

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR GETAWAY ...



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

WINTER 2024 VOL. 30 NO. 4 US \$4.99



*“In peace I will
lie down and sleep,
Lord, make*



*for you alone,
me dwell in safety.”*

– Psalm 4:8, NIV



Our Why



As this edition heads to press, we are in the midst of receiving many gift subscriptions that people give for the holidays. We often hear during this time of year, “And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). But *why*? It comes down to one word—joy!

Individuals find joy in sharing *Creation Illustrated* with their family and friends and especially those who are going through difficult times in their lives—elderly shut-ins, others suffering from illness, as well as some they may not even know like inmates who try to cope with the challenges of incarceration and nature deprivation.

Many callers often share some glimpses of *why* they are gifting subscriptions. For example, a lady who gives *Creation Illustrated* to inmates said she heard back from one who let her know that they prefer *Creation Illustrated* over another spiritual magazine she gave in the past because this publication was so uplifting and the content was helping them grow. Another subscriber sent a subscription to an inmate and then added five more gift subscriptions to the same prison library so others could be blessed. Still another caller wanted to give a donation to help send *Creation Illustrated* to prisoners without her husband knowing because he is an atheist. 2 Corinthians 9:7 encourages us, “Let giving flow from your heart, not from a sense of religious duty. Let it spring up freely from the joy of giving” (TPT).

A prison ministry director shared with us that the pictures in *Creation Illustrated* are worth far more than 1,000 words. He explained that to the thousands of inmates (thanks to the donors who support this project) the nature photos and spiritual lessons are worth millions of words that transform hearts and help inmates become a new creation in Christ Jesus! “Thank you so very, very much from the bottom of my heart and the hearts of countless thousands who cannot thank you personally,” he added. “You will probably never meet these people on planet Earth, but I pray by God’s grace you will meet literally thousands in the kingdom of heaven because you were willing to give today so that *Creation Illustrated* could be placed into jails and prisons across the country.”

The angels sing for joy when even one individual surrenders to God as told in Luke 15:7. “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”

Christ gives us complete joy that we simply cannot find apart from Him. His joy is a gift that we can choose to accept no matter where we are in life or what our situation may be. John 15:11 echoes the joy of Jesus’ love, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full”—overflowing, perfect, heavenly, beyond comprehension. That’s why.

The Publishers



A woman recently bought **ALL 120 back issues** of *Creation Illustrated* in handy binders so her granddaughter would have a complete set of these timeless keepsake editions for many years to come.

You can too! For more information, turn to the center of this edition.

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Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 30, No. 4

Our Purpose . . .

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

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... IN NATURE

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Our Why | 2 |
| Giving Thanks | 4 |
| Sharing Our Mail | 5 |
| Creation Up Close | 6 |
| Courageous Caribou | 12 |
| Re-Creation Outdoors | 20 |



... IN SCRIPTURE



| | |
|----|-----------------------|
| 28 | Creation Day 1 |
| | The Creation of Light |
| 38 | Creation Highlights |
| 39 | Creation Stewardship |

... IN LIVING

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Lens on Creation | 40 |
| My Walk With God | 42 |
| Gardens From Eden | 46 |
| Genesis Cuisine | 50 |
| Children's Story | 52 |
| Character Lesson | 58 |
| Contests | 60 |
| Study Guide | 62 |



Like us:



The cover photo of a Eurasian red squirrel was taken by Vladimir Blinov of Belarus.

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Coverings

A Scandinavian proverb claims, "There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes." And Mark Twain once quipped, "Everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." Ah, but the Creator combines these two adages and designed real solutions—coverings in nature that nurture His handiwork.

For example, trees don an outer jacket that protects vital functions leading to the next season of growth. Traipse through the woods and notice the various types of bark that shields the trees from the harsh blasts of winter. Learn of the vast assortment and characteristics of such well-designed coverings in this issue's "Creation Up-Close" feature.



Whiter than snow

Drifts of snow can seem daunting to demur humans, but to farmlands and gardens the white blanket covering the soil allows the microbes and decomposing vegetation to perform wondrous works in preparation for springtime planting. In the garden story called "Let the Soil Rest," we learn that this pattern of a season of rest applies to our own ability to grow and become fruitful.

We further learn that the inhabitants of arctic latitudes are dependent upon God's provision for proper coverings. Just look at the "Courageous Caribou" in the creatures story. Their Maker provided several layers of fur coverings for these marauding mammals that journey thousands of miles in the blowing snow and frozen tundra. Their hides and fur also provide useful coverings for the native people who eek out an existence in the severe and barren arctic regions.

But sometimes barren isn't bad. The exposed and towering red rock cliffs of Zion National Park can inspire a worshipful experience as told in this edition's outdoor adventure called "Cathedrals of Zion Canyon." Millions of sojourners visit the breathtaking spectacles (often named for biblical sites or figures) in order to be covered in spiritually uplifting encounters that can transform the mind, body, and soul. Contrast the red hues with a covering of off-season snow, and the venture can become even more enlightening amid the quiet of crowdless scenery covered in the softness of winter lighting.

In fact, a covering of light is so important that God presented it on the first day of the Creation week. Early church theologians and apologists tried to explain this pre-sun glow to be like the "pillar of light" that guided the Israelites in the wilderness. As explained in the article on Creation day one, they proffered that this light was consolidated into our sun on day four of the Creation week.

Regardless of the theorizing, Jesus is clear in Luke 8:17 concerning our plight in this dark world. "For all that is secret will eventually be brought into the open, and everything that is concealed will be brought to light and made known to all" (NLT). We are invited in Romans 13:12 to "put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (NIV) as a covering against the enemy's influences and pursuit in these last days. We hold onto the promise that in the earth made new there will be no night or darkness there as we bathe in the everlasting light from His throne of glory and are covered by the blood of the lamb that makes us whiter than snow—a covering like no other that vanquishes darkness for all eternity.



Tom Ish, editor/publisher

Sharing Our Mail

Cell mate . . .

I am an inmate at the Polk County jail, and another inmate showed me *Creation Illustrated*. I loved it. Can you please send me and my cell mate some of them? Thank you for everything you do for us from the bottom of our hearts. We love you all.

Josh and Chad
Benton, Tennessee

Five gifts plus . . .

I am renewing five subscriptions and have added another one. Please use the difference from the \$500 as a gift to your ministry. You are

Dear Friends:

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G. Stoddard
Orlando, Florida

New address . . .

I had recently renewed some gift subscriptions, mine included, with my new address. I hope and pray I will receive the winter issue at my new address because I don't want to miss any issues.

Your publication is such a blessing because it celebrates God as our Creator, Sustainer, and Savior. I'm not very good with words; I just want you to know how much I appreciate all you do, and I pray for your ministry. May our Lord continue to use you and bless you richly. With kind regards and prayers,

E. Hayes
Saginaw, Michigan

A dear friend . . .

I hope and pray that you will find it in your heart to afford me a gift subscription to your *Creation* magazine like you do for those in prison. I am not in prison, but in many ways I am much more isolated and do not have the ability

to explain how very much it would mean to me right now because I am 78 years old and because my hands are numb and swollen. It is very hard for me to write; it is like carving in stone! About three years ago I received a gift subscription, and it was like finding a dear friend in my mailbox! There is much more I'd like to say, but I am losing the coordination in my hands to write, so later.

A. Shenk
Sykesville, Maryland

Missed issues . . .

Thank you, thank you, for finding the magazines I had missed and for sending them to me. I hope whomever received my missing ones were blessed!

J. Wilson
Coupeville, Washington

Stamps . . .

Thank you so much for sending me those great postage stamps. I started collecting stamps when I was seven years old. I was encouraged by an aunt, and I have enjoyed it for eighty years! From age 30 to 40 we were missionaries in Malawi,

Africa, and my house girl would help me soak and dry the many stamps that we donated to other ministries. Sadly, stamp collecting is no longer a popular hobby.

If you have anyone that could help you process them by finding buyers, I would be happy to donate a box of stamps that could be turned into cash for your ministry. I love your magazine and appreciate the work you are doing! God bless you. We are all partners and in fellowship as we await our Lord's return.

R. Stecker, MD
Gentry, Arkansas

Remove staples . . .

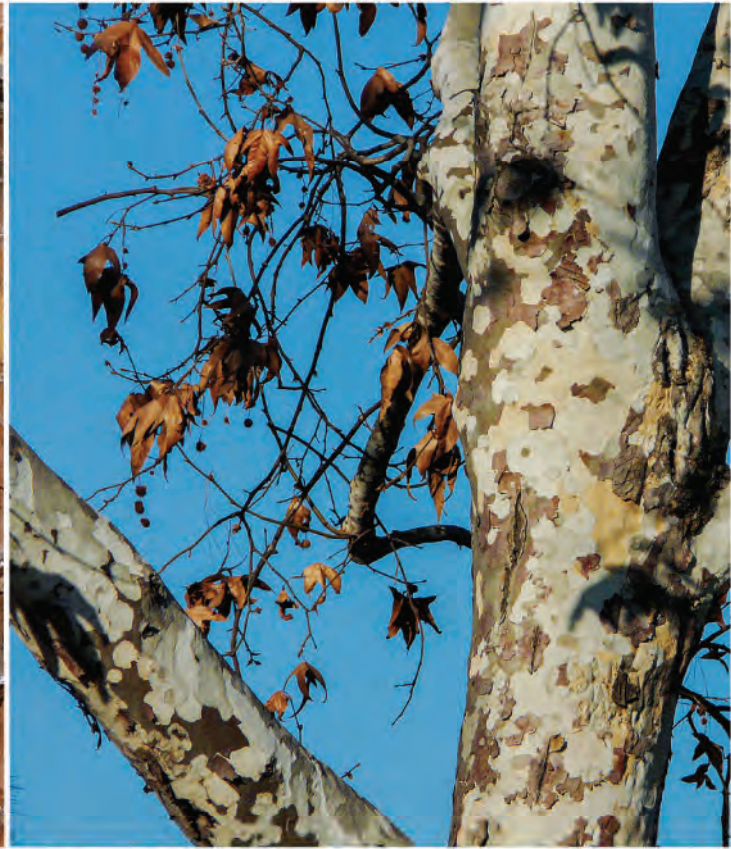
I am currently serving time in the Polk County, Tennessee, jail and would love to read more of your magazines. I don't get money from outside, so, if you could send me any free issues, that would be greatly appreciated.

Please take the staples out before mailing them as the staff will reject anything with staples, and I will not receive them. Please send what you can.

D. L. PCJ
Benton, Tennessee

A Shield

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



Tree bark can be deeply furrowed or smooth and scaly. Winter allows for closer examination of the characteristics of bark.

One of the most obvious signs of the soon coming winter is displayed on deciduous trees as their leaves dazzle us with bright hues then drop to the ground leaving nothing but the trunk and branches to endure the cold. As the northern hemisphere tilts further away from the sun, frigid temperatures, shorter days, and dormant plants dominate the environment. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (KJV).

So, what is the purpose of this dramatic shift in the scenery?

Examining these arborous skeletons further, we discover that all trees, whether deciduous or evergreen, have a protective covering of bark. Bark is kind of like a shield or blanket for trees that insulates them from the cold winter temperatures. Tree bark helps both disperse heat and reflect light so that the tree remains dormant during wintertime. If the trees experience warmer temperatures, they may begin to sprout new buds and leaves. If that were to happen

of Bark

Y S T E P H A N I E M A T H E W S



Karen Bulbuk



Karen Bulbuk

Some bark can offer wicked-looking protection to shield a tree.

in the middle of winter, the tree could die. This safeguard function of bark illustrates that our Creator designed trees with built-in protections to withstand environmental changes. The Lord God created the world with intent by knowing what is needed for each time and season. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3, KJV).

Exploring further, we find layers and different purposes within the bark that helps trees in various ways depending on the season. The first layer or

the outer bark serves as the tree’s shield against the outside world. It’s not surprising that a loving Creator would design His creation with such a provision. If God designs trees in such a way, we can trust in the Lord to protect and care for us too. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust” (Psalm 91: 1, 2, KJV).

The protection He provides His children is quite different from the scaly, rough coating found

on trees. Ephesians 6:14–17 admonishes us to “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (NIV).

The inner bark, called phloem, serves as conduits where food can travel throughout the tree. The phloem is made of living elongated cells, but after a time they die, though they do remain intact. Once the inner bark has done its job, it turns to cork and becomes part of the outer bark.

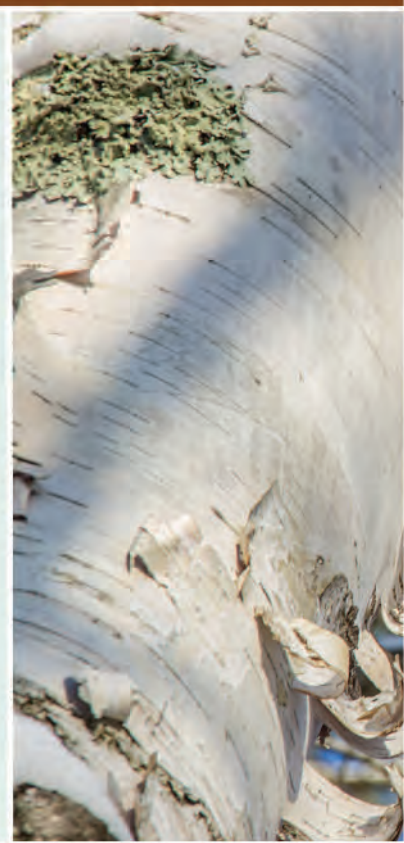
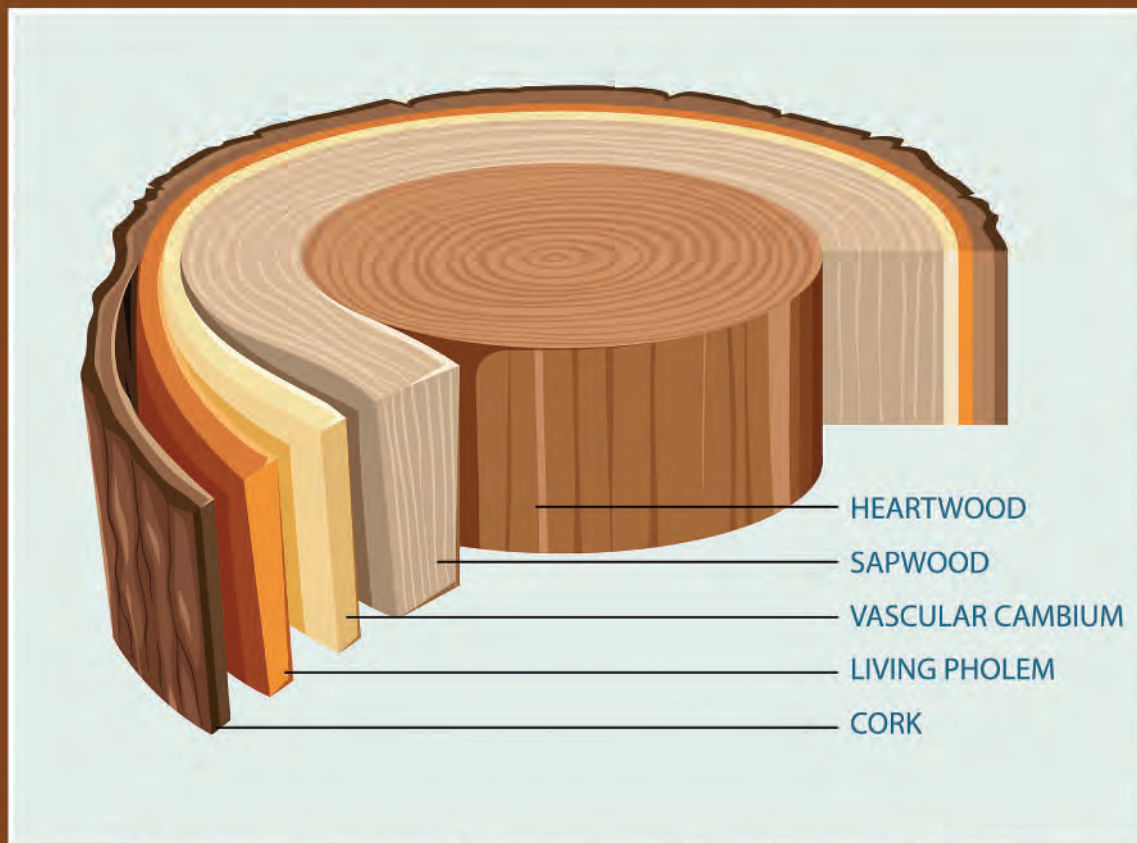
Next is the cambium cell layer, which is the part that grows every year and adds new sapwood that moves water up to the leaves. Eventually the cells lose vitality and turn to the heartwood. Heartwood provides the central, supporting pillar of the tree. Though heartwood is technically dead, it does not

decay or weaken as long as the outer layers are still intact. The heartwood remains very strong—almost as strong as steel.

Just as God created trees with strength to withstand the different seasons, so has God given us His Spirit to strengthen us. Our faith in the Lord will help us endure the sometimes stormy seasons that occur throughout our life. Like a tree that is planted in good soil, when we are rooted in God’s truth, we can thrive! Psalm 92:12 promises, “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon” (KJV).

Bark comes in a wide variety. Learning about bark can help in identifying trees during the winter when no leaves are there to help us. Some characteristics include: bark that peels horizontally, bark that shows lenticels (pores or breathing holes), bark that is smooth, bark that has cracks, bark that has ridges or furrows, and bark that forms scales or plates.

Trees benefit from the type of bark they have, and those with peeling bark shed a thin outer layer



The anatomy of a tree reveals the various layers that perform specific functions.

Peeling bark sheds paper thin

that keeps the tree healthy as the old bark falls off to let the new bark provide protection. Trees with lenticels allow oxygen to reach the living cells of a tree. Smooth bark offers a shield against insects and fungal diseases, and some young trees also have smooth bark their first few years to help insulate the inner bark during winter. Bark with cracks and furrows aids in growth and air circulation while providing a nice habitat for small creatures. Barks with scales can appear thick, which provides additional protection. Bark often serves like insulation in a house; it keeps the tree cool or warm depending on the season. As some trees age, the thicker and rougher their bark becomes with some surfaces also changing color with age.

Certain barks even have an aroma due to the amount of *terpenes*—the essential oils of plants especially found in conifers and citrus trees. This compound can aid the tree in fighting off pests, attracting pollinators, and helping regulate temperatures in forests. Isaiah 41:19 points to

some species of aromatic trees. “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together” (KJV). The frankincense and myrrh brought by the wise men as gifts to Jesus’ birth come from oil and aromatic hardened gum resins obtained by tapping boswellia and commiphora trees found in Somalia and Ethiopia.

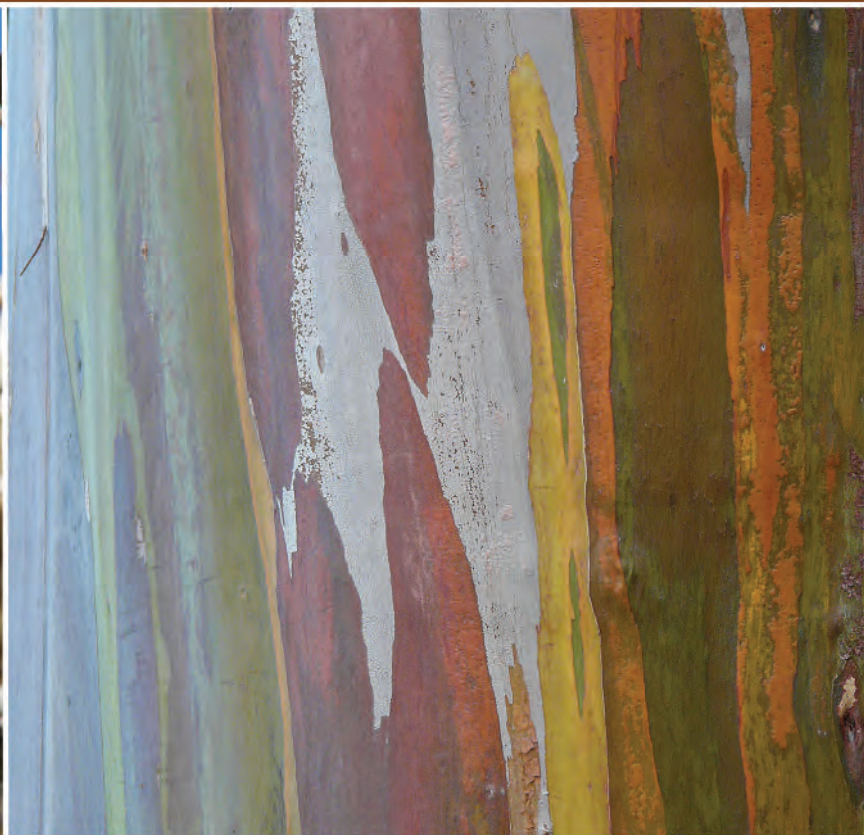
In creating trees the Lord made each tree suited to its own environment, but some trees can be planted and cultivated for crops. The more we learn about trees and their needs, the better care we can give them to be fruitful.

We, too, can be planted and cultivated where God wants us to grow, flourish, and become fruitful. If we are planted in God’s truth and trusting in His word through faithful study and prayer, we can learn more about God as the Master gardener and be assured that He will provide as promised in Romans 8:28. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the



Karen Bulbuk

layers to expose new bark as the tree grows.



Karen Bulbuk

Rainbow eucalyptus bark displays its dazzling hues.



Jenny Miner

Growth rings, heart wood, and bark layers work together in aiding a tree to stand tall in the harshest of elements.

called according to his purpose” (KJV).

While God created the vast variety of trees with their unique bark to protect them in all seasons, His provision is especially noticeable in the winter months. As we recognize the many well-designed benefits of bark, we can rest in the covering of God’s love and protection for us. Let us remember to be content in all seasons of life by following Paul’s example found in Philippians 4:11, “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (NIV).

When exploring the outdoors, draw close to God’s creation; touch the bark of trees; feel the different textures; notice the colors; examine the thickness; and even sniff the aroma.

The same God created trees with these amazing features is the same God who created you to stand tall wherever you are planted and to follow the admonition and claim the promise of Deuteronomy 31:6. “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that

doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (KJV). **C**

Stephanie Mathews writes from Tremonton, Utah, where she has published a book of poetry, serves as a homeschool mom, and spends time outdoors in God’s creation with her family doing anything from backpacking to picnics.



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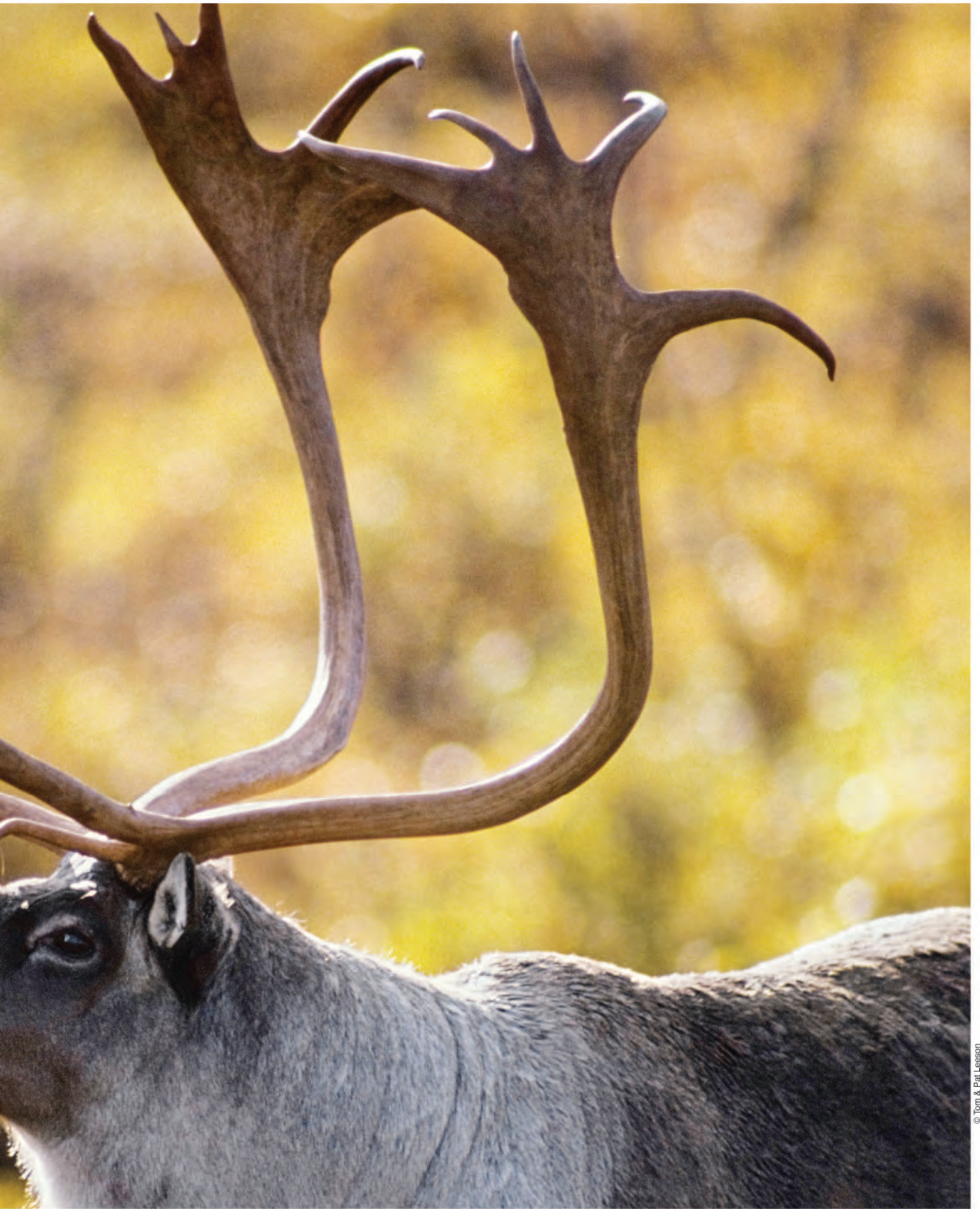
Caribou

Caribou with their regal racks of antlers roam some of the coldest and harshest environments on the planet. Long distance migrations in the arctic and subarctic regions force these hearty and courageous creatures to adapt and rely on provisions from their Creator.

Members of the deer family, caribou and reindeer are the same species. So, if there is no difference between caribou and reindeer, why two names? Simply put, in Europe they are called reindeer; in North America the animals are called caribou if they are wild and reindeer if they are domesticated. The word *reindeer* comes from Old Norse words *hrein* and *dýr* and has nothing to do with the reins that are used when they pull sleds. The word *caribou* comes from the French term *Mi'kmaq qalipu*, meaning snow shoveler that refers to the creature pawing and nuzzling through the snow for food. The hair that completely covers their nose helps to filter and warm incoming cold air before it enters their lungs. This keen sense of smell also aids in sniffing for food hidden under the snow, detecting nearby danger, and guiding their sense of direction.

By Jennifer and Tom Ish





© Tom & Pat Leeson



© Tom & Pat Leeson

Barren ground caribou (above) gallop across a coastal plain in Alaska. Unique hooves (below) help wild and domesticated caribou trod the snow and tundra.



*“For in due season we will reap,
if we do not give up.”*

—Galatians 6:9

As the only deer species that has been successfully domesticated, slight differences can be seen in controlled, semidomesticated caribou herds. Most notably, they are the only member of the deer family in which both males and females grow antlers and claim the largest racks relative to body size.

Both wild and semidomestic herds support inhabitants in the far northern climates. The indigenous people of these regions, such as the Sami of Scandinavia and the Nenet of Russia, have herded reindeer for many centuries. To these nomadic groups, the reindeer herds supply hides for shelter, meat for food, fur for warmth, as well as sturdy footing and strength for transportation—all key contributions for the native populations’ survival and existence.

Caribou congregate in huge herds with the largest in the world being the Western Arctic caribou herd reaching more than three hundred thousand head. The worldwide population (including those that are domesticated) totals around five million. These tenacious creatures have a complex social structure that varies depending on the season. They communicate using sounds, smells, and body language. Some herds are led by dominant males, while others are led by females or elders. Certain groups are mixed with males and females, while some can be segregated by gender or age. Strength found in herds allows the creatures to protect and sustain each other. This support offers a reminder that Christian community and fellowship remain important for our own journey as underscored in Psalm 133:1. “How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity” (ESV).

The North American caribou migrates further

than any terrestrial mammal. Each year as they travel 3,000 miles over a region of four hundred thousand square miles to reach their calving grounds. Such perseverance builds strong character as taught in Galatians 6:9. “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (ESV). This massive migration pattern also influenced the design of the Alaska oil pipeline that had to be elevated on tall pillars so the caribou could travel underneath it en route to their grazing areas and destination.

Such human encroachments can impact the behavior of wild animals. Professional wildlife photographers Tom and Pat Leeson of Vancouver, Washington, have pursued barren ground caribou in Denali National Park and in the Brooks Range of Alaska, as well as the woodland caribou in Northern British Columbia and in Jasper. “I’m intrigued with the woodland caribou because there are so few,” says Tom. “In my experience, unless they have been particularly heavily hunted, they seem to be curious creatures. About three years ago in northern British Columbia, I did a fairly hard hike up to an alpine lake. I saw a single caribou that immediately ran over a ridge, which was a considerable disappointment. After a few minutes I was surprised when it reappeared quite near me and just stayed for a minute or two observing. It’s always a treat to become better acquainted with God’s wild creatures in their natural home. I always come away with more than just another photo. Often I find peace and joy as well.”

When baby caribou are born, they can run faster at only one day old than a human sprinter! Caribou also display strong abilities and often do

*“I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race.”*

—2 Timothy 4:7

not hesitate to forge across broad rivers or large lakes. Their fur coats help with buoyancy, and they have been clocked swimming at over six miles per hour. Just as caribou undertake long and arduous migrations, we, too, are called to keep our heart and mind focused throughout our spiritual journey despite the challenges we face. As Paul noted near the end of his ministry, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Another wildlife photographer, Steve Lackie of Anchorage, Alaska, concurs by noting, “For the most part caribou are always on the move unless they are laying down to rest. Just walking they can out distance a human even if you are running. I’ve never had a problem photographing caribou as they are basically docile; however, any animal with antlers can be aggressive, and you should always be careful around them. It takes time to gain their trust; stay close to the ground and slowly work your way toward them. They do not like you to get too close, so, this is where a telephoto lens works well.”

Caribou vary in size, weight, and color depending on their subspecies and habitat. The average weight ranges from 240 to 700 pounds; they stand about four to five feet high at the shoulder; and their life span is about fifteen years. As herbivores, they consume up to twelve pounds of food a day by feeding mostly on grasses and plants in the summer. During the harsh winter months, caribou turn to eating the low-growing lichen, which are a combination of algae and fungus, representing 90 percent of their diet. A special digestive system with a four-chambered stomach allows these hearty creatures to digest tough plants and store fat for the winter.

One may wonder how caribou endure the bitter cold with subzero temperatures as low as minus 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The Creator has blessed the caribou with several helpful adaptations including minimizing heat loss with counter-current heat exchange in their legs and nasal passages. The blood moving up their legs is heated by the blood moving down their legs from their body core, which transfers and recycles the heat. Also, in their nasal passages another specialized counter-current vascular heat exchange allows the incoming cold air to be warmed before going to their lungs. Condensation from the expelled air also gets captured before their breath is fully exhaled, which moistens the dry incoming air.

Another helpful design is the caribou’s large crescent-shaped cloven hooves that even adapt to the seasons. During the snowy winter, their large hoofs function like snowshoes, and the hoof pads shrink and tighten, which exposes the rim of their hooves allowing them to cut into the ice and hard snow for more stability and grip. Each hoof has four toes—two large toes that support most of their weight and are used to help dig for food under the snow. In the summer, when walking in the soft, wet tundra, the footpads become sponge-like, providing extra traction in the swampy conditions that are becoming softer, wetter, and harder to traverse due to climate changes and warmer temperatures. Psalm 18:32, 33 assures us, however, “It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places.” Without a shadow of a doubt, we can all say very assuredly that it is God who arms us with strength, and it is He who makes our way perfect.

© Thomas Kitchin & Victoria Hursuljesonphoto



Caribou forage (above) for scant food. Their hairy nostrils (right) help filter and warm the frigid air. Reindeer race through the snowy woods (below).



Mark Gottlieb



© Tom & Pat Leeson



© Stone Nature Photography

Caribou thrive in both barren land (above) and forests (below). Their multilayered fur (left) protects them from the elements.



© Tom & Pat Leeson

“I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger . . .”

—Philippians 4:12


Caribou are the only animal known to change the structure of their eye color, which happens only to those that live in 24-hour darkness during the winter months. The reflective layer of the eyes turns from a golden color to a deep blue to help their vision become a thousand times more sensitive to light. Researchers say it is caused when their pupils dilate and the increased pressure on the retina triggers the change in color.

The caribou’s winter coat grows three inches thick with two layers of fur. The undercoat consists of a thick, dense woolly layer. Then they have an overcoat of longer-hair with each strand being hollow and tapering down tight to the body to help trap the heat. The hollow structure also helps the hefty creatures stay buoyant when swimming and also serves to regulate their body temperature in warmer weather. The density is about two thousand hairs per square centimeter compared to sea otters that have the densest fur with about a hundred thousand hairs per square centimeter. Native people in the arctic regions, such as the Inuit, Sumi, and Nenets, make their parkas, pants, and mittens using caribou fur.

The caribou’s ability to adjust and survive in harsh conditions helps teach us to be adaptable and trust in God’s provision in all circumstances, as well. As Paul confessed, “I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:12, 13, ESV).

Caribou face many challenges and threats that currently classify them as a vulnerable species

at high risk of extinction in the wild. They have to deal with predators such as wolves, bears, cougars, wolverines, lynxes, coyotes, and even golden eagles that go after newborn caribou calves. Parasites such as ticks, flies, and worms can also cause diseases and infections. Dealing with recent weather extremes adds more challenges such as blizzards, droughts, and floods. Furthermore, the human impacts of hunting, poaching, habitat loss, climate change, pollution, and disease transmission complicate an already difficult existence for the caribou.

Through all these trials it is good to remember God’s provisions for His creatures including food, water, shelter, protection, companionship, and guidance. He sustains them through all seasons and circumstances. He cares for them as His creatures because, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1, KJV). Yet, when God gave humans dominion over all the creatures from the beginning in Genesis 1:26 and 28, He expects us to be involved as good stewards of His creation by helping to protect creatures that face undue hardships. Ultimately, He will not forget them or forsake them, and neither should we. 

Jennifer and Tom Ish are editors and publishers of Creation Illustrated and have worked together in the ministry for more than thirty years.

RE-CREATION OUTDOORS

Cathedrals of Zion Canyon

BY DEBORAH REW

The divine artistry in Zion National Park reveals a majestic temple of nature that turns the secular into the sacred and teases spirituality out of the skeptic. From the earliest Anasazi inhabitants 1,500 years ago to the early European explorers of the mid 1800s and even up to the present day, visitors to the canyon have been inspired to embrace the worshipful atmosphere.



That is why in 1861 Isaac Behunin, a Mormon who was Zion's first European-American settler, proclaimed, "A man can worship God among these great cathedrals as well as in any man-made church—this is Zion." And upon seeing the canyon for the first time in 1927, author Henry Dodge challenged, "Let any man stand there in those beautiful silences and declare there is no God, and he's got more courage than I have. Or he is a bigger fool."



Hiking through the watery Narrows in summer contrasts with the frigid Virgin River in winter.

WE REMAINED SPEECHLESS

My first view of Zion National Park's main valley appeared after coming through the historic Zion/Mt. Carmel tunnel from the east. While rolling through the 1.1-mile tunnel, the anticipation of finally getting to see the third most popular park in the country builds to a crescendo as brief glimpses through the small windows in the tunnel entice eager tourists. As we drove into the light, the view stunned us. Exclamations of "Wow!" didn't do the spectacle justice. So, we remained speechless!

My husband was trying to stay in his lane on the steep switchbacks leading to the valley floor as I furiously snapped pictures wherever I could. Neither of us had imagined such a phenomenal landscape! We have traveled the world and seen many types of mountains, canyons, and valleys, but none dazzle the senses like Zion.

The unique white Navajo sandstone caps on each of the peaks look like ivory crowns sitting on top of ruby red bases that jutted straight up from the valley floor. The steep crimson walls towering over the Virgin River on both sides of the canyon make us feel tiny—like humble subjects in God's heavenly throne room described in Revelation 7:11. "All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God" (NIV).

And Zion does have a massive outcropping called the Great White Throne dominating the valley on the east side of the river. On the west side is the Court of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and Angel's Landing, which is considered one of the most difficult hikes in the world. At the south entrance to the park in Springdale stands the Watchman formation, and on the east side is the Altar of Sacrifice named for the iron oxide that makes it look like it has



NPS/Christopher Gezon



Artists like Gloria Miller Allen are challenged to capture the grandeur and colors of Zion.

NPS

“You have come to Mount Zion.”

blood stains running down the east face. Some visitors liken the canyon’s grandeur to Yosemite National Park only in red and rust hues rather than grays and charcoal.

Frederick Fisher, a Methodist minister, came up with these biblical names in 1916. Other religious names in the park include Cathedral Mountain, West Temple, East Temple, Prodigal Son, and the Virgin River (perhaps named by Spanish explorers to honor the Virgin Mary).

It’s obvious from the biblical names that explorers and early visitors to the park found spiritual solace and inspiration from the Creator’s handiwork. The name Zion epitomizes the feelings of those who professed their faith in choosing names for the rock formations. *Zion* is a Hebrew word meaning “refuge” or “sanctuary.” In the Old Testament it refers to Jerusalem, and Mount Zion is a hill within the city—originally the City of David. (See 2 Samuel 5:7.) Psalm 2:6 calls Zion God’s holy mountain, and Psalm 9:11 says it is the place where the Lord is enthroned. Zion takes on a more symbolic meaning in the New Testament where it refers to the heavenly Jerusalem and the church. Hebrews 12:22, 23 says, “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (NIV).

Explorer John Wesley Powell originally named the park area Mukuntuweap, a Paiute name meaning *straight canyon*. But most settlers referred to the area as Zion, and in 1918 the name was changed to Zion National Monument by President Woodrow Wilson because it was easier to say and is a more inspirational moniker. At the dedication declaring it to be a national park in 1920, National Park Services Director Stephen Mather said, “Today is the christening day of a most wondrous child born of God and Nature—a child of such ethereal beauty that man stands enthralled in her presence.”



The Great White Throne

Deborah Rew



Kolob Canyon Road even glows with the reddish

YOU MUST GO

Artists complain that they struggle to paint the amazing colors on display in the layers of sedimentary rocks, and photographers find it difficult to capture the enormous scale and depth in the canyon walls. Videos fail to show the dramatic sense of wonder that demands that you must go to Zion National Park in person to understand its grandeur. It is the only way.

Getting to Zion is fairly easy, but if you go in the March to November time frame, you'll need to plan in advance because it is a very busy park. Visitors must ride the free shuttle buses during these months as no driving or parking is allowed. For this reason I prefer to go in the winter months between November and March. My husband and I went in February a few years ago, and the weather was perfect at 65 degrees. The temperature in winter can be as cold as 28 degrees, and summer days can reach 98 degrees.

In the off season, the area wasn't crowded; we could park at any destination; and we were able to get reservations at the lodge inside the national park. One downside of a winter visit may be that the Virgin River water is too cold to hike in the water up to the Narrows—the 15-mile slot canyon at the north end of Zion Canyon. It is possible to do with outfitters who have dry suits and proper gear, but this is a challenging, strenuous hike that's definitely not for everyone.

To get to Zion, I recommend a road trip. If you have at least ten days in Utah, you can also visit Bryce, Capitol Reef, Canyonlands, and Arches National Parks. Although you could see the main part of Zion in one day, allow three days to experience it fully.

There are short, family-friendly walks such as Riverside Walk, Weeping Rock, Emerald Pools, and Canyon Overlook Trail. Then there is Angel's Landing—which isn't for people who



hues of the canyon.

NPS



Chaotic striated cliffs reveal sedimentary layers pointing evidence of the Flood.

Deborah Rew

“The glorious splendor of your majesty”

feared heights. However, it is the most popular hike in Zion because the 360-degree views from the top are awe-inspiring. Permits are required, and only three hundred people per day are allowed in peak season. Historical sites reveal the rock art and cliff dwellings (between eight hundred and fifteen hundred years old) of the Anasazi who were the original inhabitants of Zion Canyon.

Land formations in Zion National Park include canyons, buttes, mesas, monoliths, mountains, natural arches, and slot canyons that encompass 229 square miles. Zion Canyon is 15 miles long and more than two thousand five hundred feet deep. The park is part of the Grand Staircase on the Colorado Plateau, and the uplifting, tilting, and erosion of the land formed a *staircase* of cliffs between Bryce Canyon in Utah and the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The bottom layer of rock at Bryce is the top layer in Zion, and the bottom layer of Zion is the top layer of the Grand Canyon. Underneath Zion is a natural spring, and the park has four life zones: riparian, coniferous forest, woodland, and desert. More than eight hundred species of plants are native to the area—the largest plant diversity in Utah.

There are 79 types of mammals, 32 species of reptiles and amphibians, eight species of fish, and 289 species of birds living in the park. Mule deer are generally the largest mammals, but bears and cougars have also been seen.

Psalm 145:5 states, “On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate” (ESV). It is clear from historical writings through present day blogs that Zion National Park inspires spiritual meditation. Henry Dodge also quoted the observations of others such as, “Go to Zion Canyon for the spiritual influence of it. If you are threatened with the effect—without cause, superstition, atheism—go there, and while you are there, for the good



The Altar of Sacrifice is splashed with dramatic cascading red.

Deborah Rew

LOOK UPWARD

Lord's sake, keep still. Don't try to describe it. Just contemplate humbly, joyously contemplate." The author sites another visitor who said, "If you want to look into Heaven, go into Zion Canyon and look upward." Dodge observed that people are always looking up in Zion saying, "You look up and worship and appeal."

Upon his first visit to Zion in 1919, Jack Lait wrote, "I stood there and I gasped, though I had become almost familiar with the miracles of Zion, I gasped; I gasped a prayer, for one may not behold what one beholds there without knowing that there is a God; that His ways are inexplicable to man and to be taken in faith alone. Zion Canyon is the most beautiful spot on this continent."

North America has the most incredible variety of amazing landscapes from the Alaska wilderness to the tip of Florida, but Zion stands out in a realm all its own. Our modern lifestyle can make it difficult to have the same experiences as the early explorers because of so many people in the park (more than five million visit Zion each year) generating extra noise and making it harder to find the quiet. But you can still find solace if you greet the sunrise, overstay the sunset, hike to remote camping areas, find a place to sit away from the crowds, or visit the park in the winter. Take a walk in God's sublime cathedral to hear the symphony of water and wind. Marvel at the riotous colors He painted on the sandstone walls. Simply look up and worship Zion's Maker. **C**

Deborah Rew writes from Evergreen, Colorado, where she spends a great deal of time outdoors as a prolific nature photographer in an effort to share the wonders of God's creation.



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The light separated the darkness.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. . . .


CREATION DAY 1

▪ BY TROY LACEY AND BODIE HODGE

The Creation of Light

“**A**nd God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day” (Genesis 1:3–5, ESV).

In the very first few verses of Scripture, we are greeted with light. According to most commentators, the light was either created by God or manifested by Himself. This light that separated the darkness was observed by God as being *good* and was called *day* while the darkness was called *night*. Together they made up the first evening and morning of day one of Creation week. A frequent question about the beginning of the Creation week



Ephrem the Syrian speculated that the first light was like a huge bright mist.

is: “What was the light source on days one through three if not the sun?”

The Bible is silent about the source. Nevertheless, this question has been debated and speculated upon among scholars and theologians for nearly two millennia with varying views that must be examined in comparison to Scripture.

For example, Tertullian (AD 155–220) of Carthage was an early Christian apologist and theologian who believed that the light was a physical manifestation of Christ’s glory early in Creation week. Tertullian wrote, “Then, therefore, does the Word also Himself assume His own form and glorious garb, His own sound and vocal utterance, when God says, ‘Let there be light’ (Genesis 1:3). This is the perfect nativity of the Word, when He proceeds forth from God. . . .”

However, John 1:9 is using light in a metaphorical sense of the revealed truth of God. It is also used in the sense of illuminating that truth to mankind. So, it may not be the best interpretation to say this physical light in early Genesis 1 is explained by the light of Christ found in John 1. Because God created the light, this naturally makes God the ultimate Source by His power, but what was the specific source?

Ephrem the Syrian (AD 306–373) was an apologist, a hymnographer, and a theologian in Edessa, Syria. Ephrem speculated that the first light was like a huge bright mist or a pillar of fire and that after day three ended, God *re-purposed* that light (and its heat) into the sun, moon, and stars.

He wrote, “After Moses spoke of



The sun, moon, and stars did not provide light until the fourth day of Creation.

heaven and earth, of the darkness, the abyss, and the wind that came to be at the beginning of the first night, he then turned to speak about the light that came to be at dawn of the first day. At the end of the twelve hours of that night, the light was created between the clouds and the waters, and it chased away the shadow of the clouds that were overshadowing the waters and making them dark. . . . The light then was like a bright mist over the face of the earth. Whether it was like the dawn or like the pillar that gave light in the wilderness to the people, it is obvious that it was unable to chase away the darkness that was spread over the face of everything, unless it had spread out completely over everything, either by its substance or by its appearance.”

But a logical problem arises here.

The sun is like a pillar of fire—nuclear fusion fire that doesn’t need oxygen like fires on earth. So, the sun would really have been made on day one, and then slightly modified on day four in this view. Yet, we read that God made the greater and lesser lights on day four. Furthermore, these newly fashioned lights were *placed* or *set* in the expanse by God (Genesis 1:17) to give light on the earth. So, any alleged material coalescing into the sun, moon, and stars doesn’t appear to fit this description. Also, why would God have to say these new sources were to give light on the earth if the previous material making the pillar of fire was already doing that? While it is certainly within God’s power and discretion to use existing material to create something new and totally different (i.e., Adam from dust),

*And the Spirit of God
was hovering over
the face of the waters.
Then God said,
'Let there be light';
and there
was light. . . .*



Basil of Caesarea argued the light was the essence of the sun.

there is no explicit statement that this was what God did on day four.

Then, Basil of Caesarea (AD 329–379), who was the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia and an ardent apologist and theologian, used a unique argument that God created the essence of the sun the first three days of Creation without creating its substance until day four. Using the analogy of fire and a lamp, Basil concluded that God took the *fire* from days one through three and put it in the *lamp* of the sun on day four. This is likened to the burning bush where the light of the fire existed, but the fire was not really burning from the bush (Exodus 3). One presumption here is that light must be connected to fire. Another assumption is that light is mere incandescence and not material. In our modern understanding,

we know that light can be made from other sources besides fire. The Scriptures seem to imply that the light from the new sources on day four were unique to the creation of each source and not attached to previous light.

Some apologists wonder if the angels, often described as luminaries, provided the light on day one. Augustine (AD 354–430), the bishop of Hippo, was a prolific author and a theologian. He believed that the light on days one through three was specifically created (not a manifested essence of God) or something that was later re-purposed. He believed that God created angels on day one that shone on the earth for three days (likely based on scriptural references such as Psalm 104:4; Ezekiel 1:13, 14; Matthew 28:3; Acts 12:7; and Revelation 18:1).



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*And God saw the light,
that it was good;
and God divided
the light from
the darkness.
God called the
light Day, . . .*

Augustine of Hippo believed the first light came from angels.

Augustine wrote: “It is a way of showing that on the first day, on which light was made, the setting up of the spiritual and intelligent creation is being announced under the name of light—the nature of this creation being understood to include all the angels and powers.”

We run into a subtle issue here since angels are spiritual beings (e.g., Hebrews 1:14), which poses a metaphysical question of how light from spiritual beings manifests itself as physical light in our universe. Augustine’s position is predicated on light being spiritual and not physical—an assumption he mentions where light is supposedly incorporeal. Light, however, is physical and operates within space and time.

So, could the light on day one be God’s Shekinah Glory? The *Midrash*

Bereishit Rabbah (completed c. AD 500) is a commentary and exposition on Genesis by a group of Babylonian rabbis. There are several mentions of the light in Genesis 1:3–5, with some being merely expositions on how light symbolizes good (or God) while darkness symbolizes evil. Although there are plenty of Bible passages that discuss the metaphorical nature of good and evil being light and darkness, reading this idea back into Genesis 1 may not be ideal since it is discussing physical light in our creation. But for the rabbis, it was the physically manifested shekinah glory of God, which in later Scripture was to reside in the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 40:34; 2 Chronicles 7:1, 2), and that was mentioned to shine on the whole earth (Ezekiel 43:2). No doubt, God can use His glory to shine (e.g., Luke 2:9; Revelation



Dr. John Whitcomb wrote that God created a fixed and localized light on day one.

21:23), but we are left with the fact that God never said this happened for the initial created light.

Matthew Poole (AD 1624–1679) was an English Puritan, a theologian and a Bible commentator who believed that the light on the first three days of Creation week was some type of bright cloud that moved across the earth (rather than a fixed source) and later became the sun on the fourth day.

Then Dr. John Whitcomb (1924–2020), a theologian and author/coauthor of several young-earth creation works including *The Genesis Flood*, is often credited with igniting the modern creationist movement. He believed that the light on the first three days was some type of *proto-sun*, which was done away with once God created the sun on day

four. He wrote, “God created a fixed and localized light source in the heavens in reference to which the rotating earth passed through the same kind of day/night cycle as it has since the creation of the sun.”

Whitcomb’s belief was much more in accord with what Scripture has to say on this subject in that there is no mention of using the initial light source from days one through three. Instead, the text seems to state that God created a temporary and localized light source that was done away with when the sun was created. It is clear that Whitcomb viewed the Creation as literal 24-hour days and that the first light served the same basic (temporary) function as the sun that replaced it.

Currently, Ken Ham, the co-founder and CEO of the Answers in



Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis believes Scripture teaches there was a localized and temporary light created.

Genesis ministry, an apologist and a staunch defender of biblical inerrancy, does not take a position on what the light source on days one through three was, but he observes that it must have been a light source that shone on a rotating earth once the light and darkness were separated to functionally serve the same purpose as the later-created sun. He wrote in *The New Answers Book 1* that the first three days are written the same way as the next three. So, if we let the language speak to us, all six days were ordinary earth days. . . . The sun was not needed for day and night. What was needed was light and a rotating earth. On the first day of creation, God made light (Genesis 1:3), and the phrase “evening and morning” certainly implies a rotating earth. Thus, if we have light from one direction and a spinning earth,

there can be day and night. Some people ask why God did not tell us the source of this light. If God told us everything, we would have so many books we would not have time to read them. God has given us all the information we need to come to the right conclusions about the things that really matter.”

Like Dr. Whitcomb, Ham takes Scripture as written and believes that it teaches a localized and temporary light source for days one through three. Although he does not specifically say that the light source was done away with, he highlights that Genesis 1 and 2 clearly teaches a literal six-day Creation week with God resting on the seventh day. Not having a sun before day four of creation is not a problem for biblical creationists. The temporary light source—whatever

*and the darkness
He called Night,
So the evening
and the morning
were the
first day.”*

—Genesis 1:1–5



God's Word is the supreme source of light and truth.

it was—by God's design and purpose it served to function as light and heat for the earth for three days.

Furthermore, we must acknowledge that light is used in different ways in Genesis and Revelation. The light in Genesis is a localized light source shining on a rotating earth. In Revelation 21:23 and 22:5 the light of God's glory seems to radiate in all directions and permeates all of the New Jerusalem, which is never mentioned to be rotating.

As can be seen from the small sampling above, there are numerous views on this subject, and all of them are based on accepting the Bible as the ultimate authority and then use theological inference from Scripture alone to develop an explanation. Ultimately, we must admit that Scripture doesn't satisfy

our curiosity on this question but leaves us free to put forth possible accounts, as long as we acknowledge that we cannot dogmatically assert our favored hypothesis as fact. Even today there are many aspects of light that we do not understand, and it is wise to step back and recognize this. What we can do is trust God's Word as supreme and rest in His truth. **C**

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CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

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

Answers in Genesis Founder

Ken Ham (the founder and CEO of Answers in Genesis that operates the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter in Kentucky) is quick to confess that the heart of his huge commitment to sharing Creation apologetics and a biblical worldview stems from being raised by dedicated, Bible-believing parents who challenged him to stand up for his faith. Ham has been doing this since age ten in response to an evangelistic



Ken Ham

meeting appeal.

Since the first verse of the Bible says, "God created," then He owns it all, has a right to determine the best way His creation is to function, determines what is right and wrong, and reveals how we fit into His plan, Ham explains.

Additionally, the prolific author and speaker points to Creation evidence and apologetics as a useful means to help validate the truth of God's Word and its power. Then such intellectual convictions can lead to a heart conversion in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit.

While technology can distract today's youth, Ham says it can also be used for good to reach them where they are, to help them recognize their sin problem, and to point them to Jesus as the solution.

Getting youth out in Creation is a challenge, Ham admits, but the Creation museum's extensive gardens and plants of the Bible can attract youth to be impacted by what God has made in nature rather than what man has made in urban settings.

He says his parents would take their family hiking in the rain forest or for picnics near a stream to enjoy the calming affects of nature, but now Ham says he travels so much that he often finds rest and restoration at home. Occasional trips to his native Australia to visit family do include time on the beach relaxing, drawing close to God, focusing on how great He is, and thinking about what He wants us to do.

Ham says the more we can make God's Word come alive to people (like at the Creation Museum

and the Ark Encounter that continues to expand their operations to attract visitors), the more they can learn about God and be inspired to share His truth.

From an interview with *Creation Illustrated* editor, Tom Ish, at a conference in Spokane, Washington. Learn more at answersingenesis.org.

Creation Research Shared at ICC

After a lecture we attended about the "Pseudo Science of Intelligent Design," one science professor said that one of the problems he had with creationists was that their work was not peer-reviewed. We were able to share with him that the International Conference on Creationism (ICC) is a technical scientific research conference held every four to five years since 1986.

Scientists who want to present their research submit technical papers of their work for peer review by other scientists. This year the conference was at Cedarville University, in Cedarville, Ohio. Though many of the presentations were not in our areas of expertise, we were blessed by the opportunity to learn about current research, visit with friends, and enjoy the fellowship of several hundred creationists.

Creation science has developed over the years from primarily exposing the errors of evolutionary teaching to developing a creation model that is consistent with the Word of God backed by sound, innovative scientific research. Here are just a few of topics covered at ICC this year:

- A Progressive Global Flood Model Confirmed by Rock Data Across Five Continents
- Human Brain Function Above All Other and the Creation Model
- Developing a Comprehensive Model of Global Flood Paleontology
- How Should Recent Creationists Respond to Dark Matter and Dark Energy?

As Psalm 111:2 states, "Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them" (ESV).

Condensed from *Think and Believe*, September/October 2023, Alpha and Omega Institute, www.discovercreation.org

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

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

Sharing Facts and Figures

Re-Commerce, which some say is “reverse commerce,” goes back centuries—think swap meets, garage sales, and flea markets. Thrift-store shopping used to be for those facing financial hardship, but today it is considered a fashion statement to find that unique retro look or an unbelievable deal. It is even trending on social media with one hashtag #ThriftTok generating 1.6 billion views! In fact, the secondhand apparel market is growing three times faster than the regular apparel market.

Online marketplaces have generated record-breaking growth with 272 million people or 82 percent of Americans buying or selling pre-owned items. Aside from apparel, 76 percent of sales are in categories of electronics, furniture, home goods, sporting goods, and auto parts. This re-commerce market is expected to reach \$289 billion by 2027.

Tips for Simple Living

A popular saying during the days of the Great Depression was, “use it up; wear it out; make do; or do without.” Today we also realize how easy it is to waste and overspend. When was the last time you put a patch on clothes or did mending? It is so easy to just throw things away and get something new.

Here are a few simple tips to help implement good stewardship and maybe even generate some extra funds by selling things you no longer need:

- De-clutter by selling or donating books, toys, and collectibles online. Or have a yard sale.
- Cut the bottom off tubes of toothpaste and lotions to get the remaining product out, and turn cleaning and condiment bottles upside down to get the last drops.
- Pass clothing down to younger children in your family or to friends at school and church.
- Learn to re-purpose towels and sheets.



- Using die, lace, or appliqués can give new life to old things.
- Give older furniture new life with a coat of paint or fresh upholstery.
- Plan your family's clothing and other major purchases with a yearly and monthly budget. Fewer trips to the stores equal less spending.
- Enjoy the many free resources of your local library; often they have more than books to share!

Biblical Stewardship of Creation

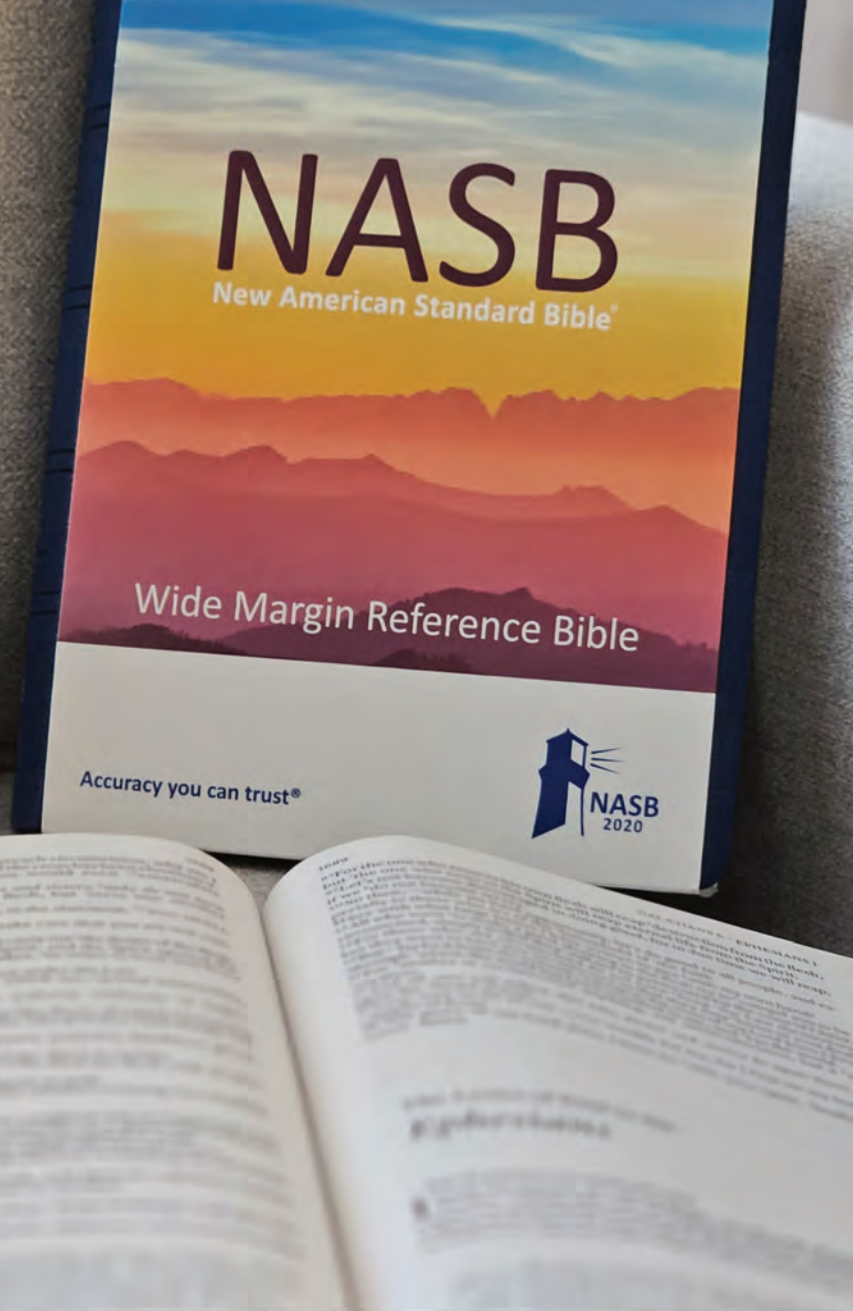
Jesus Christ is our best example in showing the importance of not wasting anything. In the miracle of feeding the 5,000, He had the disciple retrieve all of the leftover pieces of bread and fish.

He further instructed, “Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you” (Matthew 5:42, ESV). Other powerful scriptures that can guide us toward helping those who are in need and wisely sharing our goods and resources include: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27, KJV). “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God” (Hebrews 13:16, ESV). “But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?” (1 John 3:17, ESV). “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interest of others” (Philippians 2:4, ESV).

The Bible also teaches us to avoid greed above our love for others. “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5, NASB). “He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty” (Proverbs 22:16, NASB).

Daily character-building habits will help us grow in Christian stewardship and kindness. Always remember the admonition, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Corinthians 13:13 KJV).

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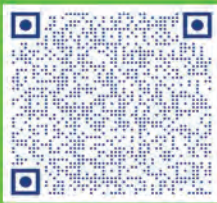
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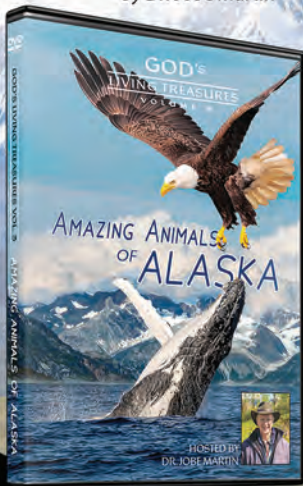
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A L E N S O N C R E A T I O N



Bobby Harrison

Pine warbler



Bobby Harrison

Red-cockaded woodpecker

1926 just forty-five minutes north of downtown Houston, Texas, the preserve covers more than seventeen-hundred acres and stands as one of the nation's largest managed urban forests.

Native, hundred-year-old loblolly pine groves stand as the most abundant trees found in the forest. Other native species such as shortleaf pine and hardwoods also present a diverse habitat for wildlife. This abundant forest offers a home to numerous southern avian species. Throughout the woods the musical trill of pine warblers, the melodious song of yellow-throated warblers, and the piping *kidee-ee* of brown-headed nuthatches ring out almost constantly.

However, the main attraction for most visitors is the chance to see the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker that is endemic of the southern pine forest. While traversing the forest, the attentive visitor will most likely hear the raspy skit, chattering, and soft drumming of the red-cockaded woodpecker long before seeing it clinging to the side of a giant loblolly pine. This little black and white bird that is recognized and named for the small, red streaks on each side of its cheeks is an amazingly unique species among the woodpecker clan.

Unlike other woodpeckers, the red-cockaded creates roosting and nesting cavities in live mature

“E very good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17, NIV). Thankfully our God does not change. Yet, our world certainly does, and humankind is often the chief architect of many of those changes. As cities grow, natural habitats fall to the sharp blade of development.

Fortunately, dedicated souls see the need for natural spaces and save remnants of wild habitats for the survival and benefit of both wildlife and people. Surrounded by housing developments and strip malls, the William Goodrich Jones State Forest provides a woodland haven for native creatures and visiting humans. Established in

Jones State Park

BY BOBBY HARRISON

pine trees instead of dead or rotting snags like other woodpeckers. They live in family groups, and the offspring from previous years often help in rearing current broods. At the Jones State Forest, management practices are implemented to insure a sustainable habitat for the woodpecker. The forest contains approximately six red-cockaded woodpecker colonies in the extreme southwestern edge of the species' range. Because of this designated federally-endangered species, William Goodrich Jones State Forest is recognized by the American Bird Conservancy as one of the five-hundred most important birding areas in North America.

But these sought after pine tree residents share the sanctuary that boasts an impressive list of more than two hundred fifty bird species altogether. Other woodpeckers such as downy, hairy, red-bellied, red-headed, northern flicker, and pileated are commonly seen, as well.

Other birds of note include eastern wood-pewee, eastern kingbird, scissortailed flycatcher, eastern bluebird, loggerhead shrike, northern cardinal, and northern mockingbird. In spring, migrating warblers and other neotropical visitors can be found in abundance.

The primary purpose of William Goodrich Jones State Park is to educate Texas citizens and visitors about public forest



Brown-headed nuthatch

Bobby Harrison

stewardship, but to the naturalist, birder, and nature photographer, sanctuary is so much more. Its mile-long nature trail and 14 miles of dirt road provide an escape into God's natural world. With the steadfast management of the forest, not only do the pines prosper, but so do we who enjoy God's great and diverse Creation.

When visiting such sanctuaries, the words of Psalm 85:12 ring with resounding truth. "Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase" (ESV). No better words could describe the William Goodrich Jones State Forest. **C**

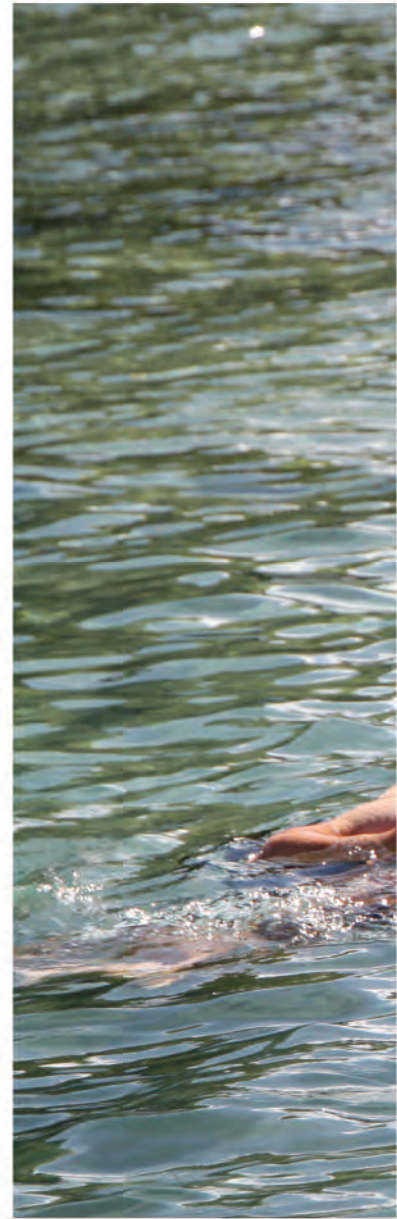
Bobby Harrison writes from Huntsville, Alabama and Oakwood University as a retired associate professor of photography. See his work at: www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com



Northern parula warbler

Bobby Harrison

Coves of Curiosity



A new morning dawned on the west coast of the Big Island of Hawaii. As the sun rose higher in the sky, the pale hues of pink, purple, and blue delicately blended together like a watercolor painting. Settling comfortably into my short-legged beach chair, I dug my toes into the coarse salt-and-pepper-colored sand composed of crushed volcanic rock and little bits of shells. The warm, gentle breezes rustled the

palm branches overhead.

A lump began forming in my throat, and my eyes teared up as there I sat, a Mother of seven, lounging peacefully on Honaunau Beach enjoying such a soothing caress in the middle of winter. It all seemed so extravagant yet wonderfully simple as I watched my husband and children frolic in the cool, salty water of Keoneele Cove. I became overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude toward God who gave this wonderful gift

to me, undeservedly through a friend—our adopted Grandmother Lynn from Alaska.

As I delightfully mused at my surroundings, my thoughts were interrupted by a long, high-pitched squeal that seemingly came out of nowhere—“AhhhEEEEEAhhhh!” At first I couldn’t make out where the sound originated as it was muffled. I felt slightly alarmed and quickly scanned the cove and could see all my kids playing in the surf.



Jeannie Gerhardt

The author tries to adjust her snorkel in order to try to comfortably swim with her face underwater.

Suddenly a boy splashed out of the water yelling excitedly, "A turtle, I see a turtle! Mom, Mom, I see a turtle!" I chuckled at my momentary worry. The sound had emanated from under the water and up through his snorkel. This young man had been actively seeking the local marine life and got surprised with a thrilling discovery. He couldn't help but share an exclamation of his joy.

When we first experience

something, we make a big deal about it. Our parents might remember the first time we smiled or walked. You might remember the first time you lost a tooth. These are all positive memories meant to be shared and celebrated just like the happy squeal from this young man's snorkel.

Are we as eager to share our failures and frustrations? When does sharing cross the line into complaining? The Bible

says, "Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:14, 15).

Earlier I had tried snorkeling and panicked. I didn't want anyone to notice me doing that. We don't like to reveal our inadequacies. I eventually

B Y J E A N N I E G E R H A R D T

removed the snorkel and only used the mask while holding my breath. I just couldn't relax enough to breathe while floating face down in the water. But I was still seeking a blessing just without the snorkel, which to me made the experience harder.

Grandma Lynn explained that it takes time and practice to enjoy snorkeling and relaxing in the water. I wished I could snorkel like everyone else who made it look so easy. As I adjusted the clip that held the snorkel to my mask, Grandma Lynn splashed up out of the water in an explosion of droplets and spray while flailing her arms and making a whoop of joy. She had spotted a large sea turtle too! She happened to put her head into the water at the exact moment the turtle decided to come up for air. What would you do if you saw a great mass of what you thought was a rock suddenly become alive and swim under you?

Sometimes our reactions are sudden, but they often fade into fond memories. Even our ability to remember is a gift from God. Our heavenly Father brings us many delights, and the best gift is His one and only Son, Jesus. This gift of abundant, eternal life doesn't just start when we experience heaven; it is here and now as we seek His presence in our lives, and it should never fade if we remain focused on the gift.

In Psalm 69:30 David declares that he will praise God with song and thanksgiving and that it would please God more than sacrifice. "The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God" (Psalm 69:32, KJV). We see the evidence of the gospel changing our lives even though we don't deserve the friendship that God so graciously bestows upon us. Yet, He extends His grace anyway.

In order to stay constantly

seeking, our journey must be *with* Him rather than *for* Him or *to* Him. So, we all joined together by strapping on our masks to investigate the underwater world further. We watched in silence as this huge turtle shell, several feet wide, maneuvered in slow motion around us with ease and curiosity. Occasionally it's black and yellow spotted head poked above the ripples of water to get a quick breath of air. Eventually it paddled its way over to an outcropping of black lava rock and began nibbling the bits of kelp attached there in the shallow water. We spent a lot of time *oohing* and *aahing* over this massive creature created by God.

As the time lazily passed, we swam, snorkeled, and then rested on the warm sand. Abruptly another voice rose in glee, "A baby turtle!" We scrambled as quickly as possible in knee-deep water. We found a brownish-colored turtle the size of a very large dinner plate floating along just above the sandy, rocky bottom.

"Stay back ten feet!" instructed a woman. She kindly shared with us that the turtles are hungry, very curious, and need their space to eat within the coves. God challenges Job by telling him, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" (Job 38:11, KJV). God set boundaries even for the ocean, and within those boundaries, turtles dine. Plus, we didn't want to scare them away; so, we watched quietly as the young turtle seemed to half paddle, half float with the movement of the tide. It was in no hurry.



Jeannie Gerhardt



Jeannie Gerhardt

Swimming with the dolphins provided one of many highlights of the trip.

We found it difficult to leave that beach and the evidence we witnessed of a caring God providing food on the sides of lava rocks for the very creatures He made. Psalm 145:16 says that God satisfies the desires of every living thing in all His creation. “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love him . . .” (Psalm 145:18–20, KJV). As we seek Him in truth, He is near to us.

Discovering turtles in the cove that day was a highlight. We spent the rest of our days curiously seeking out other beaches, coves, bays, and various adventures including driving the perimeter of the island, meeting locals, hearing their stories, and viewing waterfalls. We also had

the privilege of attending a local church where we made new friends, as well as spending part of a day reconnecting with old friends.

Then we set aside an afternoon to swim with spinner dolphins that live in a man-made, cold-water lagoon by the Hilton Hotel. They had been trained to respond to hand slaps on the surface of the water, as well as finger motions to leap high in the air. One of them swam right through my daughter’s legs! Diving, jumping, and gracefully posing, these sleek sea creatures seemed to enjoy being the center of attention while communicating in high-pitched sounds and being constantly rewarded with small fish. They even allowed everyone in the group to embrace them with a hug, and my daughter even kissed one on the nose. After this unique encounter with

one of God’s unique creatures, everyone chattered and shared the excitement and joy in their hearts.

We all overflowed with joy and delight to experience something that we could have never provided for our family on our own. We revel in the generosity of our friend from Alaska and the goodness that God bestowed through her that week in allowing us to draw closer to Him—a blessing we’ll cherish for a long time. “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever” (Psalm 146:5, 6, KJV). **C**

Jeannie Gerhardt writes from Monmouth, Oregon, where she cares for her family and explores the wonders of Creation in order to share the lessons God offers in His creation.



A blanket of snow protects the activity in the soil.

let the soil

In the hush of winter when fields lay dormant under a blanket of snow, the scene may appear as if life has come to a standstill. But beneath the frosty surface, a miraculous transformation is taking place. The life-giving layer of topsoil rests and rejuvenates to prepare for the burst of springtime plant growth. This frigid period is crucial for maintaining soil health and conserving organic matter as part of a seasonal cycle designed by the Creator.

He extensively reveals the pattern of His timing in eight verses in Ecclesiastes chapter three that begins, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2, KJV).

g a r d e n s

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Layers in the soil reveal the restoration processes of organic matter and microbes doing their job.

rest

To set the stage for a time to plant, the organic material of decomposing leaves, roots, grasses, and other ground cover play a vital role in insulating the soil in order to retain some of the heat gained during the warmer months of the year. This underground, undetectable environment helps protect a myriad of microorganisms that must flourish to maintain the health of the loamy realm. Astoundingly, one teaspoon of topsoil contains one billion individual microscopic microbial cells with around ten thousand different species!

These tiny microbes perform an essential function in supplying the needs of plants by breaking down organic material into nutrients that the vegetation can absorb. By resting the soil during winter, these organisms continue their work undisturbed as they enrich the soil for the coming growing season.

f r o m e d e n



Soybean plants provide dense ground cover that will nourish the soil.

Scientific studies have validated the importance of this period of rest. Researchers at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln demonstrated how cover crops can alleviate soil compaction without resorting to mechanical means of loosening the dirt. Furthermore, the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service has identified principles for improving soil health and sustainability, which include disturbing the soil less and keeping it covered as much as possible. A study from Penn State Extension also emphasizes the importance of understanding how soil processes are affected by farm-management practices.

The Bible also speaks to this theme of cultivation, rest, and rejuvenation from the beginning of earth’s history. In Genesis 2:15 we learn, “Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it” (NASB). This verse reminds us of our responsibility to care for the land, which includes allowing it time to rest and regenerate.

In Proverbs 28:19 we find another relevant scripture. “He who tills his land will have plenty of food, but he who follows empty pursuits will have poverty in plenty” (NASB), which underscores the importance of diligent stewardship while understanding and respecting its natural cycles and rhythms of life that have been ordained since Creation.

Cover crops contribute an essential function in this process. They protect and improve the soil, as well as help with weed control when a cash crop is not growing. Cover crops also provide a greater variety of food sources for soil organisms that helps support the entire agricultural web that is woven throughout the year. Examples of cover crops include: rye as a fast-growing annual that can keep the soil covered in fall, winter, and early spring; legumes that help fulfill some of the soil’s nitrogen needs; radishes and turnips that break up compacted soils;



Kim Hanson

After the harvest, the soil is left fallow to rest.

oats that are used for scavenging unused fertilizer and releasing nutrients back into the soil for the next crop; and clovers and vetches that provide general cover.

A good tip for planting cover crops is to do it about a month before the first frost. It is good to plant the seeds abundantly—about three pounds for every thousand square feet. Cover crops are very hardy and drought resistant; so, you do not need to water them unless the soil is very dry.

In conclusion, resting the soil during winter is not just about giving the earth a break. It's about providing what is needed to promote restoration and regeneration for another season of growth. It's about respecting the natural cycles that God designed, and ultimately it's about ensuring healthy soil that will continue to sustain us with its bounty.

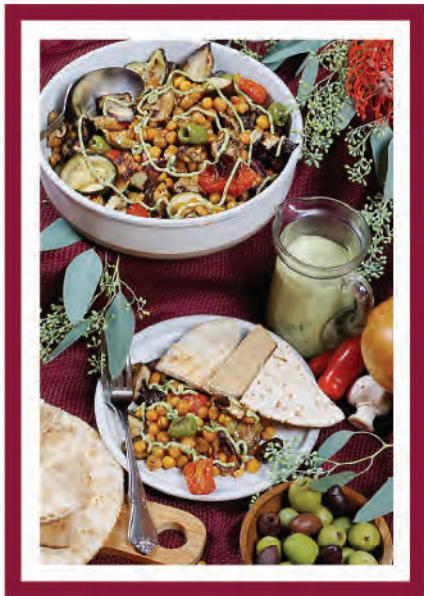
We must realize that our Creator requires rest for much of His creation. Just like soil and the creatures, we humans need that rest also. We can rejoice that we have a daily and weekly cycle where God built in rest for us to enjoy, to restore, and to prepare us for better service to Him and to others. "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15, KJV). Are we willing to rest and be restored? **C**

Compiled by staff writers at Creation Illustrated where vital life lessons found in Creation guide the editorial team.

Genesis Cuisine

Israeli
delights

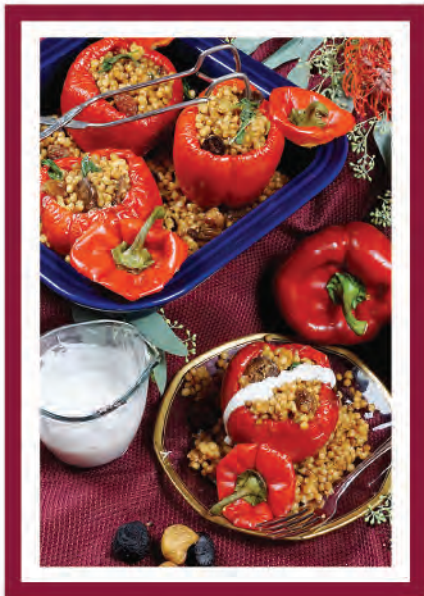




Roasted Chickpeas and Veggies

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 cans chickpeas/garbanzos | Pita bread |
| 1 C. fresh button mushrooms | Green Tahini Sauce: |
| 1 med. eggplant | 1/2 C. fresh parsley |
| 1 med. zucchini | 1 green onion, chopped |
| 1 med. red onion | 1 lemon, juiced |
| 1/2 C. green and kalamata olives | 2 Tb. olive oil |
| 1/2 C. cherry tomatoes | 1 garlic clove, crushed |
| olive oil and aromatic seasonings | 1/3 tsp. salt or to taste |

Toss chickpeas in a little olive oil and aromatic seasonings of choice such as paprika, garlic, cumin, cayenne, and salt. Chop veggies into bite-size chunks; mix together in a bowl with a little olive oil, salt, and pepper. Spread chickpeas and veggies on baking sheet and bake at 425 degrees for about 30 minutes, toss halfway through. For green tahini sauce, place all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth. Dilute with water or nondairy milk if needed. Fill pita pockets and drizzle with tahini sauce.



Israeli Couscous Stuffed Peppers

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4 red bell peppers | 1/2 C. golden raisins |
| 2 C. Israeli pearl couscous | 1/3 C. dried figs, chopped |
| 1 1/2 C. vegetable broth | 1/2 C. green onions, chopped |
| 1 1/2 tsp. garlic, minced | 3 handfuls of fresh spinach |
| 2 1/2 Tb. olive oil | Lemon Cream Sauce: |
| Seasonings: cloves, cumin, red chili | 1/2 C. cashew yogurt |
| flakes, coriander, curry, nutmeg, | 1 Tb. fresh lemon juice |
| and paprika. | dill weed and salt to taste |

Remove stems and de-seed peppers. Place in a baking dish with small amount of water. Cover and cook for 20 min. in a 350 degree oven. Saute minced garlic and other seasonings in olive oil; add broth and couscous. Bring to a boil, lower heat, and simmer covered for about 10 minutes or until couscous is al dente and most of the broth is absorbed. Stir in the dried fruit, onion, and spinach while the pasta is warm. Stuff the peppers and bake at 350 for 20 min. until hot. Top with lemon sauce.



Mini Baklava and Milk Pudding Cups

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 pk. phyllo pastry cup shells | 1/2 tsp. nutmeg |
| 1 C. walnuts | pinch of salt |
| 1/2 C. ea. of pistachios and pecans | 3 Tb. melted vegan butter |
| 1/2 C. coconut sugar | Milk Pudding: |
| 1/4 C. honey | 1 C. non-dairy milk |
| 4 Tb. water | 3 Tb. starch thickener |
| 1 Tb. lemon juice | 1 Tb. rose water |
| 1/2 Tb. cinnamon | pomegranate seeds and juice |

Combine sugar, honey, and lemon juice in a saucepan. Stir on med.-high heat until dissolved; then cook at a low boil for four min. Let syrup cool. Coarsely chop nuts in a food processor. Mix nuts, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and melted vegan butter in a bowl. Scoop into mini phyllo shells and bake at 350 degrees for 10 min. Spoon 1 tsp. of syrup over each shell. Heat milk, starch, and rose water in a saucepan until thick. Chill until set; scoop into shells. Top with thickened pomegranate juice and seeds.

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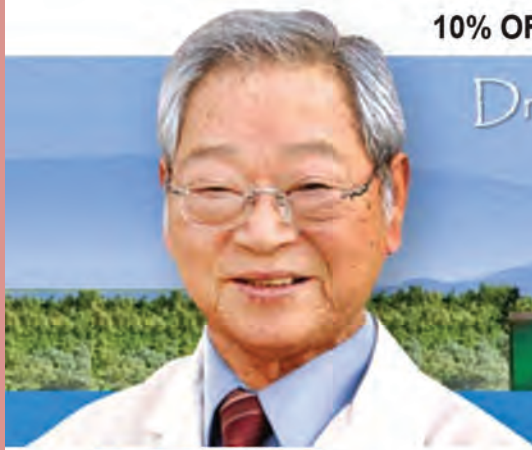
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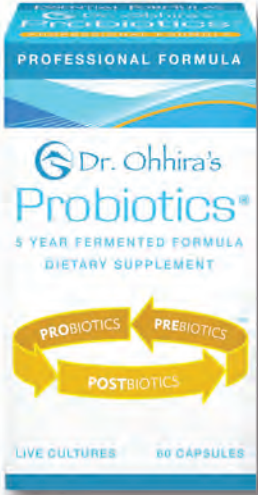
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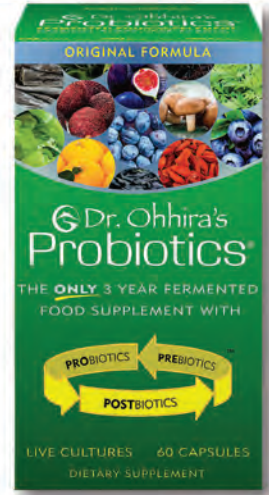
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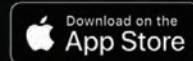
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A Winter Visitor

One winter day Susan was so excited—it was snowing! As she looked out the window, she wondered if maybe Judy could come over, and they could play in the snow together. She asked her parents if that would be okay, and soon it was all arranged. The two girls quickly put on their snow clothes and boots. But then something exciting happened!

Susan's parents saw a surprise visitor in the nearby field and excitedly called the girls to look out the back window. There they watched it too—a

beautiful red fox with a bushy long tail; the creature walked slowly across the field near the family's garden that grows vegetables during the warmer months.

All of a sudden, the fox leaped way up in the air and dove into the snow. The fox could hardly be seen, and the girls started giggling as they wondered what the fox was doing. At first it looked as if the creature was playing and having fun, but Susan's father said it was most likely doing something else very important. It was hunting for its supper.

Hunting in the snow takes special skills. Her father explained that the fox has very good hearing,

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© Tom & Pat Leeson

B Y J E N N I F E R I S H



Steve Lackie

Foxes are wily hunters.

and the girls had noticed the fox's large ears twitching and its head bending down as if it was listening for something beneath the snow.

"I wonder what type of animal the fox was after," Judy said. Susan's father thought it might be some type of rodent. He went over to their bookshelf and found a nature book that might have more information. Just then the fox hopped out of the snow with a small gray rodent in its mouth that looked like a mouse or a vole. Peering through birding binoculars, everyone got a chance to watch the fox up close. Soon he scampered across the field to probably return to its den. Susan and Judy hurried outside to enjoy playing in the snow until the temperature dropped with the setting sun.

Once they were indoors and warmed by the fire, they opened the nature book to see what else they could learn about the red fox and how it hunts so well in snow. The fox listens very carefully to pinpoint the rodent's movements. When the fox figures out the location of the rodent, the hunter jumps straight up in the air a couple feet and plunges headfirst with its mouth open. The girls giggled as they wondered if the fox got a mouth full of snow too. They discovered that when a fox jumps down into the snow like this, it

is called *mousing*. Snow makes everything in nature very quiet, which allows the fox to hear the muffled sound of the prey moving around. Judy said, "It's a good thing the fox came before we went outside to



play. We would have scared it away, and we would not have been able to watch it and learn what it was doing!”

Susan’s mother handed each girl a cup of hot cocoa to enjoy and asked, “What lessons have you learned from what we just observed today with the red fox’s visit? Can you girls think of anything special that this creature helped teach you?”


“I think the fox teaches us the importance of listening very carefully,” Judy said. Susan added, “And also being patient because the fox waited to jump at just the right time. He had to know the exact location of the rodent and probably had only one chance to catch it.”

Susan’s mother said, “Let’s see if we can find some good Bible verses to go with these important lessons. Do either of you remember any Scripture texts about being patient?” Both girls said, “Yes, the fruit of the Spirit!” They had recently studied Galatians 5:22, 23 in their Bible class at school.

They turned to the verses in a Bible and read them together. “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). They noticed a reference by that text for another one found in Colossians 3:12, 13, so, they read that too. “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive” (ESV).

“It sounds as if we need to be patient with each other all the time,” Susan said. Her mother agreed and said that God provides many lessons like this in His creation. “Let’s look to see if we can find a helpful Scripture text about the importance of listening,” she added.

“I know of a good one,” Judy offered. “It’s James 1:19. ‘Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.’ I memorized that verse with my family just the other week.” She explained that they are trying to follow this advice because sometimes everyone talks at the same time, and no one is listening. They all chuckled knowing that this often happens in homes, schools, and even churches.

“Well girls,” Susan’s dad said. “I think we all really had a fun afternoon learning some important things about God’s creation and the lessons it can teach us.” Susan and Judy both agreed and were looking forward to sharing their fox sighting and these important lessons with their friends at school the next day. 

Jennifer Ish of Spokane Valley, Washington, created this story from many fond memories of growing up learning from and appreciating nature.



© Tom & Pat Leeson

Sharp eyes and listening ears are vital.

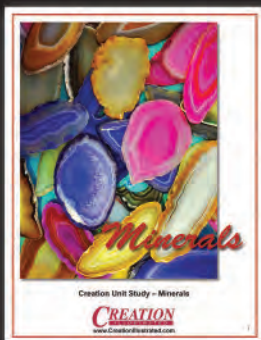
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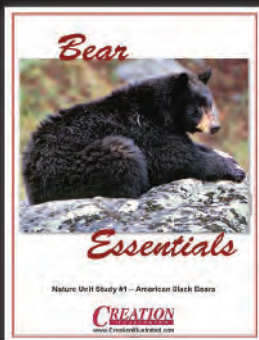


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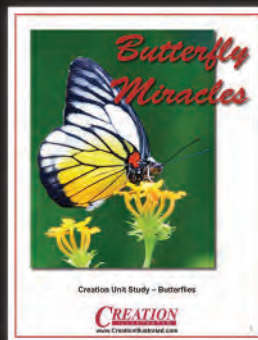
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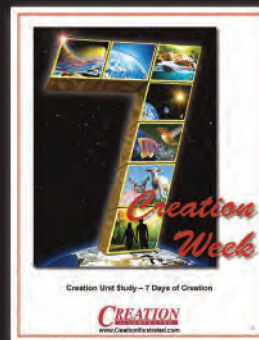
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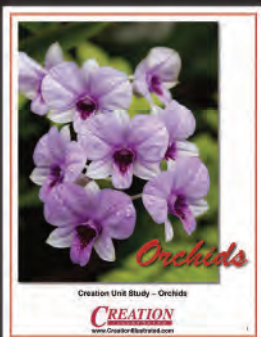
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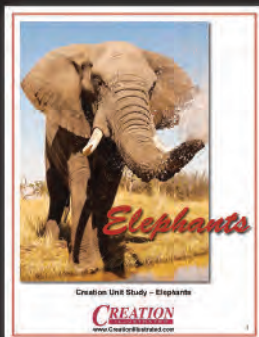
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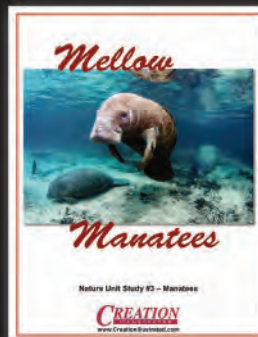
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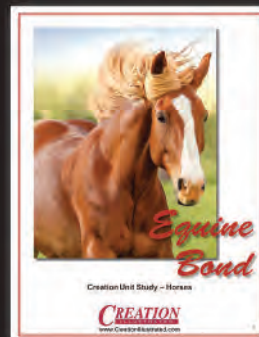
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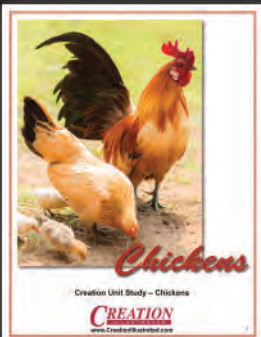
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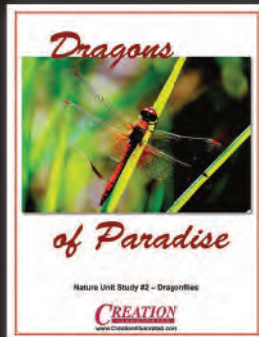
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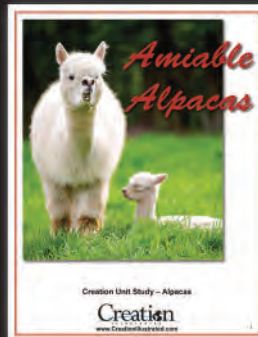
Horses



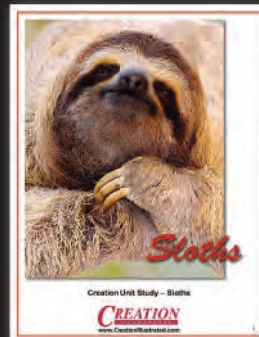
Chickens



Dragonflies



Alpacas



Sloths

with Cellphone Addiction!

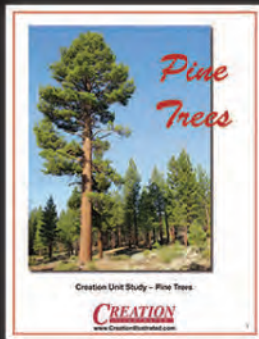
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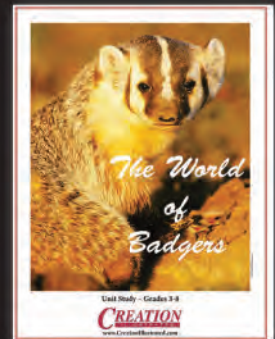
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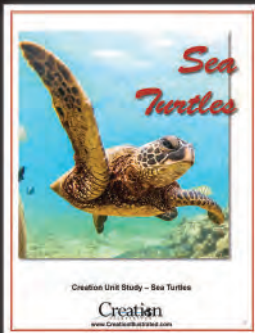
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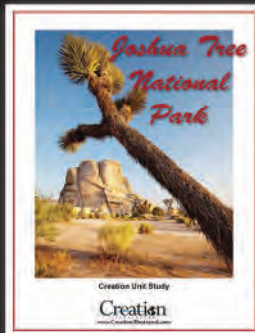
Snow



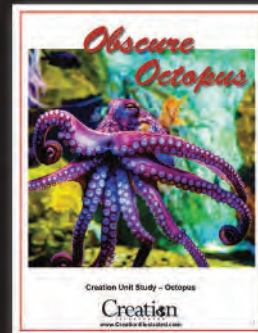
Badgers



Sea Turtles



Joshua Tree National Park



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God Sends Snow

"God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend. For he says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth'; Likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength. He seals the hand of every man, that all men may know His work.

The animals enter dens, and remain in their lairs. From the chamber of the south comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds of the north. By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen. Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His bright clouds. And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, that they may do whatever He commands them on the face of the whole earth. He causes it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy" Job 37:5-13.

God sends the snow for one of three reasons:

1. For correction: Storms may force you to change your plans so that God's plans for you may succeed. He sees what we do not see.

2. For His land: The pastures and farm lands welcome the snow. The snow melts slowly into the ground providing moisture needed for growth of food for man and animal.

3. For mercy: Because of His mercy, the thick insulating blanket of snow falls before the temperature falls. Snow protects seeds and soil from hard, deep freezes. It may also be in mercy that a storm hits, causing all evening programs to cancel. Thus you find an unexpected evening to re-evaluate the worth of your activities.

The trials and the storms of life often prove your very best blessing.

Your life might even be spared by what appears to be a disappointment. Jacob said, "All these things are against me." Genesis 42:33. But God had a bigger picture in mind. "All things work together for good to those who love God." Romans 8:28. It doesn't say "some things" or "most things" or "joyous things" but "ALL things."



PRACTICAL PROJECT:

List the times your family has faced a storm of some kind. Evaluate it in the light of the three reasons why God sends snow. Can you find a hidden blessing in the storm.



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





Winter 2024 Coloring Contest First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____
(deadline & details on page 60) City: _____ State/Prov. _____

Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest



First Place, ages 6–11
Lydia M., age 9
of Daytona Beach, Florida

Winners From the Fall 2023 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 12–18
Naomi W., age 12
of Sacramento, California



First Place, ages 19+
Georgia P., age 81
of Lubbock, Texas

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest for ALL Ages!** Color in the picture on the previous page from the Character-Building Lesson. You can even add other creatures, clouds, sky, etc. Then scan or photograph your work (maximum one per quarter) and email an attached jpeg to: coloring@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Coloring Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The **DEADLINE for winter 2024 entries is February 15, 2024**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site and Facebook pages where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of March from winter-edition pictures, the first week of June from spring-edition pictures, the first week of September from summer-edition pictures, and the first week of December from fall-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site 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 Fall 2023 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

*Gordon Y., age 11, of San Jose, California, wrote:
“Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles . . .” (Isaiah 40:31). When you are sad wait upon the Lord, and He will give you strength.”*

First Place, ages 12–18 (right) *Ruthann B., age 15, of Jacobs, Ontario*



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

*Ava W., age 20, of Saint Cloud, Florida, wrote:
“No two sunsets are the same, and it is such a beautiful feeling to know God creates the sunsets for us each day. May His name be praised!”*

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Photo Contest for ALL Ages!** Get creative with your camera in nature and email an attached jpeg (maximum one per quarter) to: photos@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Photo Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address and one or two sentences on what your photo says about our Creator. The **DEADLINE for winter 2024 entries is February 15, 2024**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site and Facebook pages where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of March from winter submissions, the first week of June from spring submissions, the first week of September from summer submissions, the first week of December from fall 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*, Winter 2024 Edition, Vol. 30, No. 4

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

I. Creation Up Close—“A Shield of Bark” story, pages 6–11

1. What two key functions does bark perform for trees? Why are these important, and what do they help illustrate about our Creator? pp. 6, 7
2. What is the inner bark called, and what is its purpose? p. 8
3. What is the center of the tree called? Is it living? How strong is it? p. 8
4. List six different characteristics of tree bark and explain why some give off an aroma. pp. 8, 9
5. What are some interactive things you can do with bark when exploring the outdoors? p. 10

II. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—“Courageous Caribou” story, pages 12–19

1. Why are there two names for this creature? What indigenous people have domesticated them? pp. 12, 15
2. What is the size and location of the largest herds of caribou? What is their worldwide population? p. 15
3. How far do some caribou migrate? How did they influence the design of the Alaska pipeline? p. 15
4. Caribou are blessed with a counter-current heat exchange. How does this work and help them? p. 16
5. List other adaptations caribou exhibit that allow them to live in arctic climates. What valuable lessons have you learned from the caribou’s ability to endure hardship? pp. 16–19

III. Re-Creation Outdoors—“Cathedrals of Zion Canyon” story, pages 20–27

1. List some of the biblical names found at Zion National Park. Who were the individuals who came up with these names? pp. 22, 23
2. What does the Hebrew word *Zion* mean? What does it refer to in the Bible? (Hebrews 12:22, 23) p. 23
3. What time of the year is less crowded in Zion that allows you to drive your car instead of riding the shuttle bus? p. 24
4. List two challenging hikes in Zion. What special gear and arrangements are required? pp. 23, 24
5. List the four life zones in the park. How many species of plants are native to the area? p. 25
6. What are some challenges with touring Zion National Park since there are more than five million visitors each year? p. 26

IV. The Creation Week—“Creation Day 1—Light” story, pages 28–37

1. What is a frequent question about the beginning of the Creation week? pp. 28, 29
2. Summarize the different theories on the source of the light that appeared on days one through three of the Creation week. p. 29–35
3. What is Answers in Genesis founder Ken Ham’s position on the source of light? pp. 35, 36
4. Why is having no sun before day four of the Creation week not a problem for biblical creationists? pp. 36, 37
5. What can we say when we do not have a clear Scriptural account of certain Creation details? p. 37

Winter Family Fun Activities

Getting the family outside in harsh winter weather can be challenging. But if you have proper layers of clothing, warm boots, hats, and gloves, the cold does not usually present a problem. Many great winter activities exist for families to enjoy that are not too expensive.

Buying or renting snowshoes if you live close to parks, golf courses, or trail systems can provide fun winter hikes. Take snacks and a thermos of hot tea to enjoy after your invigorating exercise. If you can plan your snowshoe hike on a full-moon evening, it is extra special as the snow sparkles in the moonlight.

Another adventurous winter activity includes building snow forts or caves if the snow is packable. Or try having a wintertime scavenger hunt for objects found in nature. Some areas might have safe frozen ponds for ice skating in the outdoors. Snow sledding is always a thrilling winter family activity! You can also set up a sled-pulling contest! And don't forget to build a snowman or make a snow angel.



Bird watching in the winter can be a great way to get started with this popular outdoor nature activity. With the leaves off the trees, the birds are easier to spot. Try making bird-seed treats to hang in your yard to attract the winged creatures. Simply take bird seed, nuts, and berries and place them in muffin tins that are half full of water. Press the ends of some strong string into each seed muffin to make a hanger; then place the muffin tin in the freezer. As long as the temperature is freezing outside, enjoy decorating the trees and bushes in your yard and watch the birds come to feast on your tasty treats.

While it may not sound like a lot of fun, sometimes helping neighbors shovel snow or pick up debris in their yard can be even more satisfying than playing outdoors. Or making cards or cookies to take to elderly shutins can certainly brighten everyone's wintery day. Offering to read a book or nature stories found in *Creation Illustrated* to a neighbor's children can provide a break for parents while helping avoid cell phone or screen addiction.

Whatever you decide to do during the chilly winter months, remember what Paul said in the Bible. "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11, NIV).

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Requester Publications Only)

1. Publication Title: *Creation Illustrated*
 2. Issue Date: *Sept. 28, 2023*
 3. Issue Frequency: *Quarterly*
 4. Issue Number: *4*
 5. Annual Subscription Price: *\$9.95*
 6. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer):
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 Tom Isha
 (509) 267-1920
 7. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher:
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 8. Complete Mailing Address of the Publisher:
 Tom Isha
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 9. Complete Mailing Address of the Editor:
 Tom Isha
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 10. Owner:
 Creation Illustrated Ministries, Inc.
 P.O. Box 11103
 Spokane Valley, WA 99211-1103

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Requester Publications Only)

1. Publication Title: *Creation Illustrated*
 2. Issue Date: *Vol. 30, No. 2, Summer 2023*
 3. Issue Frequency: *Quarterly*
 4. Issue Number: *2*
 5. Annual Subscription Price: *\$12.00*
 6. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer):
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 7. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher:
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
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| A. Total (National and Foreign) (Include paid and unpaid circulation) | | 14. Total Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b, 11c, 11d, 11e, 11f, 11g, 11h, 11i, 11j, 11k, 11l, 11m, 11n, 11o, 11p, 11q, 11r, 11s, 11t, 11u, 11v, 11w, 11x, 11y, 11z, 11aa, 11ab, 11ac, 11ad, 11ae, 11af, 11ag, 11ah, 11ai, 11aj, 11ak, 11al, 11am, 11an, 11ao, 11ap, 11aq, 11ar, 11as, 11at, 11au, 11av, 11aw, 11ax, 11ay, 11az, 11ba, 11bb, 11bc, 11bd, 11be, 11bf, 11bg, 11bh, 11bi, 11bj, 11bk, 11bl, 11bm, 11bn, 11bo, 11bp, 11bq, 11br, 11bs, 11bt, 11bu, 11bv, 11bv, 11bw, 11bx, 11by, 11bz, 11ca, 11cb, 11cc, 11cd, 11ce, 11cf, 11cg, 11ch, 11ci, 11cj, 11ck, 11cl, 11cm, 11cn, 11co, 11cp, 11cq, 11cr, 11cs, 11ct, 11cu, 11cv, 11cw, 11cx, 11cy, 11cz, 11da, 11db, 11dc, 11dd, 11de, 11df, 11dg, 11dh, 11di, 11dj, 11dk, 11dl, 11dm, 11dn, 11do, 11dp, 11dq, 11dr, 11ds, 11dt, 11du, 11dv, 11dv, 11dw, 11dx, 11dy, 11dz, 11ea, 11eb, 11ec, 11ed, 11ee, 11ef, 11ef, 11eg, 11eh, 11ei, 11ej, 11ek, 11el, 11em, 11en, 11eo, 11ep, 11eq, 11er, 11es, 11et, 11eu, 11ev, 11ev, 11ew, 11ex, 11ey, 11ez, 11fa, 11fb, 11fc, 11fd, 11fe, 11ff, 11ff, 11fg, 11fh, 11fi, 11fj, 11fk, 11fl, 11fm, 11fn, 11fo, 11fp, 11fq, 11fr, 11fs, 11ft, 11fu, 11fv, 11fv, 11fw, 11fx, 11fy, 11fz, 11ga, 11gb, 11gc, 11gd, 11ge, 11gf, 11gf, 11gg, 11gh, 11gi, 11gj, 11gk, 11gl, 11gm, 11gn, 11go, 11gp, 11gq, 11gr, 11gs, 11gt, 11gu, 11gv, 11gv, 11gw, 11gx, 11gy, 11gz, 11ha, 11hb, 11hc, 11hd, 11he, 11hf, 11hf, 11hg, 11hh, 11hi, 11hj, 11hk, 11hl, 11hm, 11hn, 11ho, 11hp, 11hq, 11hr, 11hs, 11ht, 11hu, 11hv, 11hv, 11hw, 11hx, 11hy, 11hz, 11ia, 11ib, 11ic, 11id, 11ie, 11if, 11if, 11ig, 11ih, 11ii, 11ij, 11ik, 11il, 11im, 11in, 11io, 11ip, 11iq, 11ir, 11is, 11it, 11iu, 11iv, 11iv, 11iw, 11ix, 11iy, 11iz, 11ja, 11jb, 11jc, 11jd, 11je, 11jf, 11jf, 11jg, 11jh, 11ji, 11jj, 11jk, 11jl, 11jm, 11jn, 11jo, 11jp, 11jq, 11jr, 11js, 11jt, 11ju, 11jv, 11jv, 11jw, 11jx, 11jy, 11jz, 11ka, 11kb, 11kc, 11kd, 11ke, 11kf, 11kf, 11kg, 11kh, 11ki, 11kj, 11kl, 11km, 11kn, 11ko, 11kp, 11kq, 11kr, 11ks, 11kt, 11ku, 11kv, 11kv, 11kw, 11kx, 11ky, 11kz, 11la, 11lb, 11lc, 11ld, 11le, 11lf, 11lf, 11lg, 11lh, 11li, 11lj, 11lk, 11ll, 11lm, 11ln, 11lo, 11lp, 11lp, 11lq, 11lr, 11ls, 11lt, 11lu, 11lv, 11lv, 11lw, 11lx, 11ly, 11lz, 11ma, 11mb, 11mc, 11md, 11me, 11mf, 11mf, 11mg, 11mh, 11mi, 11mj, 11mk, 11ml, 11mm, 11mn, 11mo, 11mp, 11mq, 11mr, 11ms, 11mt, 11mu, 11mv, 11mv, 11mw, 11mx, 11my, 11mz, 11na, 11nb, 11nc, 11nd, 11ne, 11nf, 11nf, 11ng, 11nh, 11ni, 11nj, 11nk, 11nl, 11nm, 11nn, 11no, 11np, 11np, 11nq, 11nr, 11ns, 11nt, 11nu, 11nv, 11nv, 11nw, 11nx, 11ny, 11nz, 11oa, 11ob, 11oc, 11od, 11oe, 11of, 11of, 11og, 11oh, 11oi, 11oj, 11ok, 11ol, 11om, 11on, 11oo, 11op, 11op, 11oq, 11or, 11os, 11ot, 11ou, 11ov, 11ov, 11ow, 11ox, 11oy, 11oz, 11pa, 11pb, 11pc, 11pd, 11pe, 11pf, 11pf, 11pg, 11ph, 11pi, 11pj, 11pk, 11pl, 11pm, 11pn, 11po, 11pp, 11pp, 11pq, 11pr, 11ps, 11pt, 11pu, 11pv, 11pv, 11pw, 11px, 11py, 11pz, 11qa, 11qb, 11qc, 11qd, 11qe, 11qf, 11qf, 11qg, 11qh, 11qi, 11qj, 11qk, 11ql, 11qm, 11qn, 11qo, 11qp, 11qp, 11qq, 11qr, 11qs, 11qt, 11qu, 11qv, 11qv, 11qw, 11qx, 11qy, 11qz, 11ra, 11rb, 11rc, 11rd, 11re, 11rf, 11rf, 11rg, 11rh, 11ri, 11rj, 11rk, 11rl, 11rm, 11rn, 11ro, 11rp, 11rp, 11rq, 11rr, 11rs, 11rt, 11ru, 11rv, 11rv, 11rw, 11rx, 11ry, 11rz, 11sa, 11sb, 11sc, 11sd, 11se, 11sf, 11sf, 11sg, 11sh, 11si, 11sj, 11sk, 11sl, 11sm, 11sn, 11so, 11sp, 11sp, 11sq, 11sr, 11st, 11su, 11sv, 11sv, 11sw, 11sx, 11sy, 11sz, 11ta, 11tb, 11tc, 11td, 11te, 11tf, 11tf, 11tg, 11th, 11ti, 11tj, 11tk, 11tl, 11tm, 11tn, 11to, 11tp, 11tp, 11tq, 11tr, 11ts, 11tt, 11tu, 11tv, 11tv, 11tw, 11tx, 11ty, 11tz, 11ua, 11ub, 11uc, 11ud, 11ue, 11uf, 11uf, 11ug, 11uh, 11ui, 11uj, 11uk, 11ul, 11um, 11un, 11uo, 11up, 11up, 11uq, 11ur, 11us, 11ut, 11uu, 11uv, 11uv, 11uw, 11ux, 11uy, 11uz, 11va, 11vb, 11vc, 11vd, 11ve, 11vf, 11vf, 11vg, 11vh, 11vi, 11vj, 11vk, 11vl, 11vm, 11vn, 11vo, 11vp, 11vp, 11vq, 11vr, 11vs, 11vt, 11vu, 11vv, 11vv, 11vw, 11vx, 11vy, 11vz, 11wa, 11wb, 11wc, 11wd, 11we, 11wf, 11wf, 11wg, 11wh, 11wi, 11wj, 11wk, 11wl, 11wm, 11wn, 11wo, 11wp, 11wp, 11wq, 11wr, 11ws, 11wt, 11wu, 11wv, 11wv, 11ww, 11wx, 11wy, 11wz, 11xa, 11xb, 11xc, 11xd, 11xe, 11xf, 11xf, 11xg, 11xh, 11xi, 11xj, 11xk, 11xl, 11xm, 11xn, 11xo, 11xp, 11xp, 11xq, 11xr, 11xs, 11xt, 11xu, 11xv, 11xv, 11xw, 11xx, 11xy, 11xz, 11ya, 11yb, 11yc, 11yd, 11ye, 11yf, 11yf, 11yg, 11yh, 11yi, 11yj, 11yk, 11yl, 11ym, 11yn, 11yo, 11yp, 11yp, 11yq, 11yr, 11ys, 11yt, 11yu, 11yv, 11yv, 11yw, 11yx, 11yy, 11yz, 11za, 11zb, 11zc, 11zd, 11ze, 11zf, 11zf, 11zg, 11zh, 11zi, 11zj, 11zk, 11zl, 11zm, 11zn, 11zo, 11zp, 11zp, 11zq, 11zr, 11zs, 11zt, 11zu, 11zv, 11zv, 11zw, 11zx, 11zy, 11zz | 15. Total (Sum of 11a through 11z) |
|---|--------|--|------------------------------------|
| 11a. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 14,667 | 12,000 | |
| 11b. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 9,464 | 7,526 | |
| 11c. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 0 | 0 | |
| 11d. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 2,283 | 2,490 | |
| 11e. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 397 | 416 | |
| 11f. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 12,144 | 10,432 | |
| 11g. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 667 | 0 | |
| 11h. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 0 | 0 | |
| 11i. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 284 | 22 | |
| 11j. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 0 | 0 | |
| 11k. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 901 | 22 | |
| 11l. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 13,045 | 10,454 | |
| 11m. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 1,622 | 1,546 | |
| 11n. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 14,667 | 12,000 | |
| 11o. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 93.09% | 92.79% | |

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Requester Publications Only)

1. Publication Title: *Creation Illustrated*
 2. Issue Date: *Vol. 30, No. 2, Summer 2023*
 3. Issue Frequency: *Quarterly*
 4. Issue Number: *2*
 5. Annual Subscription Price: *\$12.00*
 6. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer):
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 7. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher:
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 8. Complete Mailing Address of the Publisher:
 Tom Isha
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 9. Complete Mailing Address of the Editor:
 Tom Isha
 813 S. Wilbur Rd.
 Spokane Valley, WA 99206
 10. Owner:
 Creation Illustrated Ministries, Inc.
 P.O. Box 11103
 Spokane Valley, WA 99211-1103

| A. Total (National and Foreign) (Include paid and unpaid circulation) | | 14. Total Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b, 11c, 11d, 11e, 11f, 11g, 11h, 11i, 11j, 11k, 11l, 11m, 11n, 11o, 11p, 11q, 11r, 11s, 11t, 11u, 11v, 11w, 11x, 11y, 11z, 11aa, 11ab, 11ac, 11ad, 11ae, 11af, 11ag, 11ah, 11ai, 11aj, 11ak, 11al, 11am, 11an, 11ao, 11ap, 11aq, 11ar, 11as, 11at, 11au, 11av, 11aw, 11ax, 11ay, 11az, 11ba, 11bb, 11bc, 11bd, 11be, 11bf, 11bg, 11bh, 11bi, 11bj, 11bk, 11bl, 11bm, 11bn, 11bo, 11bp, 11bq, 11br, 11bs, 11bt, 11bu, 11bv, 11bv, 11bw, 11bx, 11by, 11bz, 11ca, 11cb, 11cc, 11cd, 11ce, 11cf, 11cg, 11ch, 11ci, 11cj, 11ck, 11cl, 11cm, 11cn, 11co, 11cp, 11cq, 11cr, 11cs, 11ct, 11cu, 11cv, 11cv, 11cw, 11cx, 11cy, 11cz, 11da, 11db, 11dc, 11dd, 11de, 11df, 11df, 11dg, 11dh, 11di, 11dj, 11dk, 11dl, 11dm, 11dn, 11do, 11dp, 11dq, 11dr, 11ds, 11dt, 11du, 11dv, 11dv, 11dw, 11dx, 11dy, 11dz, 11ea, 11eb, 11ec, 11ed, 11ee, 11ef, 11ef, 11eg, 11eh, 11ei, 11ej, 11ek, 11el, 11em, 11en, 11eo, 11ep, 11ep, 11eq, 11er, 11es, 11et, 11eu, 11ev, 11ev, 11ew, 11ex, 11ey, 11ez, 11fa, 11fb, 11fc, 11fd, 11fe, 11ff, 11ff, 11fg, 11fh, 11fi, 11fj, 11fk, 11fl, 11fm, 11fn, 11fo, 11fp, 11fp, 11fq, 11fr, 11fs, 11ft, 11fu, 11fv, 11fv, 11fw, 11fx, 11fy, 11fz, 11ga, 11gb, 11gc, 11gd, 11ge, 11gf, 11gf, 11gg, 11gh, 11gi, 11gj, 11gk, 11gl, 11gm, 11gn, 11go, 11gp, 11gp, 11gq, 11gr, 11gs, 11gt, 11gu, 11gv, 11gv, 11gw, 11gx, 11gy, 11gz, 11ha, 11hb, 11hc, 11hd, 11he, 11hf, 11hf, 11hg, 11hh, 11hi, 11hj, 11hk, 11hl, 11hm, 11hn, 11ho, 11hp, 11hp, 11hq, 11hr, 11hs, 11ht, 11hu, 11hv, 11hv, 11hw, 11hx, 11hy, 11hz, 11ia, 11ib, 11ic, 11id, 11ie, 11if, 11if, 11ig, 11ih, 11ii, 11ij, 11ik, 11il, 11im, 11in, 11io, 11ip, 11ip, 11iq, 11ir, 11is, 11it, 11iu, 11iv, 11iv, 11iw, 11ix, 11iy, 11iz, 11ja, 11jb, 11jc, 11jd, 11je, 11jf, 11jf, 11jg, 11jh, 11ji, 11jj, 11jk, 11kl, 11lm, 11ln, 11lo, 11lp, 11lp, 11lq, 11lr, 11ls, 11lt, 11lu, 11lv, 11lv, 11lw, 11lx, 11ly, 11lz, 11ma, 11mb, 11mc, 11md, 11me, 11mf, 11mf, 11mg, 11mh, 11mi, 11mj, 11mk, 11ml, 11mm, 11mn, 11mo, 11mp, 11mp, 11mq, 11mr, 11ms, 11mt, 11mu, 11mv, 11mv, 11mw, 11mx, 11my, 11mz, 11na, 11nb, 11nc, 11nd, 11ne, 11nf, 11nf, 11ng, 11nh, 11ni, 11nj, 11nk, 11nl, 11nm, 11nn, 11no, 11np, 11np, 11nq, 11nr, 11ns, 11nt, 11nu, 11nv, 11nv, 11nw, 11nx, 11ny, 11nz, 11oa, 11ob, 11oc, 11od, 11oe, 11of, 11of, 11og, 11oh, 11oi, 11oj, 11ok, 11ol, 11om, 11on, 11oo, 11op, 11op, 11oq, 11or, 11os, 11ot, 11ou, 11ov, 11ov, 11ow, 11ox, 11oy, 11oz, 11pa, 11pb, 11pc, 11pd, 11pe, 11pf, 11pf, 11pg, 11ph, 11pi, 11pj, 11pk, 11pl, 11pm, 11pn, 11po, 11pp, 11pp, 11pq, 11pr, 11ps, 11pt, 11pu, 11pv, 11pv, 11pw, 11px, 11py, 11pz, 11qa, 11qb, 11qc, 11qd, 11qe, 11qf, 11qf, 11qg, 11qh, 11qi, 11qj, 11qk, 11ql, 11qm, 11qn, 11qo, 11qp, 11qp, 11qq, 11qr, 11qs, 11qt, 11qu, 11qv, 11qv, 11qw, 11qx, 11qy, 11qz, 11ra, 11rb, 11rc, 11rd, 11re, 11rf, 11rf, 11rg, 11rh, 11ri, 11rj, 11rk, 11rl, 11rm, 11rn, 11ro, 11rp, 11rp, 11rq, 11rr, 11rs, 11rt, 11ru, 11rv, 11rv, 11rw, 11rx, 11ry, 11rz, 11sa, 11sb, 11sc, 11sd, 11se, 11sf, 11sf, 11sg, 11sh, 11si, 11sj, 11sk, 11sl, 11sm, 11sn, 11so, 11sp, 11sp, 11sq, 11sr, 11st, 11su, 11sv, 11sv, 11sw, 11sx, 11sy, 11sz, 11ta, 11tb, 11tc, 11td, 11te, 11tf, 11tf, 11tg, 11th, 11ti, 11tj, 11tk, 11tl, 11tm, 11tn, 11to, 11tp, 11tp, 11tq, 11tr, 11ts, 11tt, 11tu, 11tv, 11tv, 11tw, 11tx, 11ty, 11tz, 11ua, 11ub, 11uc, 11ud, 11ue, 11uf, 11uf, 11ug, 11uh, 11ui, 11uj, 11uk, 11ul, 11um, 11un, 11uo, 11up, 11up, 11uq, 11ur, 11us, 11ut, 11uu, 11uv, 11uv, 11uw, 11ux, 11uy, 11uz, 11va, 11vb, 11vc, 11vd, 11ve, 11vf, 11vf, 11vg, 11vh, 11vi, 11vj, 11vk, 11vl, 11vm, 11vn, 11vo, 11vp, 11vp, 11vq, 11vr, 11vs, 11vt, 11vu, 11vv, 11vv, 11vw, 11vx, 11vy, 11vz, 11wa, 11wb, 11wc, 11wd, 11we, 11wf, 11wf, 11wg, 11wh, 11wi, 11wj, 11wk, 11xl, 11xm, 11xn, 11yo, 11yp, 11yp, 11yq, 11yr, 11ys, 11yt, 11yu, 11yv, 11yv, 11yw, 11zx, 11zy, 11zz | 15. Total (Sum of 11a through 11z) |
|---|--------|--|------------------------------------|
| 11a. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 9,464 | 7,526 | |
| 11b. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 2,160 | 1,958 | |
| 11c. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 22,509 | 17,980 | |
| 11d. Paid for Circulation (Sum of 11b through 11z) | 95.99% | 92.87% | |



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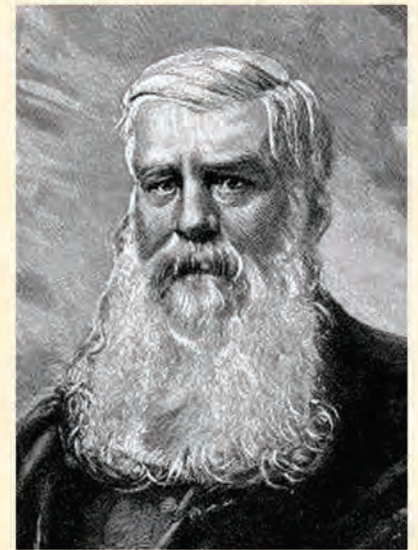
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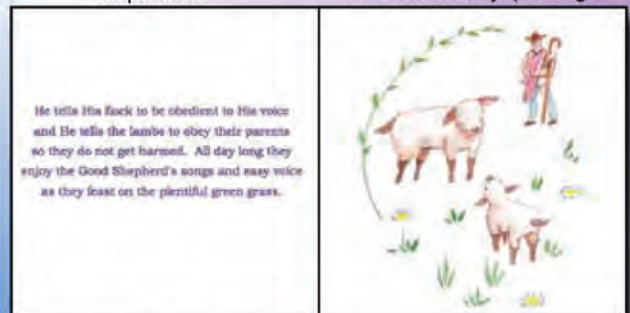
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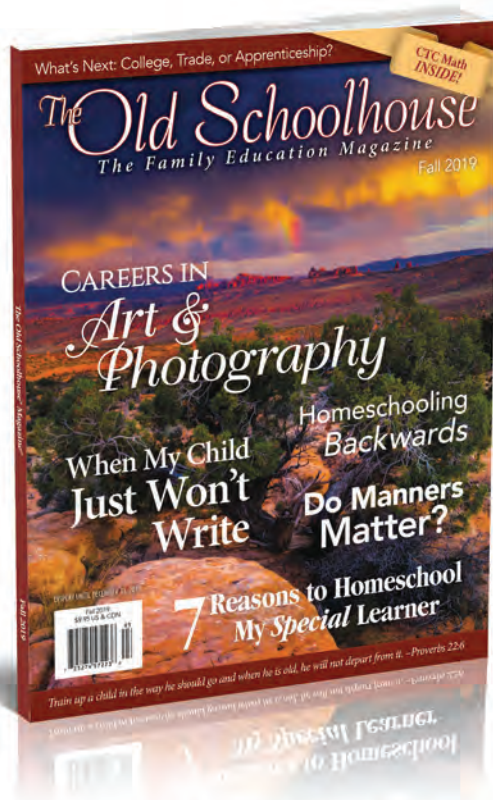
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