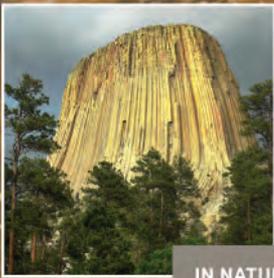


Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR COMPANION . . .



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

WINTER 2026 VOL 32 NO 4 US \$4.99





*“I saw heaven opened,
The one sitting on it is*



*and behold, a white horse!
called Faithful and True . . . ”*

– Revelation 19:11, ESV

Our Why



Recent data from Gallup polling and the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that Americans are reading less in the battle for their attention. But since you are reading this issue of *Creation Illustrated*, you are one of the minority. And because you are reading this “Why” article and not just looking at the pictures in this edition, you are receiving the restorative brain benefits of reading!

Researchers found that reading affects the brain by enhancing concentration, empathy, and balanced thinking. Readings decline is linked to the rise of social media and the massive onslaught of on-screen entertainment resulting in shorter attention spans. This decline contributes to a loss of *deep* reading skills that impacts the ability to process complex information, engage in critical thinking, and ultimately affecting decision-making and civic participation.

Reading tangible printed material provides a sanctuary from digital interruptions that trains the brain to focus while improving the ability to filter distractions. It boosts empathy by activating neural networks associated with understanding others’ beliefs and intentions that strengthens ones emotional intelligence.

Studies show reading can also reduce cognitive decline over time and improve memory and concentration. Deep, sustained reading develops analytical skills and the ability to question which are crucial for making informed decisions. Reading helps to shift our focus from self-centered thoughts to larger themes and other people that can profoundly shape one’s worldview. Amazingly, reading can physically change the brain. For example, reading in a foreign language has been shown to increase the size of the hippocampus and cerebral cortex.

Sadly, the art of reading is disappearing amid the constant stream of digital notifications and the preference for instant gratification from social media and other digital platforms that displace reading time and make it harder to engage in deep, slow-paced reading. This constant barrage of digital stimuli leads to shorter attention spans.

Furthermore, an educational curriculum focused heavily on standardized testing can turn reading into a chore rather than a pleasurable activity and an important habit that can carry into adulthood. Children learn reading habits from their parents who are spending more time on screens.

So, schedule time to enhance your brain, empathy, and concentration by reading *Creation Illustrated* from cover to cover, and then minister to your family and friends’ cognitive health by sharing *Creation Illustrated*. Find something new and uplifting in this issue to testify about that will encourage them to read it themselves. Tell how a story brought you to a deeper understanding of your Creator and Redeemer. We pray that *Creation Illustrated* will help everyone physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. That’s why.

The Publishers



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Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 32, No. 4

Our Purpose . . .

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

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The cover photo of a Korean Leopard was taken by Tom and Pat Leeson of Vancouver, Washington.

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Appearance

A 1990s British TV comedy called *Keeping Up Appearances* focused on countless laughable *faux pas* committed by a middle-aged couple who struggled to appear to be something they were not. Materialistic or *me first* societies often drive families, businesses, and even youth toward competitive superiority aspirations aimed at a *keeping up with the Joneses* mentality—to appear a little better, smarter, richer, or attractive in ways that teeter on the brink of opulence, racism, and unfettered pride.

Such misdirected endeavors can sometimes be influenced by the great deceiver, but in nature, appearance often sparks curiosity and inspires valuable life lessons. For example, the “Peculiar Penguins” story in this edition shows tuxedo-clad birds that appear to proudly strut around the antarctic, yet they can’t even fly. Instead, God surprises us with their agile swimming skills and sense of cooperative community—an antidote to prideful oneupmanship.

A towering monolith protruding up from the prairies of Wyoming appears to be remnants of a volcano, but researchers point to a different source. The majestic formation also got mislabeled as Devils Tower by explorers, which appears as a wrong interpretation of the native term given to the sacred outcropping—Bear Lodge.

Looking at Creation up close in the “Drifting Wood” feature, beachcombers often see the tree remnants as *deadwood*, yet there appears to be an abundance of life upon and around the polished driftwood that is protected from being harvested because of the ecological service it provides. We, too, can become of greater service as the Holy Spirit polishes our character beyond its original appearance.

Such transformation can also be embraced in the garden feature called “Providential Pruning.” Cutting back plants, trees, shrubs, and flowers to an unrecognizable contrast to their summertime appearance will result in greater fruitfulness the next growing season. Our transformation as followers of Christ also appears unrecognizable as God prunes and discards any unfruitful practices so that our spiritual growth can flourish.



Even the seventh day of the Creation week when God rested from all He had created can appear to be a time for slumber and relaxation, yet the real power within the culmination of the last day of Creation is discovered amid God’s *presence*. Relationships with Him and others can be fostered in accordance with His fullest intent and ultimately appear as an unspeakable gift that inspires worship toward the Creator.

Creativity appears as the first element of God’s character revealed in the Bible, and this issue’s “My Walk With God” story features an inventor who developed numerous patents and now creates masterful 3D art, woodworking pieces, nature photographs, drone videos, and mathematical art. What finally appears as a finished product has gone through various stages of development and refinement in order to arrive at the most aesthetically pleasing appearance that glorifies the Creator—a goal that all of our endeavors must focus on to humbly eradicate the appearance of self-centered pride.

Tom Ish, editor/publisher



Sharing Our Mail

\$5 donation . . .

I am a prisoner at Dixon Correctional Center. I personally would like to thank Creation Illustrated Ministries for sending me your wonderful magazine. I had never heard of your magazine or ministry.

Anyway, I thank you for your thoughtfulness to guys (prisoners) like myself. It is good to know there are still a lot of good people out there. I pray that God always keeps His arms around your ministry. I'm sending a five dollar donation to your ministry for being

thoughtful to the less thought of people like us prisoners. May God continue to reward you and everyone who is a part of your ministry. God bless.

Respectfully,

Eric R.

Dixon, Illinois

Continue giving . . .

We want to continue our contributions to your wonderful outreach projects. Please send some envelopes to us. Thank you.

G. and J. Reynolds

Fresno, California

Older copies . . .

Thanks so much for your quick reply and for the invitation to send my article on speculation. We've been enjoying the detailed articles and excellent photos in *Creation Illustrated*.

While preparing to help homeschool two of my grandchildren, I ran across older copies of your magazine that I've had for years. I'm glad I kept them, as the information and inspiration in those pages will help supplement our curriculum.

I expect to

complete my story soon and will send it your way. Thanks again! God bless.

K. Wilcox

Tillamook, Oregon

Time with God . . .

I am currently incarcerated at Angola, Louisiana. I am writing to request your magazine. Can you please send me any recent or even back issues or give me all thirty-two years of *Creation Illustrated*?

I've been locked up over nine years and have a life sentence. I spend most of my free time with God and building my relationship with Jesus. I will look forward to receiving whatever you can send me. God bless you.

Lonnie C.

Angola, Louisiana

P.S. Could you also please send copies to two friends in Shreveport, Louisiana?

Better harvest . . .

Thank you so much for your prayers for a better harvest. We did have a little more rain this year, so the crops were better than the last two very dry years.

I'm sorry the

donation is not big, but a little is better than none. You work so hard preparing and writing such an amazing magazine, you must be getting exhausted.

Thanksgiving is over, but yours is still coming up, so I hope you have an amazing Thanksgiving with family and friends. Take care and God Bless.

C. Grabo

Beiseker, Alberta

Share my copy . . .

I received your email requesting donations, but I'm so sorry that at this time my husband and I are struggling financially because of his current health issues. This, too, shall pass, but at this time I cannot donate or give any gift subscriptions.

However, I do absolutely love your magazine and especially appreciate the stunning photography. I plan to continue my own subscription, and I always share my copy with a few of my friends. Thank you for a quality publication that is helping to change lives!

B. Crouse

Lebanon, Ohio

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Peculiar Penguins

What bird doesn't fly, swims in antarctic waters in search of food, waddles on land, mates for life, and relies on community to survive? Peculiar penguins fit all of these avian oddities; yet, their formal-looking, tuxedo-like attire appears to allow them to proudly strut their quirky characteristics.

Scripture says Christians "Are . . . a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9, KJV); yet, the followers of Christ are to exemplify His humility rather than exhibit prideful self-righteousness.

Penguins live more than half their lives in water, but they breed and raise their chicks on land. Most penguins function in groups, unlike those of Haggai 1:9 whom the prophet said, "Each of you is busy with his own house" (AMS). Penguins display community cooperation for the good of the whole, which we should do as believers.

Penguins' wings serve as rigid flippers that provide thrust in the frigid sea. Although they don't help penguins to fly, the wing design enables extraordinary swimming. The Creator also purposefully fashioned their streamlined body shape and dense bones (unlike most birds' hollow bones)

By Matthias Hoefler







Mark Gottlieb



Jenny Miner

A parent emperor penguin with its juvenile offspring (previous pages) huddle together to stay safe and warm. Unique erect crested penguins (above) don a distinct golden crown that accents their tuxedo-like feather pattern. Little blue penguins (left) can be found along the coasts of New Zealand and Southern Australia. An African penguin family (right) does not have to battle the bitter cold climate of Antarctica. All of these penguin species are unable to fly, but they are very adept swimmers.



Deborah Riew

*“What therefore God hath
joined together, . . .”*

—Mark 10:9, KJV

to help the creatures dive effectively. According to 1 Corinthians 14:40, God does all things “decently and in order,” and that orderliness is clearly evident in the way penguins were created.

Penguins play an important role in the food chain of their habitat as they feed on a wide variety of marine organisms and help control the populations of these species. In turn, their eggs and chicks are consumed by gulls, rats, foxes, and even feral cats and dogs on some accessible islands. Adult penguins are a source of food for a number of predators including seals, sharks, and orca whales.

On a brighter note, the movie *Happy Feet* depicts an animated penguin named Mumble that uses his dancing skills to call attention to the needs of his community. He is a peculiar example among peculiar creatures, and although penguins may appear in zoos or aquariums and even on screen, they do not appear in the Bible. But that doesn’t stop them from exhibiting traits the Bible values.

Among the seventeen species of these unusual birds, Adelie penguins—perhaps the most commonly envisioned—don a distinguishing black and white tuxedo pattern, a black-tipped red beak, yellow webbed feet, and spectacle-like white rings around their eyes. They live in Antarctica and the surrounding islands where they feast on favorite foods including krill, squid, silverfish, and crustaceans. Adelie penguins can be aggressive when caring for their nests, which reveals a godly admonition of protecting ones offspring.

With all of the wild beasts found in Africa, penguins likely don’t come to mind. But South African penguins live there, consume sardines and anchovies, and were the first kind of penguin documented in European history. On November 22, 1497, an anonymous member of Vasco da Gama’s

crew recorded seeing “birds as big as ducks, but they cannot fly.” So, penguins aren’t confined only to the icy regions where we often associate them. In fact, South African Penguins have bare feet, which helps to regulate their body temperature since they don’t live in ice and snow. Surprisingly, no penguins can be found in the arctic regions around the North Pole where they might be more expected than in Africa.

Equally unexpected, Galapagos penguins live off the coast of Ecuador, which is a tropical region. As the only species that lives north of the equator, they are the rarest kind of penguin with only about a thousand of them left in the wild. They avoid the sun by hiding their eggs in the shade under steep rocks. Galapagos penguins choose a mate for life, which Jesus relates to us in His edict: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:9, KJV).

One of the most unique species, little blue penguins, function as families that leave the nest together to hunt for food in the ocean. This theme of teamwork shows up again and again among penguins. Even though this smallest species stands only about thirteen inches tall, it is no less significant to God. Just as Zechariah points out in building the temple, “For who hath despised the day of small things?” (Zechariah 4:10, KJV). Every detail and every creature matters to God. The little blue penguins’ head, upper body, and flippers are blue, and slate-gray ear coverts fade to white from the chin to the belly. Their dark gray-black beak is less than a half inch long, and their feet are pink with black soles and webbing. These noisy little penguins each have their own individual call. They live six to seven years along the coast of New Zealand and southern Australia. Ever cautious, they return to land after dark to avoid being spotted by predators or humans. Like the

*“Thou therefore endure hardness,
as a good soldier . . .”*

—2 Timothy 2:3, KJV

Galapagos penguins, the little blue species choose one mate to stay with for life although they may part if a nesting attempt doesn't succeed. So, these loyal birds echo the words of Paul, “Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Corinthians 7:2, KJV).

Gentoo penguins rank as the third-largest penguin (emperor and king penguins being first and second) averaging around thirty inches tall and record the fastest swimming rate by ripping through the water at speeds of up to twenty-two miles per hour. They also don the largest and most prominent tails that swish from side to side as they waddle along on land. This awkward mobility among penguins typically does not present a risk to healthy adults, but their chicks face vulnerability to predation. When gentoo penguins court, they bring each other rocks that are then used to build their nests. Pairs of this species also normally mate for life, and unfaithful gentoos have been known to be banished from the colony. Perhaps their instinct runs parallel to Scripture that notes, “he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10, KJV).

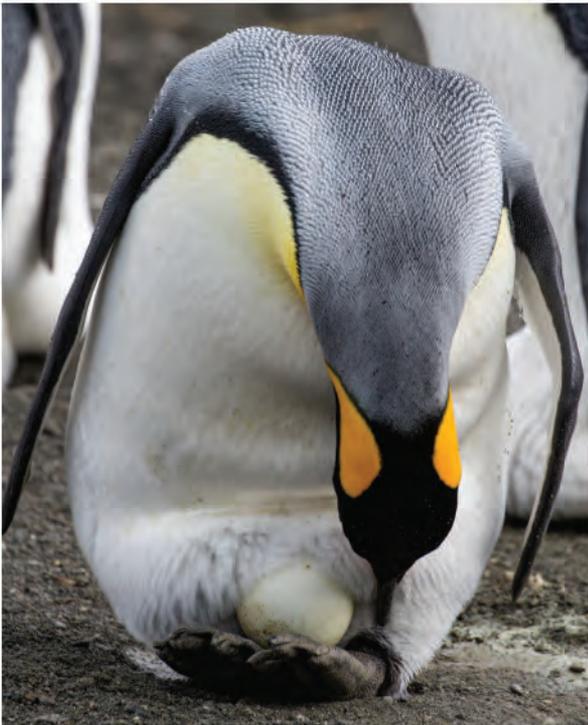
King penguins huddle in large groups for warmth as observed in Ecclesiastes 4:11: “Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?” (KJV). King penguins stand about three feet tall, weigh thirty to forty pounds, and are distinguished by their blackish-brown head, dark golden ear markings, and a silvery gray back. Like all penguins, they steer themselves through the water with their feet and tail. The female can only lay one egg at a time, and in order to survive, the chicks have to weigh at least sixteen pounds when winter hits in order to have enough stored up fat to fend off the cold, sparse months.

The largest species, emperor penguins, stand up to fifty-one inches tall and starred in the documentary *March of the Penguins*. They don't try to move to avoid bad weather and can tolerate temperatures of minus 75 degrees Fahrenheit as they share body heat while huddling together in large colonies. God created emperor penguins with great endurance and protection with four layers of scale-like feathers and enormous amounts of fat for insulation and energy. This endurance and protection also serves well underwater where they can remain for twenty minutes or more at a time in the icy sea. Their God-given tenacity grants them a lifespan of up to twenty years. Scripture encourages us to endure difficulty and develop this characteristic of tenacity, “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3, KJV).

Penguins also have something to teach about cooperative parenting. After laying her single egg, the female emperor penguin travels to the open sea to feed while the male stays behind to hold the egg on his feet to incubate it under his warm body and feathers. Eventually, the female comes back, and the male goes to sea. Parents that work together are a great model for their young, and life is much better and easier for everyone involved.

We have much to learn from the peculiar penguin. Faithfulness to a mate for life, working together as a community, and having a strong endurance in harsh situations all exhibit character qualities we should emulate—part of Christ's plan of perseverance until He returns. 

Matthias Hoefler writes from Kent, Ohio, where he explores unique aspects of Creation worth sharing when he is not working as an independent contractor with a company that trains AI.



A king penguin parent (left) cradles a single egg on its feet while covering it with multiple layers of feathers and fat to keep it warm. A Galapagos Penguin (above) demonstrates its strong ability to swim in search of food. Countless hoards of king penguins (below) spend a sunny day at the beach.



Drifting

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



Beachcombers find many treasures in the sand, and the vast mounds of driftwood along the shore tempts collectors to take some home.

Many people who love the ocean proclaim that one of the most pleasurable attractions that beckons them to spend hours trodding along sandy shores is beachcombing—walking completely unencumbered, head bent down as if in prayer, and carrying an old weather-worn pail in hand to be filled with all kinds of delightful treasures including sand dollars, shells, agates, various other rocks, and maybe even some sea glass.

Furthermore, driftwood of all shapes and sizes tempts collectors to no end, but because it plays such a vital role in protecting beaches from erosion and supporting coastal ecosystems, some state parks like in Florida, all of Washington state, and even Wisconsin have laws prohibiting the removal of driftwood from beaches, especially for commercial enterprise. Other states will allow small amounts of driftwood to be collected for personal use.

While some of the smooth, sea-scrubbed

Wood

B Y C A R O L E R O D G E R S



Floating wood serves as a home to wildlife and fungi.

timber along the West Coast of the U.S. comes from as far away as Southeast Asia, much of it comes right from the state's own backyard. Washington state, for example, has a very different kind of *backyard* with the bluffs along Puget Sound waterways releasing wood into the water due to erosion, large logs traveling down the Skykomish and Nisqually Rivers, and then the erosion of other riverbanks and stream banks contributing a good number of limbs, root masses, and whole trees.

Driftwood is often thought of as *dead wood*, but in taking a closer look, we might be surprised at the life found living on, within, or around the beached flotillas. Both fungi and bacteria play a role in the decomposition of driftwood where nutrients get released and habitats become created—convenient homes for isopods, taliridae, and invertebrates. There's even room for insect families, arthropods, and larvae that seek a safe haven in which to flourish. Mounds of tangled driftwood serve as small

communes where smaller animals seek shelter and protection from predators while shorebirds use the same habitats as maternity wards.

How wonderfully God cares for all His creatures from the greatest to the very least. The psalmist wrote, “How many are your works, Lord! . . . the earth is full of your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures . . . living things both great and small. . . . All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things” (Psalm 104: 24, 25, 27, 28, NIV).

Is not the Christian life much the same when it comes to the providence and protection found in the *dead wood*? The apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 3: 3, “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (NASB). And it is in our dying in Christ—when we are most dead in Him—that He is most able to do in and through us just what He does through the driftwood in feeding and ministering to others. Remember the words to Peter after Jesus’ resurrection.

He told Peter three times to feed or care for His lambs or sheep. (See John 21:15–17, NIV.) Jesus commissioned Peter to minister to all the souls set before him and offer them the blessings and comfort of a loving home found in the body of believers through Christ, as well, that glorious forever home.

Furthermore, coastal stability strengthened by driftwood trapping and stabilizing beach and dune sands helps to secure a safe border for both oceanside communities and resident critters. Surely we humans need stability and security in both the physical and spiritual realm. Jesus taught about the wise and foolish builders and a storm that rose up. “Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock” (Matthew 7:24, 25, NIV). Jesus is that Rock, the One upon whom we are to build our lives, who promises unfailing stability and spiritual nourishment that is far more dependable than the driftwood that holds down



Floating root masses offer protection for creatures.



Massive logs of driftwood surround associate

the sand—an unstable foundation upon which to build our future.

In and through Him we can weather all the storms of life, so long as we fix “our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12: 2, NASB). We receive nourishment from God’s Holy Word: “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:103, NIV), and from His Holy Spirit: “He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14: 26, NASB).

Jesus’ promises are instantaneous to the believer, whereas it takes a long time for the driftwood to reach land through an enduring process of decomposing and getting scrubbed and *polished* as it travels through the buffeting sea. But wonderful things happen on its journey through turbulent waters as the driftwood is transformed and crafted into truly outstanding artwork—some sleek and smooth, some twisted and gnarled.

Whether we admit it or not, without Christ we are all drifters prone to wander further and further

away from the very One who offers that unfailing stability and nourishment. But praise God; He is ever near patiently watching, waiting, and ready for when the time is right to transform fallen humanity into marvelous works of art—both beautiful and useful. “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2: 10, NLT).

However, it’s not just the unsaved man who drifts. God’s children are certainly not exempt from deviating away from His plan. “We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it” (Hebrews 2: 1, NASB). Second Kings 6:5–7 tells the story of the sons of the prophets who were down at the Jordan River cutting trees when the head of one of the axes broke off and fell into the river. The servant cried out to Elisha, “Alas, my master! For it was borrowed.’ Then the man of God said, ‘Where did it fall?’ And when he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there, and made the iron float. And he said, ‘Take it up for yourself.’ So he put out his hand and took it” (NASB).



editor Jennifer Ish in the San Juan Islands, Washington.

We all can drift like logs on the open sea.



Jenny Mear

The cross of Christ can rescue us from turbulent seas and guide us like a lighthouse on the shore.

Just like the ax head falling off and plunging into the water, we, too, can figuratively lose our heads and end up helplessly sinking and tumbling through troubled waters. Thankfully the Lord is patient, and when we cry out to Him, He doesn't just use a stick similar to Elisha to rescue us. He reaches us with the power of the cross amid the turbulent waters of life. Such love and sacrifice from the blessed Tree leads to conviction and repentance that lifts us up and out of the worldly waters. What mercy and grace; "When someone stumbles or falls, you give a helping hand" (Psalm 145:14, CEV). Perhaps this is you or someone you know who is drifting away from truth and security in the Rock.

The next time you find yourself beachcombing, walking the shoreline completely unencumbered, head bent down, swinging that old weather-worn pail in hand, watch for that half-buried piece of driftwood in the sand. May it remind you that He wants you to stop drifting and become the *dead wood* that is hidden in Him in order to be a polished thing of beauty that

can be wonderfully used of the Lord. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2: 20, NASB). 

Carole Rodgers writes from Olympia, Washington, where she explores unique aspects of Creation in order to draw spiritual lessons and insights worth sharing.



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RE-CREATION OUTDOORS

Wyoming's Majestic Monolith

BY LESLIE A. SAMS

While driving in northeastern Wyoming, suddenly in the distance an immense rock formation appears—stunning and magnificent—above the grasslands and the Belle Fourche River. This natural wonder with an evil sounding name seems out of place as it pierces the placid prairie landscape. So, how did it form, and who named it Devil's Tower?

Long before the mid-1800s when European explorers discovered the mysterious monolith, at least twenty Great Plains and Black Hills native tribes considered the enormous rock formation sacred. Most tribes including the Arapaho, Crow, Cheyenne, Shoshone, and Lakota natives referred to the gargantuan geologic formation variations of *Bear Lodge* that is translated from the Lakota name *Mato Tipila*. Each tribe had its own legend about the tower's origins with most stories featuring a giant bear clawing its way up the colossal rock tower.

Bear Lodge appeared on official maps of the Black Hills area from 1857 to 1901, but the name started to change after Colonel Richard Irving Dodge returned from an expedition



in 1875. His team heard the Indians call the structure *bad god's tower*, which turned into the misnomer *Devil's Tower*. However, no evidence leads to native people associating this awesome spectacle with bad gods or evil spirits.

Instead, many scholars believe the new name, fully adopted in the early 1900s, resulted from a bad translation that confused the words *bear* and *bad god*. Eventually the apostrophe in the word *Devil's* got dropped from the name due to the US Board on Geographic Names maintaining a policy to not use possessive attributes.

President Theodore Roosevelt decided that Devils Tower should be recognized for its rich historical, cultural, and scientific significance. Accordingly, on September 24, 1906, having met Congressional qualifications for federal permanent land protection, President Roosevelt declared Devils Tower to be the first National Monument in the United States.

Now approximately five hundred thousand people visit this site annually to learn about its geologic and spiritual significance with many appreciating it as the handiwork of



The tower pierces the prairie and can be viewed for miles around.

NPS *A climber fills out*

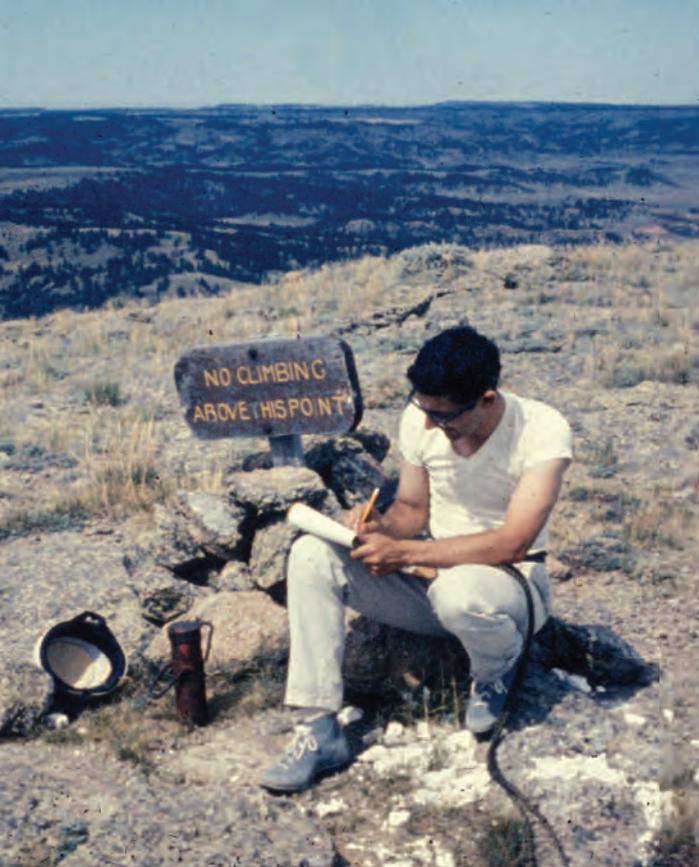
PRAYER BUNDLES

our Creator God. Even today tribes still use the park for traditional ceremonies. Visitors can observe prayer cloths and prayer bundles attached to trees around the park, especially along Tower Trail—the most popular 1.8-mile hiking route with moderate elevation changes. Four additional trails in the park include Joyner Ridge Trail, Red Beds Trail, South Side Trail, and Valley View Trail that connect and offer spectacular views of the tower and the surrounding landscape.

Further exploration reveals that the national monument is home to more than forty different types of mammals, at least a hundred sixty species of birds, as well as amphibians, reptiles, and abundant fish in the Belle Fourche River. Even a prairie dog town along the river offers a delightful scene where I tried to take photos, but the clever creatures ducked into their holes and tunnels then popped up behind me.

According to *In the Company of Plants and Rocks*, the football field sized plateau of Devils Tower is botanically diverse with fifty-three plant species scattered over the rocky surface. The only way to get to the top is to climb, and about five thousand people scale the vertical walls each year.

Standing 1,267 feet above the river and 867 feet from base to summit, the tower reaches about the height of a fifty-story building—the world’s largest example of geologic columnar jointing (a set of intersecting fractures with polygonal sides). The tightly fitting columns are mostly hexagonal with the larger ones about six to eight feet in diameter near the base and taper to about four feet in diameter at the top. At the bottom, massive boulders as large as cars pile up as remnants of broken columns.



the climbing log at the summit that is dotted with vegetation.

Massive piles of collapsed columns buttress the tower base.

Jeremy Nickson

“The earth is the Lord’s . . .”

Most experts consider Devils Tower a *laccolith* composed of a mass of igneous rock that has risen between sedimentary rock beds that produced a dome-shaped structure. It is also considered a butte—an isolated hill with steep sides and a flat top. Some claim Devils Tower is a millions-of-years-old dormant volcano that gradually formed into its current shape. Geologists believe it to be an igneous intrusion, meaning it formed underground beneath the earth’s mantle from molten rock or magma that pushed up into sedimentary layers. This intrusion became solid after which the surrounding sedimentary rock eroded away. As geologists continue to study the formation, time becomes an important factor that influences their views and perspective. Did it take millions of years for Devils Tower to stand as a sky-scraping sentinel above the prairies? Or perhaps it formed in only thousands of years as young earth biblical creationists believe.

In either case, the process of creating Devils Tower would have taken a lot of water—much more than the Belle Fourche River could have offered. Something must have happened under God’s mighty hand to accomplish this mysterious masterpiece. Consider the power of water as researchers at Answers in Genesis note, “Geologists repeatedly discover the catastrophic effects of local flooding on the earth’s surface, resulting in the same conclusion each time: that substantial amounts of water can have the same geological effect in a short period of time (even laying down rock layers) that hypothesized millions of years of slow water flow would have.” Psalm 24:1, 2 clearly states whose authority rules the earth. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers” (ESV).



NPS/Lucas Barth

Climbers scale the sheer columns.



NPS

The national monument provides a varied habitat for wildlife.

ACOUSTIC PROPERTY

One catastrophic event could have revealed the tower within a very short time frame, and Creationists believe this event was recorded in Genesis 6–9, described as *Noah's Flood*. Psalm 135:6 underscores, “Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps” (ESV).

According to an Institute for Creation Research article, a relatively new idea was proposed by Prokop Závada and colleagues about the tower’s formation. They theorized it “was a maar-diatreme volcano that forms when magma encounters groundwater, which becomes superheated and then explodes to the surface, puncturing the overlying sediments. The new hole fills with rising magma to create a cylinder-shaped underground lava tower. Soon after Devils Tower was formed, draining floodwaters eroded the surrounding sediment layers.”

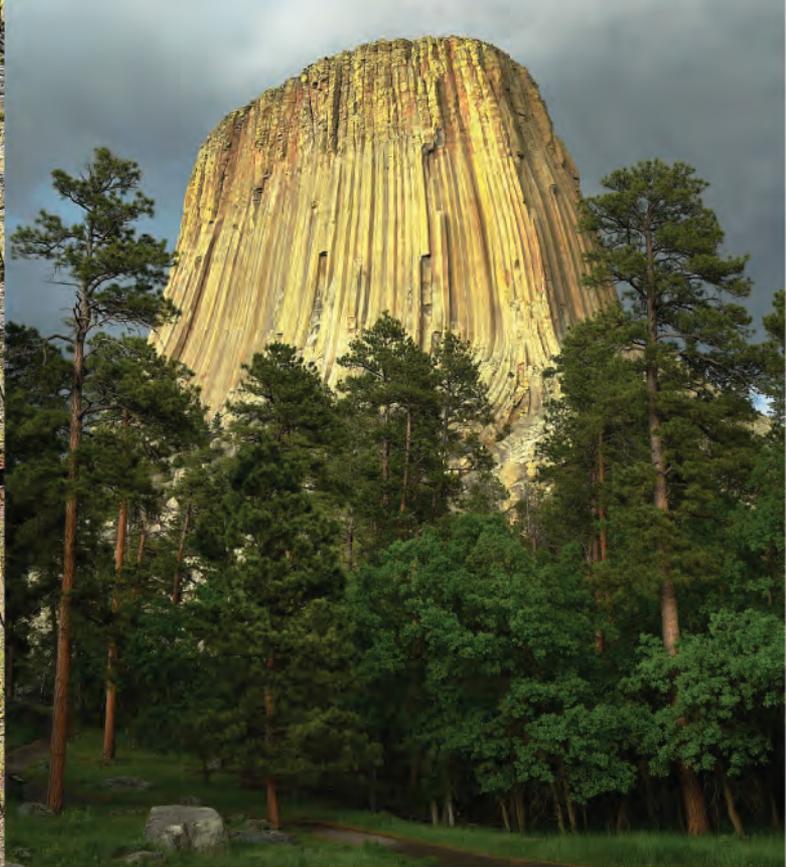
Psalm 104:6–9 concurs, “You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth” (ESV).

To dig deeper into the make-up of the formation, its light-colored rock is called *phonolite porphyry*—similar in composition to granite but lacking quartz. Phonolite refers to the ringing of the rock when a small slab is struck as well as its ability to reflect sound. According to geologic science, this acoustic property is a result of the high silica content and the specific arrangement of minerals in the rock. This construct that the Creator fashioned formed a phenomenon of sound within rocks that serves as a reminder of Luke 19:40 when Jesus told the Pharisees, “If these [disciples] were silent, the very stones would cry out” (ESV).



Deteriorating columns host lichen and alga growth.

Jeremy Nickoson



The monolith glows in the afternoon light.

Bobby Harrison

“The very stones would cry out.”

The term *porphyry* points to the texture of rock rather than its composition. The tower features large crystals of feldspar embedded in a mass of smaller crystals. Institute for Creation Research scientists also noted in an article on the tower a unique, symbiotic relationship God purposely made to thrive on the rocks. “The phonolite columns and the boulder debris surrounding them are encrusted with a mutualistic (meaning both species benefit) combination of an alga and a fungus. Neither organism can flourish without the other.

These lichens produce acids that break down solids and minerals contributing to the weathering of rocks and other objects upon which the lichen grows. In turn, these engineering marvels invite shrubs and trees to take root upon the vertical rock faces of the columns. We shouldn’t be surprised by this, because if we look closely, we’ll recognize even more signatures of the wise and thoughtful hand of our Creator. From the smallest organism to the vast universe, the power of God towers far above any earthly act of notoriety.

When we observe this majestic monolith from a distance or while trekking around it or even climbing to its summit, we must acknowledge our awesome God’s creative accomplishment and to take Him at His Word. The great Flood’s receding waters thousands of years ago cut the landscapes of the world. And no matter what humanity names His masterpieces, God Himself determined in the Genesis account that His creation, “it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). **C**

Leslie A. Sams writes from Warren, Ohio, where she studies the wonders of Creation and travels to discover new insights to share about God’s handiwork.

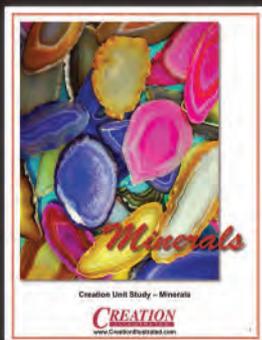
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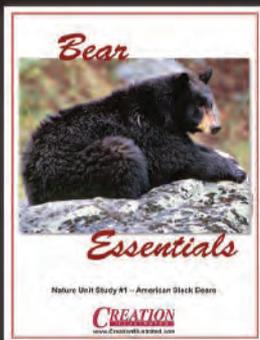


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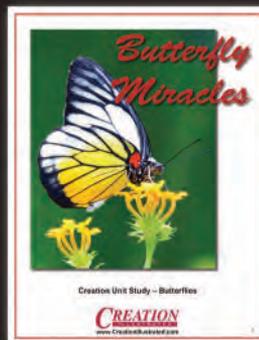
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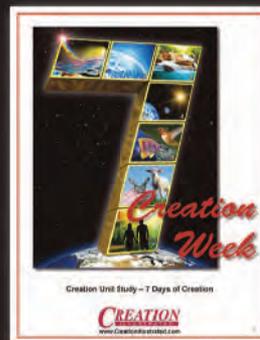
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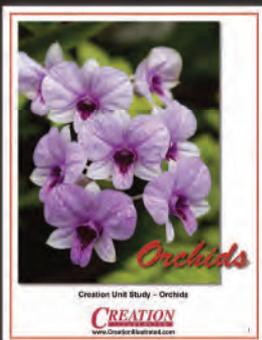
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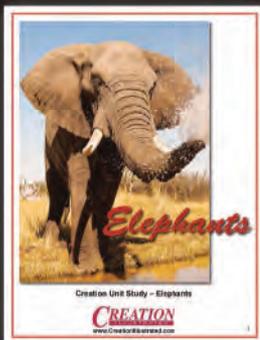
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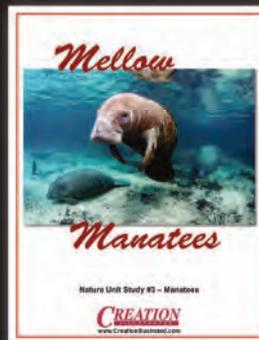
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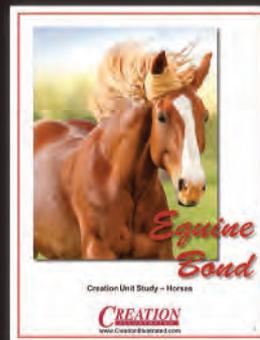
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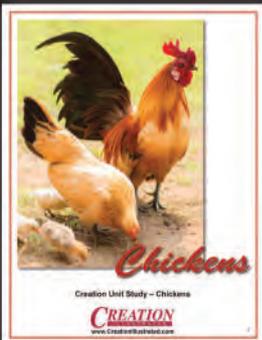
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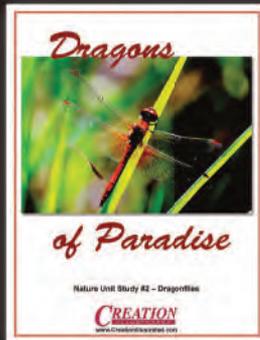
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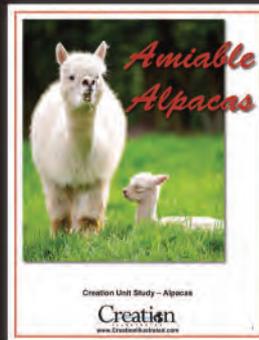
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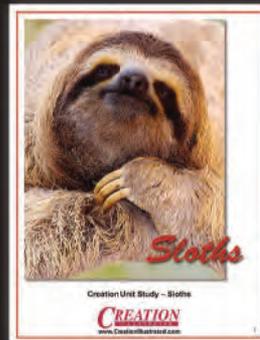
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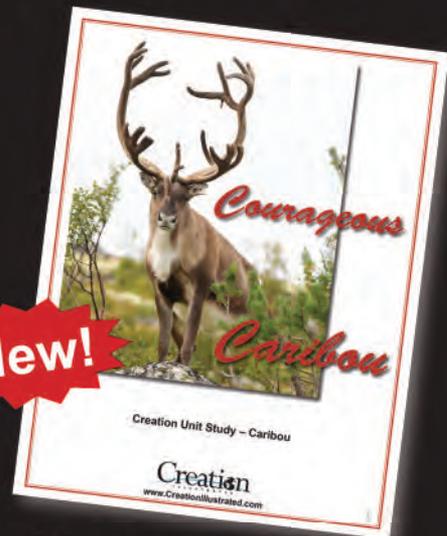
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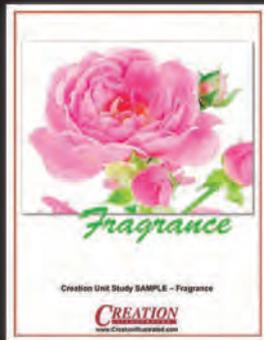
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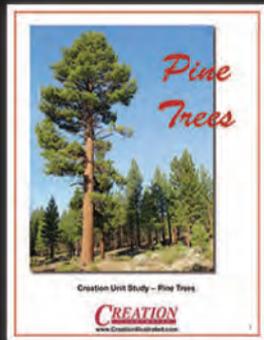
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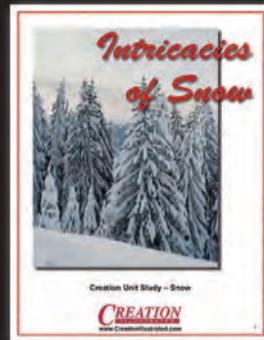
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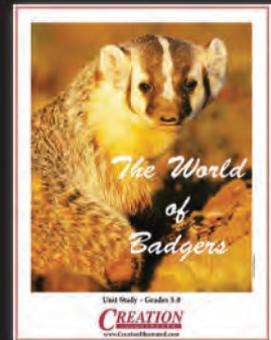
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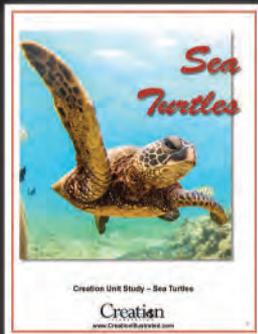
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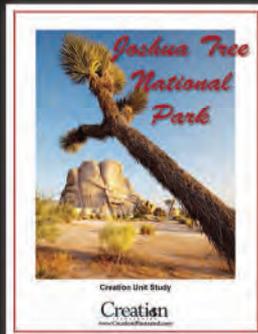
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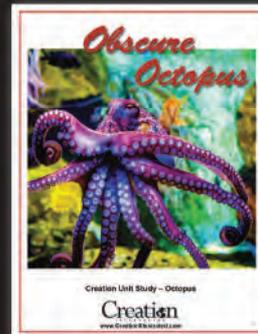
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Lee Metcalf Nation

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

Bobby Harrison



Black-crowned night heron

yellowthroat with its distinctive black mask and cheerful song often flits among the dense thickets bordering wetlands. Its bright presence is a solid sign of the refuge's marsh ecosystem. In the wooded areas, the striking Lewis's woodpecker might be spotted. Unlike other woodpeckers, it often prominently perches in the trees and has a unique, almost crow-like flight. Its glossy dark-green back and rosy underparts make it an unforgettable sighting.

Wetland birds are another highlight of the Lee Metcalf refuge.

The elusive common snipe, with its cryptically patterned plumage and characteristic *winnowing* sound during its aerial displays, can be a rewarding spectacle in the marshy areas. Patience and a keen eye are often required to spot this master of camouflage. In contrast, the more stately black-crowned night-heron and white-faced ibis can be observed especially during dusk or dawn within the watery marshes. Their croaky calls accentuate the wild atmosphere of the refuge.

Beyond these unique avian species, birders can anticipate seeing a variety of waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds. Ducks like the hooded merganser, wood ducks, and northern pintails become common sights on the refuge's waterways. Overhead, red-tailed hawks and American kestrels often patrol the skies. Lucky observers might spot a bald eagle or the elusive American

Bobby Harrison



American kestrel

The Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, nestled in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, provides a haven for both migratory and resident avian species, making it a premier destination for birding enthusiasts seeking connection with nature and the touch of the divine.

Spanning diverse habitats like wetlands, grasslands, and riparian corridors, the refuge offers a rich tapestry of birdlife and promises exciting encounters for every visitor. Beyond the checklist of supplies, a camera, and binoculars, spending time amid the Creator's natural splendor can be a deeply spiritual experience—a reminder of the intricate artistry of Creation and the Source of inner peace.

A stroll along the refuge trails can yield sightings of a remarkable array of feathered creatures. The vibrant common

al Wildlife Refuge

BY BOBBY HARRISON

bittern. The air also hums with the melodies of warblers, sparrows, and vireos especially during spring and fall migrations when the refuge becomes a vital stopover point for birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway. In all, more than two hundred fifty species of birds have been seen within the refuge.

The experience of birding at Lee Metcalf requires an exercise in mindfulness; it encourages us to slow down, carefully observe, and listen intently to the natural world around us. In this quiet contemplation, a deeper connection to something larger than ourselves can often emerge. The intricate beauty of a bird's plumage, the precision of its flight, and the resilience of its journey can inspire awe and a sense of wonder at the complexity of Creation. This sense of wonder highlights the spiritual significance of God's creation. Romans 1:20 states, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse" (NIV). Observing the intricate details and interconnectedness of the natural world such as the diverse bird life at Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge can indeed offer glimpses into the "eternal power and divine nature" of our Creator.

Furthermore, Isaiah 40:31 offers a powerful parallel to the soaring flight of birds. "But those



Hooded merganser

who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (NIV). Just as birds find strength and purpose in their natural rhythms, spending time immersed in the wonders of God's creation can be a source of spiritual renewal offering a sense of peace, perspective, and renewed energy for our own journeys. Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge offers not just a chance to observe fascinating birds, but an opportunity to connect with the natural world, find spiritual enrichment amid its grandeur, and become inspired to worship its Creator. **C**

Bobby Harrison writes from Huntsville, Alabama, as a retired associate professor of photography. Explore more of his amazing work and travels around the country at: www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com



Lewis's woodpecker



Overworking can crowd out God's presence.

“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work . . .

CREATION DAY 7

■ BY DANIEL JEON

The Creation of Rest and Worship

Editor's Note: This article is the ninth 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 one when God created light. Each series of stories varies with new writers and fresh images. We hope you enjoy this closer look at God's handiwork aimed at inspiring you to study His Word in depth.



God provides relationships that fill our lives with meaningful purpose.

During certain seasons in life, the harder I work the less progress I seem to make. Plans collapse, projects stall, and I find myself questioning if anything I'm doing really matters. Ministry often brings that tension to the surface when results aren't always immediate, and appreciation doesn't always follow. At times I've felt invisible, wondering whether my contribution has any real value.

But in those moments, something (or rather, someone) brings me back to center. My wife has a steady way of reminding me that love isn't measured by output. Whether my plans succeed or fail, whether I'm praised or forgotten, her love stays the same—constant, undeserved, and grounding. And every time I stop long enough to notice it, I'm reminded

that this is what true relationship looks like—unconditional *presence*.

That thought always brings me back to the beginning of the Bible to the story of Creation where God's rhythm for life was first established. In Genesis chapter one we see that God didn't just make things; He formed spaces and filled them with purpose. And if we slow down long enough to follow that pattern He established, we'll see a profound message about what it means to be human and what it means to rest as chronicled in Genesis 2:1–3. "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,



The Creator filled the spaces He created with an abundance of life.

because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

When we read the sequence of Genesis one carefully, the structure is strikingly ordered as each day of Creation follows a deliberate pattern. God creates a space, and then He fills it but not immediately the next day.

- Day 1—Forming light and darkness: God separates light from darkness creating time itself—day and night.
- Day 4—Filling Time: He places the sun, moon, and stars to govern the day and night and mark the seasons.
- Day 2—Forming the Sky and Waters: God separates the waters above from the waters below, creating sky and sea.
- Day 5—Filling the Sky and Sea: He populates these spaces with birds and fish.
- Day 3—Forming the Land: God gathers

the waters so dry ground appears and brings forth plants and trees.

- Day 6—Filling the Land: He inhabits the earth with animals and finally creates human beings in His image.

This pattern of forming and filling reveals something glorious about God’s character. Creation wasn’t random; it was relational. Each space God designed to receive something that brought it to life. The world wasn’t just functional; it was filled with meaning, order, and harmony.

And this pattern has something important to say about us. When God made human beings, He didn’t just make another creature to fill the earth, He made vessels designed to be filled with Himself. Genesis 1:27 underscores, “So God created man in His own image.” Unlike anything else in Creation, humanity was designed

*which He had done,
and He rested on the
seventh day from all
His work which He
had done.
Then God blessed
the seventh day . . .*



God made humans in His own image.

to bear God's likeness. We were not created merely to produce but to receive, not to perform but to relate.

But this truth is easy to forget. We live in a world that prizes productivity over presence. From an early age, we're taught to measure worth by output—how much we earn, how much we accomplish, how much we contribute. Even our relationships often get framed around usefulness (i.e. what can this person do for me?). The more we think that way, the more distant we become from God's original design. We start to function as machines meant to perform rather than vessels meant to be filled with divine character traits inspired by Scripture and the Holy Spirit. We fill our calendars, chase goals, and seek achievements, but deep down we still feel empty.

This is why the seventh day of Creation is so crucial. After six days of forming space and filling it, something changes. God doesn't make or fill anything new. Instead, He rests as we read in Genesis 2:2. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work."

At first glance, rest triggers the notion of slumber, but it's actually the culmination and finishing touch of the Creation story. God isn't tired; He's finished. The world is full, complete, and good. And now, God fills time itself with His *presence*. The Sabbath isn't the absence of activity; it's the fullness of relationship. It's the day when God Himself inhabits the space He has made where He can draw close to everything He created, and



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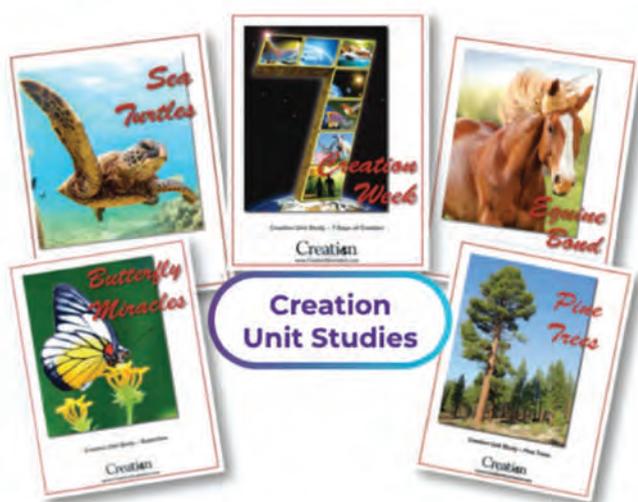
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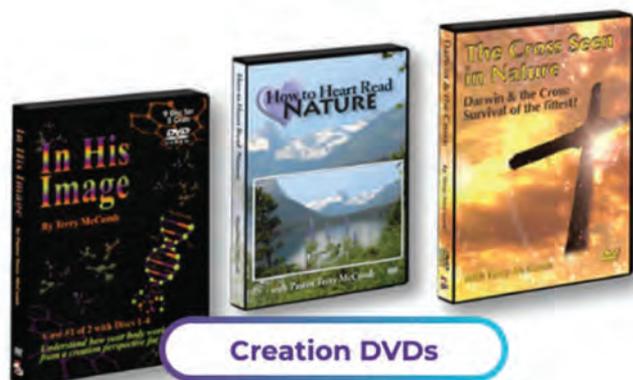
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We do not need to earn the rest given on day seven.

*and sanctified it,
because in it
He rested
from all His work
which God had
created and made.”*

—Genesis 2:1–3

all Creation can worship their Creator.

When we forget this, we begin to live as though the first six days never ended. We keep working, striving, producing, and thinking the next success will finally make us feel complete and that we have *earned* our rest. But no amount of productivity can fill the space meant for relationship.

The fourth commandment in Exodus 20 is God’s way of calling us back to that truth: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God” (Exodus 20:8, 9).

This command begins with a word that carries both tenderness and warning—*remember*. God knew we would forget that He values us for who we are,

not for what we produce. He knew we would forget that we were made for relationship, not for relentless labor.

That’s why the Sabbath commandment reaches further than any of the others; it includes everyone. Not just the head of the household but also the servant, the foreigner, even the animals. “In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates” (Exodus 20:10). In that single command, God dismantled every hierarchy of human worth. The Sabbath levels the playing field and *reminds* everyone—slave or free, rich or poor, male or female—that their value comes not from productivity, gender, race, or status but from being made in God’s image. The



Meaningful activity draws us into His presence and rest.

Sabbath provides a weekly *reminder* of equality, dignity, and relationship.

And yet, when we forget this, we risk losing what matters most—the relationships that sustain us. In our drive to produce, we can lose sight of the simple gift of *presence*. When that happens, the people closest to us can begin to feel unseen even though they're right there near us.

The Sabbath rescues us by interrupting the endless cycle of striving and reminds us to look up, to see the faces around us, to remember that relationship, not productivity, is what gives life meaning. God values us not for how much we do but for who we are—His children. It teaches us to value others in the same way. Each week, the Sabbath whispers the same message that the first

one did—stop trying to earn what has already been given. You are already loved. You are already seen. You are already filled.

Jesus echoed this same truth when He said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). That invitation wasn't just for the physically tired; it was for the spiritually exhausted—the people still trying to prove or earn their worth through performance, sacrifices, penances, and offerings. Jesus restores the Sabbath principle by reminding us that true rest is not in the absence of work but being in the presence of God.

The gospel is, in many ways, the continuation of the Creation story. Just as God filled the world and then rested, Jesus fills our hearts and then calls us to abide.



Pause to silence the noise, put the tasks on hold, and abide in Him and the relationships He has given.

In Him, we become new creations—formed again and filled again—not by what we do but by who He is and what He did for us.

When I take time to pause and remember that, I find balance again to silence the noise, set aside the tasks, and simply rest and abide in the relationships that God has given me. I realize that even if every plan fell apart, even if no one ever noticed what I did, I would still be loved, still be known, and still be filled. That is enough.

The creation story is not just a record of how the world began; it's a pattern for how we are meant to live. God forms and then fills. He creates structure and then breathes life into it. He forms humanity and then fills us with His Spirit. And when completed, He filled time itself

with His presence so that every week we would remember who we are and *whose* we are as God seems to whisper, “You are not valuable because of what you do. You are valuable because you are Mine.” **C**

Daniel Jeon writes from Ooltewah, Tennessee, where he serves as founder and director of Jeology—a Christian ministry dedicated to helping people fall in love with the Bible through videos, workshops, and published materials. Discover more at: itsjeology.com.



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CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

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

Creation vs. Evolution Evidence

The National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine outlines six major categories of evidence for evolution: observed microevolution, biogeography, comparative anatomy, fossil record, classification systems, and molecular genetics. Evolutionary biologists present these as a unified, authoritative case for universal common ancestry and deep time. However, a Young Earth Creationist critique argues that these categories rest on speculative assumptions and incomplete interpretations rather than direct, testable evidence.

Young earth creationists believe that microevolution demonstrates variation rather than new kinds. That biogeography can be explained by post-Flood migration and adaptation. Comparative anatomy reflects functional design rather than evolution. Fossil evidence shows rapid burial and catastrophic processes consistent with a global Flood. Classification highlights distinct created kinds rather than transitional forms. And genetics reveals complexity and functionality that evolution struggles to explain.

The critique emphasizes that evolutionary theory often relies on ad hoc explanations and fails to demonstrate the origin of novel genetic information, a cornerstone of its claims. In contrast, the Young Earth Creationist framework offers a coherent alternative—created kinds explain biological diversity. Rapid post-Flood adaptation accounts for observed variation. A global catastrophic Flood explains fossil distributions and sedimentary layers.

Ultimately, its paradigm harmonizes scientific observations with the biblical narrative of creation and the Flood to explain life's complexity and diversity. Evolution depends on speculation and constant revision.

Condensed from an article "Examining the common evidence for evolution and young earth creationist perspectives" posted on Whole Reason, August 2025, www.wholereason.com

Hemoglobin In Dinosaur Bones

Scientists have discovered that hemoglobin (the molecule that transports oxygen in blood) has been found still partly intact in dinosaur bones. Hemoglobin contains a ring-shaped *heme* group that holds iron and is attached to globin proteins. Researchers have been studying soft tissue,

proteins, and even traces of DNA in dinosaur bones for about thirty years. Measured rates of chemical breakdown show that proteins should not survive even a million years. Yet dinosaurs supposedly became extinct more than sixty-six million years ago.

The scientists examined bones from the duck-billed brachylophosaurus and tyrannosaurus rex and compared with ostrich blood vessels and human blood as controls. They used special techniques called *Resonance Raman* to identify chemical groups—in this case, parts of the heme molecule. Because bacteria doesn't make hemoglobin, their findings points to the hemoglobin originating in the dinosaur. The researchers also detected goethite, an iron oxy-hydroxide mineral that is often found on ancient blood vessel surfaces.



Discovering soft tissue (including partially preserved hemoglobin) was surprising, but the measured breakdown rates are compatible with a biblical timescale. In particular, dinosaur fossils appear to have been formed in the Genesis 7–8 global Flood about 4,500 years ago. The molecules break down too fast to last millions of years.

Condensed from a Creation Ministries International article by Jonathan Sarfati posted May 21, 2025, www.creation.com

Yellowstone Creationist Guide

The True North: Your Guide to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks: A Different Perspective includes travel tips, maps, and details about the parks' geology, wildlife, and trails, and interprets them through the lens of biblical Creation. You'll gain facts and insights that can be found in no other source to help avoid the naturalistic explanations promoted throughout the parks. This handy guide also helps you plan your trip with travel information to cope with the other 3.5 million visitors.

Get additional creation-based explanations of the park with Alpha Omega Institute's Yellowstone App that includes history, volcanics, glaciation, etc. and is keyed to GPS for a hands-free voice mode.

Available at www.DiscoverCreation.org/ Yellowstone-App

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

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

Heating Facts and Figures

Staying warm in cold weather can be costly. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports that in the 2025-26 winter season, 96 percent of homes in the U.S. will rely on four fuel sources: natural gas, electricity, propane, and heating oil. Natural gas remains the dominant source. Heating forty-six percent of homes nationwide with average winter household energy cost around six hundred forty dollars. Electricity heats about forty-three percent of homes but at a higher cost averaging \$1,130 per household for the season. Propane and heating oil are less common and significantly more expensive with average expenditures of \$2,670 and \$2,930 respectively. From an efficiency standpoint, natural gas delivers nearly four times more energy than the electric grid on peak winter days.

Nuclear power, while not used directly for home heating, provides stable baseload electricity that supports winter demand. Renewables like wind and solar contribute to the energy grid but are intermittent, requiring backup from gas or nuclear power. Thus, natural gas remains the most efficient and cost-effective heating source in winter though long-term sustainability points toward integrating renewables with better storage solutions. Each type of fuel has unique risks, but most can be mitigated with proper installation, maintenance, and safety equipment.

When looking at each fuel's impact on the environment, it is important to consider emissions, waste, and materials needed. Natural gas is cleaner than coal, but methane leaks are a major climate risk. Electric becomes cleaner as the grid shifts to renewables. Nuclear has a very low carbon impact, but radioactive waste disposal is a major issue. Wind is emission-free but impacts wildlife and landscapes. Solar is clean, but manufacturing and disposal of materials requires careful management.

Tips for Simple Living

Clothing choices also impact energy stewardship. The sustainable fashion industry is projected to reach \$10.1 billion by the end of 2025,

growing nearly nine percent annually. Eco-conscious consumers increasingly prefer organic cotton, hemp, recycled wool, and bamboo fabrics. These materials reduce water use, avoid harmful pesticides, and minimize carbon footprints in manufacturing. Synthetic fashion, by contrast, contributes heavily to pollution and waste with the apparel industry responsible for up to ten percent of global carbon emissions.

Organic wool and recycled fibers are particularly effective for winter warmth. Wool is naturally insulating, breathable, and biodegradable. Recycled polyester and fleece reduce landfill waste while providing durable warmth. Teach children about conserving energy and caring for clothing. Share or donate gently used winter wear to reduce waste and help others stay warm.

Household energy habits can also impact the environment. If possible, lower thermostats by a couple of degrees and wear layered clothing to stay warm. Seal drafts around windows and doors to reduce heat loss, and use programmable thermostats to optimize energy use.



Biblical Stewardship of Creation

Scripture points to insights on environmental care. In Mark 4:37-41 Jesus calms a storm. "And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. . . . And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' . . . And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'" (ESV).

Here we see Christ's authority over nature. This reminds us that Creation is under God's care, and we are called to align ourselves with His order. "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (Psalms 24:1, NLT). Ownership belongs to God, and stewardship belongs to us.

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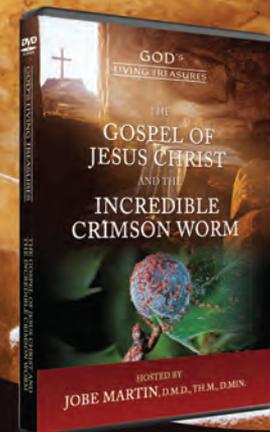
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Creating for the creator



The ultimate story begins with God's mind-boggling creative power. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). And near the middle of the Bible the psalmist cries out, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). But the pinnacle of Creation isn't the vast expanse of the galaxies or the unfathomable



This stunning image of a pod of dolphins donned the cover of South Africa's Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency 2019 Annual Report—one of many underwater photos since the author's childhood waterproof camera case invention. On a safari in Africa (left), he captured photos of other creatures in the wild. The Bengal tiger photo (below) was from a trip to India.

depths of the sea; it's humanity. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). We worship a God who creates, and, as His image bearers, we are invited into this good and holy work of creativity.

I was born into an atheist Jewish family. Culturally we were Jewish, but we didn't believe that God was real. My mother





Some of the thirty-plus patents gathered through Gottlieb's creative engineering career include a vehicle backup alert/light, a remote car starter, and a two-way voice emergency alert pendant.

(an architect) and my father (a musician) valued creativity and hard work. I spent my childhood in my dad's woodshop creating and building. At age twelve I created an underwater camera

housing for my friend's super-eight movie camera so we could make movies in the backyard pool. Then I created *Aqua Pods*—large, Styrofoam shoes that allowed me to walk across the pool. In

high school, I was featured in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the world's first underwater violinist after creating a violin that could play underwater. Naturally, I performed Handel's *Water Music* in the key of *sea*.

As an adult, I continued to pursue creative interests and earned over thirty US patents that allowed me to develop proprietary products to sell for actual profit. Some familiar inventions include: an automobile backup alarm (developed thirty years ago) that fits into a taillight socket, a remote car engine starter for cold winter days, and an emergency alert pendant that can dial a series of phone numbers or 911 and be spoken into—hence the world's smallest cell phone.

During this season of my life, the Lord captured my heart, and I gave my life to Christ as my



Able to retire, create, and travel, the author and his son, Brendan, spent two weeks in Namibia in 2022 resulting in a drone video accolade at the Siena Awards—a prestigious international photography competition held in Siena, Italy.

Lord and Savior. As I began to study the Bible, I learned that “All things were made through Him [Jesus], and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:3). As my faith grew, I began to understand that all the creativity in my life was a gift from God, and I should give Him the glory for it all.

Scripture is explicit about man’s creative abilities. As Israel proceeded to establish itself after escaping Egypt, “The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘See, I have called by name Bezalal the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship’” (Exodus 31:1–5).

It became clear to me that God delighted in blessing creative endeavors. As the emergency alert device businesses did well, I decided to sell it, retire, and devote my time to being more creative through photography, woodworking, metalworking, 3D printing, and mathematical art.

In a famous quote from the movie *Chariots of Fire*, Olympic sprinter Eric Liddell explained, “I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure.” I can clearly see in Scripture that our Creator God has made us in His image to glorify Him with our creativity, and when I create, I, too, feel His pleasure as I seek to serve and benefit others



A spiral artwork 3D printed in white plastic then stained dark fills a teak wood bowl with leather trim—one of the finalists in the European Purmundus-Challenge annual International 3D printing show in 2017.

according to God’s will.

I often get asked how to increase creativity, and I have three practical pieces of advice. First, ask God to bless you with creative talents and abilities to do works that will honor Him. Second, make it a habit to understand the world around you. Examine how things are made and how they work. Study beautiful artwork or photography, looking for what makes it so stunning and captivating. Cultivate wonder as you marvel at what God has created, and you’ll be amazed at how appreciation will lead to curiosity, which will lead to knowledge and eventually result in creativity. Thirdly, always

give God the glory. Filled with examples of creation and creativity, the Bible reveals that God pours out blessings on His children for the sake of His glory. All the creativity we have is from Him, and we must praise Him continually for the opportunity to create alongside our God.

Sometimes people look at my work and think that creativity comes easy. My final word of encouragement would be to press on, no matter how difficult it may be. God has blessed me with sixteen grandchildren ages ten and under, and they haven’t yet realized that creativity can be hard work. They’re just excited to put crayon to paper and create



A mathematical nautilus shell 3D printed in white plastic rests on a milled walnut display base.

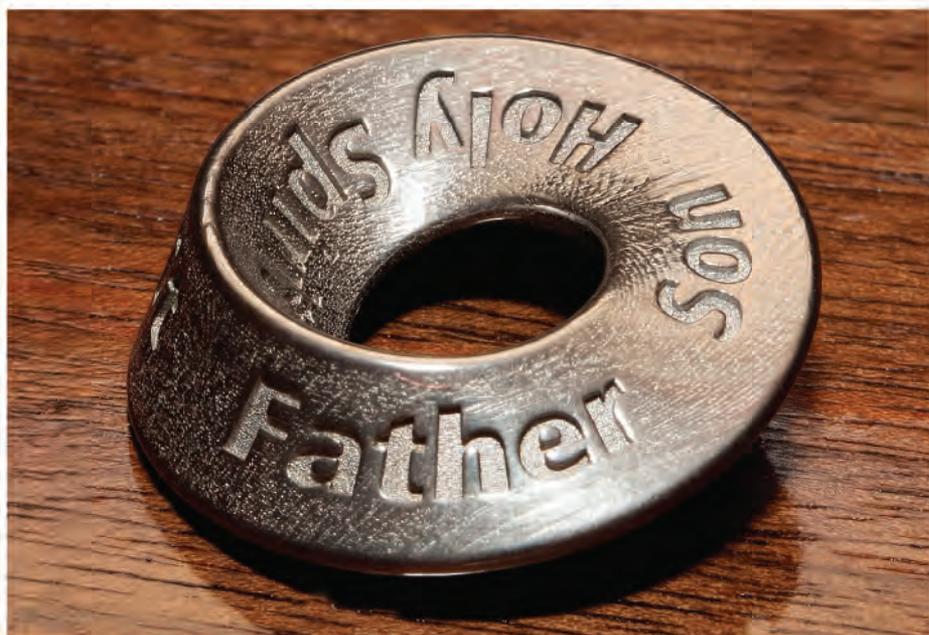
something fun, but nurturing their creativity now can lead to great success as an adult reflecting the image of the Creator. So, I want to encourage everyone to start now with pen and paper, a camera, paints, wood, or even culinary experimentation. Begin to create and believe the world is waiting to see God's creative image in you! A quote attributed to both civil rights leader Ralph Abernathy and missionary martyr Jim Elliot states, "Faith is not knowing what the future holds, but knowing Who holds the future." So, believe that He has a plan to use your creativity for the good of others.

I happen to love photography because it puts my mind and body into *search mode*. By that I mean to search for that unusual creature or the perfect shot of that particular creature among God's bountiful Creation.

In particular I enjoy macro (close-up) photography in search of really small animals or bugs while wandering through a swamp looking under each leaf or around logs and stones that help me realize

the magnificence of His creation.

In pursuit of Creation's spectacular bounty, I have traveled to seventy-nine countries over the years, and people often ask what my favorite trip has been. My answer is always the same, "The next one," but above all, I highly recommend going on a safari. I did one last year to Tanzania with my wife, and witnessing the diversity of animals and the finely tuned roles each one plays in their interactions reminded me to admire and thank the Lord for His marvelous handiwork. Lately I've pursued drone photography and videos, which I use to create rare and inspiring perspectives during this trip and several others including jaw-dropping drone footage gathered over an active volcano in Iceland, the stunningly stark desert expanses and rocky outcroppings of Ethiopia, and the frigid iceberg-laden waters around Greenland.



3D printed nickel stainless steel forms a three-sided mobius with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit carved into the surface which actually is one continuous side—depicting three unique parts of the Trinity yet One.

Some of my favorite still images include: a koi fish in my front-yard pond, a blue heron in flight, and a pink lotus flower in Vietnam (one of over four hundred thousand flower types throughout the world). These and countless other images captured in nature prove that God didn't just create functionally; He created aesthetically. Dante, the Italian philosopher, once said, "Nature is the art of God."

That childhood underwater super-eight movie experiment eventually turned into many more photos and videos under the sea and other waterways over forty-five years of scuba diving. Probably the most unusual and challenging dive I ever did involved a week in the jungles of Brazil searching for giant anaconda snakes found in those waters. Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho once said, "If you think adventure is dangerous, try routine; it's lethal."

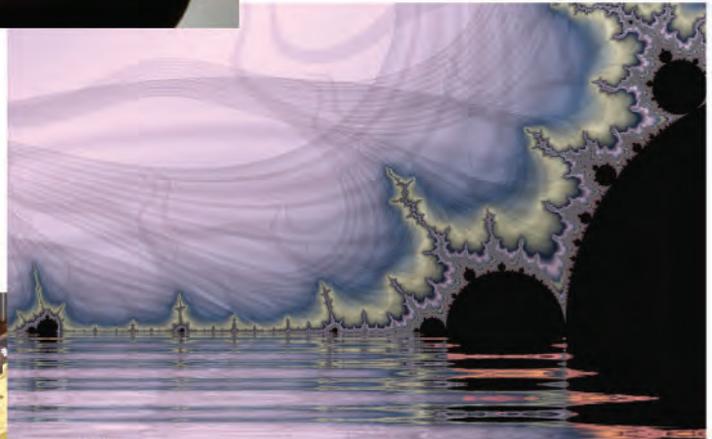
Even if you are not quite ready for an extreme adventure, find some way to connect with Creation and the creative gifts that God bestowed upon you because you were made in His image to create and bless others through your creativity. 

Mark Gottlieb writes from Fairfax Station, Virginia, where he continues to create as an engineer, inventor, photographer, scuba diver, gardener, woodworker, machinist, 3D printing designer, mathematical artist, builder, mountain biker, and hiker. To view more of his astonishing creative works and global excursions, go to: www.MarksAdventures.com.



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Mark Gottlieb creates for the glory of his Creator.





A neglected tree becomes a tangled mess just as we can without cutting away the deadwood in our lives.

providential

Throughout the world, well cultivated and elegantly designed gardens display a vast variety of flora typically for aesthetics but also for culinary and even medicinal benefits. Following Edenic admonitions to tend to the garden, avid horticulturalists dedicate countless hours of thorough attention to their plants in order to bring about the greatest intended result.

In order to efficiently enhance optimal growth and care, gardeners must proactively perform the vital task of pruning, sometimes even during the winter months. This often ruthlessly aggressive chore of cutting vegetation back in order to promote growth seems counterintuitive or even harmful to the plants, but it actually helps to encourage the development and fruitfulness of the shrubs, vines, trees, and other foliage.

This pruning process appears just as vital in the spiritual realm as shown in John 15:1, 2

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



Hannah Jones

A diligent farmer must remove the useless parts of his trees in order to promote growth and fruitfulness.

pruning

when Jesus says, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful” (NIV). The purpose from both a natural and spiritual standpoint is that pruning discards whatever is unnecessary for the growth of the vine in order to become more productive.

Pruning also shapes and molds the growth of a plant in accordance with the desire of the gardener. Sometimes branches can get tangled, which stunts the development of the plant and needs to be cut off to avoid choking it or to conserve energy and nutrients that the plant can use elsewhere. If a particular plant is growing in a way that is actually going to be detrimental, the gardener must trim, cut, and discard branches and twigs in a way that won't cause damage to the plant.

Hebrews 12:1 warns that we, too, can become ensnared or misguided by worldly

by jordan zuniga with tom ish



Deadheading cuts back blossoms in order to make room for new flowers in the spring.

influences that inhibit our growth and spiritual development. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles” (NIV) so we can focus our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. So, in the interest of preserving His vineyard, Eden’s Designer actively helps to snip and prune the harmful parts of our lives through the influence of the Holy Spirit to remove everything that will become a hindrance to our maturing as vines on the Branch—Christ Jesus.

Removing and discarding all the dead or dying branches or twigs allows room for fresh and healthy growth. Trimming also helps control the size and shape of the plant, as well as controls insect and disease problems. So, the process provides multiple benefits, and God wants to reassure all Creation not to fear His purposes and methods. “Do not be afraid, . . . for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches” (Joel 2:22, NIV).

Different types of pruning apply to particular plants, shrubs, or trees. One method is referred to as *deadheading*—the practice of removing spent blooms from plants to encourage new growth. When the faded flowers are removed before they have a chance to set or go to seed, the plant has a chance to encourage new blooms and foliage while preventing self-sowing. *Thinning* can be done when plants become thick and dense in the center and are prone to die from getting too crowded to receive enough sunlight. By thinning the branches in the center, more airflow and light also help avoid pests and diseases. *Maintenance* pruning and *hard* pruning include removing dead and diseased leaves after the plants are done blooming in summer, often drastically cutting a plant back to shorter than its original height. Sometimes special tools and clippers are not needed. A method called *pinching* simply uses your fingers to remove any



Using the proper tools is important in performing any job, especially when pruning.

excess dead parts of the plant. Specific methods for pruning fruit trees, roses, and other sensitive species can be researched for expert advice.

Just as we wisely prune our plants and cultivate our gardens with expert guidance for the most effective and beneficial growth, so the Lord God imparts His perfect wisdom for our ultimate blessing as mentioned in Isaiah 28:29. "All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent" (NIV).

Many people wonder when to plan the best time to prune. Generally, after plants stop blooming the trimming can begin, but with some plants this may not be the case. Sometimes late winter or early spring pruning promotes the best harvest, but each plant should be researched to apply the proper care. Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2 instructs, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot" (NIV). Timing and staying on schedule remain key and fluctuate due to your climate and growing zone, which can also be researched.

Certain types of pruning requires specific tools to do the job right. Hand pruners, clippers, loppers, pruning saws, hedge trimmers, and pruning shears can make the process easier and more effective depending on the thickness, fiber content, and dryness of the branches or twigs. Sometimes even with the right tools we become reluctant to cause any harm to the plant and want to postpone taking action like the man in the parable of the fig tree who wanted to wait one more year to see if it would bear fruit and promised, "If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down" (Luke 13:9, NIV). The Lord God wants to make sure we bear spiritual fruit as He tries to cultivate and develop us for a particular season of our lives, but we risk being cut off by turning cold and unproductive.



With proper pruning, the branches remain well attached to the vine and produce abundant fruit.

So, pruning performs an essential function for earthly gardens as well as for the eternal kingdom of God to flourish. We must keep in mind one of the most vivid object lessons in the Bible. “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:4–8, NIV).

May we continue to yield to the Gardener and His plan for our lives as He continues to prune us, develop us, and cultivate us as more mature, fruitful, and productive Christians for our good and His glory! **C**

Jordan Zuniga writes from Santee, California, where he continues to develop his poetry, devotional, and creative prose to honor the Creator and inspire others to worship Him who made heaven and earth. Tom Ish is editor and publisher of Creation Illustrated.



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“And you shall eat the herb of the field.”
—Genesis 1:29, 3:18





Dried Fruit Medley Jam

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 C. dried apricots, chopped | 1 1/2 C. water |
| 1/2 C. dried pineapple, chopped | 1 Tb. pineapple juice concentrate |
| 1/2 C. dried cranberries, chopped | Zest of one lemon |
| 2 Tb. lemon juice | 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes (optional for a sweet-hot kick) |

Soak the dried fruit in the water and pineapple juice concentrate. Add to saucepan and cook until water evaporates and fruit congeals. Stir in lemon zest and optional red pepper flakes. Chill and serve on your favorite crackers with some plant-based cream cheese spread.



Plum-Raspberry Compote

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 1/2 C. plums, quartered | 1/2 C. water |
| 1 C. raspberries, fresh or frozen | 2 Tb. chia seeds |

In a saucepan, slowly cook down the plums in water into a thick compote. Let cool and fold in the fresh or frozen raspberries and chia seeds. Chill overnight until jelled. Serve on your favorite breads with nut butter, pancakes, crackers, or frozen dessert.



Apple-Butternut Butter

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 4 C. apples, peeled and chopped | 1/2 tsp. nutmeg |
| 3 C. butternut squash, peeled and chopped | 1/4 tsp. ginger |
| 1 tsp. cinnamon | 1/8 tsp. cloves |
| 1/2 tsp. Allspice | 1/2 C. maple syrup |
| | salt to taste |

Place all ingredients into a slow cooker. Cook on high for one hour then reduce to low and cook overnight or for eight hours. Stir and cook for another hour uncovered until desired thickness. Leave chunky or blend smooth with an immersion blender. Enjoy on waffles, bread, muffins, or croissants. Garnish with whipped topping and chopped walnuts.

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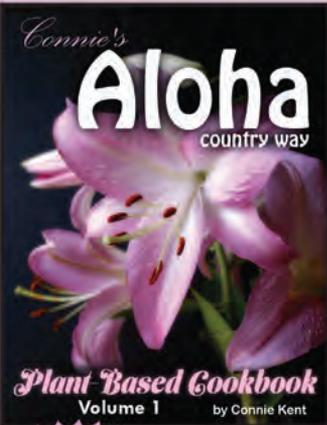


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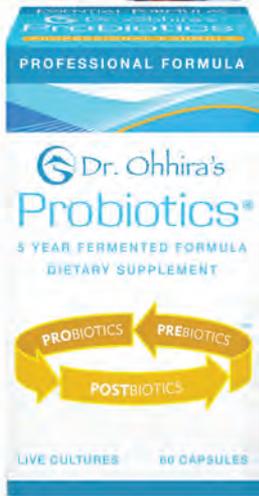
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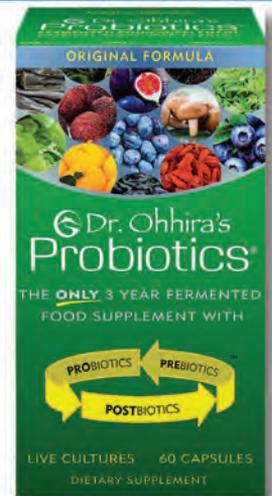
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Chickadee Trust

Sarah watched from her bedroom window as snow gently drifted down on a cold winter morning. The backyard bird feeder that her father had helped her set up last weekend swayed slightly in the breeze. She had been learning about God's care for His creatures in homeschool, and Sarah especially remembered the verse, "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them" (Matthew 6:26).

As she watched, a tiny black-capped chickadee landed on the feeder. Its black cap and bib stood out against its white cheeks and gray wings. Sarah had learned that chickadees were one of the smallest birds that stayed in their area during winter while many other birds flew south.

"Lord," Sarah whispered, pressing her nose against the cold window, "how do such tiny birds survive the winter?"

Just then her mother called her downstairs for breakfast and added, "Bring your nature journal.



I want to show you something amazing about chickadees!" At the kitchen table, her mom opened a book about winter birds.

"Did you know that God gave chickadees special adaptations to survive winter?" she asked, pointing to a diagram. "They can lower their body temperature at night to conserve energy, and they have special feathers that trap warm air close to their bodies."

Sarah's eyes widened and wondered, "Really? But they're so small!"

"That's right," Mom smiled. "And there's something else special about them. They store food in many different places during autumn—in tree bark, under leaves, and in branches. Then God gave them an amazing memory to remember where they put their food!"

Sarah thought about how she sometimes couldn't even remember where she put her homework. "How do they remember all those places?" she asked.

"Scientists have discovered that chickadees can grow new brain cells specifically to help them remember where they stored their food. God designed them with exactly what they need!" Mom explained.



Throughout the day, Sarah kept checking on her little feathered friend. The chickadee returned several times bringing other chickadees with it. She noticed how they would take one seed at a time, fly to a nearby branch, and either eat it there or fly away to store it.

That evening a strong winter storm was forecast. Sarah worried about the chickadees. "Will they be okay, Dad?" she asked as they filled the bird feeder one last time before dark.

"God takes care of His creatures, sweetheart," Dad assured her. "Remember what the Bible says in Psalm 147:9. 'He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry.' Chickadees are masters at preparing for tough times. They work hard when food is plentiful and store away what they'll need later."

The next morning, the yard was blanketed in white. The storm had left nearly a foot of snow, and the wind whistled through the trees. Sarah rushed to her window, searching for any sign of the chickadees.

To her amazement, there they were! The tiny birds were already diving into snow-covered bushes and emerging with seeds they had stored. Some visited the bird feeder, while others pulled seeds from various hiding places that only they could remember.

"Mom! Dad! Come look!" Sarah called excitedly. Her parents joined her at the window.

“See how God provided for them?” Mom said. “They worked hard during the good weather, and God helped them remember where they stored their food.”

Dad added, “It reminds me of the lesson about ants in Proverbs 6:6–8 ‘Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.’”

Sarah watched the industrious little birds and thought about how she could learn from them. Sometimes she put off doing her homework or chores until the last minute, and it always made things harder. “I want to be like the chickadees,” she declared. “They trust God but also do their part by working hard and preparing ahead.”

“That’s a wonderful lesson to learn,” Mom smiled. “God’s creation teaches us so many things about how to live wisely.”

Throughout the winter Sarah kept her bird feeder full and continued observing the chickadees. She started planning ahead with her schoolwork and chores just like her tiny feathered teachers. She even began keeping a nature journal that included drawing the chickadees and writing down what she learned about God’s care through watching them.

When spring finally arrived, Sarah had

filled her journal with sketches, Bible verses, and observations. But most importantly she had learned valuable lessons about trust, preparation, and God’s faithful care for all His creatures.

“Thank you, God, for the chickadees,” she prayed one morning as she watched them gathering nesting material. “Thank you for showing me that I can trust You while doing my part just like these little birds do.”

The chickadees continued their busy work, and their cheerful *chick-a-dee-dee-dee* calls seemed to echo Sarah’s thankfulness to their Creator. In their small but significant way, they had helped a young girl understand one of life’s big lessons—that trusting God means both having faith and taking action.

As Scripture says in Philippians 4:19, “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The chickadees lived this truth every day, and now so did Sarah. **C**

David Scott Zepf is a dedicated children's author from West Pains, Missouri, where he weaves faith, nature, and life lessons into heartwarming stories. His love for God's creation inspires young readers to explore the wonders of the world around them while deepening their understanding of biblical truths.



Warm Snow



Cold snow preserves warmth when laid down as a blanket on Earth. Freshly fallen snow is about 90% trapped air, making it very fluffy. Trapped air in the snow acts like insulation, shielding the earth below from the frigid air above. In colder climates snow does not melt before the next snow falls so it is laid down layer upon layer. Imagine several blankets piled on top of one another, the bottom layer is the first snowfall. This bottom layer is made up of enlarged and loosely spaced snow crystals with angular corners. Closely examined, many of these crystals are beautiful hollow pyramids, made of miniature crystal logs. This is called depth hoar or pukak.

The air temperature may be a - 24° Fahrenheit. Near the top of the snow blanket the reflected light warms the air to a little below zero° Fahrenheit. Under the deep snow near the earth, the temperature may be only freezing or even slightly warmer. Small creatures such as mice, shrew and vole all bask in this trapped

warmth under the snow blanket above. They build a subterranean society with little tunnels going every which way beneath the protective snow.

Russians, in a comparative study, discovered frost would penetrate less than an inch under six inches of snow. Soil not covered by snow froze to a depth of one foot. Below the snow surface soil maintains an even temperature.

Our spiritual life can be kept at an even temperature by the faith of Jesus. When Jesus was a boy, he was able to have peace, even when others rejected Him, or when He was opposed and treated very cruelly. Jesus will give us this peace if we ask Him. "You (Jesus) will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" Isaiah 26:3. This faith can protect us from fear or anxiety when evil seems to be chilling our personal atmosphere.



FAMILY PROJECT:

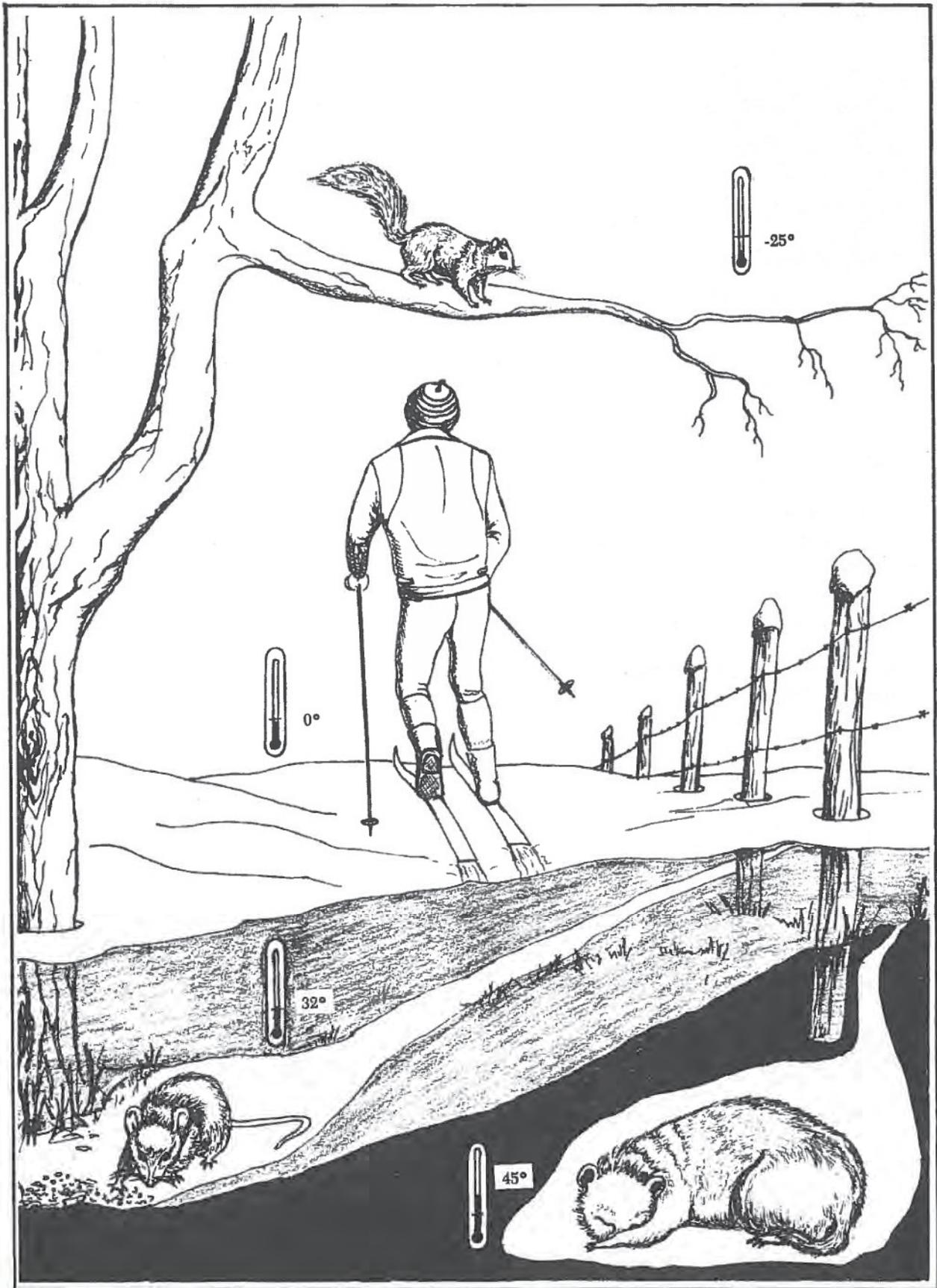
Find a snow bank that is three feet deep. Carefully cut the snow with a flat shovel or saw, down to the earth. Can you see the different snow layers? Examine the snow crystals at the bottom with a magnifying glass, then those at the top. How do they differ?

Place a thermometer in an ice cube tray and freeze in the freezer. On a day when it is sub zero, take it outside and leave there for an hour. Note the insulating ice will keep the temperature in the ice cube tray the same, even though the temperature outside is much colder.



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





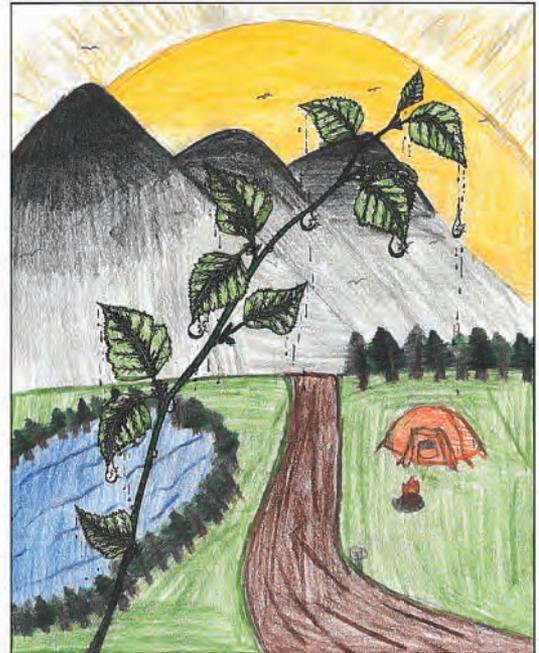
Winter 2026 Coloring Contest First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____
(deadline & details on page 60) City: _____ State/Prov. _____

Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest

Winners From the Fall 2025 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 6–11
Zoey R., age 11,
Chicago, Illinois



First Place, ages 12–18
Amaris P., age 12,
Indianapolis, Indiana



First Place, ages 19+
Donna L., age 61,
Ashford, Connecticut

Here's how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest for ALL Ages!** Color in the picture on the previous page from the Character-Building Lesson. You can even add other creatures, clouds, sky, etc. Then scan or photograph your work (maximum one per quarter) and email an attached jpeg to: coloring@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Coloring Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address. The **DEADLINE for winter 2026 entries is February 15, 2026.** Your work will be uploaded to our Web site where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of March from winter-edition pictures, the first week of June from spring-edition pictures, the first week of September from summer-edition pictures, and the first week of December from fall-edition pictures. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com

Creation Illustrated Photo Contest

Winners From Fall 2025 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Luna C., age 11, of Indianapolis, Indiana, took this picture.



First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

Lily F., age 14, of Jasper, Missouri, wrote “From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth.”



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Randi S., age 38, of Montpelier, North Dakota, simply wrote, “God’s beauty!”

Here’s how to enter the **Creation Illustrated Photo Contest for ALL Ages!** Get creative with your camera in nature and email an attached jpeg (maximum one per quarter) to: photos@creationillustrated.com, Subject Line: Photo Contest. Each entry **MUST** include your name, age, mailing address, phone number, and email address and one or two sentences on what your photo says about our Creator. The **DEADLINE for winter 2026 entries is February 15, 2026**. Your work will be uploaded to our Web site where you and others can vote for any favorites. (No last names or contact information will be included in any postings.) Winners in age groups 6–11, 12–18, 19 and older will be chosen the first week of March from winter submissions, the first week of June from spring submissions, the first week of September from summer submissions, and the first week of December from fall submissions. First-place winners will receive \$25, have their entry posted on our Web site until the next edition is printed, and *may* be published in *Creation Illustrated* as space allows. For more details go to: www.CreationIllustrated.com



STUDY GUIDE

for *Creation Illustrated*, Winter 2026 Edition, Vol. 32, No. 4

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

I. Creatures Near and Dear to Us—“Peculiar Penguins” story, pages 6–11

1. How much of a penguin's life is spent in the water? p. 6
2. Explain how penguin wings are different from other birds. How does this design assist them? pp. 6, 9
3. How many different species of penguins are there? p. 9
4. What species of penguins was the first to be documented in European history? What year was this? p. 9
5. What is the only penguin species that live north of the equator? p. 9
6. What unique species each have their own individual call? Where do they live? p. 9
7. What must baby king penguin chicks weigh to survive the harsh winter? What is the lowest temperature that emperor penguins can withstand? p. 10

II. Creation Up Close—“Drifting Wood” story, pages 12–17

1. What are the vital roles driftwood plays? Which states prohibit collecting driftwood? p. 12
2. Why is driftwood not dead wood? In what ways is it still living? pp. 13, 14
3. What is the spiritual lesson found in dead wood? p. 14 (See Colossians 3:3.)
4. We need stability and security in our lives. What Bible story did Jesus teach that demonstrates this? p. 14 (See Matthew 7:24, 25.)
5. Jesus' promises are _____ to the believer. How do we become God's masterpiece? p. 15 (See Ephesians 2:10.)

III. Re-Creation Outdoors—“Wyoming's Majestic Monolith” story, pages 18–23

1. What name did the Arapaho, Crow, Cheyenne, Shoshone, and Lakota natives give to this gargantuan geologic formation? p. 18
2. What caused the confusion that led to calling the tower by the wrong name? pp. 18, 19
3. Which U.S. president declared the area to be the first national monument in the United States? p. 19
4. How many different types of flora and fauna are found in the national monument? p. 20
5. How tall is the Monument? What is this type of geologic rock formation called? p. 20
6. Explain the different Creationists' interpretations of how the monument was formed. pp. 21, 22
7. Explain these terms: laccolith, phonolite porphyry, feldspar, mutualistic. pp. 21–23

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

1. What does true relationship look like? p. 29
2. What does the *forming* and *filling* pattern in the Creation week reveal about God? p. 30
3. We were not created to merely produce but to _____. p. 30
4. Explain why the seventh day of Creation is so crucial. How does the Creator fill it? pp. 31, 34
5. What word carried both tenderness and warning? What is God wanting us not to forget? p. 34
6. How does the weekly Sabbath level the playing field for everyone including the animals? pp. 34, 35
7. How does the gospel tell the same story of relationship and presence? p. 36

Winter Family Fun Activities

Don't let winter keep you and your family indoors. There are many fun activities to do in cold weather, but prepare before going outdoors. Most people will be comfortable in cooler temperatures with layered clothes, and make sure you have warm feet, a scarf, a wool hat, and gloves.

Ice Lanterns

One creative outdoors winter nature craft that the whole family can enjoy doing together is making *ice lanterns* to decorate your yard with or to share as a gift with someone special.

Begin by gathering the materials needed for this craft. Decide what molds you wish to use to shape the ice lanterns—buckets, bowls, milk cartons, etc. Collect some natural decoration materials like pine boughs, holly, berries, leaves, pine cones. Then find some lights such as tea candles or LED candles.

Start by pouring water into the molds until they are halfway full. Add decoration materials, and sink a plastic or paper drinking cup with some small rocks, dry rice, or sand until the cup is halfway submerged in the water to form a cylindrical indentation. Leave the containers outside to freeze if temperatures are low enough. If not, place them in a freezer.

Once the water is frozen solid, gently remove the ice from the molds and pull the paper or plastic cup out of the middle. Place a candle or LED light inside the indentation in the ice. Enjoy the lanterns as they glow with the beauty of nature encased in ice.



An ice lantern highlights nature.

Sun Catchers

Another similar craft is to make *frozen sun catchers*. Gather leaves, berries, pine needles, twigs, holly, etc. and arrange in a shallow plate or aluminum pie pan of water. Place a small rock in the center that can be removed to form a hole in the frozen plate of ice. Once the water is frozen solid, remove it from the plate and take out the rock in the center. Then hang the icy artwork with some twine from a tree branch and let the sunlight sparkle through it.

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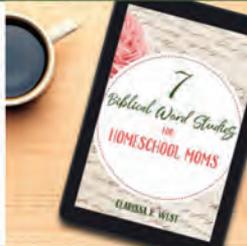


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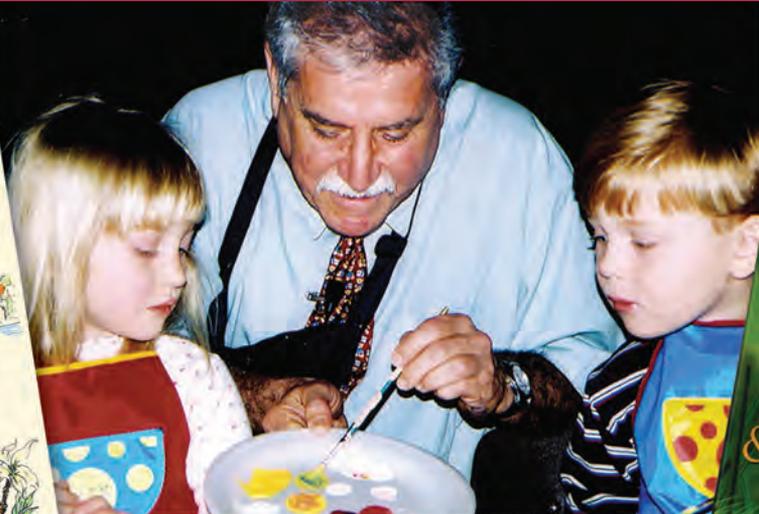
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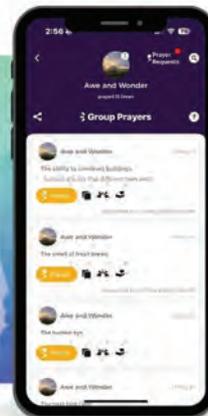
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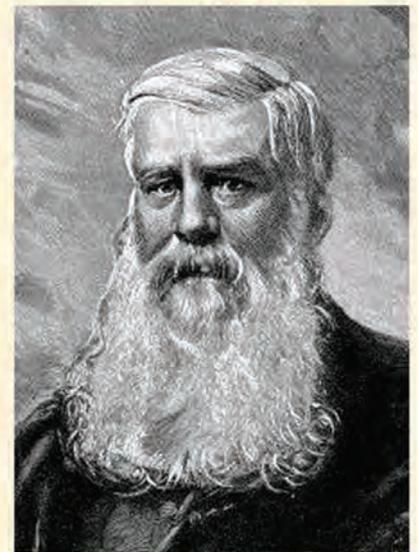
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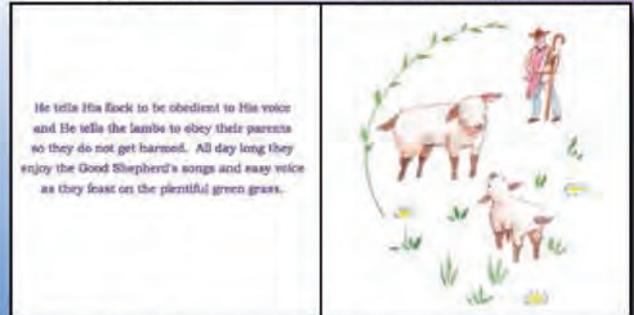
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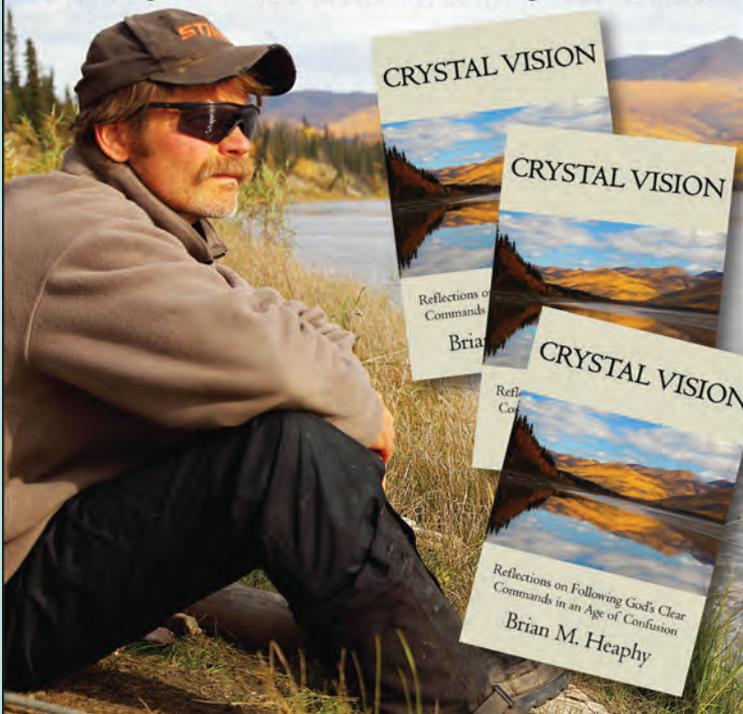


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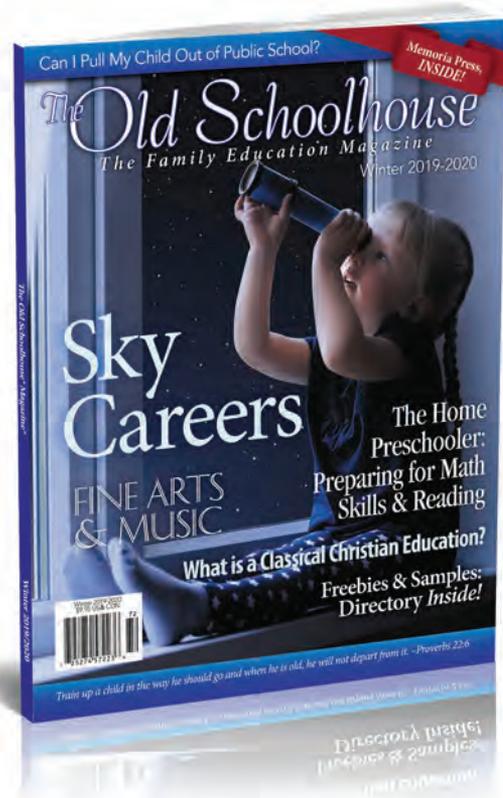
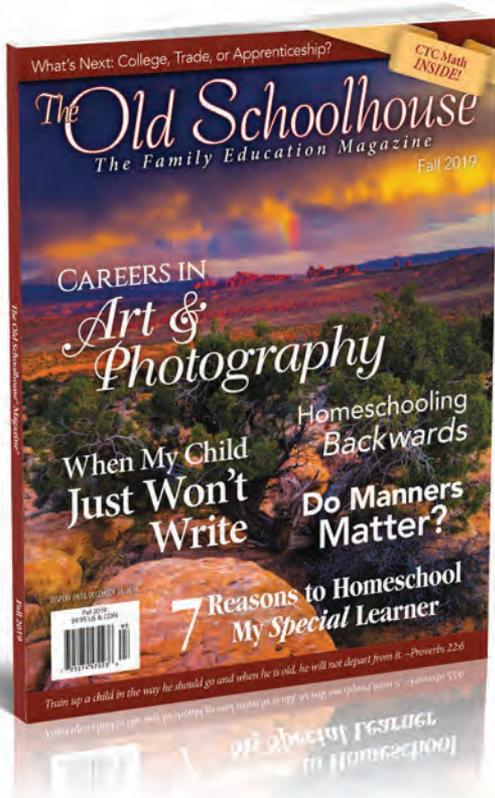
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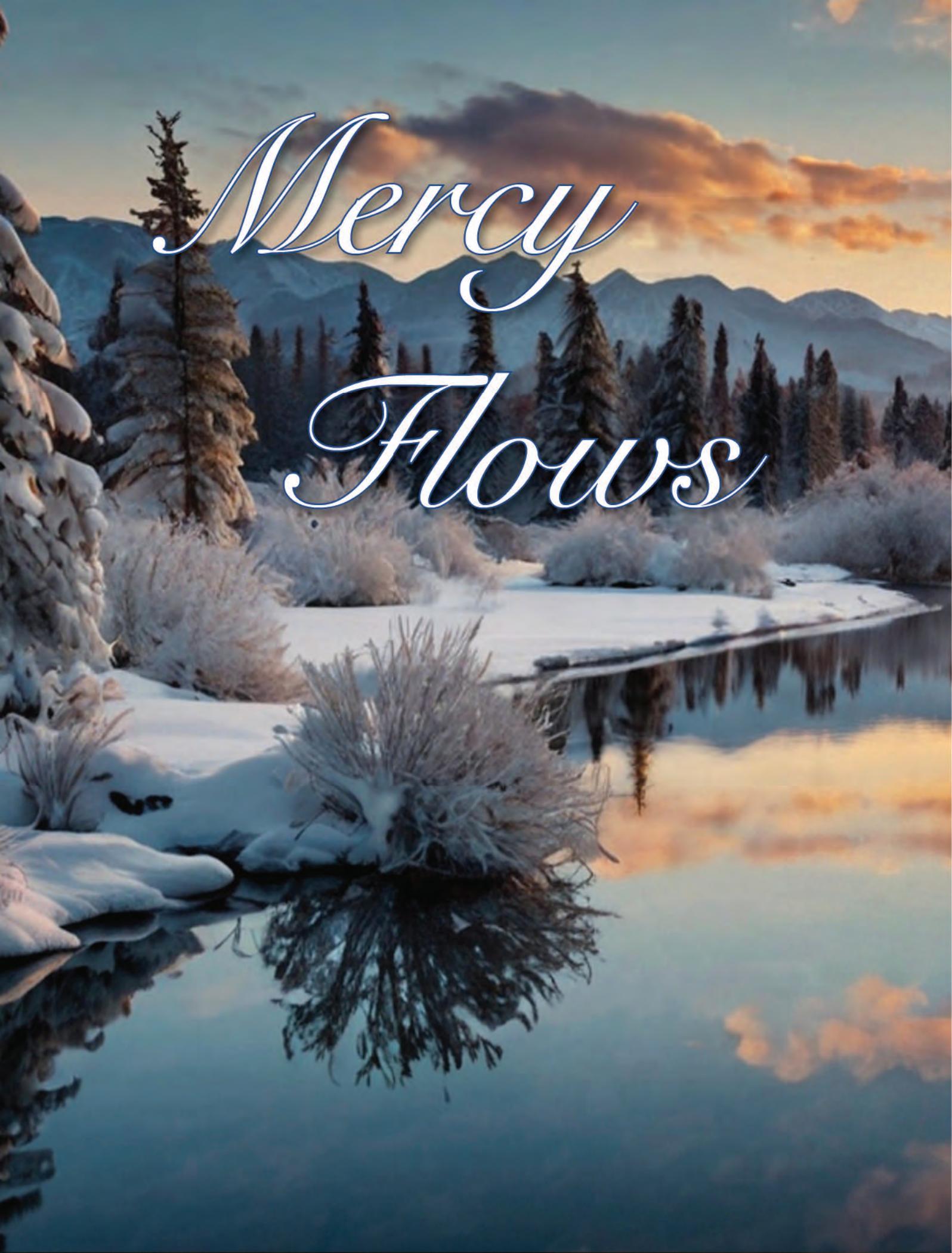
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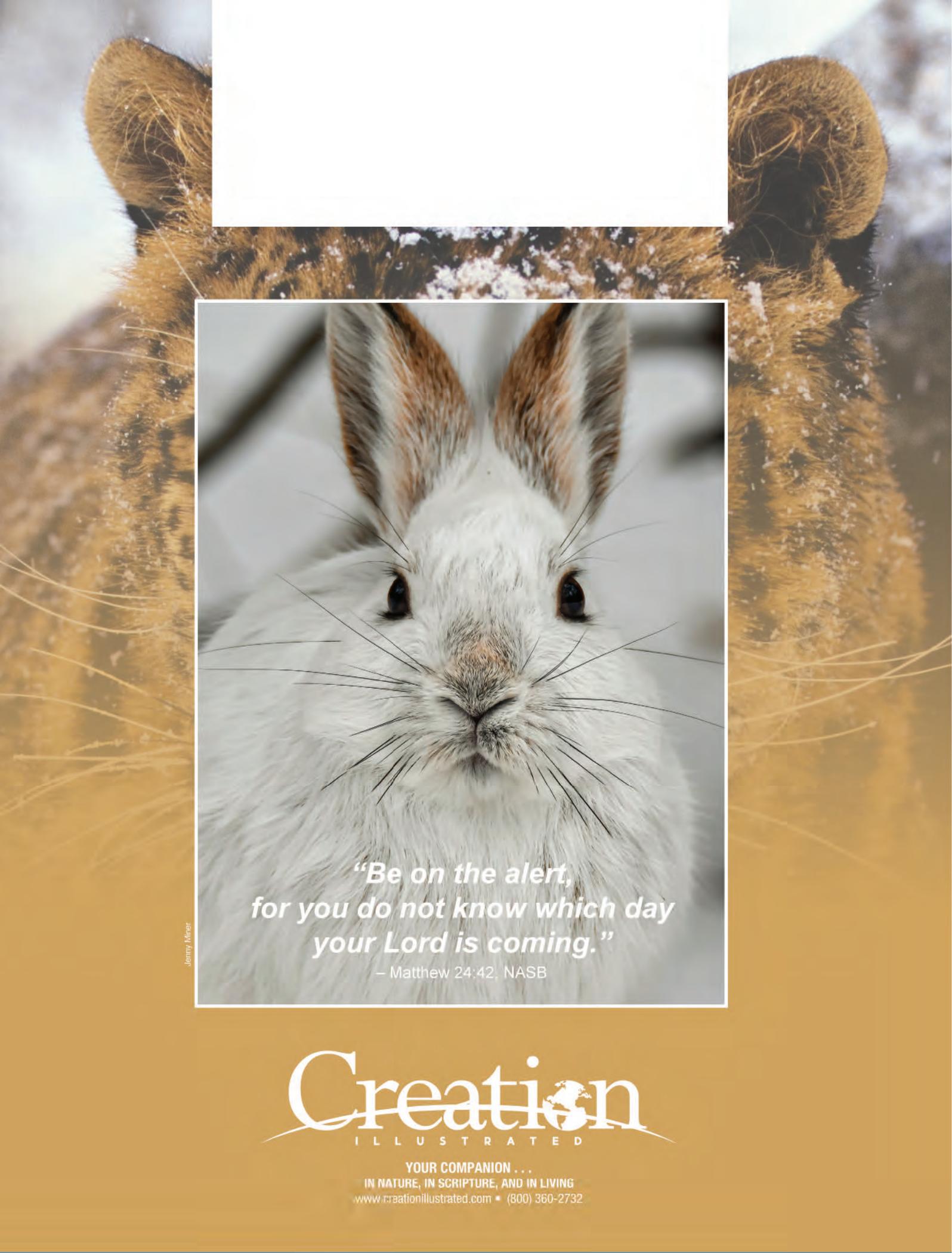
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