

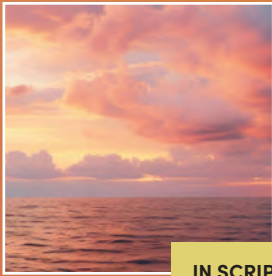
# Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR GETAWAY . . .



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

SPRING 2024 VOL 31 NO 1 US \$4.99







*“Whatever you do,  
do your work  
heartily,  
as for  
the Lord.”*

– Colossians 3:23, NASB

# Our Why



Since the inception of *Creation Illustrated*, our fundamental commitment to bring honor and all glory to our Creator called for including His divinely inspired Word in every story.

*Creation Illustrated* in nature, in Scripture, and in living provided the three areas of focus for a balance of mental, spiritual, and physical enrichment in every edition with a gentle sprinkling of scripture where appropriate. An occasional reader may feel that we include too many biblical quotes, and others have expressed that we should offer scriptural references only at the end of the stories. They thought the scriptures detracted from the facts of the story.

We beg to differ since the power is in the Word of God. So, on average there are around seventy scriptural quotes woven throughout each edition of *Creation Illustrated*. We seize every opportunity to help the reader find wisdom, guidance, and joy in God's holy Word. Placing scripture verses that blend well within the stories and teaches important character lessons is the *Creation Illustrated in Scripture* focus of the ministry.

Our vision has always been to produce a publication that anyone at any age can embrace, enjoy, and be transformed by the eternal truths found or illustrated in the things God made—Christ's method of teaching the masses in His day and an approach that still impacts lives today. So, families use *Creation Illustrated* to help educate their children about the wonders of God's creation, but more importantly, to learn of God's love for them and in turn they grow to love and "worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water" (Revelation 14:7).

Such meaningful edification is not just for individuals or students, but this balance of lessons from nature combined with scripture quotes proves to be effective in prisons and hospitals where people are suffering and searching for comfort and meaning in life. Whatever the situation may be, we encourage readers to look up the scriptures in their own personal Bibles and read them out loud, underline the salient verses, and take notes or journal about how to apply God's Word to their own lives and claim Christ's promise found in Matthew 4:4. "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.""

It is our prayerful desire to have *Creation Illustrated* become your *companion* to help you reconnect with nature, God, and your family. The result will be lasting, meaningful, and *genuine* relationships in a world that is becoming more fragmented and artificial with the threat of AI-generated information and images. We trust that Bible-centered and powerfully authentic material will win hearts, minds, and souls for eternity. That's why.

## The Publishers



Springtime may not be considered a peak season for gift giving, but commemorating Christ's resurrection, Mother's Day, weddings, graduations, and eventually Father's Day provide occasions for sharing the uplifting wonders found in *Creation Illustrated* by giving gift subscriptions that keep on giving all year long! Plus, U.S. shipping is always on the house!

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# Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 31, No. 1

## Our Purpose . . .

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

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The cover photo of baby chicks was taken by Anatolii Tsekhmister of Ukraine.

Like us: 

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## A Name

The familiar Shakespearean quote, “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell just as sweet” connotes that names are somewhat irrelevant. However, names remain vital in revealing key characteristics such as function, stature, location, and true identity that generate clarity and understanding for effective communication.

For example, this edition’s creature story focuses on Canada geese—large birds named for ornithologist John Canada. To be clear, these winged creatures are not native to Canada yet often bear the common misnomer *Canadian* geese that spreads a false identity within the avian world.



Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge may sound rather distasteful and uninviting, yet the wealth of wildlife and vast variety of terrain and habitats present a treasure trove for exploration, discovery, and lasting impressions that should not be spewed out of a travel bucket list as told in this issue’s “Re-Creation and Restoration Outdoors” feature.

Other negative labels like *pest* can immediately denigrate the subject that dons such an epithet, but sometimes creatures get this bad rap as told in the “Gardens From Eden” story aimed at helping gardeners avoid harmful critters. Fortunately, other insects get elevated to the category of “God’s Little Helpers”—those that prey on the *pests* that are dealt with in the article by the same name.

Certain creatures God created take on various names during their various stages of development like frogs that go from eggs to embryos to tadpoles or pollywogs (different names for the same thing) to froglets and finally to adult frogs that contribute to the “Frog Symphony” in this issue’s children’s story.

With more than seventy thousand species of trees in Creation, the vast quantity of names can be overwhelming, but some sense can be made through scientific classifications such as conifers and deciduous trees. The “Creation Up Close” article in this issue called “Like a Tree” covers the characteristics, benefits, and functions of a number of trees ranging from enormous sequoias of California to the African baobab tree.

On the second day of the Creation week, God provided the *firmament*—an uncommon name for the protective canopy of space that surrounded the entire earth. As explained in the “Creation Day 2” story, this space is also referred to as *heaven*—a cherished term that also means an expanse or space. After the Flood of Noah’s day, the firmament was transformed and given a totally different name—what we now refer to as our *atmosphere* (atmos meaning vapor and sphere meaning ball).

Certain names found in nature can also point to crucial concepts in the Bible. For example, the “Resurrection Fern” story tells how this appropriately named plant seems to miraculously come back to life after appearing dried up and dead. Such examples of God’s handiwork serve as reminders and inspire hope in His promise of everlasting life for His followers.

This blessed hope that is celebrated globally during the springtime resurrection season can be attained only by embracing one name—the name of Jesus. “For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Tom Ish, editor / publisher

# Sharing Our Mail

## 30th Year . . .

Congratulations on the 30th anniversary of *Creation Illustrated!* What a blessing and a milestone of the faithfulness of our almighty God! The anniversary edition is stunning, simply beautiful as usual.

Thank you and God bless you for continuing to show the world the beauty and wonder of our Creator God through the platform that He has given you. It is a daily reminder of what God can do through His people.

There is always

much to be thankful for, and you all and *Creation Illustrated* are a special part of that for us. Again, congratulations, and may God continue to pour out His blessings upon you all and the work that He has set before you.

The Putnick Family  
Norristown,  
Pennsylvania

## Carmelite nuns . . .

Your personal story is an inspiring example of faith in God and using His gifts with human ingenuity and perseverance. It is a beautiful anniversary edition.

Thank you so much for our subscription in memory of Sr. Francisca, and we also remember your dad, Victor Ish, and all his kindness to us.

We are proud of you, and God bless you and reward you each.

Mother Teresita  
and the Carmelite Nuns  
Carmel, California

## Five cheers . . .

Five cheers for the outstanding job you did on the 30th anniversary edition of *Creation Illustrated*. Truly amazing! We are all so blessed to have

our Lord so honored and uplifted. My sincere thanks.

C. Rodgers  
Olympia, Washington

## Waiting room . . .

I recently came across *Creation Illustrated* while in an emergency department waiting room. I was captivated by the extraordinary way in which your publication combines the wonders of nature, the outdoors, and the spiritual aspects of our connection with God. It is truly a publication after my own heart. The inspiring content and breathtaking visuals spoke to my heart and kindled a desire within me.

Joshua Yancey  
Ormond Beach, Florida

## Freebies email . . .

I was excited to see your ad in a recent copy of *The Old Schoolhouse* magazine. There was an offer to get \$15 worth of freebies. I went to the Website and completed the information form but have yet to get a response. Could you send a link for the freebies?

Thank you so much! I'm organizing

a small mixed age homeschool group and want to check out these materials to get an idea if I should subscribe to your magazine.

Hello again! I just sent you an email and then went to my spam mail and found your timely response there. Sorry. Do you know how to prevent your newsletters from going to spam in the future?

Have a great day. As I type this the Lord is showing me a lovely pink sky! God bless.

A. Taylor  
Via Email

*Editor's note: This happens on occasion as every email server has different settings. We recommend white listing our email ci@creationillustrated.com and mark any of our emails not spam.*

## I'm hooked . . .

I just found a digital version of your magazine, and I'm hooked! I want to begin a print subscription right away! If I begin my subscription now, will I receive the winter edition, or will my first physical copy not arrive until the spring issue?

K. Canoy  
Springdale, Arkansas

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# Gregarious

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# Geese

**W**ith camera in hand to capture some of nature's wonders, I encountered Canada goslings as they swam between their parents on a small northern Michigan lake surrounded by a splash of bold spring colors. The following autumn I came upon some fully grown young geese on another Michigan lake. I confess that I looked right past them as I was seeking something rare to photograph like the American pipit I spotted earlier in a cove or maybe a great blue heron that can frequent the shoreline.

But on that particular early morning, the cove and the shoreline were empty. Instead, God provided Canada geese that seem so familiar to the American landscape. "Find Me in the ordinary," God seemed to be saying as I lifted my camera to my eye.

**By Colleen Lasky**

In the weeks that followed, I discovered many fascinating things about these geese with their long black necks and signature white *chin strap* markings as I leaned in closer to God too. The first thing I learned about the geese was their unique ability for imprinting—learning through mimicking behavior. But this concept goes beyond mere mimicking with Canada geese. Imprinting takes place directly after birth when the hatchlings identify with the first thing they see no matter what it is.

For example, if they imprint on humans, they think people are their parents and follow them around everywhere the humans go. If they imprint on a chicken, the goslings engage in chicken-like behavior. Interestingly, the bond of imprinting is so strong in Canada geese that people raising them in captivity must dress in goose costumes. They do this so the geese can be returned to the wild and identify with the other geese. Erroneously, people might assume that geese raised by humans will be friendlier toward other people they encounter, but this is not the case. In fact, they are more likely to be aggressive toward humans, making the creatures unfit to return to the wild.

It occurred to me, then, that we are *imprinted* to God's heart even before we are born. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5, NIV). I pondered how nothing in the world can satiate the longing I have toward God and a desire to follow Him. Prayer helps the heart meet the Father in recognition of His presence.

I also learned that adult geese can be remarkable teachers through the process of imprinting. They teach their new hatchlings everything from how to forage food both on land and in the water and how to defend themselves from common predators like raccoons, foxes, and coyotes. The teaching begins on day one when the babies have been known to dive

thirty to forty feet below the water's surface.

Yet, the goslings will be two to three months old before they are taught how to fly. These lessons are packed with wisdom. First, it must be noted that Canada geese can fly more than one thousand five hundred miles at forty miles per hour (or up to seventy miles per hour with a strong tailwind) during migration. The young geese learn how to create an efficient V-shape while flying. Astoundingly, the V-shape is created with one goose flying just a little bit higher than the goose in front of it creating a *draft* of airflow to decrease the resistance for the bird flying behind it. In addition, the familiar honking sound these migrators make is a call to change positions so the bird in front moves to the back in order to conserve energy for the long flight ahead.

Regarding my own parental journey, some scripture from Proverbs began to surface in my heart as I watched the geese flying overhead. "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6, NIV).

But the honking communication between geese is not limited to flying, however. In fact, thirteen goose calls have been identified. Their communication consists of everything from low clucking sounds while they feed to raucous sounds of alarm when facing danger. Additionally, geese that have paired for mating will greet each other with long, elaborate honking sounds even if separated for a short time.

Most impressively, the paired geese are very family oriented and typically bond for life, which can last up to twenty-four years. Such loyalty and devotion includes protecting each other as the male won't hesitate to put himself in danger if the female or her goslings are threatened by a predator. If one of the pair is injured, the other one will stay by its partner's side until it either recovers or dies. I marveled at this

*“Start children off on the way they should go,  
and even when they are old they  
will not turn from it.”*

—Proverbs 22:6, NIV



© Tom & Pat Leeson

Goslings behave by properly remaining between their parents for protection and guidance (above). Predators like the hungry skunk (below) attempt to rob goose eggs from a nest, but a daunting, squawking goose fends off the threat. Known for long migration journeys, Canada geese fly in “V” formations (right) in order to draft each other and reduce the resistance of the wind which saves precious energy for the birds.



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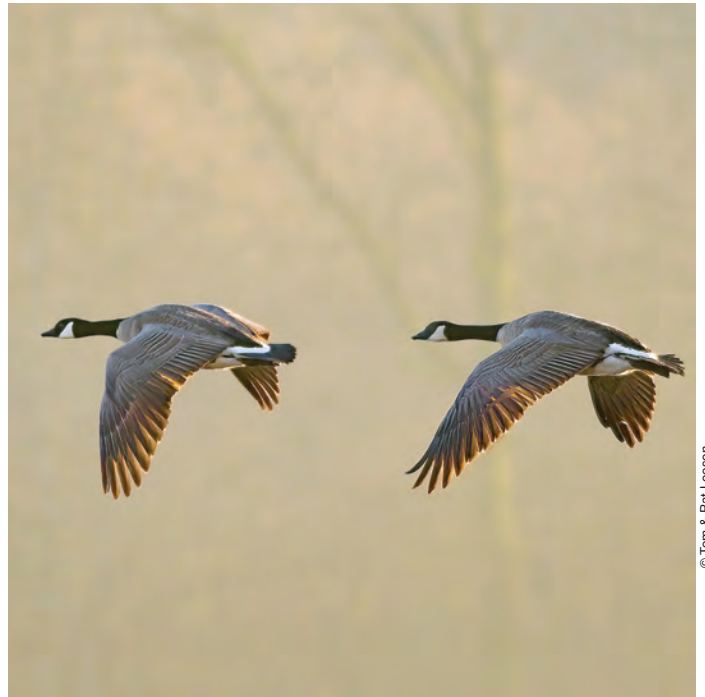


*“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you.”*

—Romans 15:7, NIV

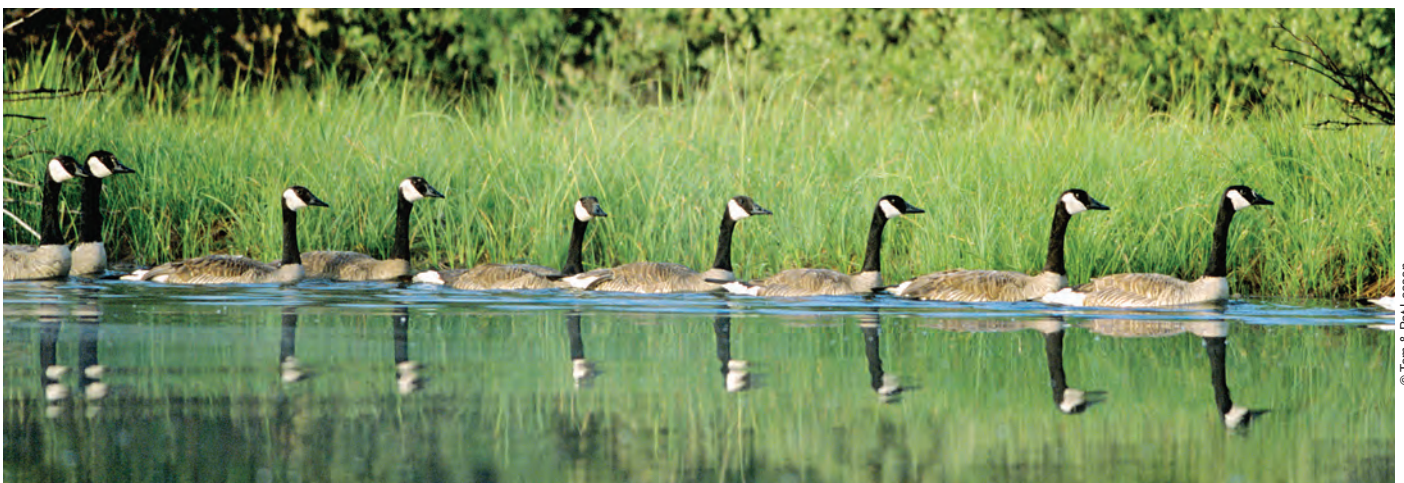


Suzanne Petrucci



© Tom & Pat Leeson

Canada geese are known for herding and protecting their brood of goslings (left). And these creatures typically mate for life, which can last around 20 years, and can be seen together in flight (above) as well as in the water or on ground. A maturing family of goslings (below) swim in front of their parents, yet continue to remain together as a family unit until the offspring learn to fly at around two to three months of age.



© Tom & Pat Leeson

and recalled the scriptural promise from God. ““Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you”” (Hebrews 13:5, NIV).


With Canada geese, their loyalty and protectiveness extend beyond the family of origin and into the community. Although they are the largest of any of its subspecies (weighing up to twenty pounds), they seem to recognize they are vulnerable to predators. As a result, *gang* broods are formed consisting of thirty to a hundred young geese shepherded by one or two adults. All young geese seem to be welcome, which echoes Romans 15:7: “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God” (NIV).

I was happy to learn that Canada geese, which are often messy, can be helpful to the environment. It’s true that they molt their feathers for a full six months beginning in the spring, and they defecate a lot on the breeding grounds where they gather. But good results from this messiness. The feathers are often gathered and used for warm blankets and soft pillows, and the ground is fertilized by the nutrients in their droppings. Also, geese serve as seed dispersers by eating plants in one area and depositing the seeds somewhere else. Finally, as part of the food chain, they provide nourishment to predators.

Some people mislabel these birds as *Canadian* geese eluding to the notion that they are native to Canada. Actually, the Canada goose is native to Connecticut and named for John Canada, the ornithologist who separated this species from other geese. Researchers identify twenty-seven species of geese found in various habitats from the Arctic to the tropics. Some species, like the brant, can migrate 3,000 miles nonstop every autumn, while others, like the Nënë, are sedentary and prefer to walk rather than fly.

As I photographed one large Canada goose

before me, it dramatically stretched out its wings displaying a set of long gray and brown feathers. The sizable creature gracefully took flight, and I was moved to think how we almost lost these avian wonders in the 1900s. My heart filled with gratitude for the volunteers and researchers that rounded them up, placed bands on their legs to follow their migratory patterns, learned more about their behavior, and took measures to ensure their existence for centuries to come.

After discovering so much about Canada geese, I rejoiced in not missing out on this unique part of God’s creation while searching for something unique to photograph. Encounters with God and His creatures can be rare fleeting moments, but the Creator is ready to reveal His power to illustrate the extraordinary in the ordinary. “How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Psalm 104:24, NIV). 

---

*Colleen Lasky writes from Brooklyn Heights, Ohio, where she spends time outdoors exploring, photographing, and sharing God’s extraordinary presence in ordinary life. You can find more of her writings on her blog: [www.rosecottagesn.com](http://www.rosecottagesn.com).*

# Like A

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



*A massive old live oak tree stretches out its strong limbs.*

*Many board*

When J. Sterling Morton moved from Michigan to Nebraska in 1854, he couldn't believe there were so few trees. Vast barren prairies stretched in every direction. Mr. Morton knew trees were important, and as a newspaper editor and nature lover, he began a campaign to encourage people in the state to plant trees.

Joined by the state governor and other

officials, they offered prizes to groups and individuals who planted the most trees. On April 10, 1872, Nebraska celebrated its first Arbor Day—a holiday that celebrates the planting, upkeep, and preservation of trees. On that day more than one million trees were planted on the state's barren plains.

Sterling Morton was right; trees are *very* important. They give us food—fruit, nuts, seeds, and even some nutritious leaves. They also act as a natural air filter keeping just the right balance of

# Tree

B Y J E W E L L J O H N S O N



*feet of cut wood supply building materials.*



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

oxygen, carbon dioxide, and other elements for every breath we take. Trees also enrich the soil by returning nutrients, holding in the moisture, and stabilizing sloping ground. Their wood provides a vital resource for building houses, making furniture, and countless other uses—even baseball bats for our nation’s favorite pastime. Furthermore, trees provide a home for squirrels, birds, and insects, as well as supply us with paper, medicine, and spices. Trees also offer a soothing solace by casting shade on hot summer days

where we can rest and draw close to our Creator.

The Bible says anyone who meditates and delights in the Word of God “shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (Psalm 1:3). So, what are some characteristics that help us be like a flourishing tree?

Trees are no pushover. They are the largest living things on earth. The General Sherman tree, a

giant sequoia that grows in Sequoia National Park in California, is 272 feet tall, and the trunk is 36 feet in diameter. The tallest trees are the redwoods of California that can grow as high as 360 feet tall, and the Australian eucalyptuses that can grow more than three hundred feet tall. These giant trees may bend and sway in severe storms, but when the winds cease, they stand tall. Devoted Christians must seize their God-given strength to stand tall and not easily snap under life's circumstances. Problems, disappointments, tragedies, and sicknesses come to all, and while these challenges may be unsettling, they won't uproot a deeply rooted faith in Christ as promised in Psalm 34:19. "The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all" (NIV).

Trees get their strength from outside resources. Roots, like underground branches, anchor a tree and absorb water and minerals from the soil to promote sturdy and steady growth. Some trees have a large, main taproot that extends into the ground fifteen

feet or more and develops millions of smaller roots that push through the soil. Christians also get their strength from an outside source—God's Word. As a person reads the Bible and applies it to his/her life, the words nourish the mind, help grow a Christlike character, and bear fruit that blesses others. Jesus said, "The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the spirit and life" (John 6:63, NIV).

Trees also live to benefit others. The baobab tree grows in thirty-two African countries and is called the tree of life because every part of the tree is so useful and valuable. The bark and flesh are used to make rope, cloth, soap, rubber, glue, and medicine. The leaves are cooked and eaten like spinach, as well as to make medicine to treat wounds, asthma, intestinal disorders, fevers, and malaria. The fruit of the baobab tree looks like a large gourd and is filled with black seeds. The seeds (rich in calcium, iron, potassium, and vitamin C) can be eaten or used to make cosmetics. Baobab trees are even sometimes hollowed out so people can live in them. Committed



*Eucalyptus trees can tower around three hundred feet tall.*



*Coconut*



Christians also live to benefit others through prayers, kind words, selfless deeds, and a benevolent attitude. “We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2: 10, NIV).

Researchers estimate three trillion trees populate the world with roughly seventy-three thousand three hundred different tree species that differ from other plants in several ways. For example, they live longer than any other form of vegetation. The bristlecone pines of California are estimated to be four thousand to five thousand years old—the oldest living things on earth! Trees also have the largest seeds of any plant. The nut of the double coconut palm that grows on an island in the Indian Ocean can weigh up to fifty pounds. Amazingly, these stalwart creations brought forth on day three of the Creation week never stop growing, and in temperate regions most trees add a layer of wood each year.

When a tree is cut down, the rings of the trunk tell us its story. We can not only learn the tree’s age by

counting the rings but also determine how much rain the tree received each year. A scar on growth rings tells us the tree may have been harmed, suffered in a storm, or faced fire damage. Almost invariably the tree recovers, perseveres, and even grows stronger from its trials. A follower of Christ is also a unique creation that can endure hardship and grow stronger. God promised to make all things new. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, personal desires change, temptations are avoided, and the life lessons of the Bible come alive to us. “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV).

The beauty and presence of trees can affect our mood and countenance. I grew up in a cold climate with long, bleak winters. When spring finally arrived, the dolgo crabapple tree in our yard burst forth with sweet-smelling, white blossoms—a glorious sight and uplifting blessing from God! Our family often posed for pictures beside the tree, and we snipped a few twigs of flowers to display in our home. Even our



*palm trees produce a massive harvest.*

Gary Bloom



*Stout baobab trees pierce the African landscape.*

Mark Gottlieb



*We shall be like trees planted by springs of living waters when we embrace the one tree that grants everlasting life.*

neighbors would comment and marvel over our tree. Other straight, symmetrical trees glowing with green leaves such as elm or maple trees delight the senses, and in autumn they light up the countryside with splashes of gold, red, and yellow. In fact the positive impact of being surrounded by trees has resulted in a practice found in Japan called *forest bathing*—remaining calm and quiet amongst the trees and observing nature while breathing deeply to help boost one’s health and wellbeing in a natural way.

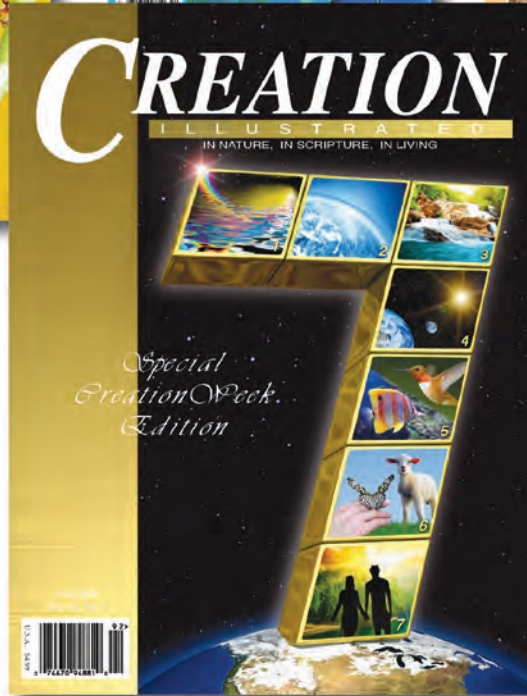
Year after year, as we grow in Christ, we too can be like the trees by increasingly bear fruit to nourish the souls around us with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—the fruit of the Spirit. The Bible tells us of a woman who impacted her community with these traits. “In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha . . . she was always doing good, and helping the poor” (Acts 9:36, NIV). These few words tell us this woman’s life bore much fruit through selfless service.

Christ is the ultimate example of selflessness as He hung on a tree to defeat the enemy and to secure eternal life for those who believe and accept His all-encompassing sacrifice. He invites us, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24).

Sterling Morton was right in his commitment to spread the important benefits of trees. And the Bible also is right as we commit our lives toward spreading the benefits of a stable, fruitful, and self-sacrificing believer in Christ—like a tree planted by the springs of water. **C**

---

*Jewell Johnson writes from Fountain Hills, Arizona, where she observes the wonders of Creation to glean Bible-based lessons that are worth sharing.*



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# Millwood Lake

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



Bobby Harrison

*Painted bunting*



Bobby Harrison

*Blue grosbeak*

and restoration is Millwood Lake State Park near Ashdown, Arkansas. The park lies in the transitional zone where eastern and western bird species merge. Though the park is only 835 acres, the surrounding vicinity encompasses more than thirty-three thousand acres of various ecosystems where about three hundred twenty-five species of birds have been observed.

Even within the confines of Millwood Lake State Park a vast diversity of habitats exist such as a cypress swamp, fresh-water marsh, lowland bottoms, upland hardwood, conifers, mixed forest, and interspersed meadows. Two trails wind through these surroundings giving visitors ample opportunity to see and photograph a variety of birds. By any standard these natural environs present modest and humble outdoor adventures compared to some of the massive national parks and forests. But amid such humble surroundings abounds a wealth of life as promised in Proverbs 22:4. “The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor, and life” (NASB).

For example, Waterfowl Way is only a mile-and-a-half long hiking trail traversing the water’s edge and lowland hardwood territory offering sightings of bald eagles, osprey, herons, egrets, and nesting pied-billed grebes. Large numbers of horned and eared

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16, 17, ESV).

How wonderful and secure it is to know that in Christ all things were made, and all things hold together. He is the author of peace and stability and gives to us His amazing Creation, the natural world, for each of us to find harmony and tranquility.

One of my favorite nature retreats to bask in such assurance

# State Park

BY BOBBY HARRISON

grebes, mallards, canvasbacks, ring-necked ducks, and other waterfowl arrive in the fall and spend winter there.

Even more vibrant avian life can be found on Wildlife Lane—a four-mile walk through mixed forests of lowland hardwoods and lakeside ecosystems. There you'll find various resident and migrant songbirds such as Carolina and marsh wrens, Lincoln's sparrows, painted buntings, blackpoll warblers, and more. Meadows and other open spaces are great places to look for grassland birds like dickcissels, bobolinks, scissor-tailed flycatchers, and greater roadrunners.

Two of the most popular birding spots are the campground and the spillway for Millwood Lake. The campground is an ideal habitat for eastern bluebirds, blue grosbeaks, red-headed woodpeckers, and brownheaded nuthatches. The spillway is usually teeming with great blue, little blue, and green herons. Great and snowy egrets, wood storks, double-crested cormorants, and white pelicans can also be found there.

The park is also known for avian rarities. Eighteen of Arkansas' rare bird sightings were first documented there that include the glossy ibis, American black duck, purple gallinule, vermilion flycatcher, and painted bunting.

Millwood Lake State Park



*Vermilion flycatcher*

Bobby Harrison

in all its diversity is among the wondrous jewels of God's creation. Christ exclaims, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). And this humble state park with its abundant throngs of feathered creatures is held together by His great power and love that cries out "There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Corinthians 8:6, ESV). **C**

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*Bobby Harrison writes from Huntsville, Alabama, and Oakwood University as a retired associate professor of photography. See his work at: [www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com](http://www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com)*



*Glossy ibis*

Bobby Harrison

RE-CREATION OUTDOORS

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# Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

BY MARGARET NAVA  
WITH JENNIFER ISH

**T**he rising sun cast a vibrant orange-red glow on the morning sky as I approached the entrance to Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge northeast of Roswell, New Mexico. Even though Matthew 16:3 suggests that a red sky could mean an approaching storm and Hebrews 6:7 states that “earth which drinks in the rain . . . receives blessing from God,” I selfishly prayed for dry weather.



Once called the Carlsbad Bird Refuge, early explorers renamed the region *Bitter Lake* because its dried-up lake, or playa, appeared alkaline. Venturing to a place called *bitter* may not sound as inviting as some of the national parks like Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier, or Arches, but I knew a unique adventure awaited my visit.

Established in 1903, the National Wildlife Refuge System was created as a means of



Thousands of snow geese stop over at Bitter Lake during their migration.



Inkpot Sinkhole offers

## INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

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protecting wildlife and their habitats. In 1937, 24,500 acres along the banks of the Pecos River where the Chihuahuan Desert meets the Great Plains were set aside to provide a wintering habitat for migratory birds including around twenty-six thousand sandhill cranes and fifty thousand snow geese, as well as a variety of wading shorebirds such as great blue herons, egrets, white faced ibis, snowy plovers, least terns, black-necked stilts, avocets, and over three hundred fifty species of other birds. No wonder the refuge is recognized as a wetland of international importance, as well as a National Natural Landmark and Research Natural Site designated by the National Park Service.

Even with such vast avian diversity, a solitary bird broke the morning silence as I headed for the quarter-mile Butterfly Trail. Reminiscent of the bird in Eleanor Farjeon’s poem, it chirped its way across the brightening sky sweetly announcing the glorious wonder of God’s creation in the dawning day. Soon other birds were lifting their voices as if in praise. I had chosen to begin my day on this trail, not because it was rated *easy* but because I thought the informational signs and native vegetation I’d read about might serve as a good introduction to the refuge. Being neither a biologist, botanist, nor lepidopterist (a person who studies or collects butterflies and moths), I needed all the help I could get.

Although better known for its populations of dragonflies, various butterfly species including swallowtails, sulphurs, hairstreaks, skippers, brushfoots, leafwings, and occasional monarchs also find Bitter Lake as their own refuge. As an ancient symbol of rebirth and transformation, butterflies are cold-blooded and must spend endless hours absorbing the sun’s heat through their spread wings. Several terra cotta saucers filled with sand and gravel can be





a glimpse into the Roswell Artesian Aquifer.

Jeff Howland/USFWS



Bountiful dragonflies are stars of the annual Dragonfly Festival.

*“He turns a wilderness into pools of water.”*

found along the trail with an interpretive sign describing them as *puddling stations* where male butterflies can sip water and extract salt and minerals from the damp sand. Tropical milkweed, hollyhocks, marigolds, and lantana are planted nearby to attract butterflies and supply the nectar they need for growth and reproduction. I spent nearly an hour searching the plants and saucers for butterflies, but finding none I decided to move on. Another visit at the end of summer may be necessary to enjoy the Dragonfly Festival when professional dragonfly experts offer guided tours to learn about more than a hundred dragonfly and damselfly species.

A one-way eight-mile gravel road circles the main part of the refuge and serves as an auto tour. As I drove I noticed the levels of most of the water sources seemed low or completely dried up. The refuge seemed to be living up to its name. I pulled off the road at one of the overlooks to get a better view. The barrenness of the place shocked me. Everything appeared parched and scoured with no trees and very few shrubs. Where I should have seen wildlife, I found strange-looking sinkholes. Being so close to Roswell where claims of UFO sightings exist, I imagined the holes had been caused by aliens. But the guidebook I carried in my daypack explained the more than seventy sinkholes had been “created by groundwater from the Roswell Artesian Aquifer dissolving the gypsum deposits in the soils above.” The subsurface water percolating through the San Andreas limestone into the sinkholes provides habitats for native fish and rare invertebrates including “the endangered Noel’s amphipod, a light-sensitive, bottom-dwelling crustacean found only in the Bitter Lake.”

About the time I began to doubt that any life existed in this parched wasteland, I looked off in the distance and spotted a flock of plump, duck-like birds floating on the surface of a



*Coots bob for food in the refuge ponds.*

Bryan Reynolds



*A well maintained*

## M A N Y   A N I M A L S   S E E K   S H E L T E R

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pond. With the help of binoculars, I identified them as American coots. When a battle erupted between a couple of the birds, the others hop-skipped across the water flapping their short wings, squawking loudly, and revealing their skinny yellow-green legs. The coots' antics startled two black-necked stilts that were preening in the shallow end of the pond. I knew it was shallow because the water barely covered the stilts' rose-colored feet. Obviously, there was much more wildlife here than I'd first imagined.

Eager to see even more, I continued the auto tour. Where the road turned north, I noticed a sign for the Oxbow Lake Trail. Oxbow lakes are formed when a curve in the river slows, deposits silt, and separates from the main body of the river. Shaped like horseshoes or oxbows (the u-shaped collar that holds the yoke of an ox in place), these lakes often provide great ecosystems for plants and animals. Thinking this might be a good place to view wildlife, I grabbed my daypack and set off on a noon-hike to draw close to the Creator and perhaps become more equally yoked with Christ. (See 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.)

In spring and summer, temperatures in the desert can easily exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit. During the heat of the day many animals seek shelter. Snakes and lizards hide under rocks or in burrows; birds seek low-lying shady areas; fish and turtles dive to cooler water. Nevertheless, within minutes of setting out on the trail, I practically tripped over a four-foot-long Western diamondback rattlesnake that, because of its color and markings, blended perfectly with the rocky trail. Short of hearing its warning, I could have easily stepped on it. Gorged with recent prey, it slithered sluggishly across my path. As thrilled as I was to see it, I remained calm, respected its domain, and gave it a wide berth.



trail spans some waterways at the refuge.

Cindy Daly



A roadrunner watches for prey.

Bryan Reynolds

*“She took an ark of bulrushes for him.”*

My next sighting was of New Mexico’s state bird—a chicken-sized tan and black roadrunner making a quick getaway with a scorpion hanging from its beak. A member of the cuckoo family, this bird is known to be fast enough to catch rattlesnakes. I wondered if it had seen the size of the diamondhead and decided the scorpion was easier prey. As if lured by the possibility of leftovers, a hairy black tarantula hurried to catch up to the creature.

Psalm 107:35 tells us, “He turns a wilderness into pools of water, and dry land into watersprings.” As I reached the lake, I realized that God indeed can transform what first appeared as a barren wilderness into a desert oasis complete with a lake.

If it had been later in the season, the lake would have been surrounded with thousands of pecos sunflowers, an endangered species that is smaller than the common sunflower and frequently produces bright red petals with yellow tips. Songbirds, woodpeckers, and chipmunks enjoy the plants’ seeds; bees and butterflies drink its nectar; and beetles feed on its roots. Several birds plucked seeds and insects from the plants’ stems, and two muskrats dove in and out of the water that covered the plants’ submerged roots. It was hard to tell whether they were hunting for food or playing hide and seek.

However, while I was visiting, instead of sunflowers all I found was bulrush—the grass-like plant that Moses’ mother used to construct the basket ark that carried him down the river as told in Exodus 2:3. “But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river’s bank.”

Another plant growing near the lake was salt cedar. When in bloom, the pink flowers



*Ducks are banded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel.*

Mark Wilson



*Sunflowers add*

## RESTORATION OF WETLANDS

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of the salt cedar attract bees, dragonflies, and hummingbirds, but it is an invasive plant that depletes water sources, increases the salinity, and displaces native species such as the pecos sunflower. In recent years managers at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge have engaged in the Pecos River Salt Cedar Eradication Project to eradicate the exotic plant and restore the native habitat through cutting, prescribed burning, and applying herbicides.

As the sun reached its highest point and the day became increasingly hotter, birds fell silent, lizards disappeared under rocks; mice, chipmunks, and desert cottontails settled into their hideouts for siestas. In their absence insects moved in. Taking my cue from the ground dwellers, I retreated to the protection of my car, and after a short stop at the Visitor Center, I headed out of the refuge realizing that one day is hardly enough to explore such a wealth of natural wonders in the remote segment of God's creation.

Home to more than seven hundred species of birds, two hundred twenty species of mammals, two hundred fifty reptile and amphibian species, more than a thousand species of fish, and almost innumerable plant species, the 568 national wildlife refuges in the United States provide places where visitors can study and learn about the preservation and restoration of wetlands, grasslands, marine habitats, the biodiversity of native and endangered plants and animals, and the complex interrelatedness between God's creatures and the environment. After all, He created humans in His own image to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Genesis 1:26). So, we need to know what to do to be good stewards of all Creation.



*a splash of color to the refuge's mostly barren landscape.*


Mark Wilson



*A black-necked stilt searches for food.*

Caleb Steuer

*“Have dominion . . . over the birds of the air.”*

There is order in our world, and when one species suffers, all suffer. The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to protect and preserve as many diverse native species as possible. Without such diversity, life would be like a dried-up, bitter lake. Driving home, the rain forewarned in the morning began to fall, and I wondered if the inhabitants of Bitter Lake were rejoicing. 

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*Margaret Nava writes from her home in New Mexico where she lives with an aging chihuahua and enjoys spending time outdoors and writing about God's creation. In addition to her stories in the Chicken Soup for the Soul books, she has authored six books and written numerous articles for inspirational and Christian living publications. Jennifer Ish is associate editor of Creation Illustrated.*



*Orion*

*“Then God said,  
‘Let there be a  
firmament in the  
midst of the waters,  
and let it divide . . .*

# CREATION DAY 2

■ BY LAWRENCE BURNS

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## The Creation of the Atmosphere

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



Don O'Garner

*Dark, angry clouds can impact our mood.*

One Friday night not long ago, I had a wondrous experience. I glanced out the window of a darkened room and saw a clear, moonless sky speckled with stars. There, front and center, was the constellation Orion with its signature three-star *belt*. I thought for a moment about a climactic future event confirmed over and over in the Bible—the return of the Servant King, Jesus. At that very moment a meteor streaked in front of Orion. I gasped in awe; then my eyes welled up as I thought of our Creator God who orchestrated that moment to cheer my heart and encourage me with the certainty of His coming.

Our emotions and moods can at times be a reflection of what's happening in the sky—a gloomy day with drizzle and

fog might make us feel the same—gloomy. Sunshine and blue sky often buoy our spirits with confidence to take hold of the day's opportunities. Dark, tumultuous clouds can sometimes echo anger, stress, and frustration.

But the expansive sky does much more than just influence our emotions. A relatively thin layer of atmosphere shrouding the earth and held there by gravity has been designed (along with the magnetic field) to act as an invisible shield protecting our world from lethal forms of cosmic radiation. The atmosphere also moderates temperatures and moves air around the globe in a consistent pattern. Obviously fresh air in the great outdoors is vital for vibrant life. To the same degree, embracing the Holy Spirit and having a strong relationship with our Creator is



*The waters above remain separated from the waters below.*

vital for life that has true significance, satisfaction, and purpose. As singer-songwriter Joe Mettle affirms:

*You are the air I breathe,  
Your holy presence living in me.  
And I, I'm desperate for You.  
And I, I'm lost without You.*

According to Genesis 1:2 this planet originally was largely a watery mass surrounded by darkness, devoid of landforms and life as told in Genesis 1:2. The Spirit of God moved, and on day one of the Creation week the creative directive was given: "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3). Then, on day two, our all-powerful, all-passionate God took the next step to prepare earth for life and for us! "Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters.' . . . God made the expanse, and separated

the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day" (Genesis 1:6–8, NASB).

More details are given about the waters above and below the expanse in other biblical accounts. Genesis 2:4–6 states, "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. . . . Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a mist [springs, (NET)] used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground" (NASB).

Peter adds yet another dimension



*the waters from the waters.’ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters . . .*



*The destructive floodgates were opened.*

to the picture. “By the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed by being flooded with water” (2 Peter 3:5, 6, NASB). But how did this great Flood happen? “All the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky” (Genesis 7:11, NLT).

So, it appears that the waters separated by the expanse in God’s act of creation were reunited in God’s act of judgment. After the unbridled evil of those days was destroyed, God once again separated the waters that were below the expanse (rivers, lakes, oceans, and underground aquifers) from the waters that were above the expanse (clouds suspended in the atmosphere). “God

caused a wind to blow over the earth and the waters receded. The fountains of the deep and the floodgates of heaven were closed, and the rain stopped falling from the sky. The waters kept receding steadily from the earth, so that they had gone down by the end of the 150 days” (Genesis 8:1–3, NET).

Heavens, expanse, waters—how are these related? An insight is revealed in the Hebrew word for *heavens*, which literally means the *heaved up things* or *one of the waters*. The connection is also seen in side-by-side phrases that have similar meaning such as: “Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds” (Psalm 36:5).

Those who wrote the Bible, while inspired by God, used common



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## Mother's Day in Prison

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



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*A meteor shower is a sign.*

*which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. . . .*

words and thought structure that people living in those times and places would understand. From their perspective the sky was thought to be like a canopy or tent. “[God] sits enthroned above the circle of the earth [the earth’s horizon, (NET)], and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in” (Isaiah 40:22, NIV).

The sun, moon, and stars were understood to be within, or part of this tent. “In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like . . . a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other” (Psalm 19:4–6, NIV). Of course, we now know that the sun is ninety-three million miles beyond earth’s

atmosphere. And though the sun is relatively stationary, we, of course, know the rotating earth makes it appear to rise and set, giving the Bible writers an accurate point-of-view description.

When Jesus’ followers asked Him about the sign of His coming, He gave them several in Matthew 24:3–44. Jesus could have described one of the signs as an extraordinary meteor storm where hundreds of thousands of space particles would impact earth’s atmosphere at 25,000 miles per hour producing streaks of light in the pre-dawn sky. But just imagine people’s reaction to that would likely have been wide-eyed blank stares. Instead, Jesus compassionately told them what they could grasp at that time, “the stars will fall from heaven” (Matthew 24:29). That amazing prediction did actually



Karen Bulbak

*Stunning spectacles in the atmosphere inspire awe.*

happen in the form of a rare Leonids meteor storm late November 12 and early November 13, 1833.

During any normal meteor shower, about twenty streaks in the sky might appear each hour, but in 1833 eyewitnesses estimated that the number of meteors each hour was from fifty thousand to over a hundred thousand (averaging up to twenty-eight per second) with one estimate more than double that number! The spectacle was seen throughout North America east of the Rocky Mountains and became known as “the night the stars fell.”

So, we should read the biblical description of the expanse from the perspective of the writers and readers who, in their day, had a limited understanding of earth, its atmosphere,

and the universe beyond. Our expanded knowledge should not confuse matters. For example, does knowing about the five atmospheric layers and the jet stream diminish the beauty of all the different cloud formations? Does knowing how light refracts through water droplets dampen the thrill of seeing a rainbow? Does knowing that electrically-charged particles from the sun colliding with molecules in the thermosphere detract from the jaw-dropping, shimmering glow of the aurora borealis in the north and the aurora Australis in the south? Does knowing that orange-red hues are caused by atmospheric dust and the low angle of the sun deter my appreciation of a glorious sunset?

And what about that Friday night and my personal heavenly experience



*The vast expanse created on day two affects our everyday lives.*

not so long ago? I saw a space particle (probably the size of a grain of rice) burn up as it pierced earth's atmosphere in my line of sight as I gazed up at the constellation Orion some one thousand five hundred light years away. Did our current knowledge of time and space make my experience any less meaningful? Actually, our current knowledge gave me greater admiration for our all-powerful Creator and made His gift to me that night all the more wondrous.

The expanse created on day two of the Creation week hugely impacts our lives, our weather, our emotions, our every breath, and our perspective on the vast beyond. And one day the earth's atmosphere will be the stage for a grand event with a crescendo of brilliant lights and majestic music—an unimaginably

glorious sight that every eye will see as promised in Revelation 1:7. "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him." As the song penned by Dottie Rambo declares:

*The sky shall unfold, preparing His entrance.  
The stars shall applaud Him with thunders  
of praise.*

*The sweet light in His eyes enhances those  
waiting.*

*And we shall behold Him, then face to face.*

We are to find peace and comfort in the glorious thought of His return in the expanse God created around our earth as explained in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–18. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise

*And God called the  
firmament Heaven.  
So the evening and  
the morning were the  
second day.”*

*— Genesis 1:6–8*



*Every eye will see Him coming in the clouds.*

first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air [expanse]. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” **C**

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*Lawrence Burns became acquainted with his Creator while growing up in Ontario, Canada, and now writes from Newfoundland where he continues to be amazed and inspired by the sky above and the universe beyond.*

# CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

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

## Global Flood Scoffers

In 2 Peter 3:3–7, Peter describes the scoffing attitude toward God’s Word that would arise in the last days. Peter warned that such scoffers would mock at the return of Jesus and choose intentionally to ignore three core teachings of the Bible—God’s original creation, the global Flood, and the coming judgment.

These scoffers attempt to attack or dismiss the Genesis Flood in many ways. If the Flood really happened how the Bible describes it, the implications are stark! Two common ways they try to undermine the Flood is by claiming it was a local flood, but these scriptures say differently. “All the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered” (Genesis 7:19, NIV). “Every living thing that moved on the earth perished” (Genesis 7:21, NIV). “You covered it (the earth) with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains” (Psalm 104:6).

The Flood was catastrophic. “On that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth” (Genesis 7:11, NIV). Though it rained for forty days and nights, much of the water came from underneath the earth. The Mid-Atlantic Ridge is a good example of where the earth burst forth with water from underneath the surface. This cracking up of the earth’s crust is why we observe plate tectonics to this day.

“Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. The water receded steadily from the earth” (Genesis 8:2, 3, NIV). The idea is that the huge volume of water was not still. The powerful movement of the rushing waters also explains so much of the topography of our present-day earth including sediment layers, sheared off features, and major water erosion in places that get little rain today.



*Radical erosion from the Flood*

The original Creation did not have the Himalaya Mountains or the great oceanic trenches.

The oceans are very deep in order to hold all the extra water. It’s more plausible to understand the earth’s topography from a catastrophic Flood point of view.

**Condensed from an online article by Adam Habluetzel, Alpha and Omega Institute, [www.discovercreation.org](http://www.discovercreation.org)**

## Multi Cultural Aromas

International scientists asked people from ten different cultures across the world to rate how pleasant they found ten distinctive scents. The participants were asked to arrange identical odor dispensers in the order of most pleasant to least pleasant. It has been widely assumed that the perception of pleasantness is determined mostly by cultural background, but this study found culture only explained six percent of the variance in rankings.

There was strong consistency across the world as to which odors were rated as pleasant. The best predictor of pleasantness was what chemical produced the smell. The top three pleasant substances were vanilla, ethyl butyrate (which has a fruity smell), and linalool (which has a floral scent). The least pleasant smell was isovaleric acid—a strong, pungent odor associated with foot sweat, soy milk, and cheese.

The research team suggested a possible reason why some smells are more pleasant than others regardless of culture is that such odors increased the chances of survival during human evolution.

But here at Creation Research, we believe there is a better explanation to this. The trees in the Garden of Eden were described as pleasing to the eye and good for food. No doubt the garden also smelled beautiful and pleased all the senses. So, the actual reason these fragrances are considered pleasant across different human cultures is that all people on earth are descended from the same mother and father—Adam and Eve, and inherited a sense of smell that is tuned to what God created to be pleasant. This would also explain why floral and fruity fragrances have a calming and comforting effect.

**Condensed from an online article from Creation Research, [www.creationresearch.net](http://www.creationresearch.net)**



# CREATION STEWARDSHIP

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

## Sharing Facts and Figures

There are 2.2 billion children in the world. Of these, 1.2 billion (every second child) live in poverty. Some struggle to survive on less than \$2.15 per day. The definition of child poverty given by UNICEF is: "When a child is living within a household in which the family's economic resources are below the threshold of what is required to meet their basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, and hygiene needs."



For each child born into a poor family today, it will take four to five generations to reach the average national level of income.

About one hundred sixty million children

worldwide (nearly one in ten children) worked in child labor in 2020 engaging in jobs that deprived many of education, jeopardized their well-being, and infringed upon their basic rights. The latest estimates indicate that approximately twenty-eight million individuals are trafficked globally with 17.3 million people experiencing forced labor in private sector industries and 6.3 million experiencing forced commercial sexual exploitation.

## Tips for Simple Living

One young teenager inspired her family to change the way they were over-consuming in order to give to those who had less. She encouraged her parents to sell their large 6,500 square foot home for a smaller 3,000 square foot one. They then gave half of the home sale profit to a charity to help educate and feed families in Ghana Africa.

Overconsumption has taken over the mindset of the majority. In 1950 the average square footage of a home was about 1,000, but house size is only one area where we over-consume. There is an epidemic to want more and buy more than we need. Choosing daily to consume less so others can have more is a worthy goal. We can all think of something in our

lives that we can reduce by half and share the other half with those in need. Here are a few ideas:

- Have a jar to throw your spare change into every evening. This often adds up to around \$200 per year.
- Some banks offer a "keep the change" program that can round up your debit card purchases and transfer them directly to a savings account. They will even match it for a few months!
- Shop carefully. Just saving \$20 per week on your purchases adds up to over \$1,000 in savings in a year. Look for buy-one-get-one free offers. Then you may wish to donate the extra one to your local food bank.
- Telephone savings can add up too. Shop around for a good cell phone service, use the Internet for calling, or get cheaper flip phones.

## Biblical Stewardship of Creation

Historically, Christians have been at the forefront of addressing the poverty issue. Craig Blomberg in his book *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions* declares, "It is arguable that all of the major attempts to alleviate poverty and human suffering have a Christian foundation at one level or another."

In fact, the Bible contains more than three hundred verses regarding the poor. In Deuteronomy 15:7, 8 we read, "If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks" (NASB). Proverbs 22:9 says, "He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor" (NASB).

As Christians, how can we hear and not follow these important messages? Instead there is a thrust for what is called the *prosperity gospel* aimed at increasing our own riches. Yes, God blesses us so we can be a blessing to others, but does He bless us so we can buy the biggest house on the block? Read the book of Acts to see what the early Christian church was like. Jesus set an example for us to follow.



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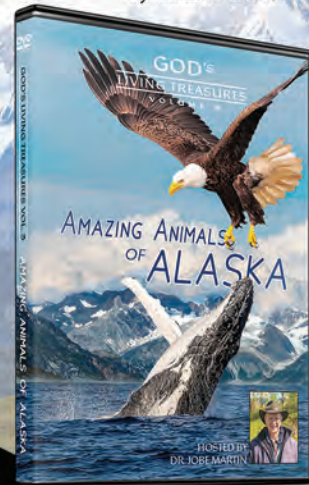
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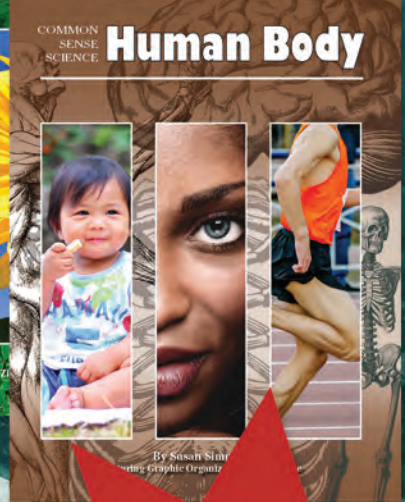
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**A**s thunder angrily rumbled above us, my family and I quickened our pace. An evening walk in Florida during the hot, humid summers often gets squelched by storms. But I wanted us to spend as much time exercising together outdoors as we could; so, we continued on down our neighborhood sidewalks.

Besides watching the sky

for signs of lightning, I scanned the oak trees, the Spanish moss, and the vines climbing up fence rows spilling over with scarlet blooms. As we walked I also noticed the lush green resurrection ferns nestled in the crooks of trees on each side of the street.

With all the rain that had been dumped on our town lately, I was not surprised at how healthy and full the little ferns looked. But they didn't always appear



# Resurrection

## Ferns

this hearty. Three months prior, when we'd first moved into our new neighborhood, these ferns appeared brittle and almost lifeless.

During times of insufficient rainfall, resurrection ferns lose moisture, but they don't die. Even during drought conditions, they will lose their vibrant green hue, wither, and shrivel. This remarkable plant can lose about seventy-five percent of its water

content during a typical dry period and up to ninety-seven percent in an extreme drought. By contrast, most other plants can lose only 10 percent of their water content before they die. But resurrection ferns don't expire simply due to lack of water. They hunker down patiently waiting for the water to return. We, too, must be patient during times of trial as promised in Isaiah 40:31. "But those who

wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." And when the rain comes, their vitality returns, which is where the plant gets its name by coming back to life in a seemingly miraculous *resurrection*.

By this time during our evening stroll, we had seen more than one flash of lightning, and we all began to jog back toward home. But I kept pondering the ferns. What if I were to grow to be more

B Y A L L I S O N W I L S O N L E E



*Trying to beat the springtime rain*

like resurrection ferns? In times that feel barren, I would continue to cling to my Source of life, Jesus Christ, just as these ferns establish themselves by clinging to their host. A resurrection fern requires another plant to provide the foundation for its life. Once settled onto its base, the plant remains there. These small plants remind me to build my own life upon the sturdy vine of Jesus and remain dependent on Him to support my own life as one of His fruit-bearing branches.

As the resurrection fern clings to its host, it sucks no water from the plant or tree. Even as it fades during a dry season, the ferns contract until the rains return to nourish the plants without ever acting as a parasite. When I experience trials as in a desert with

my hope running dry and baking in the hot sun, do I seek to suck life out of some other nearby source, or do I, like the resurrection fronds sprouting out of the oak tree's branches, wait for thirst-quenching Living Water to replenish my life?

I first learned of resurrection ferns on a guided nature walk through a local park. My husband's work team hosted a barbecue and invited all the families to join the event. Before we ate that evening, the park ranger led us on a short hike where he pointed out local flora and fauna. We learned about bayberry trees, alligator flag, and pickerel weed. We also heard about the life of resurrection ferns found throughout the Southeast, as far north as New York, and as far west as Texas in a variety of

habitats. The resurrection fern is a type of *epiphytic* fern, which means it grows on top of other plants or anchors and reproduces, not by seeds but by spores housed on the underside of the fronds. Before that walk I had observed these ferns but had never given them much attention—seeing them without really examining them. In addition to interesting facts, I discovered that God often shares big messages through small means.

For years I occasionally recalled the resurrection ferns that I'd been introduced to long ago on that nature walk, but their lessons took time for me to absorb. Once I began paying closer attention, these fronds that are typically four to twelve inches long—whether desiccated and gray or plush and green—sent me looking for related scriptures. In Psalm 1:3 I noticed a description of one who trusts God that might mirror the qualities of these ferns. "He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" (ESV).

Jeremiah 17: 7, 8 echoes a similar object lesson. "'Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit'" (ESV).

In times of drought, do I succumb to being anxious or fearful about where I will find my sustenance? Or do I simply

trust? Do I believe that the Lord will keep me planted by the waters with roots stretching and reaching toward His thirst-quenching care and compassion for my soul? Isaiah 58:11 reminds us that we will experience times of drought, and it is our Father who will satisfy our needs in those arid seasons. “And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail” (ESV).

We all long for waters that do not fail—for the spring of life welling up within us. Waiting on the Savior’s guidance positions us

in just the right posture to receive the life-giving sustenance that strengthens our resolve and faith. Just as the Spring of Living Water sustains us, the rain He sends upon the earth fortifies the resurrection ferns after they’ve waited out their own droughts. In His perfect time, He sends the much-needed rain.

During that after-dinner walk with my family, noticing the plump and verdant ferns revitalized from all the recent rain revealed one more important lesson—the droughts do not last forever. No matter how long they may linger, the droughts do come to an end. Dry seasons don’t possess the power to kill the resurrection ferns thriving in my

neighborhood, and the deserts we experience don’t have to ruin our own lives either. We remain hopeful in the ultimate resurrection and victory over death.

Job 5:10 assures us, “He gives rain on the earth and sends waters on the fields” (ESV). As resurrection ferns cling to the trees on which they live, I, too, must cling to the One who hung on the tree and was resurrected so I might have life—abundant, overflowing life, sustained by His Living Water that refreshes my soul. **C**

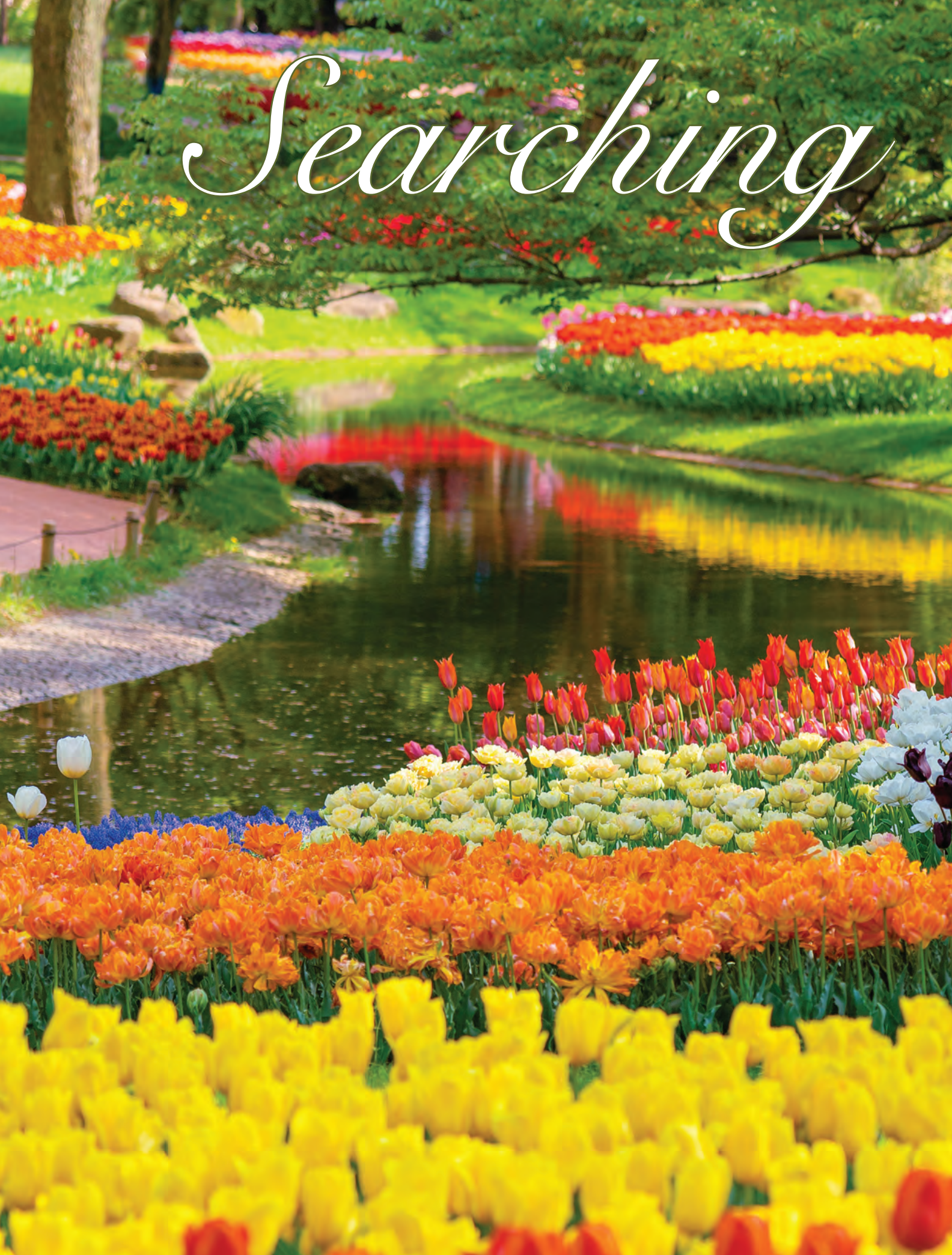
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*Allison Wilson Lee writes from Belle Isle, Florida, where she enjoys observing nature and gleaning vital life lessons worth sharing with others.*




*Once the resurrection ferns get moisture, they come back to life and flourish.*

# *Searching*







I looked for You in the garden,  
And I found You.  
I looked up in the sky,  
And You were there.

I looked for You in the lives  
Of those who love You.  
And could see that You  
Share every earthly care.

Such a yearning through me surged,  
Oh Savior, hear my prayer.  
When I look within my heart,  
Please let me find You there.

– Jeanne Matlack



*Hungry rabbits can cause severe damage to a garden.*



*Hornworms consume massive*

# God's little

**E**very year my children and I plant a vegetable garden, and long ago we made an important decision. Our garden would be organic. The Bible says, “Do not pollute the land where you are” (Numbers 35:33, NIV). So, we don’t spray plants with chemicals to get rid of garden pests.

Gardeners know that all kinds of pests can be a serious problem. Hungry creatures like deer, rabbits, groundhogs, or raccoons can ravage a garden, which is why the Bible teaches, “Catch for us . . . the little foxes that ruin the vineyards” (Song of Solomon 2:15, NIV). But harmful insects and worms can destroy a sizable garden too.

For instance, tomato hornworms (large green caterpillars) eat leaves of tomato plants and chew on tomatoes. Clinging to tomato plant branches and stems, the wriggly worms are

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



amounts of tomato plants.



Deborah Raw

Ladybugs are friendly helpers in a garden.

# helpers

difficult to find. For years we plucked these voracious consumers from the plants with our hands. We found that worms do not like hot weather and hide in the ground during the day. So, we had to look for them early in the morning, and day after day we checked every tomato plant. But not anymore. Now we have God's little helpers—useful insects that eat harmful bugs and worms. To keep our garden healthy, we attracted important pest hunters like ladybugs, praying mantises, and spiders.

Ladybugs are very popular and are called *God's little cows* in Russia and *ladybirds* in England, but they are obviously neither cows nor birds. In fact, ladybugs are not even bugs; they are beetles. They can live almost everywhere except for really cold climates and can be easily identified by the little black spots on their red (or yellow) wings. Black, white, or dark

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



*A praying mantis waits to capture its next prey.*

Bryan Reynolds



*Marigolds provide protection*

blue ladybugs with no spots also exist but are rare. Still others have stripes instead of spots. God created ladybugs with bright-colored wings to protect them from predators. In nature, red colored creatures (and even mushrooms) are usually poisonous. Thus, birds do not eat ladybugs. “O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all” (Psalm 104:24).

Ladybugs are great helpers for gardeners because these tiny, round beetles eat a lot of pests. Even ladybugs in the larvae stage can eat four hundred pests in two weeks. Remember the nasty tomato hornworms? Ladybugs eat them also. So, of course, we wanted to invite these useful insects in our garden.

First, we planted bright orange and yellow flowers—marigolds and calendulas. The leaves of these flowers would protect ladybugs from strong winds or rain. Second, we sprinkled our plants with water so the ladybugs could drink the droplets when thirsty. Finally, we grew herbs that attract ladybugs including dill, fennel, and chives.

Our second helper—the praying mantis—is also well known and usually lives in warm places. This creature has a triangular head with bulging eyes and six legs. It is the only insect that can turn its head 180 degrees. This insect gets its name because while it waits for prey, its two front legs resemble praying hands. If you’ve seen a praying mantis, you may think you would always recognize this creature, but it may not be easy. Some praying mantises are green, and others are brown. Some resemble branches or leaves, and others look like flowers. Psalm 40:5 reminds us, “Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done” (NIV).

As great hunters for bad insects, praying mantises prove very useful in gardens. To attract them we planted cosmos—colorful daisy-like flowers on tall stems with ferny leaves. We



Tatiana Claudy

against certain garden pests.



Bryan Reynolds


*A spider captures a harmful grasshopper in its web.*

also let tall grasses grow near the fence so the praying mantises could live there.

Our third helpers include a variety of spiders—not as attractive as a ladybug or as unique as a praying mantis. These abundant insects have eight legs and six (or eight) eyes and can lurk most anywhere as skilled hunters. The Bible says, “The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings’ palaces” (Proverbs 30:28). Yet, you should not be afraid as most spiders are not dangerous to humans. Yes, they can bite people but only to protect themselves.

How does this insect know how to construct such intricate and uniform webs? When it lets out a special secretion from its stomach, the liquid becomes a strand of silk. Different kinds of spiders spin different webs, and in our garden we found webs that looked like flat spirals while others resembled cups or tunnels. Spider webs appear fragile and easy to break, but they are very strong and effective at catching prey. In our garden they caught flies and grasshoppers.

Spiders are attracted to tall plants where they can build their webs. That’s why we planted bushes in a corner of the garden. We also grew sunflowers and sweet corn. Once, after a rain, we saw tiny drops of water on a spider web that sparkled like precious gems under the sun’s rays. We couldn’t help but thank the Lord for His creative genius. “Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty” (Revelation 15:3, NIV).

Because He provides useful insects to protect our garden, we harvested plenty of vegetables and enjoy sharing them with friends. Most importantly, we learned to be good stewards of God’s creation by cooperating with Him and the little helpers He provides. 

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*Tatiana Claudy writes from Indiana where she explores the wonders of Creation in order to discover valuable lessons worth sharing to help guide others to worship the Creator.*

# Genesis Cuisine

## Lovely Layers





## Layered Spring Salads

### 1st Layer—Pea Salad

- 16 oz. frozen peas, thawed
- 1/2 C. ea. pea pods, asparagus, green pimento olives, sliced
- 1/2 C. ea. onion, non-dairy cheddar cheese, chopped
- vegan mayo, salt and pepper to taste, mixed

### 2nd Layer—Macaroni Salad

- 8 oz. elbow macaroni, cooked
- 1/2 C. ea. red onion, dill pickle, red pepper, celery, chopped

- 1 Tb. dill weed
- 1/2 C. vegan mayo, 1/2 tsp. celery seed, 1 Tb. horseradish, salt and pepper to taste, mixed

### 3rd Layer—Carrot Salad

- 4 med. carrots, grated
- 1/2 C. red cabbage shredded
- 1/4 C. parsley, chopped
- 1 Tb. ea. olive oil, grated ginger, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste, mixed

Prepare each salad separately and layer in a deep, clear bowl. Chill, garnish with parsley, and serve.



## Layered Au Gratin Tian

- 1 lg. yellow potato
- 1 lg. yam
- 2 beets
- 1 lg. parsnip
- 1 med. red onion
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp. dried onions or onion soup mix

### Basting Sauce:

- 3 Tb. olive oil
- 1/3 C. lemon juice
- 2 tsp. oregano, dried
- 1 tsp. thyme, dried
- 1 tsp. salt or to taste

Peel vegetables. Using a mandoline or box slicer, make thin slices of each of vegetables and place into separate bowls of water with some lemon juice to avoid oxidation. Coat a round pie dish or earthenware *tian* with a small amount of oil and arrange vegetables into circles while alternating slices of each. Drizzle and baste with the sauce. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 min. Serve hot.



## Strawberry Chiffon Lemon Layer Cake

### Four thin layers of cake

- 1 1/2 C. flour
- 3/4 C. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ea. lemon & vanilla extract
- 1 Tb. lemon zest
- 1/3 C. fresh lemon juice

- 4 Tb. oil
- 2/3 C. cold water

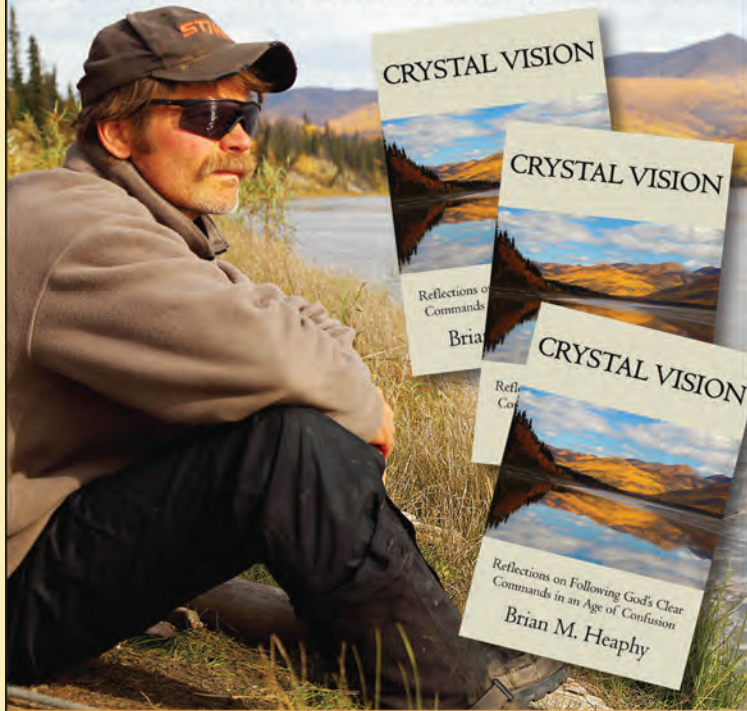
### Strawberry Chiffon

- 8 oz. tofu, medium firm
- 1 C. fresh strawberries
- 1 box non-dairy vanilla pudding
- 8 oz. non-dairy topping

For two layers of cake: Combine dry ingredients. Mix wet ingredients. Stir wet ingredients into the dry. Pour batter evenly into two cake pans and bake for 20 to 25 min. until done. Cool on racks. Repeat for a four layered cake.

Chiffon: Blend tofu with berries and pudding mix, fold into the topping and chill until stiff. Spread layers of chiffon in between each layer and on top. Decorate with additional strawberry slices. Chill and serve.

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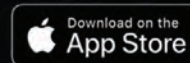
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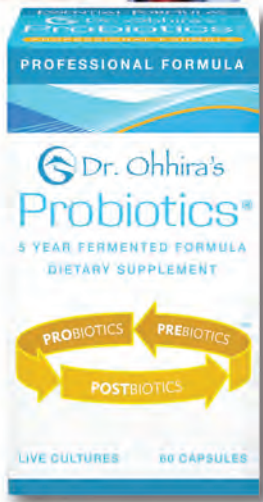
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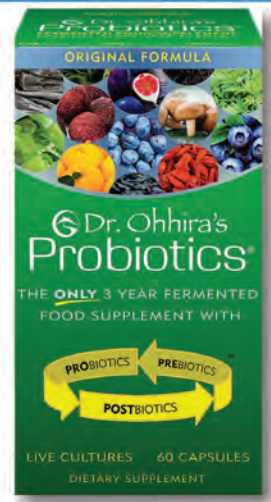
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# A Frog Symphony



**D**uring spring and summer evenings the pond behind our home comes alive with an amazing concert of natural music. The frog chorus gets very loud filling the night air with high-pitched trills, chirps, ribbits, and deep bass croaking of the bullfrogs. The green frogs that live in our pond sometimes make a throaty sound that resembles the twang of a plucked banjo string. It all sounds like a raucous band playing a country tune that can be heard up to a quarter of a mile away. We may not see them, but we know they are there by all the noise they make.

It was a mystery to us why the frogs would often suddenly stop and pause for a few moments of silence. Then, as if directed by an unseen conductor, start their performance again. A little research taught

us that this pause was a defensive move if a predator was nearby. When the danger left, the amphibians could sing again.

“Why are they so loud?” my great granddaughter asked as we sat on the porch one spring night.

“I think they are making a joyful noise to the Lord,” I responded. “The Bible says, ‘Praise the Lord from the earth, . . . wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds’ (Psalm 148:7, 10 NIV). God created all things to show His amazing design. Those little frogs seem to praise Him the only way they can—with their voices. Or maybe they are just glad to be awake after their winter hibernation. Did you know that frogs spend the winter sleeping in ponds and streams? They bury themselves in mud, and God has provided them with a special *frog antifreeze* that

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



protects their vital organs while the rest of their bodies freeze. In the spring God wakes them up, and they can swim in the pond and hop on land again. Isn't that amazing?"

"How do they breathe if they are buried in the mud?" she asked.

"Instead of using their lungs, hibernating frogs get the oxygen they need to survive by absorbing it through their skin from the surrounding mud. The Bible says, 'Let everything that has breath praise the Lord' (Psalm 150:6 NIV). Everything means all creatures big or small. Those frogs may be small and seem insignificant, but God created them and cares for them just like He cares for us. Jesus said in Luke 12:6 that not one little sparrow falls without the Father knowing. That means He cares for all His wonderful Creation—even frogs."

I explained that there are thousands of species of frogs. We imagine they all look like the green frogs in our pond, but there are many different colors of frogs that live in different habitats all over the world. Some are smaller than a half inch. The Goliath frog lives in Africa and can grow to be as large as a house cat! Can you imagine how loud a croak a 20-pound frog makes?

"But how did all the frogs we hear get into your pond?" she wondered.

"Some of them may have been there for a long time," I said. Frogs can live from five to fourteen years as long as they stay safe from predators.

One of God's great miracles quietly happens every spring in that pond and all over the world. Frogs begin as a tiny egg and go through an amazing transformation similar to butterflies. Human babies

Y J E A N V A N H O U T E N

and baby mammals are born appearing similar to their parents and grow bigger and bigger until they are full grown. When frogs are babies, they look very different from their parents, but they transform from one form to another until they are adults.

This life cycle of a frog starts with a tiny egg. Some frog eggs are so small that one could fit on the point of a pencil. Female frogs lay a lot of eggs early in the spring. Scientists say that frogs can lay from two thousand to twenty thousand eggs at a time. The eggs are clumped together in a jelly-like mass called a *frogspawn*. The mother frog tries to protect her eggs from predators by hiding them in a safe place. She seeks calm water with no strong currents that could carry them away, as well as plenty of vegetation like the tall grasses and cattails that surround our pond. Adult amphibians, like frogs, can live both on land and in water, but during the first stages of their life, they can live only in water. Frog eggs do not have hard shells like bird eggs. If they are not in water, they will dry up and die. The mass of eggs floats on the water looking quite lifeless.

But inside those eggs, a great change is taking place as God designed it. Those tiny black dots feed on the yolk of their own egg and build up their strength. They begin to grow a tail and start to look more like little commas than dots. After two to three weeks, the baby frog hatches and is now officially a *tadpole* that is still small enough to fit on the eraser of a pencil. When tadpoles hatch, they have gills for breathing, a mouth, and a tail that helps them swim. The wriggling tadpoles look more like little fish than frogs.

At first they don't swim around a lot while living off the remaining yolk of their egg. Gradually they add plant material floating in the water to their diet and begin to tear off tiny bits of vegetation. By around the fourth week, skin grows over their gills, and the tadpole begins to breathe through its lungs.

After about six to nine weeks, tiny legs begin to grow—first in the back and then in the front. Tadpoles store food in their tails, and as the frog's body grows longer, its tail begins to shrink until it is totally reabsorbed into the frog's body. After about





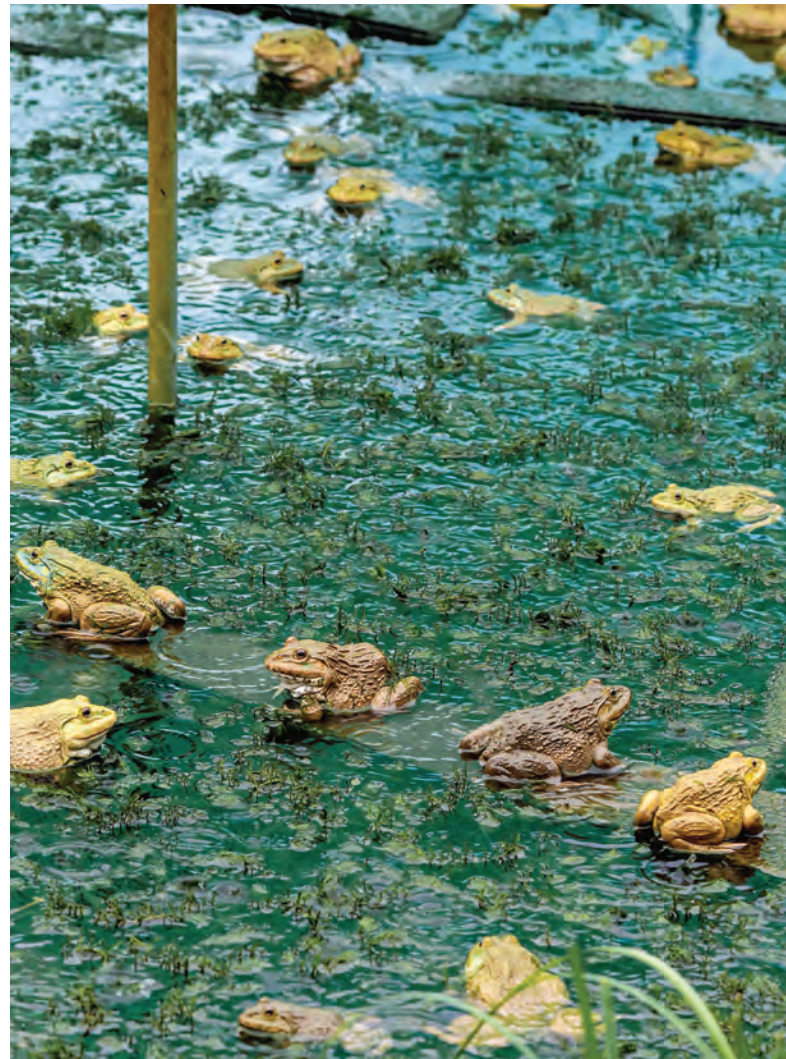
change to become more like Jesus.

The Bible tells us, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). Everything happens for a reason because He wants us to be more and more like Him and a part of the family of God.

The changes we go through may not always be fun, but God helps us get rid of the things we don't need like bad attitudes, habits, and temptations. Sometimes we go through hard times, but that makes us stronger. If we keep trusting and obeying God, we become new creatures that are free to be the way He designed us to be—just like those frogs that sing praises to Him. **C**

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*Jean Van Houten writes from Hudsonville, Michigan, where she enjoys spending time with her great granddaughter learning important lessons from God's creation.*



fourteen weeks, the tiny creatures have changed from legless, water-bound tadpoles to frogs. They can now venture onto land or stay in the water as they dine on bugs, little snails, grasshoppers, crickets, and mosquitoes that they capture with their long, sticky tongues.

When a new frog first hops out of the water and onto dry land, it is still very small—only about one inch long—but it has all the parts it needs to continue to grow to a mature adult in about three or four years. During this growing-up time, the frog can live on land or in the water, but it needs to keep its skin moist or it will dry out and die. When the frog is fully-grown and ready to be a parent, the female looks for a place to lay her eggs. The life cycle of the frog is complete and begins all over again with its offspring at the egg stage.

Through this slow process God transforms a tiny egg into a frog singing in its watery home. Our Creator designed other miraculous transformations in creating butterflies—from egg to caterpillar to a beautiful butterfly flitting from flower to flower. And He can perform a similar transformation in us as we

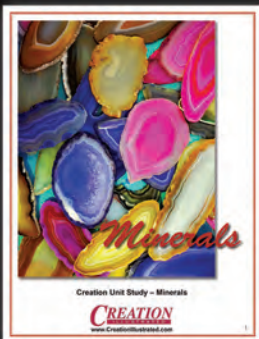
# Let Us Help You Deal

## Choose This

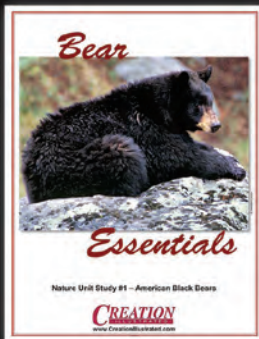


# O

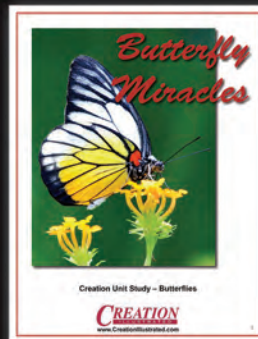
## Bible-based Unit Studies



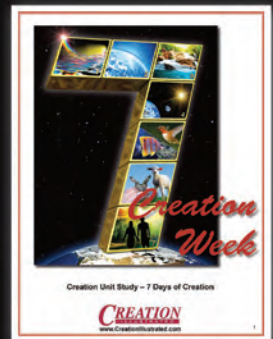
Minerals



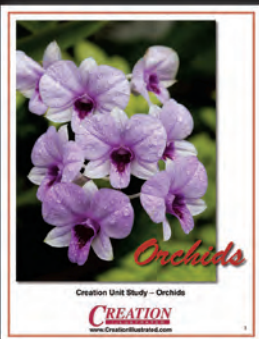
Bears



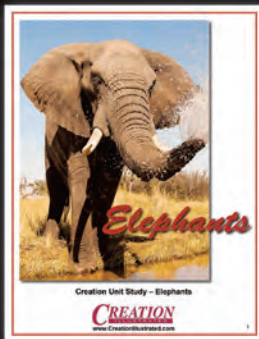
Butterflies



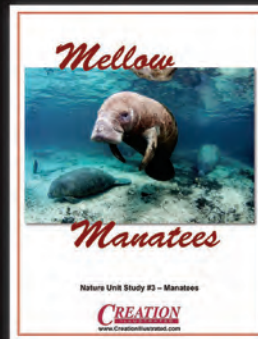
Creation Week



Orchids



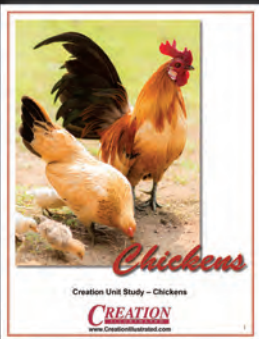
Elephants



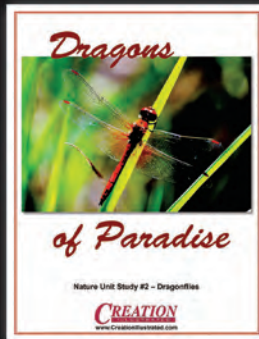
Manatees



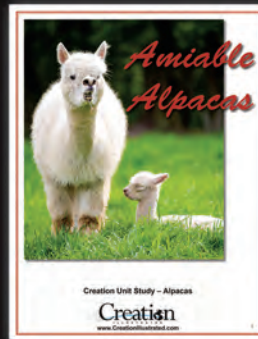
Horses



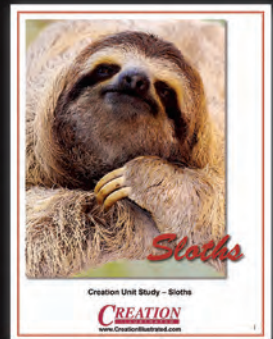
Chickens



Dragonflies



Alpacas



Sloths

# with Cellphone Addiction!

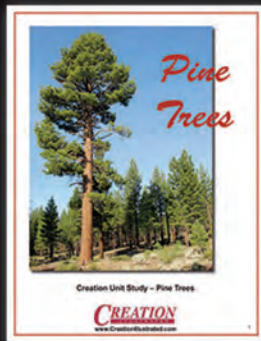
R This



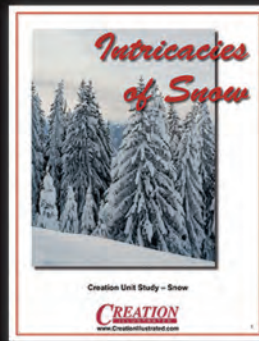
## Inspire Youth to Explore Nature !



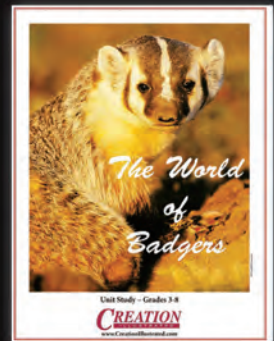
Fragrance



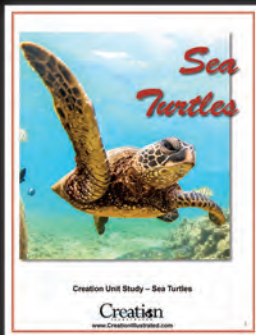
Pine Trees



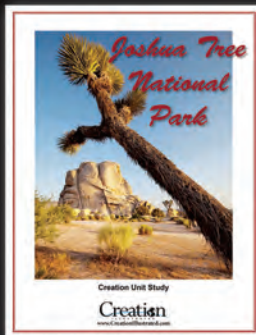
Snow



Badgers



Sea Turtles



Joshua Tree  
National Park



Octopus

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SERVICE AND MINISTRY



Not only do dandelions give their seeds away, they also give their pollen away. The tenth secret of our yellow wayfaring flower is that of service and ministry.

Bees love to receive pollen from the dandelion and this blossom is valuable in the production of golden honey. The ant also is a frequent guest at this yellow table. Pheasants, grouse and other birds favor the seeds. The leaves are relished by deer. Dandelion leaves are high in vitamins A, B, calcium phosphorous and iron. Young leaves in the spring make a delicious tossed salad, or cooked as spinach. Every part of the dandelion flower is actually edible by man.

People from the island of Mauarac, one of the islands of the Balaric Sea, avoided starvation by eating Dandelion Roots when locust had devoured all their plants. These roots may be sliced and boiled in salt water and served like potatoes. It is estimated that there are 10 mil-

lion insects along with 2 million spiders per grassy acre. Many dine frequently at the dandelion house.

What do visitors see in your house? What do you offer your friends when they come to visit?

Are your toys and treasures full of lasting golden value? Are your games uplifting and worthwhile, or perhaps foolish or even harmful? Isaiah 39:4 asks the question, "What have they seen in your house?"

What do you contribute to your family's lifestyle?

Do you have to be told what to do when you know it needs doing? Do you shirk your job? Do you work cheerfully and willingly? If you would be great in God's kingdom, then we must learn the lesson of the dandelion, to be a servant to all. See Mark 10:42-45



**PRACTICAL PROJECT:**

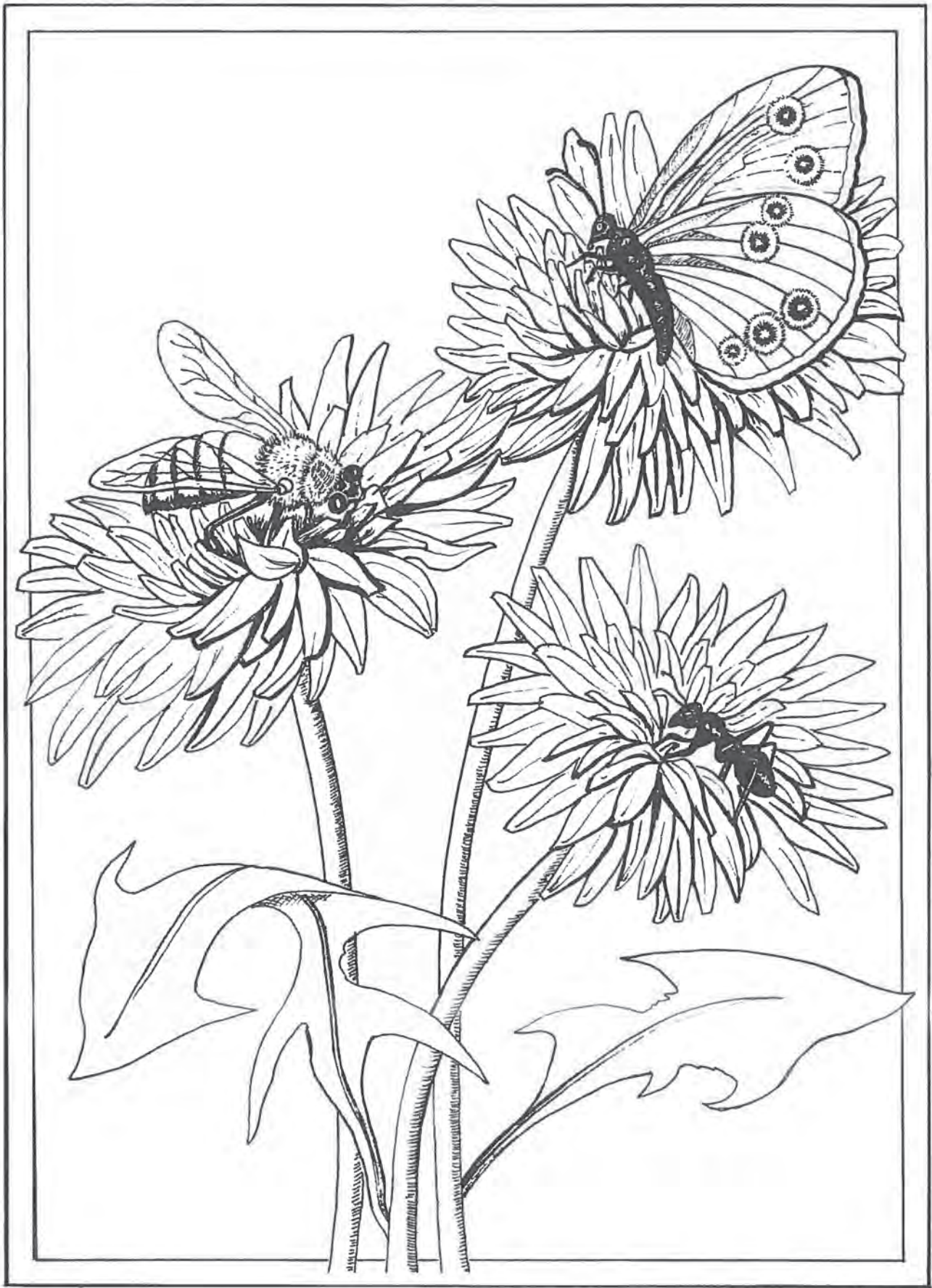
Spend some time carefully watching a dandelion flower. How many insects come to dine at its flower table in one hour? You might even try watching for several hours. Look very carefully because some insects that live and dine there are very small.



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







**Spring 2024 Coloring Contest**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Initial: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

(deadline & details on page 60)

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_

## Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest

### Winners From the Winter 2024 Edition Character-Building Lesson



*First Place, ages 6–11*  
Dante R., age 9  
Topeka, Kansas



*First Place, ages 12–18*  
Charlee F., age 12  
Tunnel Hill, Illinois



*First Place, ages 19+*  
Nancy A., age 76  
Lakewood, Washington

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](mailto:coloring@creationillustrated.com), Subject Line: Coloring Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The **DEADLINE for spring 2024 entries is May 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 June from spring-edition pictures, the first week of September from summer-edition pictures, the first week of December from fall-edition pictures, and the first week of March from winter-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: [www.CreationIllustrated.com](http://www.CreationIllustrated.com)

# Creation Illustrated Photo Contest

## Winners From Winter 2024 Submissions



### *First Place, ages 6–11 (left)*

*Kara J., age 9, of Leavenworth, Indiana, wrote: "I love that God created things like mushrooms for people like me and you. Thank You, God for creating such beautiful things!"*



### *First Place, ages 12–18 (right)*

*Novella B., age 12, of Elizabethton, Tennessee, wrote: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).*



### *First Place, ages 19+ (left)*

*Angella C., age 64, of Flushing, New York, wrote: "Red on white reminds me of the blood of the Lamb covering our sins made white as snow."*

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](mailto:photos@creationillustrated.com), Subject Line: Photo Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address and one or two sentences on what your photo says about our Creator. The **DEADLINE for spring 2024 entries is May 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 June from spring submissions, the first week of September from summer submissions, the first week of December from fall submissions, and the first week of March from winter submissions. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: [www.CreationIllustrated.com](http://www.CreationIllustrated.com)



# STUDY GUIDE

## for *Creation Illustrated*, Spring 2024 Edition, Vol. 31, No. 1

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

### **I. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—“Gregarious Geese” story, pages 6–19**

1. Explain what imprinting is, when does it happen, and how do Canada geese use it to teach. What is the spiritual lesson found with imprinting? (See Jeremish1:5.) p. 8
2. How fast and how far do Canada geese fly during migration? Explain how the V-shape of their flight works and how it helps them. p. 8
3. Explain how strong and how loyal geese bond to each other. What special spiritual lesson is demonstrated by the geese that we can learn and apply to our lives? pp. 8, 11
4. What is a *gang brood*, and how big can they become? p. 11
5. Explain where Canada geese are native, and why they are not Canadian. How many species of geese are there? p. 11

### **II. Creation Up Close—“Like a Tree” story, pages 12–16**

1. When did Nebraska celebrate its first Arbor Day? Who was behind the start of this important event, and how many trees were planted on that first Arbor Day? p. 12
2. List six major benefits that trees provide. pp. 12, 13
3. From what resources do trees get their strength? How do Christians get their strength? p. 14
4. List some of the ways the baobab tree grows to benefit people? p. 14
5. What is the estimated number of different tree species? What tree in the story is your favorite, and why do you find it special? pp. 13–16

### **III. Re-Creation Outdoors—“Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge” story, pages 20–27**

1. How did Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge get its name? Where is it located? p. 21
2. What year was the refuge established, and how many acres does it cover? p. 22
3. List some of the migratory birds that use the refuge as an important stopping point. p. 22
4. What are *puddling stations* used for? What special festival happens each year at the refuge? p. 23
5. What endangered flower is found growing by the thousands by the lake? What plant is being gotten rid of as part of the eradication project to help restore only native plants to the habitat? p. 25, 26

### **IV. The Creation Week—“Creation Day 2—The Creation of the Atmosphere” story, pages 28–37**

1. What is the thin layer of atmosphere that surrounds the earth designed to do? p. 29
2. How are heavens, expanse, and waters related? pp. 33, 34
3. Describe what the Leonid meteor storm of November 1833 was like. p. 35
4. How does the expanse created on day two impact our lives? p. 36
5. What future event will be staged in the atmosphere? (See Revelation 1:7.) p. 36

## Springtime Family Fun Activities

### Outdoor adventures in the springtime:

Windy spring days are a great time to explore and learn more about the wind. It is fun to buy or make your kites and fly them in the breezy sky. Be sure there is plenty of open space and no big trees or power lines around where your kite or string could get caught. Advancing to a double-string kite is a fun goal to work toward, and a four-string kite can be very tricky and exhilarating! Making an anemometer, windsock, or wind vane are also fun DIY projects families can enjoy working together on as purposeful educational activities.



### Start a fern garden:

Once the weather warms up, you can enjoy planting a fern garden. Choose a shady location and plant small starter ferns in moist, slightly acidic soil. After planting your ferns, spread a two-inch layer of mulch over the soil to hold in the moisture. Some fern species to look for include the Boston or sword fern that is good for baskets but needs cool shade, the lady fern that is low maintenance and can tolerate sunlight, the maidenhair fern that has dark stripes and is bright green, the Osmunda fern that grows tall, and the wood fern that is one of the most adaptable varieties.

### Plant some tasty treats:

Get a large container and plant a packet of sugar snap peas. Count how many days it takes for your peas to start showing through the soil. Then count how many days it takes for peas to get twelve inches long. Then record how many days until they bloom and how many days after they bloom until they are ready to harvest. Don't forget to count how many sugar snaps you harvested to enjoy eating!

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S	I	T	H	I	Y	R	I	O	Q	E	R
A	T	R	E	E	S	P	L	S	A	Q	E
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O	R	E	F	N	L	X	I	A	Y	C	L

## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

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

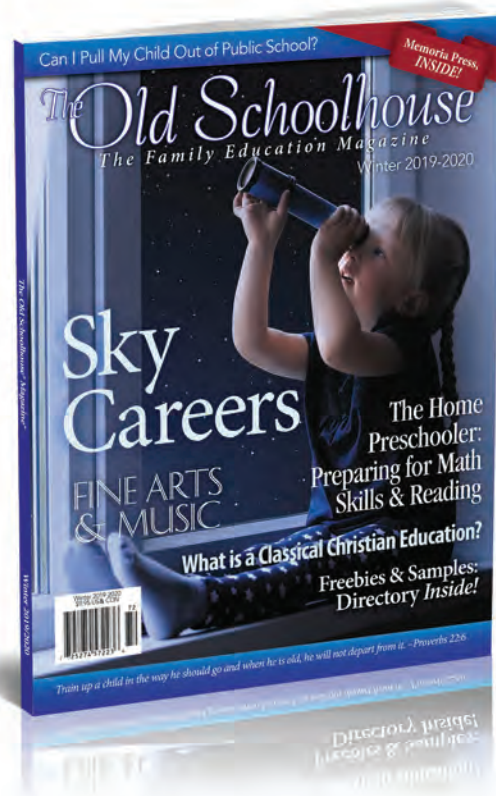
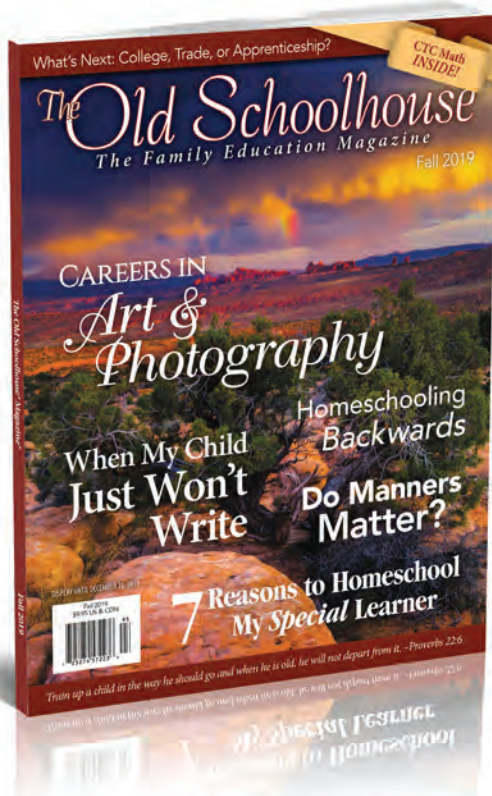
- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. ATMOSPHERE | 11. METEOR       |
| 2. BARK       | 12. MUD          |
| 3. CANADA     | 13. ORION        |
| 4. DESERT     | 14. REFUGE       |
| 5. FERN       | 15. RESURRECTION |
| 6. FROGS      | 16. SEEDS        |
| 7. GEESE      | 17. TRAIL        |
| 8. GOSLING    | 18. TREES        |
| 9. HEAVEN     | 19. WATER        |
| 10. LAKE      | 20. WILDLIFE     |

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

Luke 6:40

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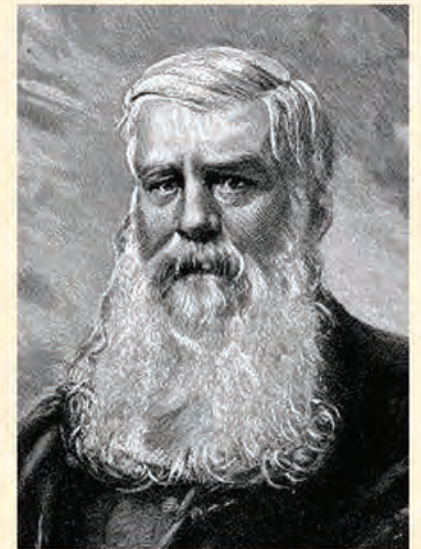
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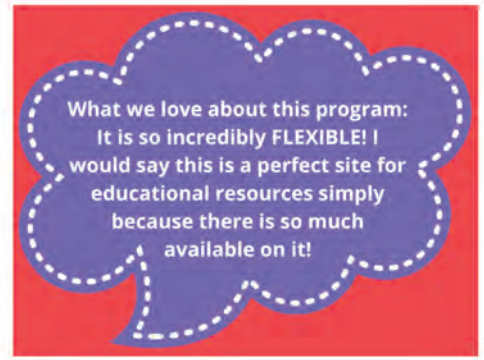
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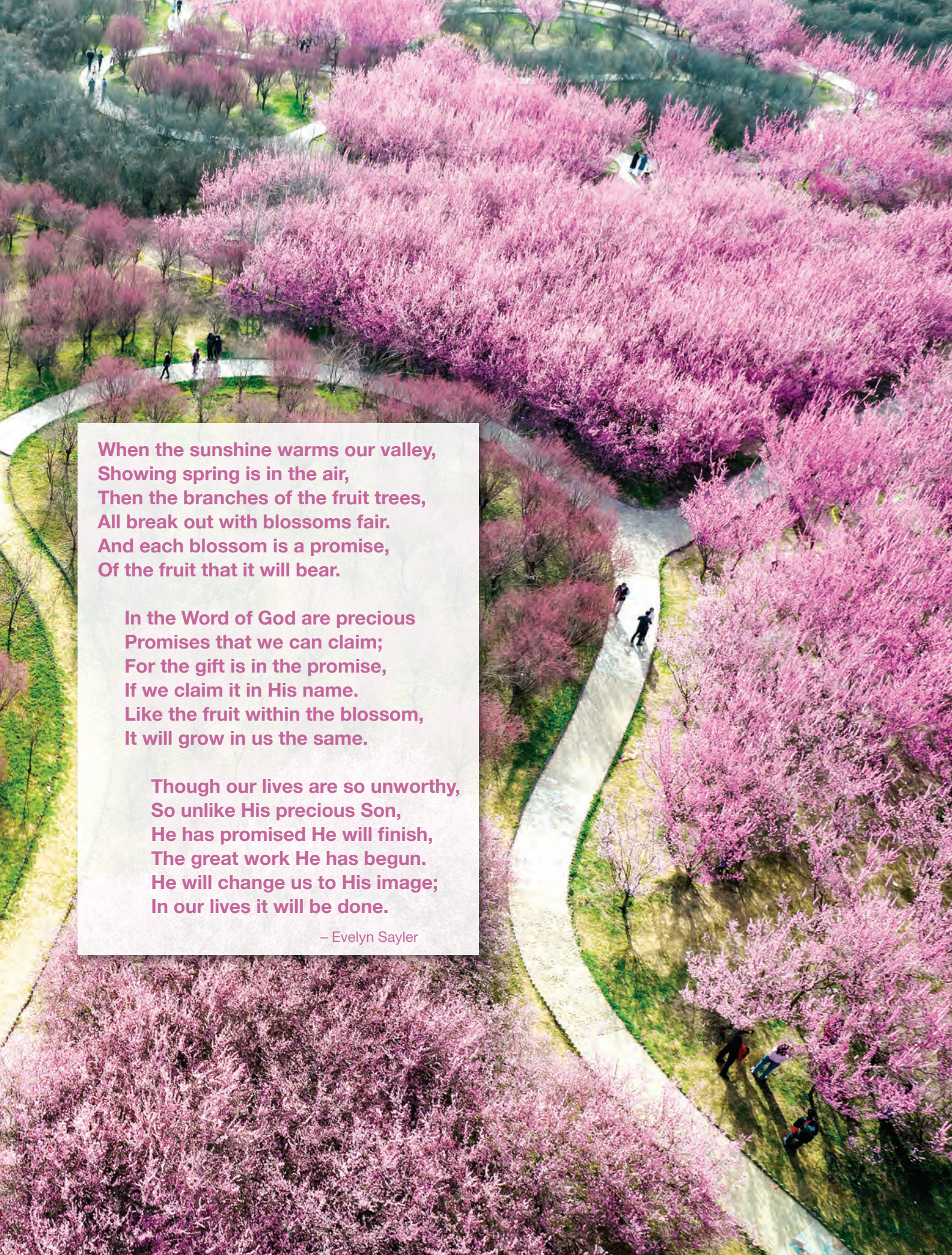
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*The  
Promise*

An aerial photograph of a park during cherry blossom season. The landscape is filled with vibrant pink cherry blossom trees in full bloom. A light-colored, winding path cuts through the trees, with several people walking along it. The scene is bright and colorful, capturing the beauty of spring.

**When the sunshine warms our valley,  
Showing spring is in the air,  
Then the branches of the fruit trees,  
All break out with blossoms fair.  
And each blossom is a promise,  
Of the fruit that it will bear.**

**In the Word of God are precious  
Promises that we can claim;  
For the gift is in the promise,  
If we claim it in His name.  
Like the fruit within the blossom,  
It will grow in us the same.**

**Though our lives are so unworthy,  
So unlike His precious Son,  
He has promised He will finish,  
The great work He has begun.  
He will change us to His image;  
In our lives it will be done.**

**– Evelyn Saylor**

*“Honor her for all that her  
hands have done, and let her  
works bring her praise.”*

– Proverbs 31:31



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