

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR GETAWAY . . .



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

SPRING 2023 VOL 30 NO 1 US \$4.99





*“Live in
harmony
with
one
another.”*

– Romans 12:16 (NIV)



Our Why



Springtime fosters fresh hope and gratitude for the Creator's unfathomable sacrifice and the faithful return of new life as our hearts long for a reprieve from life's hectic daily pace and unending suffering in the world.

Thirty years ago when we prayerfully constructed "Our Purpose" statement (in the box on the facing page), the daily stressors of life seemed so much less than they are today. More and more our planet and society appear to be falling apart. Deadly earthquakes that crush whole cities, devastating wars that rip countries apart, powerful storms that cause record life and property loss, plus the relentless famines, droughts, violent crimes, and disease can easily dash the dreams of a better life on this earth. Romans 8:22, 23 underscores that the whole creation groans along with believers as they long to be set free from the consequences of sin.

Can you imagine reading today's headline news thirty years ago? We would have a hard time comprehending them! But the Bible tells us these things will take place before Christ's return. (See Matthew 24:6, 7.)

Creation Illustrated's design and purpose has always been to help each of us cope with these heavy life stressors—the regular rigors of life. The many letters and phone calls from subscribers telling us how much they love receiving and reading *Creation Illustrated* with its blessings of peace help kindle a solid reassurance that we are providing a useful service and need to keep the flame of hope burning. Quoting one subscriber in New Hampshire, "Whenever life is full of junk, *Creation Illustrated* provides a beautiful escape."

But in addition to an escape, *Creation Illustrated* is designed to reveal the character of God so that each of us can become changed into a *new* Creation through the grace, mercy, and power of Christ Jesus. We don't want to embrace just *part* of His character but *all* of it as promised in Romans 1:20. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

So, looking at the buds blossom, watching the hills turn green, and listening to the birds sing should not just offer an annual pleasantry but rather a transformational experience—a heartfelt hope, a cognizant confidence, and a benevolent behavior that the future *is* ultimately brighter than the past.

That's why.

The Publishers



Tax season! Most people dread that time of year when taxes become due. But Jesus clearly instructed in Mark 12:17, "'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' And they marveled at Him." So, we should not just marvel at His admonition to give to the government; **we also should marvel at the opportunity to give to God and His work!** We invite you to marvel with us at the power of Creation in reaching souls for eternity. Simply use the envelope in the center of this issue or logon to our secure donations page at www.CreationIllustrated.com. **Thank you!**

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 30, No. 1

Our Purpose . . .

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

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The cover photo of a spring flower reflected in a water droplet on a vine was taken by Vera Kuttelvaserova Stuchelova of the Czech Republic.

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Attract

Every year springtime erupts with new attractions that captivate our attention. The bulbs, blossoms, and buds burst forth with rich hues illuminated by the bright sun, and the greenery from the grassy ground to the lofty leaves appears extra verdant.

Gardens, planter boxes, and pots overflow with verdure to attract winged pollinators that dazzle even beyond their flowering hosts bearing witness of renewed life. Even children can partake in planting a variety of favorite seedlings that will attract a number of butterflies, moths, and birds as told in this issue's children's story called, "Throw a Pollinator Party!"

Gardeners long for the flowers and fruit of their labor, but such bounty would not be possible unless the least attractive part, the tangled roots, devote their vital duty for the good of the whole.

Other springtime outdoor attractions may include a trip to the beach where youth eagerly scan the shimmering sand for seashells with greater eagerness than scrolling through their cell phones. But the most attractive mollusk remnant to a child may not be the perfectly symmetrical clam or scallop housing. As a mother recalls in the "My Walk With God" feature, her young son found fascination in the broken pieces of shell that attracted his innocent eyes. We learn about "Beauty in the Broken" that God finds most attractive in each of us.

Even ancient, crusted-over remnants of sea life can be considered extremely attractive and precious collectors' items as revealed in the article on "The Mystery of the Petoskey Stones" scattered along the shores of Lake Michigan. Actual fossilized dead coral creatures become resurrected treasures when polished by the careful skill of the seeker—much like the grinding and buffeting that our character undergoes on our journey toward the ultimate resurrection.

But perhaps the most profound attraction is toward the unseen as demonstrated by the unfathomable migratory patterns of sea and avian creatures discovered in the study on Creation day five. Aside from the feeding, breeding, and climate attractions that drive their global journey, there appears to be an underlying influence that attracts them *home*. Similarly, this innate longing and void in our own hearts entreats us to be attracted to our heavenly home.

Attractive winged creatures bring special spring surprises with their dazzling feathery flight, but the hidden flutters of the season can also captivate our attention as manifested in the feature on "Amazing Moths." Warmer nights brightened by porch lights attract a myriad of moths that seek the luminous allure.

This illustration from the hand of the Creator helps us wonder if we are illuminating our surrounding to attract souls to "the light of the world"—the One who promises that "He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). Amid the viral vitriol that even seethes within religious circles, we are called to attract fallen family, friends, and coworkers toward a vibrant yet humble and delicate Christlike character that glows like a springtime blossom pointed toward the radiance of eternity.



Spring blossoms attract pollinators.

Tom Ish

Tom Ish, editor/publisher

Sharing Our Mail

Stunned . . .

I just received my first copy of CI magazine, and I am stunned at the quality and subject matter! I wish I had discovered this wonderful nature magazine years ago! I saw the advertisement in the magazine about ordering back issues and decided to order some; so I clicked on the link on your Web site, but the page said nothing about back issues, DVDs, or the character-building nature books.

Do you have a list of the back issues available and the subjects of each one?

Dear Friends:

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

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Can you tell me how I can place an order for back issues, DVDs, and the nature books? Thank you in advance for your response.

R. Hannon

Keizer, Oregon

Editor's Note: Thank you for your nice email! Due to some supply challenges, our DVD stock is currently low. We do have many back issues, and we will be adding these to our store. In the meantime, call 800-360-2732 for help with back issues.

Enlightened . . .

My name is Adam, and I am at the Macon County Jail in Lafayette, Tennessee. I recently found one of your magazines, and I was enlightened by the content. I am also indigent and was wondering if I could receive your magazine free of charge? It would be a blessing. God Bless.

Adam W.

Lafayette, Tennessee

Life purpose . . .

Live life with a purpose. Thanks for the Winter 2022 issue column on "Our Why." I was so charged at how you explained the world around us with the counterfeit messages

veying for our attention! Your magazine is and always will be a good evangelistic tool. Our purpose in Christ alone,

R. Hudson

Toms River, New Jersey

Gift idea . . .

I was thinking of using *Creation Illustrated* as a gift. I was wondering when the next issue is coming out. I looked on the Web site but didn't see which months they are published.

K. Flowers

via email

Editor's Note: Our quarterly publication comes out at the end of March, June, September, and December, but we do mailings every month so new subscribers do not have to wait for the next quarterly edition to be printed. We also have an FAQ tab on our Web site with answers to many questions.

Prison check . . .

Our North Pole Seventh-Day Adventist Church Junior Sabbath School Class has enjoyed your magazine and in particular the articles about how your magazine is blessing prison inmates.

Enclosed you'll

find a check for \$156.25 that we would like to go toward funding subscriptions for more magazines to go to prisons. Thank you for what you do!

M. Christensen

North Pole, Alaska

Clear minds . . .

I like what this editor does. It brings to us the amazing science in nature in the perspective of how amazing God is as the Creator and our responsibility to take care of it all with Him. This is the "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Heaven designed it all, and we want it to continue as heaven intended.

So, I support *Creation Illustrated* and sometimes write for the magazine, as well as have a subscription. I got a gift subscription for a friend to come aside and take time with the goodness of it all and to support your continuing work.

The world fills our heads with horrible things. God wants to clear our minds with goodness and to sustain us with it.

C. Graef

Ellsworth, Maine

Amazing Moths

How would you like to have more than a hundred eighty thousand relatives flitting around in your family tree? That incredible number of species makes up the Lepidoptera order of insects that we simply call moths, butterflies, and skippers. Most people do not realize that 90 percent of all of these species are moths. Part of the reason why we are unaware of this massive flying population relates to the fact that we do not get to see a lot of moths. They become active mostly at night and generally appear more drab than brightly-colored butterflies that flutter from flower to flower during daylight hours that captures our attention.

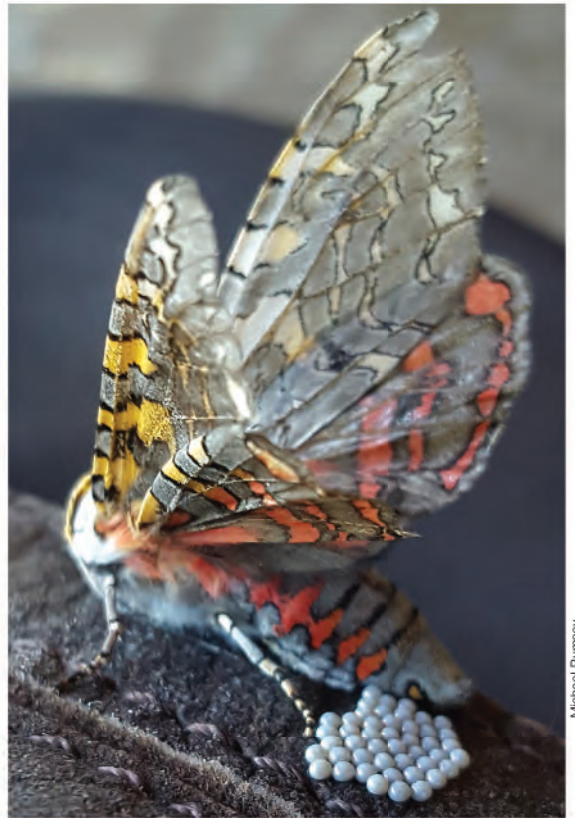
**By Wayne Easley
with Tom Ish**







Moth wings lay flat at rest (above). A female can lay up to fifty eggs (right). Moth caterpillars appear spiny and ominous to avoid predators (below).



*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation . . .”*

—2 Corinthians 5:17

But before we relegate moths to being the dull, brown forlorn cousins of dazzling butterflies, let's take a closer look at these more prolific of the two and then discover the similarities, as well as the differences that distinguish these winged insects. The most common observation reveals that moths rest their wings spread wide-open and flat against the surface where they land, while butterflies lift their wings upright so they touch together at rest. The antennae on moths often look bushy and comb-like while butterflies don't. Moths also appear more furry or feathery than butterflies. Additionally, moths form cocoons when they pupate, whereas butterflies transform within a small capsule called a chrysalis.

One similarity among these species can be found in the name of their order, *Lepidoptera*, which comes from the Greek words *lepidō* meaning scale and *pteron* meaning wing. Both moths and butterflies have four wings covered with tiny scales. Also, all moths, butterflies, and skippers for that matter begin when the female lays tiny eggs. At times she may lay many eggs and most often on a specific plant species. When an egg hatches, a tiny caterpillar (larva) emerges, and its very first food is its own egg shell. That little caterpillar appears somewhat ugly at this stage with stubby legs and various spines or scary protrusions covering its body. Since the Creator has provided it with the food it needs, the caterpillar will eat its way toward the next stage of its metamorphosis.

In a careful study of the transformation of a caterpillar, drastic changes take place. The larva goes through a rapid and gorging consumption and growth period of several weeks with a series of five *instars*

or molts in becoming an adult. Upon completing the fifth instar, the grub wraps itself in a cocoon over a period of days. During what appears as a resting time, dramatic transformations take place that we could call a *biological miracle*. In a mind-boggling re-creation event, 80 percent of the creature dies and transforms over a short period of time into a beautiful adult moth capable of flying. Instead of spending its days as a glutinous grub, the transformed creature becomes of great benefit. It will spend most of its time sipping nectar from flowers and serving as a prolific plant pollinator.

This amazing life cycle of the moths and butterflies points us to one of the greatest sections of the Bible—2 Corinthians 5:17–21. As the moths and butterflies pass through their complete metamorphosis, they illustrate what it is like to be totally converted and to become a new creation in Christ. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Just as the moth or butterfly undergoes a total transformation in appearance and function, we, too, can partake of the conversion experience offered by Christ, which requires resting in total surrender where transformation into His benevolent character subverts our own selfish ways.

This major miracle in nature can be witnessed typically during spring, which is a time of new beginnings and rebirth associated with the resurrection of Christ and His victory over death. Romans 8:12–17 promises that when we are converted, we become sons and daughters of the Creator God and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

“For the moth will eat them up like a garment . . .”

—Isaiah 51:7

During my eight years spent in Costa Rica, I maintained a mercury vapor light on the back porch with a large white sheet just behind it. The light was so bright that it attracted countless moths, some of which were huge, including the white witch thought to be one of the largest moths in the world with a wingspan of up to fourteen inches! But most of them were tiny, insignificant drab moths with a dingy brown color. That led me to think, *the Creator God made the big attractive ones, but He also made the less important ones.* And from what I can decipher, most of the little ones do not even have names. But the Creator would not have made them if they were not important. Even though He created some moths and butterflies more attractive than others, His care and purpose for all creatures, including humans, remains equal. Proverbs 22: 2 confirms, “The rich and the poor have this in common, the Lord is the maker of them all.” Several seemingly insignificant Bible characters like Jabez were not among the royalty of their day; yet, God listened to his prayer and granted his requests. (See 1 Chronicles 4:9, 10.) So, appearance and social stature do not rank within His plan of acceptance or salvation. Even Jesus did not appear dazzling in His days on earth as foretold in Isaiah 53:2, “He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” Yet, He rescued humanity and came to encourage the meek and lowly as revealed in the greatest sermon ever preached. (See Matthew 5:1–11.)

Christ even used the lowly moths to illustrate the demise of those who persecuted Him in Isaiah 50:9. “Surely the Lord God will help Me; who is he who will condemn Me? Indeed they will all grow old

like a garment; the moth will eat them up.” Anyone with a closet containing wool garments or blankets knows how destructive moths can be. Isaiah 51:7, 8 underscores this with a note of enduring hope, “Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their revilings. For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation.”

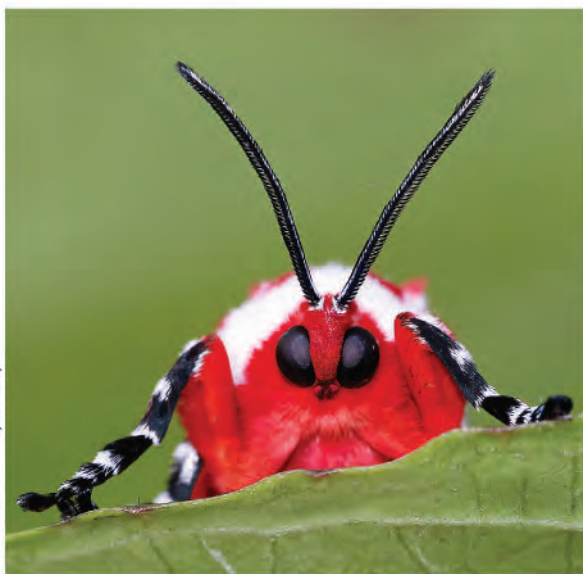
Even though they provide an important part of the food chain for many species of birds and animals, moths work hard to not get eaten. Often a moth caterpillar will resemble a twig or blend in with the bark of a tree as part of its design in avoiding predators. When they are resting, many moths will seek surroundings that afford camouflage. This notion was actually used by evolutionists to promote Darwin’s theory of natural selection when it was postulated that the peppered moth’s wings appeared to become darker during England’s soot-stained industrial revolution. It turns out that the research was faulty, and even the photographs of the moths on tree trunks were staged. But even if micro-adaptations are manifested in the hue of the moths’ wings, that does not prove macro-evolution among or between species, just as the coat of the snowshoe hare may change; yet, the creature still remains a rabbit.

As nocturnal creatures, moths have eyes adapted more for night vision. It never ceases to amaze me how the Designer wisely equipped all things with the tools they need to exist in this world. “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or



Wayne Easley

A white witch moth's wingspan (above) can be fourteen inches. Luna moths (right) are among the most attractive yet well camouflaged unlike the bright species below.



Wayne Easley



Don O'Connor



Don O'Connor

Thousands of moth species come in all shapes and sizes including the sphinx moth (above), and virtually all are attracted to light (left).



Wayne Easley

*“The people who sat in darkness
saw a great light,”*

—Matthew 4:16

powers. All things were created through Him and for Him” (Colossians 1:16). While most moths are most commonly at home during the night than during the daylight hours, there are exceptions. Several colorful moths dance from flower to flower in the daytime sun.

Nevertheless, most moths are attracted to light amid the darkness. Research indicates that light, including the moon and stars, interact with the moth’s navigational system, and bright artificial light confuses them to go toward a light source often to their demise.

Just like today, the people in Jesus’ time lived in a dark and desperate world, but then they found hope as told in Matthew 4:16. “The people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.” Anyone who is discouraged by the plight of society’s downward spiral can embrace the promise found in John 8:12 and be attracted to the Light with hope in an eternal future devoid of suffering. “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” **C**



Wayne Easley

Wayne Easley writes from Hereford, Arizona, as a retired pastor and avid nature photographer. He shares a weekly devotional often accompanied by his stunning photography. Tom Ish is editor and publisher of Creation Illustrated.

Mysterious Pe

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



Petoskey stones on the shores of Lake Michigan can be elusive.



Live coral colonies became

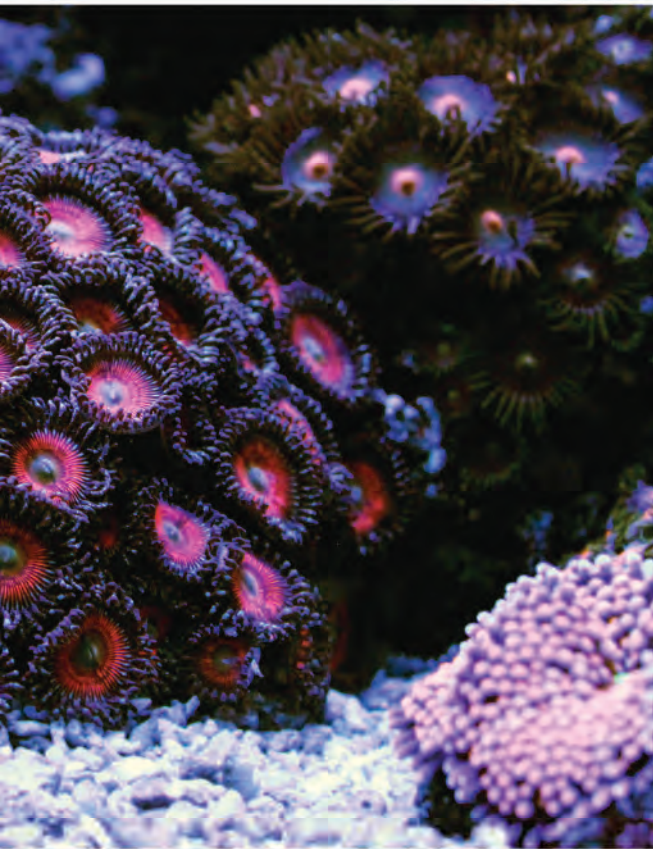
Spring had finally come to Petoskey, an inviting resort city nestled on the shores of the picturesque Little Traverse Bay along the northwestern tip of Michigan's lower peninsula. Still a bit cold in this north country, thin patches of late winter snow covered the rocks strewn along the beach. Waves broke against the shore's limestone boulders, sending sprays of frigid water high into the air and onto the few hearty souls willing to brave the brisk wind to pick up rocks—not just ordinary rocks but genuine and widely cherished Petoskey stones.

The town of Petoskey, once known as Bear River, had its name changed to honor the local leader of the Odawa Nation—a well respected businessman named Chief Ignatius Petoskey. The word comes from the native name, *Pet-O-Sega*, which translates to *Sunbeams of Promise, Rising Sun, or Rays of Dawn*—a fitting tribute enshrined in the form of a statue of Chief Petoskey that overlooks Little Traverse Bay.

Since the highest concentration of the sought-after stones can be found on the beaches near the town, the treasured formations bear the Petoskey name and became designated the official stone of

Petoskey Stones

BY JEAN VAN HOUTEN



petrified fossils known as Petoskey stones.



Polished stones are cherished by collectors.

the State of Michigan in 1965. Rock hunters say that spring is the best time to find these geological gems as melting ice and storms from Lake Michigan push the stones toward shore and deposits them on its beaches. But they can be found in other seasons as well; locals and visitors alike search the shoreline, gravel pits, and even farmers' fields all year in hopes of bringing home a meaningful souvenir or even selling the best specimens to local shops or collectors after polishing the stones to reveal their attractive patterns. Occasionally a pinkish hue appears as a result of the iron that permeated the coral as it calcified. One

shop owner sold a particularly nice Petoskey stone to a young lady who was a friend of the White House photographer with the Obama administration. She gave the stone to the photographer to give to President Obama, who kept the unique gift on the resolute desk in the oval office—perhaps as a reminder of his home region of Illinois and Michigan.

Michigan hosts a water wonderland with over thirty-two hundred miles of Great Lakes shoreline. Four of the great lakes almost surround Michigan and give the lower peninsula a unique mitten shape easily spotted on any map and even from outer space.

Lake Michigan spans the entire 277-mile west coast of Michigan's lower peninsula. Approximately one hundred eighteen miles across and nine-hundred twenty-five feet at its deepest point, it is the largest freshwater lake in the world located entirely in one country.

In certain places golden sand dunes (some as high as four-hundred fifty feet tall) tower over miles of postcard-perfect sandy shores. Feathery beach grasses stabilize the dunes with roots descending as deep as twenty feet. On other beaches aged cottonwood trees with their trunks half-buried in shifting sand flutter their glossy, silvery-green leaves in the breeze. On windy days white-capped waves crash against the shore. On calmer days the sparkling water gently laps against the sugary-sand beaches as pure and inviting as any tropical paradise—only cooler and *unsalted*.

It is here where the mystery of the highly sought-after Petoskey stones unfolds. Generations of Michiganders have treasured the uniquely attractive stones, but it wasn't until 1969 that a scientist revealed that these geologic specimens are actually fossils—a

piece of petrified coral colonies encased in limestone. They can be as small as a pebble or as large as a boulder. A dry, unpolished Petoskey stone looks like any ordinary rock—grayish-brown or off-white. A closer inspection reveals a honeycomb pattern of hexagon-shaped markings that can be easier to spot when the stones are wet. Polishing brings out the intricate beauty of each stone and points to the artistry of our creative God. Polished stones often become jewelry, souvenirs, decorative pieces, and unusual trinkets. But due to differences in hardness and impurities in the fossils that consist of calcite, quartz, pyrite, and other minerals, polishing can be a challenge.

Few people realize the hexagons formed from the skeletons of once-living coral polyps as part of a coral colony or reef. The dark center or *eye* in each hexagon was once the mouth of a polyp; the lines extending like rays of the sun were once tentacles that brought food into the mouth of the coral organism.

Some may question, "How did a coral reef usually found in warm saltwater end up near the



Prized Petoskey stones can be found in sandy dunes.



Stone polishers and cutters bring out the

forty-fifth parallel where winter temperatures plunge to single digits and ice forms on the fresh water of Lake Michigan?" Scientists theorize that long ago, Michigan was once located near earth's equator and was covered by a warm, shallow sea that created an ideal habitat for marine life. Some believe the small creatures that formed the colonies swam around freely and eventually anchored onto something solid while multiplying themselves and secreting a substance to make a hard, protective covering. The live coral thrived on the abundant plankton in the warm sea, using tentacles to snag food that floated by. A coral colonial structure can be made up of hundreds to thousands of these tiny polyps with each colony encased in a hard, outer skeleton of limestone that attached to rocks, other colonies, or the ocean bottom.

Other questions arise like: "How did this idyllic, tropical habitat drift up toward the deep and sometimes frigid waters of what is now Lake Michigan?" "Could the phenomenon of the Petoskey stone be remnants of Noah's Flood?" "Do rock hunters hold in their hands an invaluable piece of

evidence that points to the truth of the Scriptures?"

The earth upon which we stand is constantly changing and moving, although at a very slow average pace of one or two inches a year. The earth's crust, called the lithosphere, consists of fifteen to twenty moving tectonic plates of various sizes similar to the pieces of a puzzle or the peeled skin of an orange. When the plates move, they either collide or spread apart, allowing very hot molten material from under the earth's surface called magma to escape. Much of the earth's seismic activity occurs at the boundaries of these plates.

Underwater volcanoes form when the tectonic plates slowly move away from each other and magma rises up to fill in the spaces. Magma also rises when the plates collide, forming underwater valleys and mountains and sometimes forcing part of the earth's crust deep into its interior. The heat and pressure result in the crust melting, and such powerful forces can shift the seafloor, pushing huge amounts of water toward land causing tsunamis.

The Bible simply confirms that during



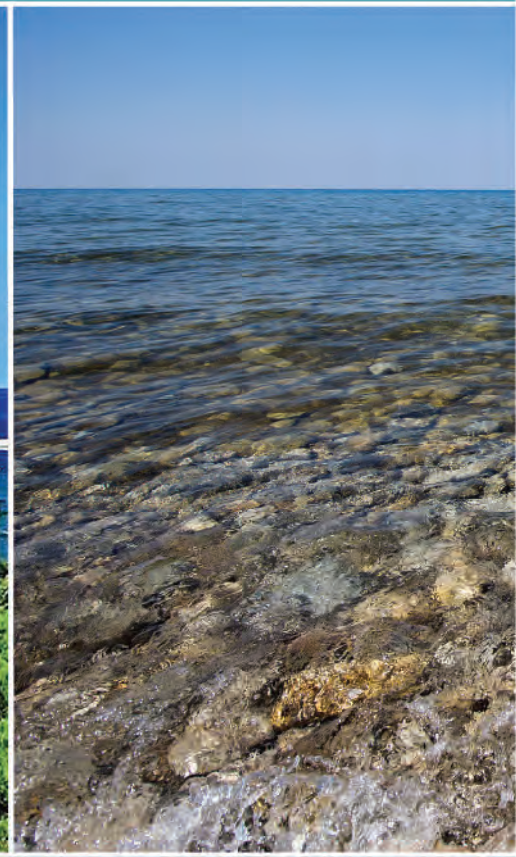
details of the stones.



Cut stones form an intricately-designed wall.



A statue honoring Chief Petoskey overlooks Little Traverse Bay.



The waters

the Flood, “the springs of the great deep burst forth” (Genesis 7:11, NIV), which seems to be an understatement. The early stage of the Flood must have been extremely violent as the earth was shaken from its foundations. Creation scientists believe the earth’s crust broke apart violently, resulting in tectonic plates that moved extremely rapidly. Great amounts of super-heated water and magma exploded out of the earth. Oceans got forced onto land by multiple tsunamis, and geologists theorize that slabs of rock shifted northward, carrying with them the remains of marine life.

But what about the Ice Age? Creation scientists believe the Flood may have actually caused the Ice Age, which they estimate happened within a few hundred years. Volcanic ash and aerosols blocked the sunlight, making land temperatures colder. Hot lava would have caused warmer oceans, and evaporation from the warm water into the cooler air would fall as frigid precipitation. Cool continents and warm oceans created the perfect conditions for an Ice

Age. Some scientists estimate one-third of the world may have been covered in ice.

When the world gradually warmed, great sheets of ice in the form of glaciers crept down from the north carrying debris and fossils and depositing them in places they would not seem to belong. This explains why marine fossils have been found on mountains, in deserts, and in the Great Lakes region—contemporary evidence of the global Flood of Noah’s day and the power of the Creator. “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made” (Romans 1:20, NIV).

The Great Lakes are believed to have been formed by glaciers that gouged out the basins and filled them with water from the melting ice. Coral colonies that had been forced northward in the powerful floodwaters and shifting land became deposited in sheets of ice, and the fossilized corals now known as Petoskey stones were deposited in



Waves of Lake Michigan can wash the stones ashore.



A close-up view shows the intricate detail in each cell.

the area we call Northern Michigan in a layer of alpena limestone. At least seven similar species of the petrified corals are found in Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, New York, Canada, Germany, England, and even Asia.

Other creationist theories point to the notion that the entire pre-Flood earth had a temperate climate under the protective shield of the firmament created on day two of the Creation week. This would allow for more tropical-type sea life to exist closer to polar latitudes. Regardless, the evidence is clear that these coral organisms existed for a long time before being discovered.

In 1999 a man walking in the water at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Seashore discovered a Petoskey stone that measured forty inches by twenty inches and is estimated to weigh as much as a ton. Imagine what power and force it would take to move that enormous fossil thousands of miles and plunk it where someone would eventually find it. Such remnant objects hidden in plain sight reveal evidence of a biblical

Creation and the Flood. Only our all-powerful God could orchestrate such a journey of segments from the earth's surface or demonstrate the original habitats and creatures of His pre-Flood Creation.

For most people, a Petoskey stone is just a pretty souvenir from a vacation stroll along the beach. But to those who know the larger story found in Scripture, the Petoskey stone reminds us of the One who reveals Himself in all He has made. Psalm 145:10–12 heralds, “All you have made will praise you, O Lord; . . . and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom” (NIV)—including the Petoskey, aptly revealing the Creator’s *Sunbeams of Promise, Rising Sun, and Rays of Dawn* that point to a glorious future. **C**

Jean Van Houten writes from Hudsonville, Michigan, where she examines the evidence of Creation that is worth sharing for God’s honor and glory.

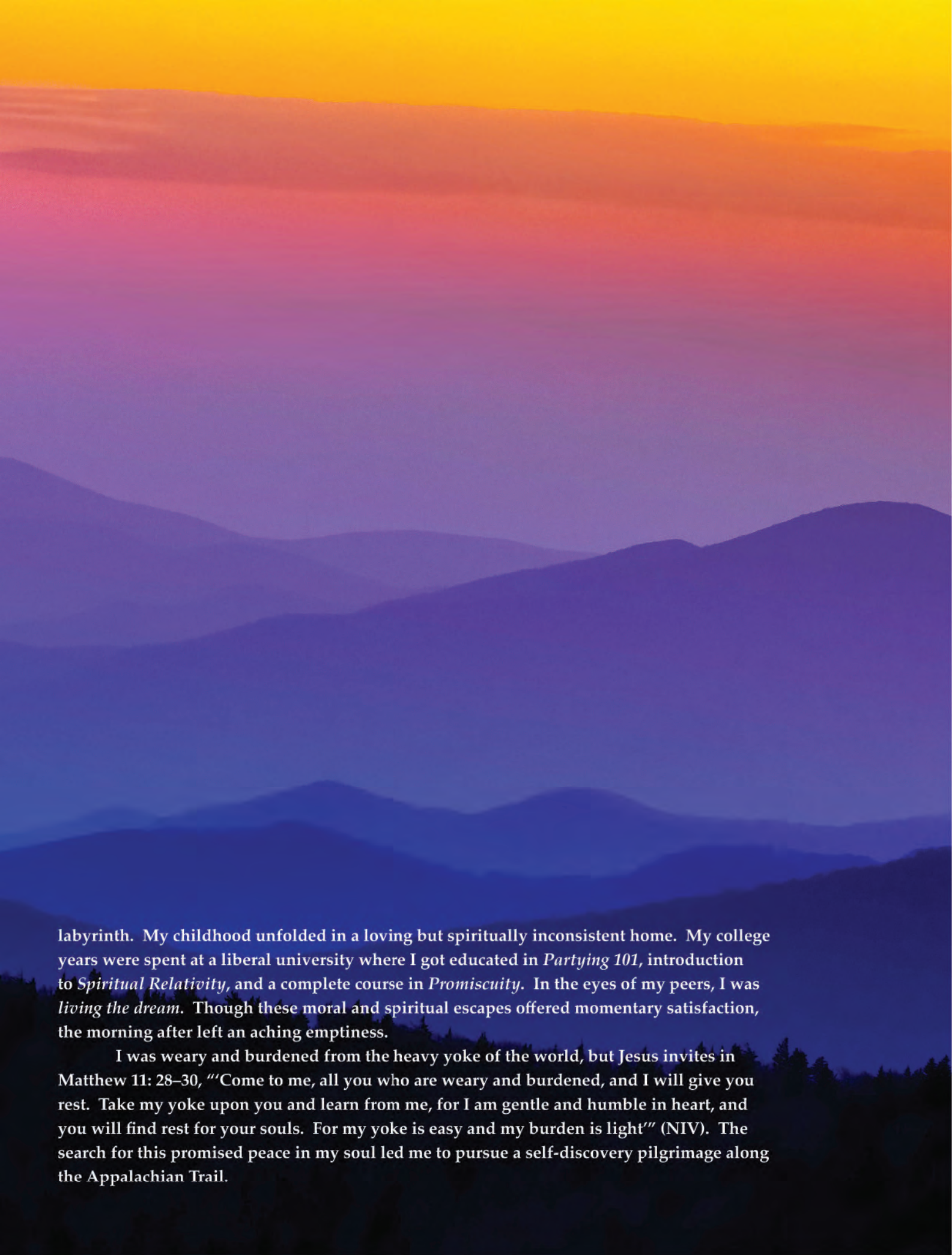
Salvation on the Appalachian Trail

BY RENEE JOY JANZEN

There it was again—a blaze that once guided my every step more than forty years ago. As the white four-by-six-inch strip smeared on the trunk of a tree came into sight, I smiled warmly and welcomed it as if greeting a long-lost friend. My hiking boot-clad feet fell into a familiar stride along the path, and in my mind I was transported back to Georgia in March of 1981 when I first glimpsed that white marker.

Springtime teased back then as I set out to backpack the Appalachian Trail (also known as the AT). The route extends more than two thousand one hundred miles along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains from Springer Mountain, Georgia, to Mount Katahdin, Maine. As a young woman in my early twenties, I set out to follow those white blazes and backpack every one of those 2,100 miles.

In the years leading up to my AT trek, I groped my way through a spiritual and moral



labyrinth. My childhood unfolded in a loving but spiritually inconsistent home. My college years were spent at a liberal university where I got educated in *Partying 101*, introduction to *Spiritual Relativity*, and a complete course in *Promiscuity*. In the eyes of my peers, I was *living the dream*. Though these moral and spiritual escapes offered momentary satisfaction, the morning after left an aching emptiness.

I was weary and burdened from the heavy yoke of the world, but Jesus invites in Matthew 11: 28–30, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (NIV). The search for this promised peace in my soul led me to pursue a self-discovery pilgrimage along the Appalachian Trail.



The Great Smokey Mountains (previous pages) attract hikers on the long trail.

Mountain laurel brightens the trail

A L W A Y S N O R T H

During the first several weeks of hiking all day every day through the high hardwood forests of Georgia, I witnessed the mountains change from their chilly winter wardrobe to their vibrant spring apparel. The early white flowers of the bloodroot, the violet-colored blooms of the dwarf iris, and the deep blue violet blossoms of the larkspur all made an inviting splash of color. Tiny pale-green buds appeared on the branches of the yellow birch and beech trees. Every new day unfolded in perfect timing and harmony of the season.

The first month was the most physically demanding because my body was still conditioning to backpacking every day at the high elevations in the south. An eight-mile day was a victory. Every muscle ached, and my feet throbbed constantly in those early weeks, but I embraced the new and exciting adventure. Although exhausted each evening, I never considered quitting. Each morning I woke nestled in my sleeping bag and felt very stiff from the previous day's exertion. Getting up from the hard wooden floor of a three-sided shelter, I ate a breakfast of grain cereal and rehydrated milk; then I dressed in the same clothes I had worn the day before and every day before that. After stuffing my sleeping bag, I repacked my backpack that presented a love/hate relationship; it became both a heavy burden and a comfortable old friend. When restocking at a food drop, my belongings weighed around seventy pounds, which was two-thirds my own weight.

Nevertheless, each day I set out once again on the AT—my first step following my last step of the day before heading north, always north. With a constant mix of emotions of excitement, exhaustion, independence, and bondage, one morning I halted my forward march and simply contemplated the scene around me. The progression and perfection of the



that meanders through dense woods.



The ever-present trail markers get blazed in hikers' memories.

"And walk in the way of love . . ."

embryonic spring stirred me. In my spirit I understood the new life blossoming before me could not be a random coincidence, but I did not yet know the omnipotent force behind it.

March turned to April, and I crossed from Georgia into North Carolina and Tennessee. The old growth trees of this section appeared massive and felt prehistoric. I walked in, over, and through countless wild flowers, flowing streams, spruce-fir forests, and grassy balds. I scaled Clingman's Dome, the highest point on the Appalachian Trail at 6,643 feet.

When the first hundred miles of the trail were behind me, I began to notice them. They were the Christians, and they were everywhere. They were in the small Appalachian hamlets such as Hot Springs where I replenished my supplies (scheduled roughly every three weeks). They were in the national forest campgrounds where the trail sometimes meandered. They were even among the other AT hikers, and they all wanted to tell me about Jesus.

At times I listened politely. Other times I led them through an intellectual debate. Always I silently judged them as annoying and eccentric, noting mercilessly their imperfections. Yet, with each conversation I found it difficult to ignore their consistent sense of joy, peace, and love—something I did not have or understand. I sensed in them what God describes in Ephesians 5:2 as the fragrant aroma of Christ. "And walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (NIV).

By May I had trekked my way into Virginia. Because the state makes up 25 percent of the entire Appalachian Trail length, and because of the nearly constant downpour of rain, I was stricken with the Virginia blues. Hiking through the state seemed so endless. But walking with T.C. helped to pass the time.



Lush ferns line the narrow trail through a forest in Virginia's Shenandoah National Park.



Orange flame azaleas highlight Tennessee's Jane Bald in the background.

L I G H T H E A R T E D E A S E

A southern gentleman recently retired from the air force as a four-star general, T.C. became a fatherly figure to younger hikers. I spent countless days walking with him toward Maine. An articulate storyteller with a quick wit and a brilliant mind, T.C. told jokes that made us laugh aloud. With the same lighthearted ease, T.C. told tales from the Bible that left me wondering. Sometimes I asked questions about his Christian faith, and he answered patiently and thoroughly. He dispelled many of my judgments of Christians. Seeing God's character through what He had created had prepared the soil of my heart and gave me ears to hear. T.C. sowed the seeds in that soil that sprouted and grew into clear understanding as told in Matthew 13: 8, 9. "Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear" (NIV).

This helped, as the most mentally challenging part of backpacking the AT was the tedium. It hit me hard in Pennsylvania when I was about two-thirds through, and the trail was so full of rocks I had to look at my feet all day to keep from tripping. As with all the tumultuous emotions and terrain challenges, I pushed through them with self-determination. By summer when the weather was hot and sultry, I reached the smaller central states of Maryland, New Jersey, and New York yet could trek around thirty miles a day. This was a more populated section of the trail, and it sometimes meandered near homes or neighborhoods. Staying hydrated and making the water I carried last to the next water source presented a constant balancing act. Unexpected blessings came as area residents occasionally offered ever-hungry and thirsty hikers a cold beverage or scrumptious goodies. In AT lingo, they were called *trail angels*.



Twenty refreshing waterfalls can be found along the Appalachian Trail.

“His eternal power and divine nature . . .”

One July morning while backpacking alone in New York state, I spotted an elderly couple working in their yard. They stopped, greeted me with thick German accents, and offered refreshments. I eagerly accepted and waited outside with the elderly man while his wife fetched the snacks. He and I conversed back and forth about my hike. Then, after studying me for a moment, he inquired, “Are you a Christian?”

Not another one of them, I thought with dread. “No, I am not,” I answered, although I pondered to myself and mentioned that since I’d been hiking the AT I’ve been wondering if there really is a God or at least some higher power. What I had seen while hiking the AT is too perfect and too powerful to happen outside of a greater plan. Surprised by my own response, I stopped suddenly. My host smiled warmly, “What you have seen is the handiwork of God Himself.”

Because I did not know Scripture, I did not realize he was quoting it when he said, “Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made” (Romans 1:20, NASB). I was ready to acknowledge the existence of God or a higher power, but I was unsure about Jesus. I had come to accept that all paths led to God.

The elderly man fixed his gray eyes on me. In them I saw genuine care and concern, and I wondered at it. After a moment he spoke again. His words were direct but kind in relaying the simple truth of John 14:6, “There is only one path to God. Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Him. You cannot believe in God without believing in Jesus Christ.” Then he revealed something that gave me pause. “You must make a decision about who Jesus is. You cannot sit on the fence. If you are not for Him, then you are



A wooden bridge on the trail spans a creek in the Green Mountains of Vermont.



Views cause hikers to

THE BATTLE WITHIN

against Him. And being against Jesus is the same as being against God. 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness'" (Romans 1:18, NASB).

If this was true, I had better give it serious consideration. Ambivalence felt comfortable; creating my own tailor-made beliefs seemed empowering. But being against God, if He exists, placed an unsettling prospect in my mind. I had seen some of the power behind His design, and I did not want to be in opposition to it. I had the sense I was standing on a spiritual precipice. A silent yet intense battle was being fought in my heart. In a handful of seconds, conflicting thoughts raced through my mind: *I don't want to give up control of my life. . . . Yet, I've been in control and the results have not been star-studded.*

As if he could read my thoughts, my new friend assured me, "You don't need to clean yourself up. God takes us as we are. 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'" (Romans 3:23, NASB). The battle within began to subside as I told myself, *You know in your heart it is true. You have seen it in what He has made. You have viewed His majesty in the mountain peaks. You have observed His power in lightning flashes over the ridges. You have been comforted by His warmth and compassion in the sun after a chilling night. You have experienced His love through His followers.*

My new friend asked, "Will you acknowledge Jesus as God and commit to make Him Lord of your life? Will you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is God?" (See Romans 10:9, 10.)

I don't know from where the courage came. I opened my mouth and heard myself say, "Yes." It was as if I felt myself step off the cliff. Then Jesus caught me.



pause along their arduous journey.



Reaching the end of the trail is not the only life-changing experience.

“I have been called by Thy name . . .”

Now, more than forty years later, I am once again walking a section of the Appalachian Trail in Maine—seeking that familiar white blaze. After my commitment to follow Christ, my life changed in more ways than I can tell, but Jeremiah 15:16 offers a glimpse. “And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts” (NASB, 1977). It hasn’t always been easy, but it has always been good. A young lady’s empty days swelled into a mature woman’s full life. Four decades ago, I began a six-month walk through the mountains and ended up with a lifetime walk with Him. What a journey! **C**

Renee Joy Janzen writes from the road where she remains an avid traveler, outdoor enthusiast, and follower of Christ. She posts about her adventures and experiencing God in His creation. Join the journey through her blog at www.janzenjoyride.com and follow her on Instagram at [janzenjoyride](https://www.instagram.com/janzenjoyride).



Streamlined fish swim without colliding.

*“Then God said,
‘Let the waters
abound with an
abundance of living
creatures, and let
birds fly above the
earth across
the face of the
firmament . . .*

CREATION DAY 5

■ BY SARAH FAY BUCKLAND, PHD
AND CHAD J. BROWNE

The Creation of Fish and Birds

“**T**hen God said, ‘Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.’ So, God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ So the evening and the morning were the fifth day” (Genesis 1:20–23).

Among the features of the creatures created on day five, the streamlined agility of birds and sea creatures has been a source of inspiration



Migrating birds add vital nutrients to global ecosystems.

for many millennia not just because the graceful maneuvers, stunning beauty, and dazzling coordination of both birds and fish, but countless inventions we use daily are linked to the study of the amazingly designed flying and swimming creatures. What lessons can we learn to further scientific discovery and to enhance our spiritual walk by exploring the wonders of day five of the Creation story?

The Genesis account records the creation of bird and sea creatures on day five following the creation of light (day one), the firmament (day two), dry land and plants (day three), and the sun, moon, and stars (day four). On the surface this order may not appear noteworthy, but our all-intelligent Creator displayed tremendous forethought in setting forth precise symbiotic processes within

complex ecosystems for the first breathing creatures on earth as important pieces to the puzzle of the perfect Creation.

For instance, birds are known to play several important ecosystem roles by ensuring the sustainability of lands just as fish do for the sea. The creation of dry land on day three of the Creation week enabled a ready habitat for birds to nest and serve as pollinators. Additionally, bird guano remains among the most efficient and sought after soil fertilizer. Such avian distributions during migration are also heavily influenced by the seasonal shifts in temperature and changes in magnetic fields, which are moderated by the presence of the sun, moon, and stars created on day four. Consequently, this bird-induced nitrogen enables more grass to grow on the typically infertile Arctic



The clownfish and sea anemone have a symbiotic relationship that benefits both sea species.

tundra that has a ripple effect in other areas of the ecosystem.

Fish also play a vital role in nutrient recycling, ocean purification, preventing flooding, and maintaining marine plant habitats. One common example of amazing symbiosis in the ocean is the relationship between the usually poisonous sea anemones and the clownfish. The anemones provide a safe habitat for the diminutive fish while the fish benefit the anemones with the high nutritive value from their waste. Without the contributions of birds and sea-dwellers, the land and sea would have a far less nutrient balance, and without the land and sea habitats established on day three, birds and fish would die.

In addition to the divine foresight of having a ready habitat for these

new flying and swimming caregivers, one might ask: Why did God decide to create these two apparently contrasting creatures that occupy opposite domains (the sky above and the sea below) on the same day? It so happens that modern scientific insights show impressive, shared characteristics apart from the predator-prey dynamics that would have only come after the fall. For one, most fish and birds display similar properties including streamlined bodies, protective covering to augment their shape, and an acute directional sense that enable them both to gracefully migrate with the efficient speed over long distances.

While many human inventions that have directly copied the engineering of birds and fish, one example apart from flying or swimming includes various

*of the heavens.'
So God created great
sea creatures,
and every living
thing that moves,
with which the
waters abounded,
according to
their kind, . . .*



Feathery wingtips inspire innovations.

shock absorbers that use woodpecker beaks as prototypes with their multiple layers that have amazing absorbent properties to dissipate impact energy. Applications from this *divine* avian technology include protection for electronics, flooring, helmets, and even debris impacting the space shuttle. Similarly, installing fringed wings on aircraft help absorb noise, and materials for bullet trains are being conceptualized by examining water birds and owl wings that contain tattered feathers at the back of their wings and serrated feathers at the front that reduces noise when they fly. The beak design of shore birds has also inspired an invention to harvest fog. Hydro-engineers are exploring how technology may mimic the beak design to capture fog that can be condensed into

liquid water for arid regions.

Flying efficiency displays another marvelous design that benefit humans. V-shaped formations enable bird groups to fly for a more extensive period by reducing fatigue. The V-shape produces an air lift or *surfing* effect that can help birds further back in the formation to use less energy. This tactic has been applied in airplane flight strategies, especially in wartime, that aid in fuel conservation. Evaluating species such as hummingbirds has also improved the rotor power of helicopters by as much as 30 percent.

Innate migratory patterns of birds and marine dwellers provide some of the most outstanding examples of divine intervention. These seasonal journeys interrelate with other global dynamic variables including temperature changes,



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The bay-breasted warbler migrates four thousand miles.

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

wind and ocean currents, and food supply, but a large component depends on breeding cycles. A key feature of Creation day five emphasizes the admonition, "And God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth'" (Genesis 1:22).

A significant element that characterizes bird and fish migration focuses on their mind-boggling directional ability to detect magnetic north. Despite uncertainties as to a physical cause, some researchers hypothesize that *magnetic cells* with magnetite or a similar substance might exist in bird and fish tissues that aid them in such precise alignments during travel. The precision of their sense of direction is so infallible that even atheistic researchers have to scramble to attempt

to explain away an intelligent design. But scripture points to what the psalmist wrote about the Creator and His works, "The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:8).

One amazing example of wondrous bird migration singles out the bay-breasted warbler. This bird is very lightweight (about four pennies), but despite its size, the creature flies nearly four thousand miles between Canada and the Northern region of South America. The bar-tailed godwit, however, set a new world record by completing a non-stop eleven-day migration spanning 8,425 miles from Alaska to Tasmania, Australia.

Another noteworthy case study of sea migration involves the loggerhead sea



Loggerhead sea turtles swim 12,000 miles round trip.

turtle. This creature's migratory patterns had been so complex that for many years researchers were not able to completely trace the turtle's routes. However, new studies have shed some light that the timing of their migration is so precise that they are able to coincide their travels with intermittent flows of warm water along their journey. This ability enables the turtles to navigate regions that would otherwise be too cold for them within the Eastern Pacific Barrier with the longest recorded migration of a sea turtle traveling 12,000 miles round-trip across the Pacific Ocean from Papua, Indonesia to the northwest coast of the United States. Just how sea turtles instinctively know when to time their migration to catch the wave of warm water is unfathomable, but the Creator knows

and assures us in Isaiah 55:8, 9, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" As their journeys reveal, bird and fish rely on the magnificence and wisdom of our all-wise Creator.

Other significant migrations among marine species include those traveled by salmon, tuna, and rainbow trout that span thousands of miles related to shifts in ocean temperatures. Certain species of rainbow trout, steelhead for example, can return to their original breeding ground after traveling hundreds of miles away from home and spending three years at sea.

The Genesis account clearly



Mark Gottlieb

Humpback whales travel 5,000 miles one way.

mentions that “God created great sea creatures” (Genesis 1:21), and elsewhere scripture reveals the massive “leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein” (Psalm 104:26, KJV). Great sea creatures still exist today, and the North Pacific grey whale holds the record for the longest marine creature migration at 12,400 miles round trip!

Furthermore, often the next generation of bird and fish offspring are able to *return home* even though they have never been in that location before! God gave birds and fish their distinctive innate desire to long for their ancestral beginnings. Likewise, we have not been to heaven, but we know that is where we want to go. Just as our Creator bestowed instinctive knowledge of finding the way *home* for these creatures, He provides the

special map for us (the Bible) that enables us to navigate by faith toward eternity by His grace and Holy Spirit. Just as God guides and sustains the avian and marine creatures over long distances, He provides direction and stamina for humanity to make the journey over millenia to complete His purpose and plan of salvation. We must claim His promise in Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” We should strive to follow the wisdom of God’s design and seek Him with all our heart to navigate life’s challenges and observe the wonders illustrated in His creation. Job 12:7 admonishes us, “But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you.”

*and fill the waters
in the seas,
and let birds multiply
on the earth.'
So the evening
and the
morning were the
fifth day."*

—Genesis 1:20–23



Massive numbers of migrating snow geese long to be home.

Just like the birds and fish, preparation season occurs during our lives with the recognition that there will come a time for finishing the migration. The creatures formed on day five remain industrious in their preparations for the season of travel, and our life quest should also be to have a ready mindset when our own migratory season arises to return home to be with Jesus.

The lives of our marine and flying friends should inspire us to rely more on our Creator to help us navigate the way. As the scriptures teach, “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:26). The psalmist beautifully invites us to join in the song of Creation to let our

lives magnify the Lord. “Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures, and all the depths . . . and flying fowl, kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven” (Psalm 148:7, 10, 11–13). **C**

Sarah Fay Buckland, PhD, writes from the island of Jamaica, where she is an environmental researcher with a degree in geography and uses her research career as a ministry tool. Chad J. Browne writes from Barbados where he is a Bible teacher and holds a certificate in Introduction of Apologetics from Answers in Genesis, as well as theology and information technology degrees.

CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

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

Eating Like a Bird

The phrase *eating like a bird* implies that what birds eat is so simple and minimal that it's hardly worth a few moments of consumption or thought. But are the diets of birds really so inconsequential and insignificant?

As the Institute for Creation Research's Dr. Frank Sherwin has repeatedly documented with huge frigate birds and tiny hummingbirds, the diets and eating habits of birds can be fascinating. In short, our Lord Jesus Christ feeds His winged creatures in wondrous ways hidden in plain view that exhibit His clever and caring genius. (See Matthew 6:26, Luke 12:24, and Psalm 147:9.)

One bird family, Meropidae, aptly labeled *bee-eaters*, are famous for successfully neutralizing the venom of bees before eating them. These birds seize the bees in flight, then repeatedly bash the bee's stinger against a hard object forcing the venom from the stinger. Then the bee-eater gulps down its prey with no harm to the bird's insides.

Australian magpies display a similar habit. The bird has been observed breaking off the stingers of bees and wasps before swallowing the dangerous bugs.

Also consider how roadrunners successfully attack rattlesnakes by biting them precisely next to the snakes' venom-loaded fangs. When a roadrunner's bill clamps down on the top half of an open-mouthed rattler's head, the reptile soon has its head fatally crushed followed by the roadrunner eating the snake.

Does any of that sound so simple that a bird could accidentally invent the specific traits and habits needed to eat this way? No, eating like a bird is not simple. The entire process is nothing short of a marvelous display of Christ's caring bioengineering design as told in Job 9:10.

Condensed from an article by James J. S. Johnson, J.D., ThD, December 2022, at www.icr.org

Whale Falls and Fossil Records

In 1987 oceanographers made the first discovery of a whale carcass on the ocean floor. The

researchers were amazed at the abundant life the carcass supported. When a dead whale sinks to the deep ocean floor, its carcass becomes home and food to a vast array of sea invertebrates. Imagine what it must have been like during the Flood when all air-breathing, land-living life had drowned, and the entire world was covered by the sea. The sea floor could have been littered with carcasses and covered with invertebrates.

Studies show that whale bones can be picked clean within four months. Invertebrates then attack the calcium-rich bones. Perhaps this is why there are not too many whole fossils found. If it really took millions or even hundreds of years for the strata to

have been slowly laid, there would have been hardly any bones left to be fossilized. Whole fossils



are usually in groups near the surface. They could have been islands of floating carcasses that became beached on the rising continents as the Flood waters were draining away. Uplifting mountains and tilting foundational plates would have triggered mudflows that would bury the carnage and the invertebrates. Volcanoes added layers of silica ash that would then fossilize the organic material.

Many geologists look at the fossil-filled strata and theorize that the abundance of invertebrates proves the earth must be extremely old. They say each thin layer represents a new generation. These geologists are not considering the abundant food source and invertebrate population explosion that would have occurred during the global Flood. Modern whale falls offer a picture of the teeming sea life that would have flourished during the global Flood, the remains of which are still seen today trapped in the limestone cliffs.

Condensed from an article by Carla Estell, January 2023, at www.TheCreationClub.com

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

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

Sharing Facts and Figures

Researchers estimate that by the year 2050 there will need to be 60 percent more food to feed the estimated world population of 9.3 billion. With government instabilities, wars, and climate challenges, innovation may help lead the way in producing more food for a hungry world.

Here are three interesting innovations.

- Bee vectoring technologies: Honeybees are worth \$20 billion; so, finding ways to protect bees and help with their pollination is very important. Commercially reared bees deliver trace amounts of pest control powders on their legs as they pollinate certain crops.

- Water management technology: Some farmers are still using irrigation methods similar to the way it was done 4,000 years ago in Mesopotamia. This can waste over two-thirds of the water and carry excess fertilizers into streams and lakes. New watering management innovation like N-Drip technologies can offer farmers microdrip irrigation allowing water to slowly get to the plants' roots. This can reduce water use by up to fifty percent.

- Indoor vertical farming: Indoor stacked farming methods have some advantages by controlling temperature, light, and water. Two methods include: hydroponics (growing plants in water and nutrient solutions) and aeroponics (suspending the roots of the crops in the air as emitters spray them with water and nutrients). These methods of farming also use 70 percent less water and reduce labor costs.

Tips for Simple Living

Many people think they cannot garden because they have limited space available. But now that gardening in urban areas is becoming popular, there are many handy items available to assist with small-space gardening.

Here are a few tips:

- Cinder blocks: Using cinder blocks around a raised-bed garden or to stack and plant inside them offer a quick and low-cost way to get a nice garden started in a small yard or place.

- Trellis gardens: Making your own trellis to help your garden grow up instead of out helps increase your garden yield while maintaining a small size. One good material is nylon trellis netting. It can last many years in the sun and still hold its strength.

- Planter boxes: Even small pots or planter boxes can be very practical for balconies, decks, and patios. Some people prefer them to regular gardens, and you can even make your own.

- Seed sheets: Quick and user-friendly garden kits come in various sizes for raised beds or containers. The kit consists of a weed-blocking fabric mat embedded with organic non GMO seed pods.

- Hanging gardens: You might not be able to reproduce one of the seven wonders of the ancient world in your yard, but the Bible shows that Nebuchadnezzar did have a good idea. You can easily create a hanging garden with plastic bottles.

Visit a local organic farm to learn what crops grow best in your area.



Biblical Stewardship of Creation

After Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He gave a final sermon to prepare His disciples for a future without Him. Jesus tells about a wealthy man who goes on a far journey, but before he leaves, he asks three of his workers to manage some of his funds. "And to one he gave five talents (five talents equals 15 years of wages), to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey" (Matthew 25:15).

The one who had received fifteen talents traded and doubled it. Likewise, he who had received two doubled it. But the worker who received one talent hid his lord's money. We are given according to our ability, and Jesus wants us to be productive until He returns. The unproductive worker represents all who take the name of Christ but do not exercise their abilities or use the power He supplies.

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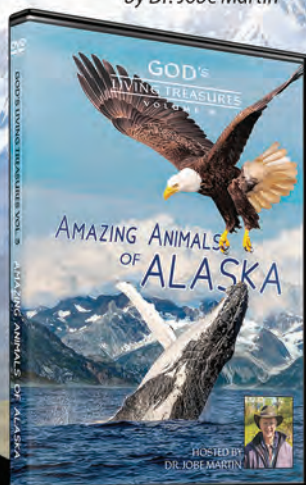
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A L E N S O N C R E A T I O N



Bobby Harrison

Sunrise over the swamp at the Goldsmith-Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary



Bobby Harrison

Great blue heron

“For You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands” (Psalm 92:4). What a joy for those of us who love nature and long to revel in God’s creation. To walk paths through towering forest along spring-fed streams that fill azure ponds provides pure delight. Just finding such places offers a great adventure that draws the created closer to the Creator. I am so fortunate to explore such places all around our nation, but such excursions become particularly special when I find a unique getaway close to home.

One of my favorite places

to visit when I am home from my travels is the Goldsmith-Schiffman Wildlife Sanctuary. This pristine sanctuary lays along the east side of the Flint River in the southeast corner of Madison County near Huntsville, Alabama. The sanctuary spans more than three hundred seventy-five acres of bottomland hardwood habitat. Open fields and farmland have become a haven for both wildlife and human life amid the growing urban development. After the sanctuary opened in 2009, it quickly gained popularity within the local birding community for its variety of habitats and abundance of bird species.

More than three miles of rustic trails wind through forested bottomlands and fallow fields that lead visitors to explore ponds, sloughs, swamps, and the banks of the Flint River. The diverse habitat of the sanctuary is home to a myriad of birdlife ranging from waterbirds to passerines. Almost any day one can find great blue herons preening or stalking prey in the shallow ponds or a red-tailed hawk soaring above open meadows looking for its next meal.

April through May and September through October provide the best times to visit as migrant species begin to arrive and pass through the sanctuary.

ffman Sanctuary

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

Spring migrants and resident birds begin nesting by mid-April, bringing the forest and fields alive with the songs of breeding warblers, sparrows, and other songbirds. The most famous among the arriving migrants are thirteen species of warblers including the blackburian, prothonotary, yellow-throated, and chestnut-sided warblers, indigo bunting, rose-breasted and blue grosbeaks, and the crimson-colored summer tanager. Notables among the resident birds include an abundance of pileated, red-bellied, red-headed, and downy woodpeckers, pine warblers, chipping sparrows, as well as the great horned and barred owls.

No matter what time of the year you visit, the Goldsmith-Schiffman Sanctuary always seems to hold a surprise for the diligent observer. After each visit to the sanctuary, I often think of Revelation 4:11, which tells us, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (KJV).

God created all things for His pleasure. If these things please God, just think how His creation can please each of us and help to draw us closer to Him. The psalmist understood this when he



Blackburnian warbler

wrote, "For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands" (Psalm 92:4, KJV).

Each of us needs a place to escape from the busyness of life and commune with our Creator. Such a refuge could include a garden, a city park, or even a backyard. Wherever you live, find that piece of nature where you, too, can triumph in the works of His hands. **C**

Bobby Harrison writes Huntsville, Alabama, and Oakwood University as an associate professor of photography, retired. See his work at: www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com



Great horned owl



This morning I had the privilege of walking along the seashore with my newly-turned 19-year-old son. Our family spent the previous day celebrating with him at one of our all-time favorite places in Pensacola Beach, Florida. We swam in the ocean, lounged around the lazy river, ate dinner, and then went night fishing!

We made plenty of wonderful memories over our

short two-day stay. However, my favorite will always be that rare opportunity of walking along the beach—just me and my boy. The morning felt warm and breezy, the sky glowed blue, and water glistened so clear and calm you could view a plethora of sea life. We admired the different species of fish, jellyfish, and stingrays.

As we strolled along with the seagulls crying overhead, a wave of memories washed over me. I could envision my little boy



*B*eauty *in the* broken

in the not so distant past running down the beach at top speed with his wild curly hair blowing in the breeze while chasing seagulls, charging the waves, and searching for seashells. I looked at him next to me, and that little boy had now become a grown young man.

He stopped to pick up a shell and examine it. Seeing that it was in one piece, he pocketed it to bring back to his little sister. I suddenly remembered that little



B Y M E L I S S A C L A R K



boy again finding seashells on the shore. It seemed as though each and every shell was special to him no matter how broken they were. Usually all of our pockets could not contain all the special shell parts he would discover. Each one appeared equally fascinating and precious.

On occasion we would walk with friends or family along the shore, and they would encourage him to discard the broken shells for the pretty whole ones. Something about that bothered me back then that I couldn't quite decipher. Maybe it was the fact that they were discouraging his curiosity or diminishing the delight he found in each discovery no matter how imperfect. Now, here in this moment many years later, I think I finally understood.

There is beauty in the broken. Oftentimes only innocent

children can see these things so clearly. We learn in Matthew 21:16, "'Do you hear what these children are saying?' they asked him. 'Yes,' replied Jesus, 'have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?'" (NIV).

This must be how God our Father sees us too. We are all broken and living in a sinful world. In essence we are like the broken seashell pieces—each unique and special in our own right. Through His victory at the cross Jesus made us whole again. While we are here on earth, it is a privilege to be able to look at the specialness of our own broken pieces. We stand in awe of how God uses what Satan meant for evil and turns it into something truly remarkable.

"To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead

of despair" (Isaiah 61:3, NLT). To deny our broken pieces or avoid looking at them is to deny Christ's gift of Himself to us. He wants us to acknowledge Him so we can witness true healing in the most miraculous of ways to become whole. Psalm 34:18 promises, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (NIV).

Interestingly, when I researched what happens to the broken shell pieces, I discovered that they eventually become part of the sandy beach. In fact, many white beaches have sand made almost entirely of tiny bits of crushed shell that has been ground down by the pounding waves of the sea. I like to think this is how God uses all our broken pieces too.

While He gives us the great gift of witnessing how He uses our own brokenness for good here on earth in so many ways,

that is only a tiny glimpse of the impact of our total surrender to His will. I believe that His heavenly view is much more majestic and unfathomable than our human mind can comprehend. He sees how each and every tiny broken piece of every one of our lives works together to form a magnificent white expanse. "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28, ESV).

Taking shell shards and ground sand one step further, the trials of life's fiery furnace can eventually purify the grains of sand and turn them into glass—that amazing transparent material that can reveal and reflect the pure character of its Maker.


As I think back on all



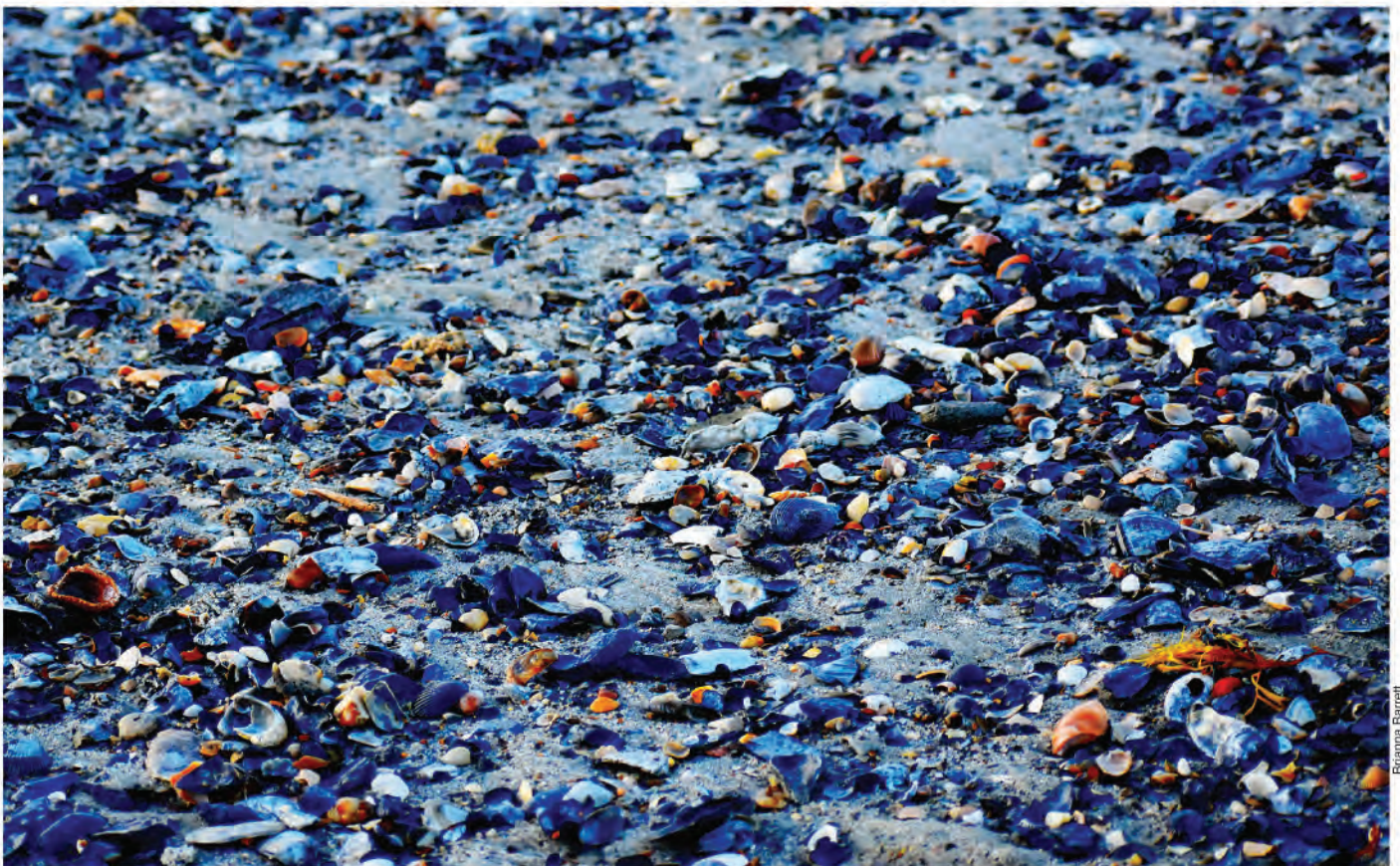
the brokenness in my own life and that of my family, I can see ways in which Jesus used each trial for good. In doing so, Jesus strengthens me to endure future adversities and to appreciate any

other broken pieces I may discover along the shores of life.

Just like little children who frolic along the beach, as we walk alongside our heavenly Father daily, He will allow us to uncover and examine more broken pieces of our lives. Then with great curiosity and contrition we can bring them to Him where He will shine the light of His love upon them transforming each one into something for the greater good.

Father, thank You for valuing and healing the broken pieces of my life. Thank You for all that You allow me to see and experience in this world and for the unfathomable beauty and goodness yet to come in the next. 

Melissa Clark writes from Spanish Fort, Alabama, where she pursues lessons from the wonders of Creation.



Brianna Barrett



Thorough tilling prepares the soil for strong roots.

growing strong

What part of a plant is the most important? Sure, leaves, stems, and flowers are necessary for a plant's growth and for bearing fruit, but digging deeper we find that a plant's roots remain vitally important! They help plants remain stable in the ground, and working like pipes, roots take water and nutrients out of the soil and bring them to the plant's stem and leaves. Even when leaves and stems are damaged or destroyed, strong roots help plants to survive.

In our garden in Indiana, my family and I learned a lot about the miraculous interworkings and responsibilities of roots. Before planting in mid-May, we prepared the soil. My husband plowed the ground several times to break up and turn nearly solid masses of dirt. Plowing promotes soil drainage, controls weeds by destroying germinated seeds, adds air to the soil, and speeds up the decomposition of organic matter.

g a r d e n s f r o m e d e n



Earthworms and microorganisms aid in getting nutrients to the roots.

roots

Well-prepared soil contains nutrients that plants need in order to grow including phosphorus, nitrogen, potassium, calcium, sulfur, and magnesium. The soil must be prepared annually because the sun, winds, and rains damage it and can leach out many of the beneficial properties of the soil. Organic fertilizer is a good way to boost up the soil quality. We use rabbit manure that provides necessary nutrients for plants and feeds the earthworms. The more earthworms there are in the soil, the better its fertility.

Soil preparation also improves the life cycle of the soil microorganisms—bacteria, fungi, and viruses—which remain key to improving soil restoration and plant health. Jesus, in the parable of the sower, taught His disciples about the importance of soil preparation: only seeds that fell “on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold” (Luke 8:8). Seeds (the word of God in this parable) can multiply when people “having heard the word with a noble

b y t a t i a n a c l a u d y



Sudden heat and wind can nearly destroy seedlings unless they have strong roots.

and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). In nature, a seed first “falls into the ground and dies” and later “produces much grain” as told in John 12:24. Likewise, to be fruitful for God’s kingdom, we must reject our old ways of life, “be renewed in the spirit” of [our] mind, and “put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4: 23, 24).

But the preparation of the soil is just the beginning. As my children and I were planting sweet peppers, the Creator taught us a powerful lesson on the importance of strong roots. It was the ideal weather for gardening—sunny with a gentle breeze. Once the pepper seedlings were in the ground, we watered them and covered the ground with straw to prevent weeds from growing. Then we prayed and asked “the gardener” (John 15:1, NIV) to take care of our garden. We were sure that later we would gather a wonderful crop.

Yet, the Bible warns us, “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12, NIV). The nice morning of planting turned into a hot afternoon, and the gentle breeze became a scorching wind. Coming to the garden the next day, we could not believe our eyes. The peppers were twisted and broken; their leaves had withered and dried, and some plants had disappeared.

My children, upset with this apparent disaster, asked me, “Do we need new plants to replace the damaged ones?”

“Let’s wait,” I said. “Yes, the stems are damaged, but roots are still there. If the roots are strong and healthy, new sprouts will grow.” I reminded them of the words of Job, “For there is hope for a tree . . . Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the



Proper watering and fertilizing of the roots helps plants become fruitful.

ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant” (Job 14:7–9).

During the next couple of weeks we watched how the damaged plants gradually came back to life because their strong roots helped them develop new stems and leaves. In August our work and faith were rewarded with plenty of sweet peppers!

Roots are so essential that the word *root* is mentioned in the Bible fifty times. The apostle Paul describes spiritual roots that every Christian must have. “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught” (Colossians 2:6, 7). To grow our spiritual roots, we need to read the Bible daily and look there for answers to our problems. For example, whenever my children ask me questions, I answer, “Let’s see what the Bible tells us about it.” Sure enough, there is typically the perfect answer from the Lord!

Although roots may be different, they have to take water and minerals from good soil to support plant growth and eventually produce fruit. And as we Christians grow our strong roots in Jesus Christ and His love, we, too, will grow and bear the fruit of the Spirit that nourishes those searching souls who can be saved for His kingdom. The apostle Paul wrote that only children of God who have been “rooted and grounded in love” will be able to understand “how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (Ephesians 3:17, 18, NIV).

The only kind of roots that Christians must eliminate is a “bitter root” that “grows up to cause trouble and defile many” (Hebrews 12:15, NIV). The Lord instructs us to make “every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy” (Hebrews 12:14, NIV). One way to eradicate the roots of bitterness is to forgive others. It is not hard when we remember God’s forgiveness



Faith builds hope and strong roots by the river of life.

of our sins, “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins” (Isaiah 43:25).

Every day brings us many opportunities to develop good spiritual roots that later will bring the best reward possible—a harvest of God’s people that will last for eternity! As prophet Jeremiah declared, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7, 8). **C**

Tatiana Claudy writes from Indiana where she continues to explore the lessons God provides in His creation that can be shared in order to offer encouragement and hope in a hurting world.



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Genesis Cuisine

“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

Tasty Tarts



Recipes by Jennifer Ish. Photos by Tom Ish



Decadent Chocolate Tart

Almond Short Crust:

- 1 1/4 C. flour
- 1/2 C. almond flour
- 1/3 C. powdered sugar
- 1/2 C. margarine
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 4 Tb. ice water
- 1/2 tsp. almond flavoring

Filling:

- 10 oz. natural chocolate chunks
(or carob chips if preferred)
- 1 1/2 C. non-dairy creamer
- 2 tsp. vanilla flavoring
- (If using unsweetened chocolate
or carob, add sweetener of choice.)
- pinch of salt

Mix dry ingredients and using a fork work the margarine into the flour until little crumbs form. Add ice water and almond flavoring and knead the dough lightly. Chill for 30 min. Roll out and place in tart form, bake for 20 min at 350 degrees. Heat creamer in a saucepan and add chocolate; let it melt. Add flavoring and pour into baked and cooled crust. Chill in refrigerator for 8 hours. Garnish with berries and flower petals.



Tropical Delight Mini Tarts

Tropical Nut Crust:

- 1/4 C. macadamia nuts
- 1/4 C. Brazil nuts
- 1/2 C. shredded coconut
- 1/2 C. coconut flour
- 3 medjool dates
- pinch of salt
- 1 Tb. coconut oil

Filling:

- 2/3 C. fresh mango chunks
- 1/2 C. canned pineapple bits
- 2 Tb. pineapple juice concentrate
- 1/2 C. coconut cream
- 2 Tb. corn starch
- 1/3 C. finely chopped mango and
pineapple pieces

Mix crust ingredients together in a food processor or blender. Press into three 4-inch tart molds. Bake for 20 min. at 350 degrees, and let them cool. Blend first four filling ingredients until smooth. Bring to a slow boil in a saucepan, and stir in corn starch that has been dissolved in a tablespoon of water. Stir until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in additional chopped fruit pieces. Pour into cooled tart crusts. Refrigerate until set. Garnish with toasted coconut and mango slices.



Raspberry Zinger Tea Tart

Walnut Crust:

- 2 C. oat flour
- 2/3 C. walnuts
- 5 medjool dates
- 1 Tb. coconut oil
- 2 tsp. agave or maple syrup
- pinch of salt

Filling:

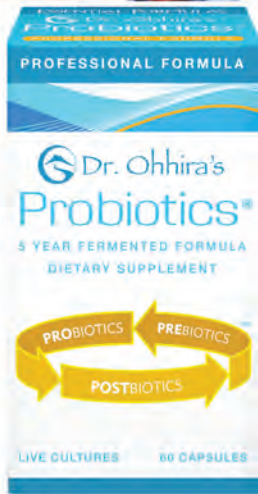
- 1 pkg. 16 oz. soft tofu
- 2 1/2 C. raspberry zinger tea
- 2 Tb. corn starch
- 1 tsp. agar agar
- 1 Tb. raspberry jam
- 1/2 C. honey, divided (to taste)

Mix crust ingredients together in a food processor or blender. Press into a tart mold. Bake for 25 min. at 350 degrees; let cool. For bottom layer, blend tofu until smooth. Bring to a slow boil in a saucepan and stir in corn starch that has been dissolved in 1/2 C. raspberry zinger tea. Stir until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in 1/4 C. honey. Pour into cooled crust and add a few fresh raspberries. Refrigerate until set. For top layer, dissolve agar agar in cooled remaining tea for 1 min. Mix jam with the tea in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and cook 2 min. while stirring. Pour onto top of tofu layer. Add a few fresh raspberries. Chill until firm.

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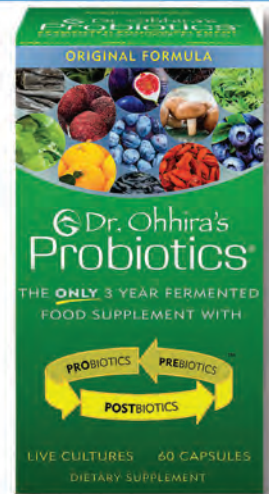
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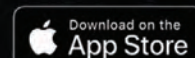
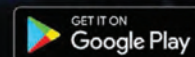


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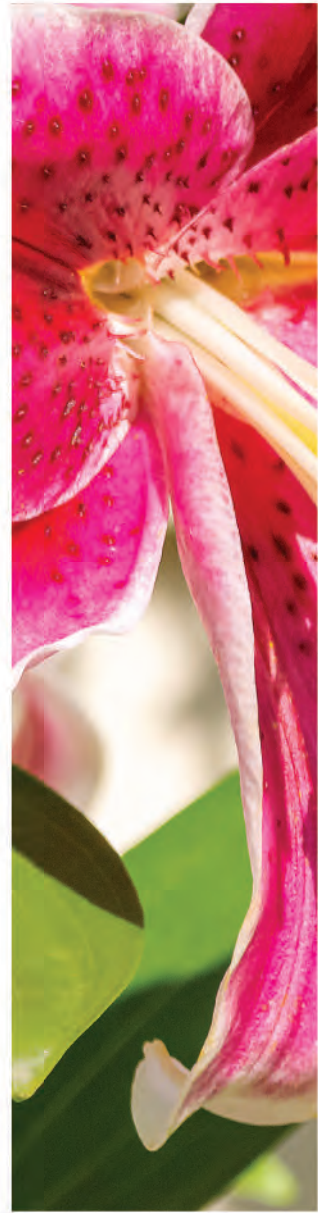


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- Chia
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Throw a Pollinator Party!



On a sunny April day, Daisy sat at her picnic table writing.

"Hi, Daisy! What are you doing?" Gavin asked as he sat down across from her.

"I'm planning a party. It's my stewardship project," she said.

"Huh?" Gavin gave her a questioning look. "What's stewardship?"

"Stewardship means taking care of something like nature. God created earth as our home. As good stewards, it's our job to take care of water, soil, plants,

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



Jenny Miner

and each other,” Daisy explained.

“You mean, like my mom says I’m responsible for cleaning my room?” Gavin asked.

“Something like that,” Daisy replied. “Maybe these verses will help you. They’re from the books of Genesis and First Peter in the Bible. I’ve written them on my party list,” she explained as she handed him her list.

Gavin read aloud. “Genesis 1:1, ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’ Genesis 1:31, ‘God saw everything that He had made, and it was very good.’” He still looked

puzzled. “I don’t see how giving a party shows good stewardship.”

“Read 1 Peter 4:10,” she instructed. “It’s the verse we talked about at church last week. Our teacher said each one of us has a talent we can use to serve God and make the world better.”

Gavin read, “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (ESV).

“Hmmm,” Gavin thought for a moment. “God created an awesome world. What kind of party would serve God and make the world better?”

Y B Y K A T H Y B U N S E

"A pollinator party," Daisy shouted as she raised her hands in the air. "I help my mom in her vegetable and flower gardens. There are always lots of bees, butterflies, and even a few hummingbirds flying around while we pull weeds and pick vegetables. Sometimes they look very busy. Sometimes they look like they're playing. I want to help them have fun and feel safe."

Gavin chuckled and shook his head. "I've been to birthday parties and pool parties, but I've never been to a pollinator party. Can I help you with it? I'd like to be a good steward and learn more about pollinators."

"Yes, I could use your help!" she agreed and gave her friend a high five. "Let's talk while we get stuff from the shed."

"Animals and people need pollinators," Daisy began. "If they didn't carry pollen from one blossom to another, flowers couldn't make seeds. Without seeds we couldn't grow more pretty flowers. Some flowers become fruits and vegetables. Yellow flowers on tomato plants become ripe, juicy, red tomatoes. White apple blossoms become crisp, sweet apples. Without pollinators, we'd have fewer flowers, fruits, and vegetables."

When they reached the shed, Daisy handed Gavin a hoe and a full watering can. She picked up another watering can, a black pen, and wooden



Joanne Taylor

markers that looked like giant popsicle sticks.

"Wow! We owe a lot to pollinators. What do they get from moving pollen around?" Gavin asked as he followed Daisy to a square garden patch.

She set her tools on the ground and took some seed packets from her pocket. "Flowers make a sweet liquid called nectar. Butterflies and hummingbirds drink nectar. Bees drink nectar and eat pollen, which is often a yellow powder," she explained.

Gavin made his *yuck* face. "Nectar sounds tasty, but not pollen."

"That's because you're not a bee," Daisy smiled. "Remember, it's a pollinator party. Let's start planting."

Slowly Gavin hoed long rows while trying to make them straight. As he finished each row, Daisy sprinkled some seeds and covered them with dirt. Next, she wrote the names of each of the types of flowers on the wooden sticks. She put markers for milkweed and asters in the back row. Cosmos, purple coneflowers, and black-eyed Susans would grow in the middle. The shortest plants, zinnias and



Jenny Miner

columbine, were in front. Carefully Gavin watered each row, making sure not to pour too much water on the seeds.

"What do we do next?" he asked as he flopped down in the grass to rest.

Daisy plopped down beside him. "We're done for today. Now we wait, water, and pray. In a couple of months, flowers will bloom, and the party will begin."

Each day after school, Daisy and Gavin ran from the bus to check their garden. After two weeks tiny leaves sprouted. After four weeks stems started reaching up. After six weeks buds appeared on tall stalks. By the eighth week, flowers started to bloom. But when would the party start?

On a sunny June day, Daisy and Gavin visited the garden. "Look! Our guests are here!" Gavin slowly circled the garden watching the insects enjoy themselves. Bees buzzed inside columbine blossoms, butterflies fluttered among zinnias, and a hummingbird zoomed past his head. He whispered a quiet prayer, not wanting to startle the party guests. "Thank You, God! This garden is really good. Amen."


He looked up and saw Daisy at the picnic table unpacking sandwiches. "Hey, I thought you said this party wasn't for people."

She smiled. "I changed my mind. After all, we are the hosts."

"Let's invite our friends over tomorrow," Gavin suggested. "God can use more good stewards."

Daisy and Gavin are good stewards of God's creation. Their garden provides food and shelter for pollinators, as well as for other insects and animals.

Here's how you can help pollinators:

- Plant the flowers listed in the story. They grow well in most of the United States.
- Plant milkweed for Monarch butterflies. They are on the endangered species list. Adult Monarchs drink the milkweed nectar and lay eggs on the leaves. Monarch caterpillars hatch from the eggs and feed on the plants. They then form a chrysalis near the plant where they hatched. Inside the chrysalis, their bodies change into adult Monarch butterflies.
- Pesticides (bug killing chemicals) harm pollinators. Use pesticides carefully or not at all.
- Learn more about pollinators by visiting the Xerces Society at www.xerces.org. 

Kathy Bunse writes from Cosby, Missouri, where she enjoys exploring God's creation and sharing the object lessons with others.



Celebrate the success of your pollinator garden with your own picnic party.

DETECTING A COUNTERFEIT



We can identify the real dandelion from a flower that looks similar by testing the qualities. First, there must be an absolute standard of the real flower's qualities. Second, we must compare the flowers in question to that absolute standard. Do this for the flowers on the facing page.

	REAL	COUNTERFEIT
1. Leaves	Dark green, smooth, deep notched, grows in a circle	Green, hairy, unnotched, grows in a circle
2. Stem	Smooth, round, hollow in the middle, with one yellow flower on the top	Thorn-like, hairy, round stem, more than one yellow flower on the top
3. Roots	A tuber tap root, grows deep	Short tap root
4. Bracts	Has a skirt on the bracts	Has no skirt
5. Conclusion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>

Truth versus Error

In a similar way we can learn to identify God's true lifestyle from a false one by using the absolute standard of scripture. Try comparing the following six areas of life with scripture.

Recreation and Pleasures: We should be able to stop and pray asking God to bless all we do. Test all leisure time by the test in Philippians 4:8-11.

Friends and associates: Love those best who love Christ most. See Exodus 23:2; 2 Corinthians 6:14; James 4:4.

School and Education: Any system of learning that exalts man's wisdom above the Creator's would have to be false. Proverbs 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:19-31; Matthew 11:28-30

Diet: Ever since Adam ate forbidden fruit our taste buds have been confused. Taste buds are not a safe guide as to what is good food and what is junk food. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Proverbs 23:29-35; Ephesians 5:18

Dress: When how you look is more important than comfort or health, you can be sure you have fallen for a false dress standard. 1 Peter 3:1-5; Proverbs 7:10; 3 John 2; "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

Religions and Churches: Because a person says, "I believe" does not make them a true follower of Jesus. See Matthew 7:21; Isaiah 8:20

PRACTICAL PROJECT:

Compare a real dandelion to the *Sonchus arvensis*. Note the differences.



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





Spring 2023 Coloring Contest
(deadline & details on page 60)

First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____
City: _____ State/Prov: _____

Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest

Winners From the Winter 2023 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 6–11
Jasmine H., age 10
Kissimmee, Florida



First Place, ages 12–18
Allison S., age 15
of Litchfield, Ohio



First Place, ages 19+
Mikaela I., age 20
of Rathdrum, Idaho

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest for ALL Ages!** Color in the picture on the previous page from the Character-Building Lesson. You can even add other creatures, clouds, sky, etc. Then scan or photograph your work (maximum one per quarter) and email an attached jpeg to: coloring@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Coloring Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The **DEADLINE for spring 2023 entries is May 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 June from spring-edition pictures, the first week of September from summer-edition pictures, the first week of December from fall-edition pictures, and the first week of March from winter-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com

Creation Illustrated Photo Contest

Winners From Winter 2023 Submissions

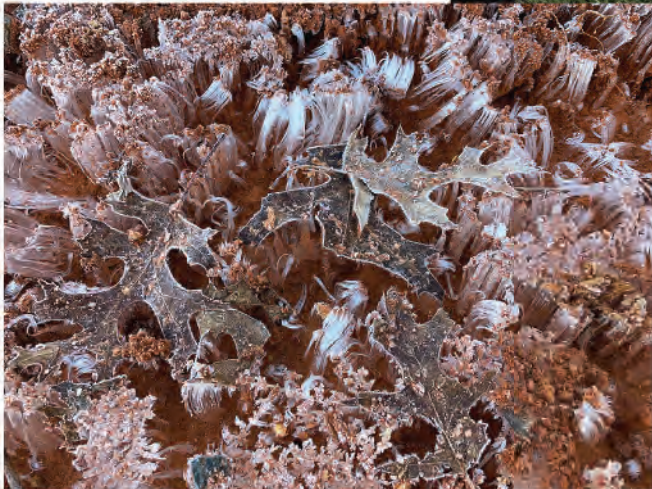


First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Charlotte H., age 8, of Turlock, California, quoted Galatians 5:22, 23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law"(ESV). All fruit should remind us of the fruit of the Spirit.

First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

Joel A., age 14, of Fulton, Missouri, wrote, "Living on a farm and seeing a brand new sunrise each day leaves no doubt in my mind that there is a Creator."



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Dennis M., age 72, Snellville, Georgia, wrote, "God has provided multiple unique and marvelous illustrations of His love in the formations of nature. Out of hard-packed red clay soil comes this beautiful growing ice formation that actually lifts up the leaves on the ground and suspends them."

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Photo Contest for ALL Ages!** Get creative with your camera in nature and email an attached jpeg (maximum one per quarter) to: photos@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Photo Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address and one or two sentences on what your photo says about our Creator. The **DEADLINE for spring 2023 entries is May 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 June from spring submissions, the first week of September from summer submissions, the first week of December from fall submissions, and the first week of March from winter submissions. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com



STUDY GUIDE

for *Creation Illustrated*, Spring 2023 Edition, Vol. 30, No. 1

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

I. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—“Amazing Moths” story, pages 6–13

1. How many species make up the Lepidoptera order? What percentage are moths? p. 6
2. List four differences between moths and butterflies. p. 9
3. Describe the stages of moth metamorphosis. p. 9
4. What percent of the creature dies and transforms? p. 9
5. What moth became part of a false evolutionary theory? p. 10
6. What does research tell us about the moth's attraction to light and artificial lights? p. 13

II. Creation Up Close—“Mysterious Petoskey Stones” story, pages 14–19

1. What is the meaning of the name *Petoskey*, and why are the stones named this? p. 14
2. Why is spring the best time of year to find the Petoskey stones? p. 15
3. Describe what the Petoskey stones are made of. p. 16
4. How did the global catastrophic Flood of Noah's era and the Ice Age contribute to finding these unique stones today? pp. 17, 18
5. What was the size and weight of one of the largest Petoskey stones?

III. Re-Creation Outdoors—“Salvation on the Appalachian Trail” story, pages 20–27

1. How many miles is the Appalachian Trail? How much did the author's backpack weigh when it was restocked? pp. 20–22
2. List the trees and wildflowers that shared their beauty along the trail. How did the changes from winter to spring affect the author? pp. 22, 23
3. What was the highest point of the Appalachian Trail that the author climbed? What state makes up 25 percent of the Appalachian Trail? p. 23
4. How did God work through the man named T.C. to touch the author's heart? How did this help with the tedium? p. 24
5. What is a *trail angel*, and how did one point the author to the handiwork of God? What scripture verses did he quote to the author, and what was the result? pp. 24–27

IV. The Creation Week—“Creation Day 5—Birds and Sea Creatures” story, pages 28–37

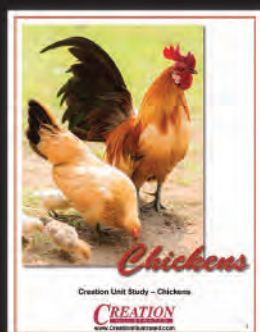
1. List some important roles birds play in affecting ecosystems. p. 29
2. List some important impacts fish have on ecosystems. p. 30
3. What are some common characteristics shared between birds and sea creatures? p. 30
4. Describe some of the amazing migrations that birds and sea creatures take. What might help them do this? pp. 34, 35
5. How does our longing for our heavenly home relate to bird and sea creature migrations? What promises can we claim? pp. 36, 37

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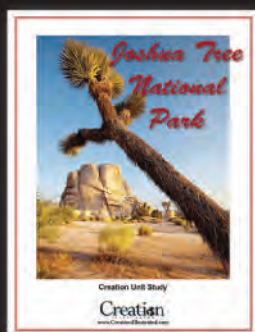
WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

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

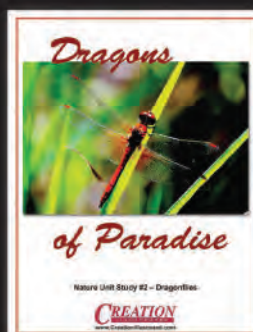
- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. ANGELS | 11. LEPIDOPTERA |
| 2. ANTENNAE | 12. MIGRATE |
| 3. BIRD | 13. MOTHS |
| 4. BLAZE | 14. POLLINATOR |
| 5. COCOON | 15. RETURN |
| 6. CORAL | 16. SEA |
| 7. FERTILIZER | 17. SPECIES |
| 8. FISH | 18. STONE |
| 9. FOSSILS | 19. TRAIL |
| 10. HIKING | 20. WING |



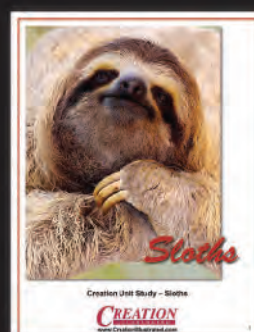
Chickens



Joshua Tree NP



Dragonflies



Sloths



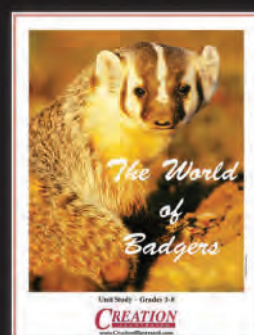
Fragrance



Pine Trees



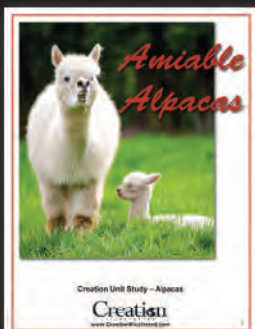
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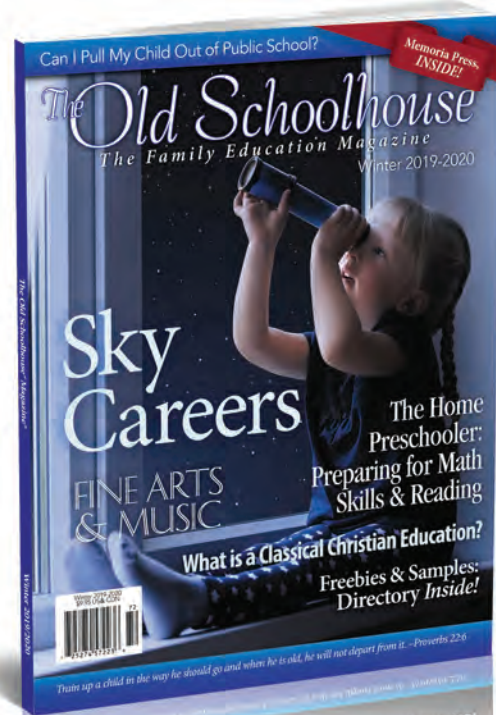
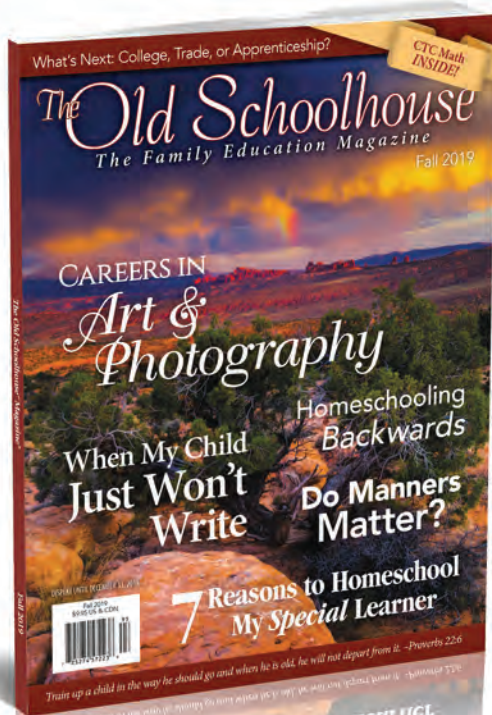


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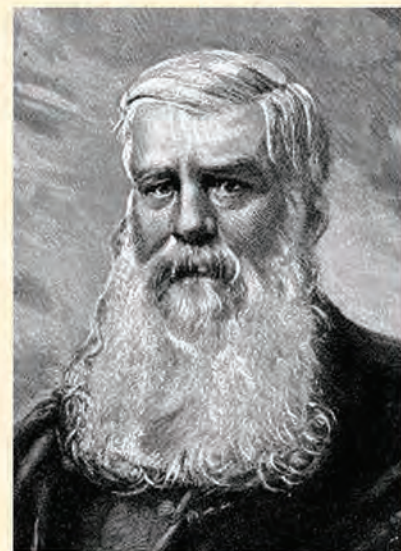
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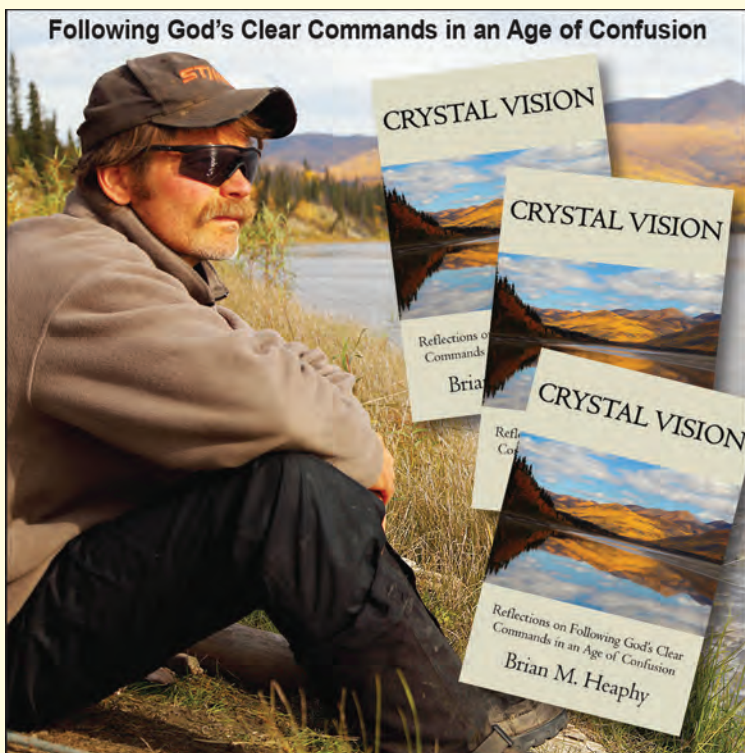
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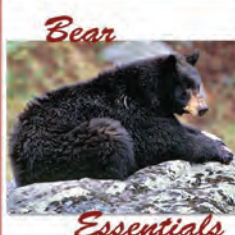
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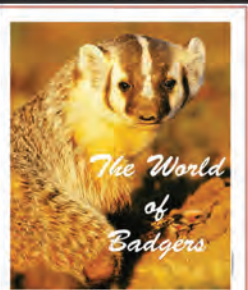
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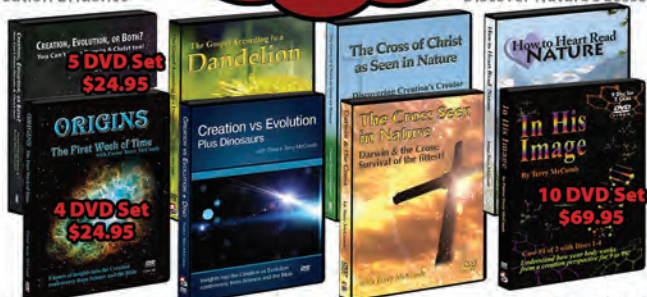


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