHN RUN TO THE TOMB, FIND IT EMPTY, BUT DO NOT SEE JESUS</p> <p>MARY MAGDALENE RETURNS TO THE TOMB WEeping, TALKS WITH 2 ANGELS AND SEES JESUS</p>
Friday Day Day of the Week	Saturday Night Sabbath (7th Day of the Week)	Sunday Day First Day of the Week

...cult to determine... to make sure... there flower... on. The priests wished to make sure this, and John states the... Savior's side. From the wound thus made, there flowed out blood and water. This was noted by all the beholders, and forthwith came there out blood and water. The spear pierced His side, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, "A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another scripture, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." John 19:34-37.

...er the resurrection the prie... and the report that Christ did not die upon the cross, that... ly fainted, and was afterward... that it was not a real body of flesh and bo... at the likeness of a body, that was laid in the tomb. The... they broke not His... He was already dead. To satisfy the priests, they pierced His side. Had not... been already extinct... caused instant death.

But it was not the spear thrust, it was... the death of Jesus. That cry, utter... "with a loud voice" (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46), at the moment of His death, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." His heart was broken, and He died of a broken heart. His heart was broken, and He died of a broken heart. His heart was broken, and He died of a broken heart.

With the death of Christ the hopes of His disciples perished. They looked upon His closed eyelids and drooping from His side, declared that He died of a broken heart. His heart was broken, and He died of a broken heart. His heart was broken, and He died of a broken heart.

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Howling Winds



Whipping, biting, lashing, and gusting—appropriate terms that capture the intensity of a windy day on the North Sea off the eastern shores of Scotland where I live. Rarely do I catch the wind gently stirring, rustling, or whispering through the trees. The wind here howls, sobs, or sings. As I write, the invisible rush of wind speedily travels in a west/



southwest path at about twenty-nine miles per hour.

I adore being out in nature. I am rejuvenated by walking in the sun, planting and weeding in the garden, reading outdoors with a breeze tickling my neck, listening to birds chirping or bees buzzing, or feeling a gentle rain pattering on my arm. My soul thrives in being connected with the outdoors.

Despite my love of nature, I tend to feel agitated or even

assaulted in a gusty, forceful wind. Strong fall and winter winds that blow with a steady constancy exasperate me. So, what did my family and I do? We prayed for the wind of God's Spirit to guide and direct us to what He had planned next for our family as we were discerning the possibility of moving from Colorado to attend a residential seminary program for my husband's master's and PhD degrees. And so, we moved to

Scotland, right on the coast of the North Sea, to expose ourselves to the persistent and robust oceanic squalls.

After our arrival I quickly realized that I had really only three choices about how to live with the wind: (1) become unreasonably upset each time I encounter it during most of the fall and winter months, (2) stay inside whenever I see the tree branches swaying, or (3) find a way to be joyful and

B Y A N N A H O L S T E E N



thankful in the unpredictable buffeting.

Of these three options, only the last one seemed to make sense and the way that God would desire me to respond. In Philippians 4:4, 5 Paul encourages us to “rejoice in the Lord always. . . . Let your gentleness be evident to all” (NIV).

Of course, we can apply this text to anything that upsets us, annoys us, or frustrates us. Like the wind, sometimes things of life—work, children, family, bills—bombard us with fierce tenacity, shake us to our bones, and test every ounce of our will and fortitude. Unanticipated frustrations come blasting at us from within and without like opening the door to take a walk and being slapped in the face

by bitter blusters that tempt us to erupt in an equally explosive emotional outburst.

On this wild and gusty day (that actually lasted a week), I confess I have chosen to hide indoors. I do not wish to expose myself to the howling wind that causes the rain to whip sideways against my face. Its constant typhoon-like howling gets broken only by either a more forceful surge or an icy rain spray. The kids are getting a bit wild and restless that matches the irritation I feel creeping to the surface. But even so, I cannot help but marvel at the unrelenting strength of the gusts.

And in these moments of wonder, my eyes become fixed, not on the wind but on the Maker of the wind. He admonishes, “Be still,

and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10, KJV). And unexpectedly my aversion toward the intense onslaught passes and is replaced with wonder, praise, and gratitude for God’s unseen, guiding presence.

As I watch the unseen wind shaking and bending the trees, I reflect on Jesus’ words in John 3:8. ““The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit”” (ESV).

How wild and unpredictable is the Spirit of God! At other times the Spirit reveals its gentle and kind characteristics like a soft summer breeze. Sometimes it can be oddly fierce, yet soothing; strong, yet tender.

This poem by Christina Rossetti always makes me think of God. Sometimes I like to insert “God” in place of “the wind.”

*Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you.
But when the leaves hang
trembling,
The wind is passing through.*

*Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I.
But when the trees bow down their
heads,
The wind is passing by.*

On the day of Pentecost the Spirit’s arrival is described as a sound of a “rushing mighty wind” (Acts 2:2, KJV). Sitting in our lounging nook, which is surrounded by windows, I listen to

the wind rushing through the trees while throwing the rain across the windowpanes. I can only imagine what it must have sounded like when the Spirit rushed through the room that day. Invisible yet unmistakable, God was there. God is also here.

Wherever you are—a fellow ex-pat living among tempestuous seaside gales in the UK, a Midwest-native watching blustery winds build drifts of deep snow, or a western comrade being whipped by a dry, cold blast—I challenge you to embrace the wind this winter. Hear the whooshing howls as a call to worship. Be reminded of the creative One who made the wind. “For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind, . . . the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name” (Amos 4:13,

ESV). He remains the mighty One who can calm the wind with three simple words—“Peace, be still!” (Mark 4:39, KJV). And His amazing power over and through all circumstances reveals His tender and devoted care for you.

I like to think that this wild, whipping wind traveling west/southwest carries messages and prayers across the ocean and around the globe. Our prayers and our praise being sent out swirl together and get raised to our Creator’s ears that must please Him deeply.

I challenge you to join me in stepping outside on a windy day; allow the wind to strike you full blast on your cheek; feel it wash over and around you as a reminder that God made that wind. As you inhale deeply, imagine

that you are breathing in the very breath of God. You cannot see God any more than you can see the wind, but may the whirling heavens remind you that He is always as near as the breath that is ceaselessly urging you along on your journey that draws you closer to Him. **C**

Anna Holsteen writes from Guardbridge, Scotland, where she is a homeschool mother to two imaginative children and wife to her best friend who is currently pursuing his master’s degree in theology, imagination, and the arts at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. She enjoys pondering and writing about the evidence of God’s beauty, goodness, and presence that can be found at <https://www.patreon.com/benandannaholsteen>.





A healthcare worker helps a patient appreciate the benefits of nature.

beautiful gardens,

“I go to nature to be soothed,

A growing trend in the medical field incorporates green spaces as part of the healing environment. Gardens and outdoor gathering spaces designed into hospitals and rehabilitation facilities not only enhance the recovery of patients but also benefit the medical staff.

This *Biophilic Intervention* reconnects humans with the natural environment that originated with the Creation story but has taken hundreds of years to rediscover and implement into industrial societies. The Genesis account demonstrates that God placed humankind in a

gardens from eden



Satisfaction and personal growth results from working in and caring for a garden.

beautiful minds

healed and have my senses put in order.”

—John Burroughs, American naturalist (1837–1921)

garden setting to interact with and oversee nature. “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed” (Genesis 2:8). Our Creator understood from the onset that our optimum environment for healthful living has been and always will be in the midst of the rest of His creation—surrounded by plants, trees, fresh air, sunshine, and creatures.

With this optimal design in mind, founder and head psychiatrist Daniel Binus, MD, at Beautiful Minds, in Auburn, California, shared his vision to create an online program for the

by rebecca wong, m ed



Rebecca Wong

Rigorous work in the hot sun is a common scene at the Weimar Farm that is being filmed for the mental health course.

treatment of depression and anxiety. Hundreds of Beautiful Minds clients already benefit from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) combined with wholistic, natural interventions rooted in the foundational principle that mental health is intrinsically tied to physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

But countless other people nationwide need help and are unable to come to the clinic nestled in the Sierra Nevada foothills. So, Binus wondered, “Can we frame this course through an agriculture perspective? I’ve been working on my own garden, and I think there are so many mental-health applications connected to growing plants.” This challenge called for a visit to the nearby organic Weimar Farms—acres of peaceful, soothing solitude tucked away from the hectic pace of city life. In the stillness of the valley, you can feel the gentle breeze and hear the chirping birds that flit and flutter among the plants and trees. But don’t misunderstand; this is not a balmy vacation spot by any means. Watching farm supervisor Darren Greenfield and his workers toil in the blazing sun for hours covered in dirt and sweat, I recognized that the farm remains a place of incredibly hard work. There’s nothing glamorous about battling the elements, especially when there are always more tasks to be done than there are hands or hours in the day to complete them. And yet, there exists an incredible sense of tranquility amidst the toil.

This inviting atmosphere holds more than just a feeling. In fact, in a landmark study from Denmark, researchers discovered that children who had been surrounded by green spaces had 55 percent less risk of developing mental-health problems later in life. Other research studies show a correlation between exposure to nature and a decrease in cortisol levels (a stress hormone), as well as decreases in rumination, anxiety, and depression.



Rebecca Wong

Ripping up old roots provides a vital object lesson for personal growth.

As I contemplated how the cycles of growth could be applied to mental-health improvement, Greenfield explained, "Tilling the ground is the very first step. Even before life begins, we must prepare for the growth to come" as he pointed to a large empty field being prepared for the upcoming season. "Timing is everything," he added. "I must watch the weather conditions very closely. The soil needs just the right balance of air and moisture to create a beautiful crumble in your hands."

He begins by turning over the soil with a light tiller attached to his tractor so the weeds or cover crop get uprooted and churned into the dirt to decompose and add nutrients. Once the ground gets watered and is allowed to rest, the watchful farmer conducts soil tests to see what minerals need to be added to create a perfect balance. During the final tilling, Greenfield mixes all the minerals into the soil.

Then a large, metal tractor tool called a ripper penetrates much deeper than a tiller in order to tear deep into the soil structure. The underground ecosystems are broken down to allow the roots of future plants to grow deeper and access more nutrients. The moisture distribution will also be more stable for the crops that will be grown there.

In a startling way, the care of our minds is very similar. In order for healing to occur, there must first be the uprooting and breaking down of previous mindsets and negative neural pathways that hold us back from growth. This process can be painful and laborious but oh so vital. We may not realize the hidden stigmas we have toward mental illness or even toward ourselves. These negative thought patterns may sound like:

- I've tried everything. Healing isn't possible.



Rebecca Wong

Nurturing seeds and seedlings started in the “germination chamber” in the back shows the importance of starting out right.

- I must not be a good person. Why else would I suffer from mental illness?
- Only crazy people go to see a therapist.
- If people really knew my struggles, they would never like me.
- I’m too ashamed to tell anyone, no one would understand.

But as we *rip* deep into our thought patterns, we realize that change is needed—the first step in the lifelong journey of growth. Ultimately, God brings the healing. Psalms 147:3 reminds us, “He [God] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Likewise, in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1–9), Christ clearly reveals that the Word of God must fall on good soil in order to sprout, grow, and produce fruit.

Leaving the tractor in the field, we walked into a warm greenhouse where rows of baby plants lined the shelves. Greenfield reached into a corner and pulled out a bag of seeds. “See these? The DNA within this tiny seed contains all the vital elements to thrive, from the roots and leaves to the fruit.” After carefully mixing the soil composition, he dropped seeds into each slot in the tray, doused the tray with a good spray of water, and carried it over to an antique apparatus in the corner of the greenhouse.

“This is what I call the germination chamber,” he explained. “Actually, it’s an old refrigerator that we fixed up. Instead of it cooling the inside, I installed a heater with a temperature control. Temperature is key for germination.”

He slid the tray onto a shelf in the chamber, closed the door, and explained that most seeds germinate within a sixty-five to seventy degree environment. The chamber provides a sheltered, temperature-controlled climate for the seed to sprout, which speeds up the process.



Rebecca Wong

Healthy seedlings will be transplanted to flourish and produce fruit—an important step in personal development

What would normally take about two weeks typically takes only five days in the chamber. But monitoring is important as the diligent farmer checks on them every day and sometimes will watch multiple times a day to catch when germination occurs.

As soon as the seedlings break through the soil, they need to be taken immediately out of the dark chamber and into the sunlight. The tiny plants reach toward the sun and shoot up in length in just a matter of hours. If the plants are left in the dark, the stems become too floppy to support their own weight and may not survive. But those that receive immediate light become strong, steady stems that uphold leaves and future growth.

Everything in the environment—temperature, water, and soil—remains crucial for the successful seeding of a plant. But the most important? The sun. In a clear object lesson relating to the human mind, our brains were intelligently designed to sustain life just like the DNA in the seed. God intricately coded the brain to control our entire being—not just physically but also emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. As soon as we spring to life, we need the light of the “Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2) to strengthen our growth. Without this vital light, our lives will go limp into a state of weakness and vulnerability. The farm provided an abundance of object lessons that will be incorporated into the online course expected to be released in mid-2023.

The mental health learning modules centered around a gardening and growth theme include:

- Till the Soil: Preparing our minds for growth,
- Seed the Mind: Understanding neuroplasticity and emotional intelligence,
- Transplant the Thought: The fundamentals of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy,



Spending time in the garden hearkens back to God's original design for His children.

- Cultivate Growth: Reframing the way we think,
- Uproot the Weeds: Dealing with root issues,
- Harvest the Rewards: Celebrating and maintaining lifestyle change,
- Share the Change: How your history unlocks someone's future.

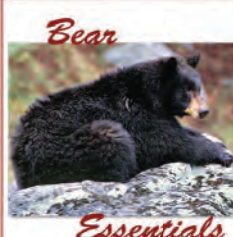
We can all gain a deeper appreciation for green spaces and the Creator's original design for our growth, purpose, and balance of physical, mental, and spiritual development. Finding ways to spend more time in our gardens tending to herbs, fruit, and vegetables in the fresh air and sunshine will prove beneficial. So, embrace green spaces and the mental rejuvenation that comes with them. In the process of planting beautiful gardens, beautiful minds will flourish with them. **C**

Rebecca Wong, MEd writes from Colfax, California, and teaches English as a second language at Woodland Community College in addition to developing programs for Beautiful Minds. To explore the resources and upcoming online programs for mental health, visit www.beautifulmindshealth.com.



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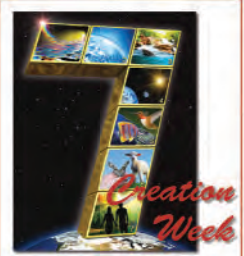
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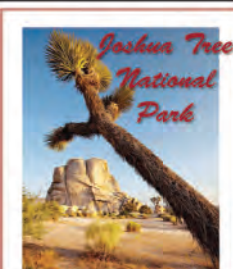
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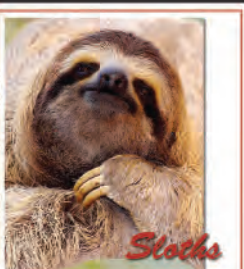
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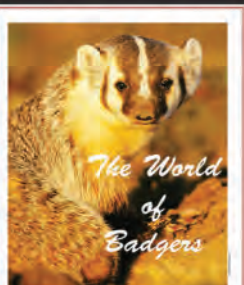
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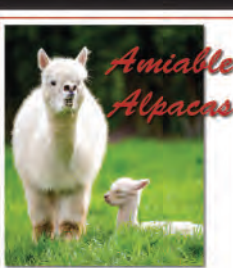
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“See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.”

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

—Genesis 1:29, 3:18



Recipes by Jennifer and Tom Ish. Photos by Melissa Ish



Golden Crackers & White Bean Hummus

Crackers:

- 1/2 C. yellow corn flour
- 1/2 C. oat flour
- 1 C. white bean hummus
- 1 Tb. fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp. turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt

White Bean Hummus:

- 1 can white beans drained
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 3 Tb. tahini
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Blend white bean hummus ingredients and set 1 C. aside. Mix cracker ingredients and add the cup of hummus. Mix well until a ball of dough is formed. Divide and roll out between wax paper, score into triangles and bake in a 300 degree oven for 12 minutes; flip crackers and bake another 12 minutes or until done. Serve with olives, cherry tomatoes, and remaining humus drizzled with olive oil, chopped sun dried tomatoes, and chopped pistachio nuts.



Nordic Seed Crackers & Pimento Spread

Crackers:

- 1 C. rye flour
- 1/2 C. oat flour
- 1/2 C. ea. pumpkin, sunflower seeds
- 1/4 C. ea. black and white sesame seeds, and chia seeds
- 2 Tb. flax seeds, milled
- 1 Tb. other seeds; ie. caraway, hemp
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 C. cold water

Pimento Cheese Spread:

- 8 oz. pkg. shredded cheddar cheese, non-dairy
- 1/2 C. cream cheese, non-dairy
- 3 Tb. vegan mayo
- 4 oz. pimentos, drained, chopped
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- Mix together and refrigerate

Mix dry cracker ingredients in a bowl, add water and mix until all seeds are moist; let sit for 20 min. Thinly roll a third of the batter at a time between wax paper. Bake at 300 degrees for 15 min. Remove and score crackers into rectangles. Return to oven and bake 15 - 30 min. or until crisp. Serve with pimento cheese spread, sliced cucumbers, gherkins, vegan sausage slices, nuts, and dried fruit.



Sweet Heart Crackers & Cheese Log

Crackers:

- 1 C. oat flour
- 1 C. gluten free flour mix
- 1/2 C. coconut oil or your choice
- 5 Tb. cold water
- 1 Tb. sweetener of choice
- 1 tsp. ea. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. salt

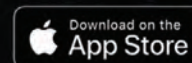
Cream Cheese Log:

- 1 8-oz. tub of vegan cream cheese
- 1/2 C. vegan shredded mozzarella
- 1 tsp. ea. vanilla & almond extract
- 1 Tb. honey or maple syrup
- 1/2 C. chopped dried cranberries
- 1/4 C. mini chocolate chips
- 1/4 C. pomegranate seeds & pecans

Mix dry cracker ingredients in a bowl, add wet ingredients, and mix well until a dough ball is formed. Divide and roll between wax paper. Use a cookie cutter for desired shape and bake at 300 degrees for 12 min.; remove from oven and dust with cinnamon sugar. Return to oven and bake another 12 min. or until crisp. Cheese log: Mix cream cheese, mozzarella, extract, and honey in a bowl. Spread out on parchment paper and sprinkle with dried cranberries and mini chocolate chips. Roll into a log and garnish with pomegranate seeds and chopped pecans.

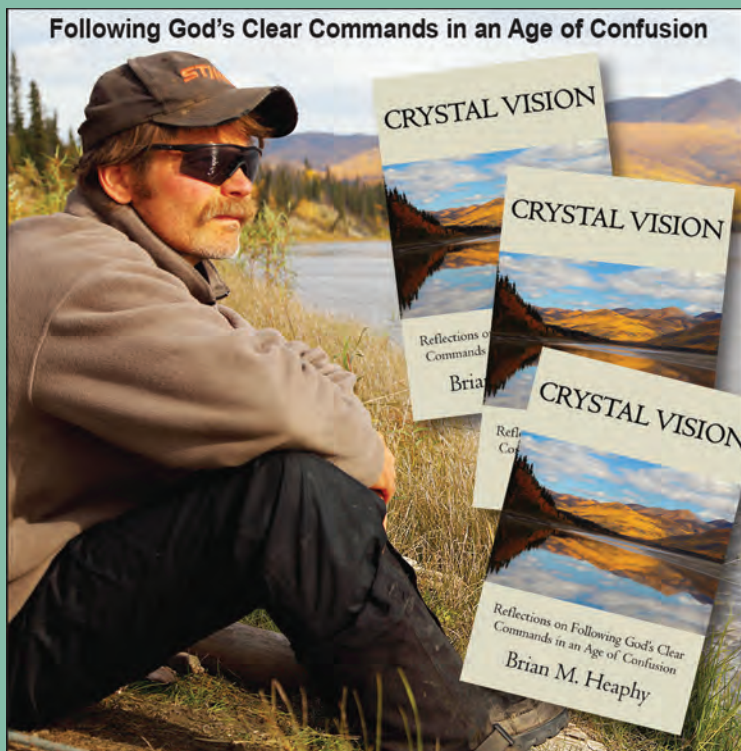
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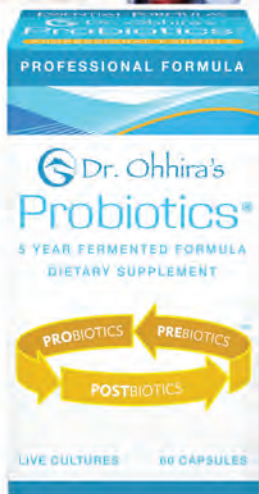
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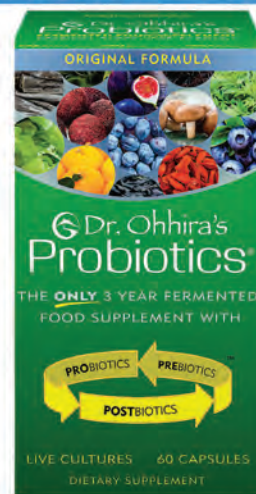
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I was in my kitchen when I heard my seven-year-old grandson call out from the laundry room. I ran in to find him pointing at a large brown spider that had crawled out from under a pile of clothes on the floor.

"Squish it, Grandma!" he demanded. "Before it bites me!"

"Oh, that's just Charlie," I said. "He's not going to bite you. We needn't squish him."

"But he's creepy and scary looking," the child insisted.

I hoped to teach Tyler reverence for all God's creatures and to know that killing one of God's creatures simply because it appeared unattractive and scary was wrong. Spiders are as much a part of God's design as any other part of Creation, and like all of His creatures have purpose and value. In fact, Psalm 145:9 instructs us that "The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made" (ESV).

So, I simply shooed the eight-legged creature away and told Tyler that while Charlie might look a little creepy and scary, he occasionally crawls inside the house to find food and water. Charlie is simply a

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



Spiders with a Purpose

harmless wolf spider that prefers to hide rather than bite. I didn't explain that there were several other *Charlies* that visited from time to time in other parts of the house even though they prefer hanging out on their webs in low gardens.

God teaches us that He values all His creatures, I told Tyler, and He wants us to respect them also. "O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures" (Psalm 104:24, ESV).

Tyler appeared unconvinced and questioned, "But they do bite sometimes. Right?"

"Well, they might if they are afraid or threatened," I explained. "Like all God's creatures, wolf spiders are naturally cautious and are instinctively aware that various things might bring harm to them. But wolf spiders are actually friendly and are not poisonous like brown recluse or black widow spiders." It is *very* important to learn which spiders can be harmful or poisonous, and families can make a study of them for a school project. Wolf spiders are considered the most common and have more than two thousand species globally. So, identifying which spiders are safe can be a challenge.

B Y B A R B A R A W E D D L E



A face to face close-up with a harmless wolf spider (left) appears ominous.

"Are you scared of them, Grandma?" Tyler persisted.

Truthfully, they do make me squeamish or startled at times when they surprise me by running out of dark corners when I least expect them.

"Well, because he's small, he's not very important, is he?" Tyler asked.

As we observed the spider for a moment longer, I explained that although he appeared small, he indeed had importance. I reminded Tyler, "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one

of them is forgotten before God" (Luke 12:6, ESV).

They eat mosquitoes, flies, beetles, crickets, and even cockroaches, I told him. The kind thing to do if you're afraid of spiders, however, is to take them back outside—not kill them.

"Come with me," I said, taking Tyler by the hand and leading him to the basement. Down there I pointed to a very tiny black spider that had been hanging around outside the window for several days.

"Do you see that spider, Tyler?" I asked.

"That's a jumping spider," I told him. "He's friendly also and doesn't bite unless he thinks he's going to be harmed."

"Why is he called a jumping spider?" Tyler asked. "Does he jump on people?"

"No, not on purpose, at least," I assured him.

"They jump to get their food. But like the wolf spider we saw upstairs, he's not likely to bite. And even if he does, he's not poisonous. I read that jumping spiders can even make good pets." Tyler stared at me as if in disbelief. I paused for a minute as I searched for the words to explain why someone might want an *arachnid* (the scientific name for spiders) as a pet. I couldn't explain it; I would have to show him why. So I said, "Come with me" as I led him back upstairs where I brought up an enlarged image of a jumping spider on my computer.

"Actually, Tyler, jumping spiders are very



unique. They have eight eyes and eight furry legs. I bet you didn't know that, did you? See the two big eyes in the center of its head? See how they are close together at the front of the face, and how their legs look fuzzy and warm?" Tyler's expression now appeared full of amazement and awe. Jumping spiders can leap up to fifty times their body length to pounce on mosquitoes or aphids. These tiny creatures can even *dance* with fancy footwork when courting a mate, and there are more than six thousand different species of jumping spiders worldwide.

"He looks just like the Cookie Monster," he said. "Grandma, he's looking at me!" Tyler's fear of spiders had turned to excitement.

Yes, the spider did resemble a Muppet, and it gazed directly at Tyler. My grandson began to realize that even God's smallest creatures were important.

Scripture encourages us to search the Word of God and find what is hidden there. We can also search creation and find what is hidden in nature that reveals important lessons.

Charlie was now huddled in one corner of the laundry room. So, I went to the kitchen and found a plastic cup and a piece of thin cardboard. I carefully placed a plastic cup over the spider and slid the cardboard under it and handed the cup with the cardboard that covered the opening to Tyler. I instructed him to carry the spider outside and set it free. Tyler did so without fear and with a fresh appreciation for all the Charlies he may encounter. **C**

Barbara Weddle writes from Nicholasville, Kentucky, where she enjoys studying important lessons found in God's handiwork that are worth sharing with curious children.



A tiny jumping spider (left) is only a spec on a fingertip. The multiple eyes on a jumping spider (above) make it look a bit cartoon-like.

Stored Snow



The U. S. Department of Agriculture has been doing snow surveys every year since 1935. Depth of snow in mountains tells how much water will be available in the valley for next summer's crops. In 1976 a record setting snowfall of 199 inches fell in Buffalo, New York. On the mountains of northern California 189 inches fell in a single snowstorm. Mount Rainier in Washington State once received over a hundred feet of snow in one year. If that amount falls at one time, it would cover a nine-story building!

If given the choice, would you drink water from a glacier fed stream in the mountain or a sewer polluted river in the valley? God asks this very question. "Will a man leave the snow-water of Lebanon, which comes from the rock of the field? Will the cold flowing waters be forsaken for strange waters?" Jeremiah 18:14.

God invites us to see His works in the natural world. He desires to turn our mind from the study of the artificial to the natural. God would lead us to His original source for our learning – to that which is God-made: the snow-waters of Lebanon, rather than strange waters of self-centered humanism. Some books and DVD's artificially take what God made and try to give its glory to man. This is often

true in the area of natural science. Science fiction is a confused blending of some truth and much error. Evolution is truly science fiction.

Schools often exalt mere human speculation to a place of authority above the pure word of God. The teaching of evolution is one example of this. How privileged we are to have access to God's "word of truth" 2 Timothy 2:15.

Television, at times, can be compared to an open end of a sewer pipe in our living room. With its fictional stories, TV's polluted streams from Hollywood can only give our family a make-believe approach to real life.

Snow is God's means to store moisture, holding it in reserve until springtime. As temperatures warm in spring, snow melts, producing spring runoff. Abundance of water arrives in our valley on time to produce summer's growth.

Whatever gets our attention is permanently stored in our subconscious mind. These memories will become part of our 'spring run off' in our words, actions and everyday choices.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" Matthew 12:34



PRACTICAL PROJECT:

Keep your own family record of the snowfall where you live.

Materials needed: a bucket or can 10 inches high, a piece of masking tape the same length, waterproof marker, paper for charting, pencil, ruler. Place tape on the inside of the bucket from the bottom to the top, with markings one inch apart and numbered accordingly. Look at the bucket after each snowfall. Write down how much snow fell and then empty the bucket. At the end of the winter add up all the numbers on your chart.



This character-building lesson was excerpted from *The Gospel According to a Snowflake* book by Terry and Jean McComb as part of their series of *Gospel According to . . . books*.

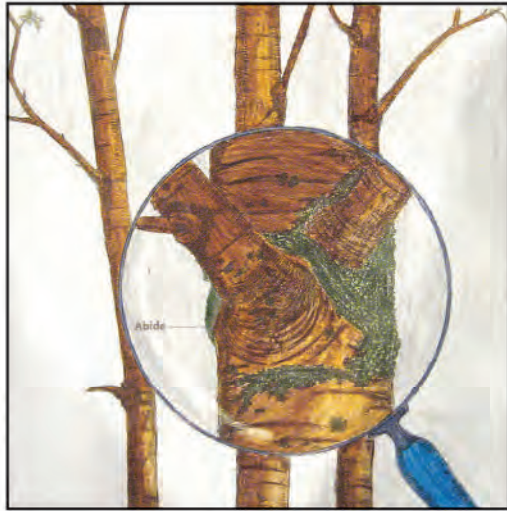




Winter 2023 Coloring Contest First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____
(deadline & details on page 60) City: _____ State/Prov. _____

Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest

Winners From the Fall 2022 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 6–11
Aaliyah L., age 9,
of Iron City, Tennessee



First Place, ages 12–18
Mark M., age 12,
of Drums, Pennsylvania

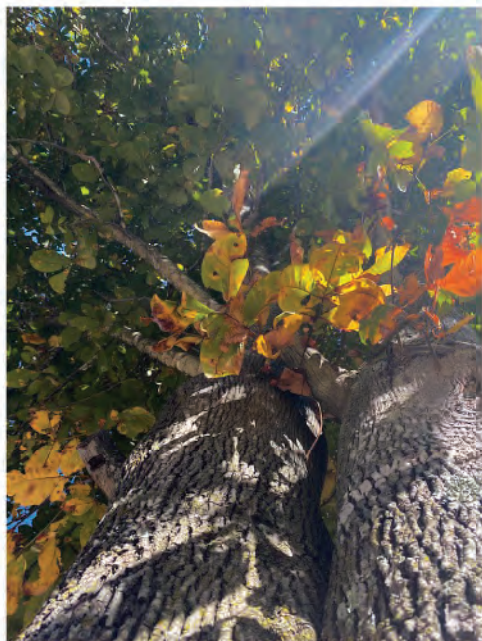


First Place, ages 19+
Peter R., age 35, of Manton, California

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 2023 entries is February 15, 2023.** 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 2022 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Benaiah N., age 10, Smithville, Oklahoma



First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

*Adriana L., age 14, of Iron City, Tennessee, wrote:
“I call this picture ‘God’s Creation.’ I just love
kittens! Here are six of ours.*



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Curri S., age 46, of Litchfield, Ohio

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 2023 entries is February 15, 2023.** 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 2023 Edition, Vol. 29, 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. Creation Up Close—"Window Frost Art" story, pages 6–11

1. How is window frost created? What are two different names that frost can be called? p. 7
2. List the four various types of crystalline formations. p. 7
3. Define fractals and how imperfections in glass affect the frost. pp. 7, 8
4. What are two key elements in window-frost photography? What time of day is best to take photos of frost? p. 9
5. Explain how ice crystal halos are formed. What is the other name for these halos, and what are the physics involved? p. 10

II. Re-Creation Outdoors—"Awesome Arches" story, pages 14–19

1. How many arches are in Arches National Park? How large of an area is the national park? pp. 15, 16
2. What arch is named after the story found in Genesis 11? p. 16
3. Describe what the most popular hike in Arches is like. pp. 16, 17
4. What were the names of the first groups of people to live in the area, and what date or period of time was involved? p. 18
5. Explain what *cryptobiotic crust* is and what it is made of. What activates it? p. 18
6. What does the author hope to do with her grandchildren someday? p. 19

III. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—"Wily Weasels" story, pages 20–25

1. What is the name some biologists have called the weasel? Why is this deserving? p. 22
2. What spiritual lesson does the weasel's character help teach us about someone who is also dangerous? (See Revelation 12:9.) p. 22
3. Where do weasels make their homes? What lessons can be learned from the color change of their fur? p. 22
4. List some of the other creatures that belong to the weasel family. What are some similar features that they all have in common? p. 25
5. Explain what *diapause* is and how it helps the weasels. p. 25

IV. The Creation Week—"Creation Day 4—Sun, Moon, and Stars" story, pages 28–38

1. What scripture describes the sun in an eloquent and poetic fashion? p. 30
2. Describe the most precise standard used to measure time on earth. How does this help reveal the deliberate design of our Creator God? p. 30
3. How stable is the temperature of the sun? What is the variation in solar irradiance? p. 31
4. List one vital example of the moon's impact on the earth. List three things this provides. pp. 35, 36
5. How does the gravitational balance and protection of the planets reveal God's infinite knowledge and benevolence? p. 37

Winter Family Fun Activities

Build a Snow Maze

Find a large yard, field, unused parking lot, or park filled with fresh snow. Gather you family and friends and show them a creative geometric design of pathways that you want to build. Some ideas of shapes that your pathways can form include a snowflake, a snowman, or just a winding maze of interconnecting paths.

Make sure all of the people participating have proper winter clothing and warm boots or snowshoes to help pack down the snow paths for your maze. After you have completed building the maze, invite other friends and neighbors over to see if they can follow the paths you created. Then enjoy some hot apple cider, hot cocoa, and cookies together. Don't forget to take photos of building the maze, people walking through it, and sharing some refreshments.



An elaborate snow maze in Poland.

Snowflake and Frost Photography Tips

Enjoy reading the helpful photography tips on taking window frost images in the "Creation Up Close" story on pages 6–11 called "Window Frost Art."

Here are a few other helpful suggestions for taking snowflake photos:

- Try to keep you camera lens free of moisture.
- Wear something black or take some black felt where the snowflakes can land.
- Make sure your camera is in its highest macro setting before you get started.
- Be careful not to breathe on the snowflakes as they will melt from the heat of your breath.
- Click your photos quickly before the snowflakes melt.

Don't forget to check out our *Intricacies of Snow* unit study in our store at www.CreationIllustrated.com to discover even more wintertime learning opportunities!

Make Tasty Snow Treats

Many people have slurped a snow cone made from crushed ice doused with colored syrup during the summer months. But have you ever eaten a *real* snow cone that is made from real snow? Simply fill an ice chest with freshly fallen snow, and bring it indoors. Then use an ice-cream scoop to fill plastic or paper cups with a nicely rounded mound of snow. Pour your favorite juice over the icy treat such as orange juice, grape soda, root beer, or cranberry juice. Enjoy using a spoon and straw.

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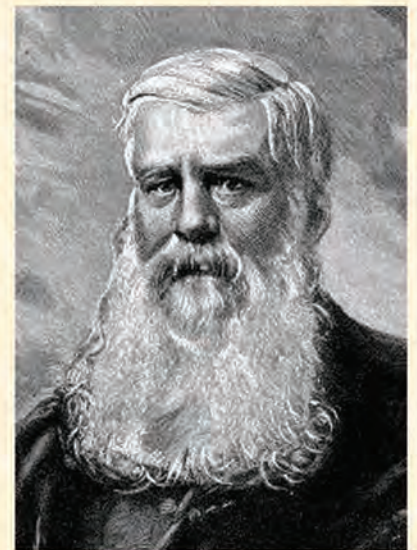
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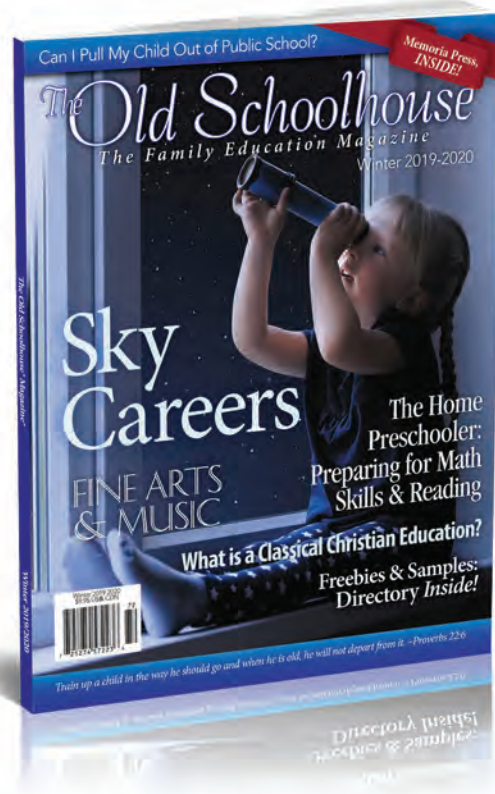
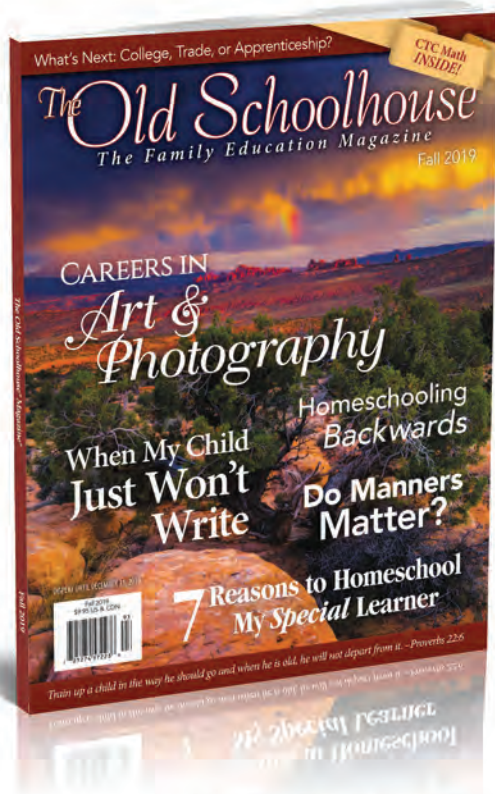
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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a winter landscape. In the foreground, a body of water is partially frozen, with ice reflecting the vibrant colors of the sunset. The sky is a mix of deep purples, pinks, and oranges. In the distance, there are rugged mountains covered in snow. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

God's

God's love is like an ocean,
a never ending,
boundless sea.

God's love is like a river,
pure water,
ever flowing.

God love is like new fallen snow,
covering sin's blackness,
making my heart white as snow.

— Jewell Johnson

Love





Mark Gottlieb

*"Let everything that has breath
praise the Lord."*

– Psalm 150:6

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