

Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

YOUR COMPANION ...



IN NATURE



IN SCRIPTURE



IN LIVING

FALL 2024 VOL 31 NO 3 US \$4.99





*“When you
have eaten your fill,*



*be sure to praise
the Lord your God.”*

– Deuteronomy 8:10, NLT

Our Why



Creation Illustrated Ministries exists to inspire awe and reverence toward the Creator by showcasing the flawless designs that can be found in His handiwork that lead to personal, life-changing experiences. The world around us is a living testimony to God’s wisdom, power, and love. Every leaf, every mountain, and every star in the sky serves as a reminder that the Creator of the universe is both infinitely powerful and intimately involved in His creation.

Through the splendor and intricacy of nature, we see the fingerprints of God who declared His work at the end of the Creation week as “very good” (Genesis 1:31). By sharing experiences, parables, facts, and object lessons found in nature, we lead readers to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the divine artistry that surrounds us. When reflecting on the wonders of Creation, hearts are drawn to worship the Creator while fostering a renewed sense of stewardship for the natural world as instructed in Genesis 2:15 “to work it and take care of it” (NIV).

Such evidence and inspiration underscores that “Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). This statement is not just a casual observation; it is a divine affirmation of the perfection and harmony that He infused into every part of the natural world, which deepens faith and encourages a closer walk with Him.

There is so much we do not comprehend or fully understand about the universe, yet, we stand in awe with the psalmist who wrote, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1, NIV). The natural world provides a continuous proclamation of God’s glory while speaking to us in a language that transcends words. Even so, through our publication we aim to bring His messages into clearer focus.

Nature is not just a physical reality; it is a spiritual teacher that reveals the character of God. The cycles of the seasons, the resilience of plants, the harmony of ecosystems all offer evidence of God’s faithfulness, His provision, His wisdom, and His desire for order and balance.

In a time when many are disconnected from the natural world, we reach out as a friend and *companion* that can rekindle a sense of wonder and reverence for the Creator. Whether through breathtaking photography, thoughtful articles, staggering facts, or inspiring testimonies, we believe many souls will be blessed. That’s why

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Creation

I L L U S T R A T E D

Vol. 31, No. 3


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 grapes in the morning light was taken by Linus Forsberg of Sweden.

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Watch and Wait

After the scurry of summer subsides, the gentle flutter of fall presents us with ample opportunities to watch and wait—watch and wait for the last tomatoes in our garden to turn red, watch and wait for the school bus to whisk children off to another year of learning, and watch and wait for shorter days and cooler nights to spark the dramatic eruption of flaming colors in the leaves.

One young boy's faith grew strong while watching his garden for answered prayers in this issue's children's story called "Miracle Pumpkins." Others among the agri-faithful eagerly wait and watch their crops for just the right time to reap as told in "The Joy of the Harvest" garden feature.

Autumn outdoor enthusiasts enjoy watching birds, squirrels, and other creatures busily searching for seeds and nuts to gather for sustenance during the changing seasons. The "My Walk With God" story called "Open Your Eyes and Ears" encourages us to wait and witness how God watches over all His creation.

Surprisingly, His creatures even watch out for each other as revealed in the article on "Fascinating Fox Squirrels" when a young, furry critter guides his injured sibling up a tree to safety in their hollowed-out hovel.

Occasionally some creatures may be watching us. This was the concern for a family spending their holiday at a Kenya Game Reserve when their vehicle got stuck in the mud at nightfall. Fortunately the son was watching for help and flagged down a tour bus carrying a few strong men who could help give the family a push to safety. "Christmas at a Kenya Game Reserve" tells the full story of the One who had been watching this fallen world from afar and came to rescue all of us. He knew that the whole universe was watching including the unfallen angels who may never understand such sacrifice or the need for such mercy.

When peering up at the heavens on a clear, brisk fall night, we can watch a mere sliver of the vast stellar expanse He created where all the stars (estimated to be ten times the number of grains of sand on earth) are numbered and named by our Creator and Redeemer. Take a closer look at the "Creation Day Four" story, and watch the sun, moon, and stars come into focus that allow us to see "the heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1).

And while such unfathomable vastness boggles the mind, God provides down-to-earth opportunities to embrace eternal truths that have a profound impact on our personal lives. Over the past 31 years of editing and publishing *Creation Illustrated*, I've been watching the impact of many authors sharing countless character-building lessons found in God's creation backed by the power of His Word. But few stories have had the effect on me personally as this edition's "Creation Up Close" feature called "Seasonal Endings."

We often publish articles with uplifting transformational teachings, but this one shares the wonder of the *final* transformation when "The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth" (Ecclesiastes 7:1, NASB)—a time when we approach the window of eternity and prepare for the final harvest at the end of our season of life. "But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior" (Micah 7:7, NIV). We can all eagerly watch for that day when Christ returns to reap from the seeds of the gospel that have been sown throughout the ages. Will you respond to this invitation to watch and wait with me?



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ish". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Ish, editor/publisher

Sharing Our Mail

True worship . . .

It is always a true worship experience going through the wonderful *Creation Illustrated*. And always my sincere thanks first to our mighty Creator and then to those of you being used of Him in such a beautiful way. I am made rich in joy, inspiration, and His love with every publication.

C. Rodgers

Olympia, Washington

Locked up . . .

I'm incarcerated at West Tennessee State Penitentiary, and I have been locked up for going on three years

now. A friend of mine found your *Creation* magazine, and I was immediately drawn to it. I really enjoy the message and the pictures of all that God has created for us. It brings some beauty to this place of solitude. I am requesting a subscription to *Creation Illustrated*. I would be grateful to be so blessed. Thank you for thinking of us—the one's who are always forgotten. God bless you!

S. Roberson

Henning, Tennessee

Start tithing . . .

Someone laid one of your *Creation* magazines down on a table, and I happened to pick it up. It has one of the prettiest pictures I've ever seen. God's art is amazing. I am requesting a copy of your magazine. I will start tithing to your center each month. I would greatly appreciate this magazine! Thank you.

D. Jackson

Inmate

Henning, Tennessee

Editor's Note: While we gratefully accept tax-deductible donations, we do not knowingly accept tithe funds that belong to the church.

Sweet lady . . .

I am currently incarcerated at WTRC prison for women in Henning, Tennessee. I have been here since 2021. There has been a sweet lady here that receives your magazine. When she gets hers and reads it, she lets me look at it. I really enjoy it, and it has become something I really look forward to.

However, she is about to be transferred to another prison, so I am writing to request a subscription for myself. Thank you so much for all that you do!

Blessings and love,

C. Lacy

Henning, Tennessee

Digital issues . . .

I am very interested in back issues. Could you please digitize them? That way myself and many others could access the information anywhere. I think this would be very popular—especially to those of us who homeschool and teach Sunday school and small groups.

D. Talsma

Bellflower, California
*Editor's Note: Several digital issues of *Creation Illustrated* are available*

to subscribers in their account as a free bonus. We are working on making all 120 editions available digitally.

Reader to donor . . .

I have been a reader and fan of *Creation Illustrated* since its inception 30 years ago. When I homeschooled my kids, each edition would arrive, and they excitedly turned to the coloring and photo contests to vote for the entries.

One of my boys passed away of leukemia, and I really truly appreciate the richness that this publication brought to his life.

Now retired, I substitute teach, and the children are ecstatic to cut out the photos from old copies of *Creation Illustrated* and make beautiful collages!

The past five years I have morphed from reader to donor, and I know that God uses this unique publication to bring His second book of nature to those who are incarcerated.

Thank you for your ministry!

J. Plank

Kingman, Arizona

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Fascinating

Fox Squirrels

Behind our home the rays of warm, autumn sunshine lighted up clusters of aging northern red oak trees with their leafy bouquets of yellow and orange. Darting about wildly among the branches of vibrant foliage, two juvenile eastern fox squirrels competed for my attention.

I began to meditate on God lovingly and lavishly providing for all living things. Zeroing in on the chase between these two gray-brown fox squirrels with orange-rust bellies, I contemplated all the things God already had in place for these little creatures to flourish.

Even before they were born, their mother was hard at work preparing a safe haven for them to begin their lives. Although she could have chosen to weave together twigs and fresh foliage to form a leafy nest

By Colleen Lasky

as sometimes done during the summer months, she seemed to know her offspring would have a much better chance for survival in a den. I gazed up high at an opening in one of our oaks—a very thin, oblong slit in the tree trunk may have been started by a woodpecker.

This inconspicuous opening was widened by the mother squirrel's razor-sharp teeth gnawing away inside the tree until a type of nursery was formed. Then, after 45 days of gestation, she gave birth to two little offspring, which are called kits at birth.

These two newborn squirrels—helpless, blind, deaf, and without fur—remained completely dependent on their mother for three months. Four weeks would pass before they opened their eyes and another two weeks before they could hear anything. Their care would come from their mother alone—nursing them, grooming them, and ridding them of parasites. In addition to keeping them healthy, she would instinctively and aggressively protect them from avian predators such as hawks and owls.

As the kits strengthened and grew into juveniles, their mother's role in their lives became less prominent. At this stage of their journey, the siblings assist each other with skills of playing, fighting, and grooming each other. Running up the tree and down again, they learn which trees hold the most food, how to crack a nut, and how to judge a flimsy branch.

One afternoon I watched and gasped as one of the squirrels misjudged the strength of one of the tree limbs. The creature fell to the ground and appeared to be temporarily or permanently paralyzed from the waist down. As I observed the healthy squirrel run to the side of its injured sibling, I thought about God's promise to all of us to provide everything we need for our journey. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you

and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'"(Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).

Now the injured squirrel lay vulnerable to ground predators such as a fox or coyote, but hope was not lost. The attentive sibling frantically chattered a warning to get to safety quickly—persistently chit-chit-chitting commands encouraged the injured one to pull itself through the grass. Further amazed, I watched the healthy squirrel begin crawling up the tree backward, staying inches from its sibling's face, and relentlessly encouraging the injured squirrel to continue up the tree, which it did!

The crippled creature hauled itself all the way to the top of the oak trunk (a span of at least fifteen feet) with only the use of its front legs while following the voice it trusted the most. Finally slipping itself into the safety of the den, the exhausted critter could rest and hopefully recover. I began to ponder a poem by Jan Richardson entitled "Beloved Is Where We Begin" that states, "I cannot promise this blessing will free you from danger, from fear, from hunger or thirst But I can tell you that on this path there will be help. I can tell you that on this way there will be rest."

In the days that followed, I became even more intrigued by the life of the fox squirrels. I learned that these juvenile squirrels, so helpful to each other in their youth, would eventually lead completely solitary lives. Yet, God has prepared them for life on their own, too, by equipping them with astonishing instincts. Some research reveals that they will go to great lengths to outsmart other wildlife by deceiving them when first burying some acorns then return later to bury them somewhere else.

In addition, while their underbelly and under tails are bright orange, they seem to know the top side of their gray-brown fur blends in perfectly with tree trunks. The coy creatures often *freeze* in place to create

*“For I know the plans I have for you,
declares the Lord.”*

—Jeremiah 29:11, NIV



A mother eastern fox squirrel protects her young in a hollowed out hovel in a tree (above). The fox squirrel offspring stay close to their mother most of the time (below). A young fox squirrel coaxes its injured sibling up a tree to safety (right).



“Fear not, for I am with you . . .”

—Isaiah 41:10, ESV



The Creator equipped the eastern fox squirrel with sharp claws in order to scale the rough bark of a tree (left) as well as to deftly grip and eat a cracked nut (below). The orange-rust furry underbelly of eastern fox squirrels is a distinctive characteristic of this particular species, as well as its gray coat, bushy tail, and stubby ears.



Caleb Steuer

a natural camouflage that fools perceived predators. If that doesn't work, they begin to vigorously *chit-chit-chit-chit*, which sounds like a scolding or warning as they whip and swish their tails to show they mean business.

These bushy tails help the squirrels survive in other ways too. Pulling their tails over their back in the rain protects them like an umbrella. During winter months they curl their tails around their bodies to create a blanket. Their tails also act as stabilizers when they are airborne, morphing into a sort of parachute when they free fall from a tree. And when squirrels swim, their tails become rudders. Plus, a few snappy tail flips back and forth can stave off a predator that gets too close. Their tails also help them communicate fear, anger, annoyance, aggression, and other emotions by various positions—straight up, straight back, twitching in all directions, or curled around their body. In fact, their common name is derived from the Greek word *skiouros*, meaning “shade tail,” which describes one of the most conspicuous and recognizable features of these small mammals of which there are 280 different species in the squirrel family. They live throughout the world with 40 of them being American and Eurasian tree squirrels. Another subset of the family includes prairie dogs and chipmunks..

As if the many uses of their tails wasn't enough, our most generous Creator has gifted squirrels with powerful senses to help them survive. Those bright orange ears, once completely deaf, grow to gain an astounding ability to hear and detect threats or to communicate with other squirrels. Razor-sharp eyesight, a well-developed sense of taste and touch, and a bewildering ability to smell acorns buried several feet beneath the snow all add to their amazing cadre of skills. Similarly the psalmist expresses the abundance of blessings God bestows to all His

Creation in Psalm 23:5, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (NIV).

Now every autumn I engage in prayerful thought when I see the fox squirrels becoming active in my oak trees preparing for winter's freeze. At times I, too, feel like a helpless kit—blind and deaf to any workable solution to my challenges. I sense a need for God's comforting presence to support me and provide me refuge like the tall oaks do for His creatures.

I seek comfort in the gospel, “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” (Matthew 6:26, NIV). I put all my faith in God's promise, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10, ESV).

With these promises I become more willing to take chances—to navigate the sometimes risky branches of my own life with more courage. And if I should misjudge something and find myself injured and vulnerable, as I surely will, I believe with my whole heart that God will be right beside me, that He will send me an abundance of everything that I may need to forge onward, and that the Lord will send me helpers to assist with my journey home. The eastern fox squirrel has testified so. **C**

Colleen Lasky writes from Brooklyn Heights, Ohio, where she enjoys finding the extraordinary presence of God in the ordinary circumstances of life. You can find more of her writings on her blog: www.rosecottagesn.com.

Seasonal

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



Tight rosebuds provide a nice beginning to the season.



Wild beach roses line the

The wild rosebuds appear in early spring, bringing the promise of new beginnings with the return of warm skies. It's time to put the winter clothes away, and thoughts turn to soothing summer days. By June the tightly closed buds have blossomed out with their soft petals into delicate wild beach roses offering strong, sweet scent mixing with the sea air.

The beach rose offers a familiar sight with thickets

of woody shrubs along the windswept glacier stones of Maine's coast and down the eastern seaboard. The scientific name of this flower is *Rosa rugosa*; *rugosa* is Latin for "wrinkled" because of the rough crinkly dark green leaves that conserve water amid the dry dunes.

The ocean-loving rose blooms into a large open-faced flower in a theatrical splash of white to shades of pink and purple accented with yellow stamens. Held up on stems covered with thorns, the wild plants discourage people from

Endings

B Y C H R I S T I N E G R A E F



shoreline and exude a sweet aroma.



A fully bloomed wild beach rose is a work of art.

walking through sensitive protected areas. Nevertheless, the petals are often collected, dried, and stored in a jar to use in potpourri that brings back the fragrance of a summertime beach. When simmered in water on a hot stove until they lose their color, fresh petals make a traditional rose water.

Beach roses mark the change of seasons as the emerging flowers bless the beachcombers enjoying the sunny days while collecting shells. Heady perfume infuses the air and mixes with the mist of foaming waves. Buds bloom

continually throughout the summer taking about six weeks to produce each new set of cupped roses adorning lush foliage arching to a height of five feet. Being blown in the wind, the floral stems seem to dance with the swaying sea grass.

But despite all of the blessings of summer sights and soothing aromas, God says, “The end of a thing is better than its beginning” (Ecclesiastes 7:8), and “the day of death [better] than the day of one’s birth” (Ecclesiastes 7:1).

Naturally, we would much rather avoid unpleasantness and painful experiences of any kind, yet Psalm 119:71 informs, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.” These scriptures guide us to pay close attention to what the end will reveal. “The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth” (Ecclesiastes 7:4). The wise have discovered that the buds of the wild rose inspire expectations of what the end result will be.

As the summer season ends, the rose has displayed all it has promised to be. Now the autumn wind blows colder, and the evenings darken earlier. The petals let go and softly fall to the ground, but the end is not yet. Yielding ripening rose hips—a red fruit the size of a small cherry tomato rich in natural vitamin C and antioxidants—is the final stage of seasonal growth. Gathered to dry for tea, harvested for delicious jams and tart jellies, carried away by animals and birds who disperse the seeds, or even floating on the saltwater to take root on other shores, the wild roses have fulfilled the promise of perpetuating that first expectant bud opening to perfume the wind.

While a beginning makes us hopeful for the future, only at the end do we know if what we placed our hope in was worth it. No doubt, a new job often holds a promising future. A new home brings many expectations for the coming years. But these worldly attainments eventually end with fleeting prosperity and emptiness. What is concealed in the beginning is now revealed. And so it is with the end of a life. When identity and self-worth based on career or material wealth suddenly diminish as the years draw to a close, it becomes evident where we placed our hope and value.

God reiterates in Ecclesiastes 7:1, “A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth” (NIV). Why? Because this is when we realize the true foundation upon which we rested our hope. The good name we develop (our character) provides a lingering perfume. The seeds generated from the fruit of the spirit and spread to others can be like the wild rose that repeatedly blossoms.

Death speaks to us of what birth cannot speak. The beach rose puts down deep roots protecting the sand dunes



Rose hips and fading leaves show a change in seasons.



Harsh winter storms along the coast mark

from erosion and holds on securely through winter when the stalks stand dark in cold frost and snow. God designed the plant to be undaunted by the changing seasons; it speaks of us being firmly rooted as His child no matter the loss of status, career, wealth, or friends. Amid these changing seasons and shifting sands, we recognize the eternal hope that stands and can never be taken away.

“It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting” (Ecclesiastes 7:2). Really? Is weeping over the death of a loved one better than the day of rejoicing over their birth? Yes! Because death is no longer to be feared due to the Lord’s glorious resurrection that overcame it for all Creation. Death is the opened door that fulfills the promise of what our faith fully rested upon throughout every season.

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” (1Thessalonians 4:13, 14).

Even so, Jesus shows the depth of His love with

sympathy and comfort. He wept with Mary and Martha when He saw their grief at the death of their brother Lazarus. He was troubled and indignant at the pain that death causes. (See John 11.) He would soon go to the cross to bring victory and everlasting life for our joy to be complete.

Death is not a message anyone wants to hear when the roses are in full bloom and drawing us toward their fragrance beneath summer skies along the splashing sea. But their full life cycle displays a truth that seasonal endings reveal what is not seen in the beginning. It’s like an orchestra that is only complete when all the instruments are present and play a piece to the end. There are minor chords and major chords—chords of joyful singing and hopeful refrains combined with the notes and phrases of mourning, discomfort, and sorrow. Yet, the symphony always concludes in a way that could not be fully anticipated or understood in the beginning.

The Lord is not saying we should not celebrate new births or rejoice over everything He has created for us. But Scripture does say, “To everything there is a season,



the end for wild beach roses.

Frost-laden rose hips provide hope for a new season of life.



The aroma of a life well lived for others continues to linger even after death.

a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2). Furthermore, “God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God’s work from beginning to end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11, NLT).

He’s saying to listen to the whole teaching; yet, we still cannot see all that He has planned for us. We may experience faith as a bud whose petals are tightly encased. We cannot imagine the eternal life that will bloom from this time on earth. Yet, we are promised, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1Corinthians 2:9).

Just as with the wild beach rose, the end of a season with friends and family reminds us that we, too, will die. Moses prayed, “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12). The fading rose bids us to ask what we put our trust in and what our own endings on this earth will reveal. Rooted in truth and

sustained by the unchanging promises of Jesus, our faith will blossom with His faithfulness throughout eternity, which has no end. **C**

Christine Graef writes from Ellsworth, Maine, where she studies various aspects of Creation in order to glean powerful life lessons to share.



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Christmas at a Kenya Game Reserve

BY WAYNE EASLEY

Kenya and the surrounding region hosts some of the world's greatest wildlife preserves—a nature photographer's paradise. Amboseli National Park in the southeastern part of the country has some of the largest herds of elephants anywhere with a spectacular backdrop of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain just to the south in Tanzania.

Masai Mara National Game Reserve to the southwest holds great herds of water buffalo that migrate across the Mara River, as well as cheetahs, lions, leopards, and myriad of other animals and birds. Many more national parks, reserves, and national forests can be found scattered around Kenya.



The Creator provides so much to learn from the natural world and invites in Job 12: 7–10, “But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing.” Job asks us all a very important question; “Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?” (Job 35:11). Kenya stands as a powerful classroom as the country has done an exemplary job in setting aside so many places where people can go and interact with the Creator’s handiwork—a glimpse of Eden past.



A pair of Grevy's zebra seek a bit of shade in the afternoon heat.

Photos by Wayne Easley

THE SELECT FIVE

So, my wife and I were thrilled when we got a call to teach at a Christian school about thirty kilometers from Kenya's capital city of Nairobi! I would be teaching five classes and serve as the assistant pastor for the school, while my wife would be the food-service director. Around one hundred students, many from East African countries, included some students from Europe and Asia. Our six wonderful years in Kenya began 30 years ago, and as avid nature photographers, life could not get much better for us, which generated a multitude of photographic images and memories that remain sharp.

For example, on Christmas day in 1998, my wife and I and our youngest son visited Buffalo Springs Game Reserve in Northern Kenya. Two other game reserves, Samburu and Shaba, are also operated by the city of Isiolo, Kenya, that reminded us of a Wild West town in the U.S. But that has all changed in the last twenty years or so as the area has become an important center for trade and tourism.

To the north of Isiolo begins a spectacular desert landscape. In this isolated part of Kenya, wildlife can be more easily observed than in other parts of East Africa. A few of the spectacular mammals include the reticulated giraffe, Grevy's zebra, beisa oryx, and the gerunuk—a bizarre long-necked antelope. These four mammals, along with the blue necked Somali ostrich, make up what is sometimes called the *special five*. While there is much to see in all three of these game reserves, most tourists would like to see and photograph these select stunning creatures.

In addition to the ostriches, many eagles, falcons, bustards, larks, rollers, and multicolored bee eaters offer great avian delights. Such a plethora of wildlife exists there mainly



A Somali ostrich with her young and a beisa oryx in Kenya's Samburu National Park provide a photographer's dream come true.

"But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you."

because of the beautiful Ewaso Nyiro River that flows down from the Aberdare Mountains of Central Kenya. The river, lined with stately doum palms, provides the lifeblood for these parks and creates habitats for a vast array of animals. Elephants are quite common, along with many cape buffalo, lions, leopards, and cheetahs. Buffalo Springs Game Reserve was the perfect place for our Christmas holiday and one we would long remember!

There are times when Northern Kenya is very dry. During periods of prolonged drought, elephants use their ivory tusks to dig deep into the riverbed for water. Once the elephants have satisfied their needs, other thirsty animals take advantage of the elephants' hard work. But this year the rains had come to Kenya and pounded the country with an abundance of this vital life-giving resource. The desert had literally sprung to life. The main river and all the smaller tributaries ran full, and in every direction a sea of green vegetation blanketed the land.

Early one morning God blessed us with the sighting of a seldom seen corn crane, a bird that we had not encountered very often in Kenya. The entire day continued just like it started, one stunning sight after another—one of those days you hope never ends. Unfortunately, the western sky was telling us a different story. Day would soon give way to night, and all Kenyan parks and game reserves require every vehicle to return to the lodges by dark. Tourists then enjoy a delicious evening meal in the comfort and safety of modern facilities.

Just as we were thinking of heading back, we saw an unusual bird—a Somali courser. This elegant plover-like species almost begged to be photographed, and we thought we had just enough time to get some shots of that remarkable creature. The often repeated birder phrase,



Mark Gottlieb

A languishing leopard rests while stunning crowned cranes scurry to safety.

IT WAS WORTH A TRY

“Well, it flew,” proved accurate as it took to the sky. We noticed it landed alongside a secondary road that might give us a chance to get closer. We thought it was worth a try. The track was a couple of hundred yards off the main road and looked fairly decent. Exploring can be fun, but it can also be full of adventure and even danger.

As we drove slowly toward our goal, the wheels suddenly began to spin, and we were going nowhere. “This is not good,” we muttered. We soon realized that the sunny day had left what looked like a decent road almost impassable. Underneath a few inches of dry dirt was a gray silt-like layer of clay that was still wet. The wheels were spinning like crazy, but the car was going nowhere. We were stuck in a very wild part of Kenya with the sun sinking rapidly in the western sky.

Before we would even try to get out of there, we needed to pray. A great text in times like this is Hebrews 4:16, which says, “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace . . . in time of need.” With dusk soon turning to night, our predicament brought Psalm 34: 4–6 to mind, which says, “I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. . . . This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

What a powerful promise! Spending a long night surrounded by lions, leopards, and other creatures and realizing that we might still be there the next day was not very pleasant. My wife got behind the steering wheel while Steven and I pushed with all we could muster. No progress, so we decided to place the floor mats of the car under the wheels for traction. The spinning wheels sent the mats sailing like hockey pucks.



Wayne Easley



A mud-caked cape buffalo

Wayne Easley

“I sought the Lord, and He heard me.”

In such a situation, one has to be very cautious as concern can lead to panic. Buffalo Springs is a reserve with not only wild animals but a good many poisonous snakes. Spending the night there with only the protection of the car was not a good idea. We had to do something, and that is when our son Steven saw an approaching vehicle with its headlights already on way in the distance on the main road. It was a tour van making its way back to a lodge.

Without saying a word, Steven took off running barefooted in a desperate attempt to intercept that van. Fortunately a hungry lion or leopard did not spot him. He arrived at the main road in the nick of time, threw up his hands, and hoped the vehicle would stop. The driver slowed down and pulled over toward Steven and asked, “What is happening? Why are you here?” Steven, a bit out of breath, explained, “My parents are down there with our vehicle that is stuck in the mud. Can you help us out?”

The driver of the van looked at his watch, glanced toward the sun, and said, “I don’t know, we are . . .” Steven did not let the man finish and looked in the backseat where six strapping young men sat wedged in among their camera equipment. The men in the back seemed eager to continue their journey.

“Where are you from?” Steven inquired. One of the six fellows said, “We are from Israel.” Thinking quickly, Steven assumed that they were Jews and raising his voice a bit asked a very pointed question, “Have you guys ever heard of the story of the good Samaritan in the Bible?” There was a noticeable silence. After a long pause, one of them finally said, “We will help you.”

At last Steven could relax. He climbed into the van, and they began to drive slowly in



A lanky gerunuk reaches for sparse food while the Ewaso Nyiro River provides a lush resource for other creatures.

Photos by Wayne Easley

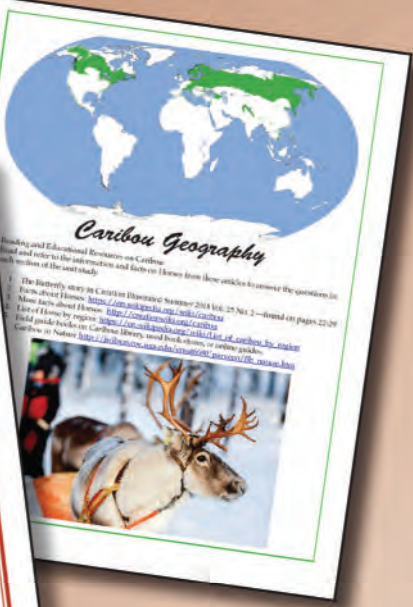
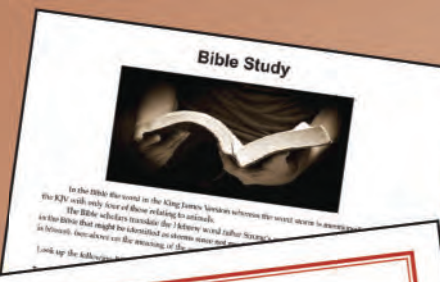
ON SOLID GROUND

the direction of my wife and me. We watched with great anticipation as six big, burly Jewish tourists got out of that van and came walking toward us. Steven and I and six big, strong *good Samaritan* Jews got our vehicle to gradually begin to move. Every inch seemed like a mile, but then suddenly we were on solid ground, which brought great relief to all of us! As we parted, we thanked them profusely and wished them the very best of success on their Kenyan safari.

We laughed about that experience later when we remembered that the Bible says that the Jews and the Samaritans in the days of Jesus did not have a good relationship. In fact, Scripture makes it very clear, “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (John 4:9). Despite those differences in Bible times, we were deeply grateful for the help of those modern day *good Samaritan* Jews.

We still had several more days of enjoyment in the game reserve paradise due to their kindness in rescuing us. This challenging episode made for an especially unique Christmas that underscored Jesus’ sacrifice in coming to this world to rescue all of us from the mucky mire of this world. **C**

Wayne Easley writes from Hereford, Arizona, where he is retired after many years of teaching and pastoring. He continues to share the stunning photography and faith-building stories gathered during his travels that inspire worship of our Creator and Rescuer.



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Audubon National

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



Bobby Harrison

Rudy duck



Bobby Harrison

Marsh wren

as you take in its grandeur from afar, there is an abundance of life, and I had come to witness that abundance. Many artists before me have come to this place, and as I stood on the prairie overlooking the Missouri River, I wonder if the great bird artist himself had stood in this very spot.

In 1843, John James Audubon headed west to paint northern plains' wildlife for his book, *The Quadrupeds of North America*. One of his stops included the area I was exploring. He had stopped here along the Missouri River to collect and paint birds and mammals. Named in his honor, the place is now known as the Audubon National Wildlife Refuge.

Commonly called prairie pothole country, the landscape is scattered with numerous wetland depressions that formed thousands of years ago as glaciers receded from the area. The depressions resulting from the melt form a vast array of wetlands essential for migratory and breeding water birds in North America.

The refuge includes 14,735 acres of native prairie, grasslands, wetlands, and a man-made lake. Though the refuge primarily serves as a breeding ground for waterfowl, it is also a haven for migrant and resident raptors, shorebirds, and songbirds. An estimated one hundred one bird species breed on the refuge, but

Every direction I turn reveals an empty, undulating landscape. The distant vista surrounds me with the sky's massive dome stretching over the horizon in every direction. I feel so small and so alone in what seems to be a desolate place. But I know I am not alone, for the Holy Scriptures tell me, "the Lord your God . . . goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6). What a relief and comfort to know that we are never alone.

The North Dakota landscape is vast. And although the prairie may appear empty

Wildlife Refuge

BY BOBBY HARRISON

during the spring and fall the region provides a vital stopover for transient flocks as they travel along their ancient migratory routes. All in all, more than two hundred forty-three species call the refuge home at some point during the year.

One of the best ways to get an overview of the landscape is to meander along the various trails through the pothole country and dry prairie that reach the shoreline of Audubon Lake. An eight-mile auto route also traverses all the various habitat zones of the refuge. This jaunt skirts the south shore of Audubon Lake, which is an ideal location to search for resident breeders such as the eared grebe, ruddy duck, and marsh wren.

The circuit continues to prairie wetlands where sora, American avocet, black-necked still, marbled godwit, greater yellowlegs, and a dozen species of waterfowl can be found. In the springtime, wildflowers blanket the prairie grasslands as they come alive with the arrival of willet, upland sandpiper, dickcissel, horned lark, Sprague's pipit, and western meadowlark.

That lonely windswept prairie I first encountered was in no way as barren as it first appeared. It thrives as an amazingly vast community of life with an ecosystem of great diversity. In those wide open spaces I could



Bobby Harrison

Eared grebe

hear the words of Isaiah, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" and, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" (Isaiah 35:1, 5, KJV). Perhaps the lonely places like the Audubon National Wildlife Refuge offer what we need in order to open our eyes and our ears to our Creator. **C**

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



Bobby Harrison

American avocet



Our sun is a G star or a yellow dwarf star.

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

CREATION DAY 4

■ BY STEPHANIE MATHEWS
WITH TOM ISH

The Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Stars

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



Jeremy Nickerson

The Andromeda galaxy is one among billions of galaxies in the universe.

On a clear night away from city lights, one of the most astounding sights in all of Creation can be witnessed—the massive number of glorious, glittering stars spread across the dark sky. “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory” (1 Corinthians 15:41, KJV).

The Creation story chronicles the heavenly events on day four of the Creation week. “Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater

light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day” (Genesis 1:14–19).

Our sun and moon appear to be the main focus of Creation day four, and the phrase in verse sixteen, “He made the stars also,” seems to be an additional act. Some creationists debate whether or not all of the stars were created on day four, but we will not attempt to answer that question here.

Instead, we will ponder the vast stellar universe and characteristics that inspire worship of the Creator



Jeremy Nickerson

The flame and horseshoe nebulae are the gaseous and dusty remains of exploding stars.

because, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge” (Psalm 19:1, 2, KJV). One of the most staggering statistics about stars is their vast number, which no one but God really knows the exact quantity, for “He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them” (Psalm 147:4, NASB). On a clear night an estimated two to three thousand stars can be viewed from earth—a mere sliver of even the estimated total.

Before attempting to calculate the number of stars in the heavens, we must first try to compute how many galaxies exist. Otherwise counting individual stars would be like trying to count grains of sand or blades of grass. While an

exact number of galaxies remains equally elusive, an unimaginable range of one to two hundred billion galaxies exist according to various sources, but that number will likely change as technology improves.

So, extrapolating the number of stars may be futile to even attempt it, for the Bible says, “And he brought him outside and said, ‘Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be’” (Genesis 15:5, ESV). Notice God’s Word says, “If you are able.”

Even with today’s powerful telescopes and technology, no one actually knows how many stars or galaxies are out there. There is only One who really knows. “He telleth the number of the

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



Our Milky Way Galaxy can be seen on a clear night.

stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147: 4, 5, KJV). Still, researchers estimate that there are ten times the number of stars as there are grains of sand on all the beaches and deserts on earth.

Stars not only are vast in number, but different types vary in size, brightness, color, and even behavior. Most stars are *main sequence stars* (those that fuse hydrogen to helium in their core), making up about ninety percent of the stellar population. Among the main sequence stars, seven types are categorized by color, temperature, and size—hottest and biggest to coolest and smallest. These include: O (blue), B (blue-white), A (white), F (yellow-white), G (yellow), K (orange), and M (red). These

classifications help us understand why some stars seem brighter than others. Of course, their distance from the earth also affects their apparent brightness.

Our sun is a G star, or a yellow dwarf star made up of a combination of gases in the form of plasma. About three-quarters of our sun consists of hydrogen, with the rest being helium. About one percent or so is made up of other gases and metals. Its core is the hottest part hitting temperatures up to twenty-seven million degrees Fahrenheit!

Bursts of solar flares are like spikes of fire shooting out hundreds of thousands of miles above the sun’s surface. In His mercy God designed the earth’s magnetic field to help protect us from the potential damage of solar flares, which also relates to the jaw-dropping heavenly spectacle

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Christmas in Prison

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



My name is Miranda # [redacted]
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or even back issues. I come across
one and absolutely loved it.
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wonderful pictures of God's
creations. I have been locked up
for 2 years. During this time I have
rededicated my life to God. I was
baptized March 15, 2023. I currently
lead the prayer circle in my
unit. 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!

Thank you
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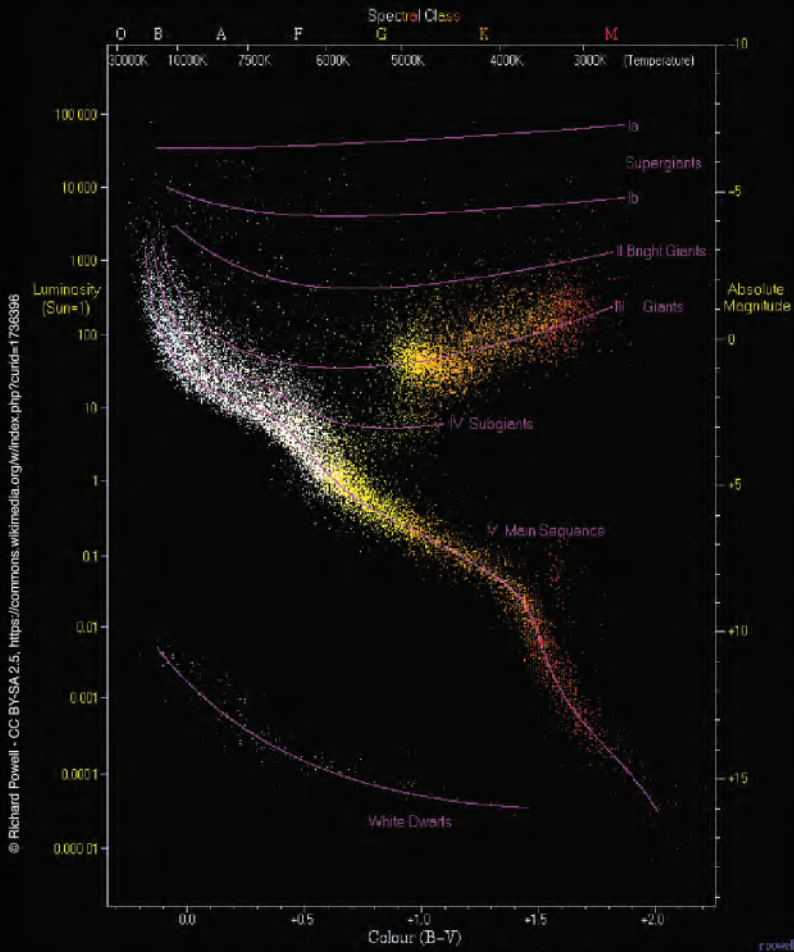
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The Hertzsprung Russell Diagram

and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, . . .

of the Aurora Borealis in the far northerly skies and the Aurora Australis in the southern polar regions.

Nearly a perfect sphere located about ninety-three million miles from us, our sun is 1,300,000 times bigger than earth. Still the light from the sun takes eight minutes to reach us. Some stars are 100 times larger than our sun, but others can be ten times smaller. Regardless, God uniquely and purposely designed the sun to make life possible here on earth. The universe is so finely tuned, it speaks to the wisdom and benevolence of our Creator. "To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth forever. To him

that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever: the sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 136: 4-8, KJV).

Still other stars include blue giants, red giants, blue supergiants, red supergiants, and white dwarfs. A graph called the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram illustrates this. Luminosity is what astronomers use to distinguish a star's apparent brightness to the actual amount of light a star emanates. The brightness is the way a star appears in the sky, whereas the luminosity is the actual amount of light it gives off.

Just by looking at a star is not the best way to determine luminosity because the farther the distance, the less bright it appears. Luminosity measures the property of a star without distance,



The Aurora Borealis forms a stunning spectacle when charged particles from solar flares hit the earth's polar magnetic fields.

whereas magnitude is used to measure the brightness as it relates to the distance of a star. Our Creator, in His infinite wisdom, conceived this magnificent part of His creation, which not only stretches our minds to understand but inspires us to worshipfully embrace the awesome power of His words that spoke these luminaries into existence. "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:36, ESV).

Not only do the stars showcase God's unfettered masterworks and exalt His glory, they serve a practical purpose. Our own star created on day four serves as our major source of light and heat. The starry heavens along with our sun and moon also provide a means for time-keeping, for signs, and for seasons as

clearly stated in Genesis 1:14, "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years'" (ESV).

When looking up at stars twinkling in the sky, some are actually part of a double star system known as a binary star, which is when a pair of stars can be observed orbiting a common center of gravity. These stars don't always have the same mass or brightness; so, the larger one is called the primary star and the smaller one is the companion star. A *visual binary* can be seen with a telescope, while many other stars have companions that are too faint to be seen and are called *astrometric binary* stars. *Spectroscopic* binary stars can only be detected by shifts in the light spectrum as they orbit each other. And



Jeremy Nickerson

The Pleiades, also known as the Seven Sisters, is an open star cluster in the constellation of Taurus.

an *eclipsing* binary occurs when one star passes in front of its companion cutting off its view. Nevertheless, Scripture encourages everyone to, “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing” (Isaiah 40:26, NIV).

Other stunning sights to notice when star gazing include globular (densely packed) star clusters and open (loosely bound) star clusters. Imagine dumping a teaspoon of sugar onto a black piece of paper with each sugar grain representing a star. The close proximity of the grains would illustrate the globular cluster. Now, instead of dumping the teaspoon of sugar, sprinkle it over the

paper as if seasoning a dish of food; this would represent an open star cluster.

Studying the stars can be a daunting task, but it brings to mind the magnificence of our Creator and how mighty and powerful He is as He inquires of Job. ““Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion? Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth?”” (Job 38:31–33). The God who spoke to Job is the same God who not only created the stars but created us in His image and speaks to us through His Word.

The psalmist ponders, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that

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

— Genesis 1:14–19



Binary stars Alpha Centauri A and Alpha Centauri B

NASA

you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” (Psalm 8: 3, 4, NIV). He who calls the nearly infinite number of stars by name also knows the number of hairs on your head. (See Luke 12:7.) Such omniscience assures us that God’s mercy, providence, and plan of salvation shall not fail for all eternity if we do not reject being counted and named as His. “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3, KJV). **C**

Stephanie Mathews writes from Tremonton, Utah, where she serves as a part-time librarian, a homeschool and dog mom, and a writer of two books of poetry while enjoying reading, walking, gardening, exploring, and

studying astronomical phenomena. Tom Ish is editor and publisher of Creation Illustrated.

The deep space photographs by Jeremy Nickoson of Xenia, Ohio, were taken with a DSLR camera and telephoto lens (100–400mm) mounted on a telescope tracking equatorial mount, which matches the earth’s rotation to keep an area of the sky within the camera frame. This enables exposures up to five minutes each with multiple exposures of one area of the sky taking several hours. Once the data is collected, he uses specific astrophotography tools to align and process the dozens or even hundreds of images to create one photo. Here is a link to a short video of his equipment setup (<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/vuSZi2NQP88>). He says he enjoys sharing God’s incredible artistic Creation with others. See more of his work at: www.jnickoson.com.

CREATION HIGHLIGHTS

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The Big Bang and the Bible

The psalmist writes, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” (Psalm 19:1–3, KJV).

With the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope, questions have piqued regarding the origins of the universe. Perhaps the most important question, over which scientists have been struggling for more than fifty years, is regarding the *nature of singularity* or a beginning point. There is no scientific explanation for such a *super point*. It is something outside of science closer to the realm of faith—something that points us to the act of Creation and the Creator.

Based on an in-depth study of the Hebrew text in Genesis 1, many theologians tend to conclude that the creation of the universe took place before the events of Creation week. They suggest the universe can be much older than several thousand years, although the Bible doesn’t comment about this gap. This theory has been called the *passive gap theory*.

The idea that the universe was created during Creation week is called the *no gap theory*. The processes that took place during Creation week go beyond the scope of modern science. Neither position can be considered the absolute truth, and all the arguments in support of one or the other position should be considered only as assumptions, which could turn out to be incorrect. Our knowledge is far from complete concerning the creation of our universe. Nevertheless, give glory to God, who “created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

Condensed from an article by Aleksei Popov, Geoscience Research Institute. www.grisda.org

Living Fossils in Amber

Scientists at Monash University have been studying pieces of amber found in a former coal mining region in south-eastern Australia. The amber is dated as forty-two million years old and contains preserved insects, springtails, and spiders.

These specimens were found in 2014 and first described in the scientific literature in 2020. Further research using an x-ray scanning technique has enabled scientists to see more detail even in thick almost opaque pieces of amber. The most significant finds are the first fossils of two species of midges and a wasp. Fossils of these insects have been found in other parts of the world, but living examples are now only found in Australia. The fossils in the amber are exactly the same as the creatures now living in Australia. The researchers commented: “Without realizing it, we exist among living fossils. While we know these species were widely distributed in the past, today most of them are found only on this continent.” (References: *The Conversation*, July 10, 2024; *Scientific Reports*, April 2, 2020.)

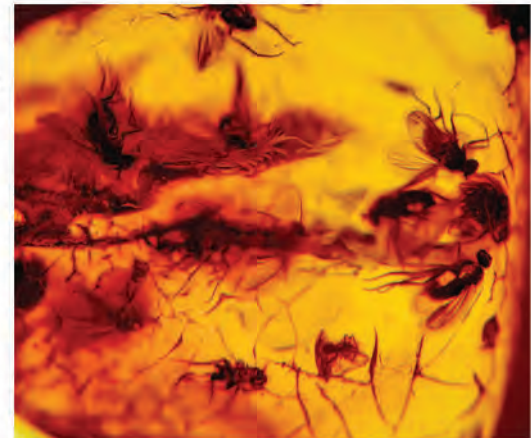
These scientists may have only just realized we live among living fossils, but living fossils are everywhere.

Creation Research has been proclaiming this for decades including in our first

documentary entitled “The World of Living Fossils.” The term *living fossils* was coined by Charles Darwin to describe living things that are identical to their fossils. Classic examples are horseshoe crabs, the nautilus, coelacanth, and Wollemi pine.

Darwin and other evolutionists consider them to be anomalies, but the reality is all living things that are also found in the fossil record are living fossils. They are confirmation of Genesis 1, where God states ten times that He created living things according to their kinds. No matter how old these scientists believe the amber fossil insects to be, the identical living insects show they have multiplied after their kinds.

Condensed from *Creation Research News*, July 23, 2024



Insects in amber

CREATION STEWARDSHIP

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

Sharing Facts and Figures

With Thanksgiving coming again this autumn, it may be prudent to look at food-consumption habits in the U.S. On average, Americans dine out or order takeout about seven and a half times per month.

Americans spend about a hundred sixty-six dollars per person per month on dining out, which equals \$38.30 per week. This figure varies based on income level and dining preferences.

The pandemic caused an increase in meals eaten at home with 55 percent of Americans reporting that they eat at home more often now. About thirty-three percent of Americans eat dinner at home every day, an increase from 21 percent before the pandemic.

Unfortunately, even with an abundance of food availability, the average American diet falls short of federal nutritional guidelines. For example, the availability of vegetables for consumption in 2020 was 382.5 pounds per capita, slightly below the twenty-year average. Americans also consume higher than recommended levels of meat, grains, and sweeteners, which contributes to diets being out of balance.

Tips for Simple Living

Here are six ideas that can help you and your family eat healthfully at home while saving money.

- Plan your meals for the week ahead and create a shopping list based on that plan. This helps reduce impulse buying and encourages you to use up what you already have on hand while cutting down on food waste.
- Prepare large batches of food and freeze portions for later use. This saves time and money, especially when buying ingredients in bulk. Soups, stews, and casseroles are ideal for bulk cooking.
- Local seasonal fruits and vegetables are often cheaper and fresher than out-of-season options at the supermarket. Shopping at area farmers' markets can also support local growers.
- Incorporate more plant-based meals into your diet, such as beans, lentils, and whole grains. These foods are not only nutritious but also are more affordable than meat.

• Processed foods are often more expensive and less healthful than whole foods. Focus on cooking with basic ingredients like fresh produce, grains, and plant proteins to keep costs down and to improve your diet.

• Growing your own herbs and vegetables in a small garden (even in a few pots on a balcony) can reduce your grocery bill and provide you with fresh, organic produce.



Biblical Stewardship of Creation

The biblical concept of gleaning is rooted in God's instructions to the Israelites and reflects His care for the marginalized in society. In Leviticus 19:9, 10, the Lord admonishes, "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God." This directive was a clear mandate for Israelite landowners to leave crop remnants for the poor, including widows, orphans, and foreigners who lacked the land and the means to support themselves.

This practice served as an early form of social welfare in an agrarian society without the stigma of begging. The story in Ruth 2 beautifully illustrates this principle. Ruth, a Moabite widow, gleaned in the fields of Boaz, who faithfully followed the law by allowing her to gather from his fields. This act of kindness also preserved her dignity as gleaning required her to work for her sustenance, and it allowed the wealthy to care for the less fortunate.

The USDA has a helpful guide about gleaning to address the 100 billion pounds of food thrown away, which is 20 percent of America's food supply going to waste. Gleaning options help promote cooperation and compassion between gardeners, farmers, and volunteers. Explore what may be available in your area, and consider volunteering.

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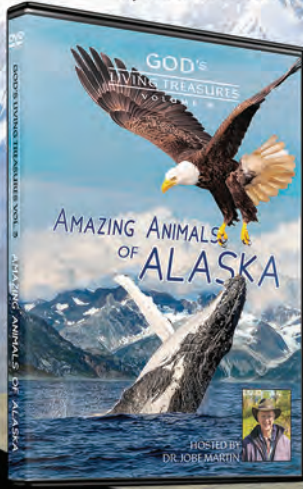
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M Y W A L K W I T H G O D

Open
Your
Eyes
and
Ears



B Y H E A T H E R B O Y D



Crisp autumn air filled my lungs as I quickened my step up a hill. Before settling down with a book, I had determined to get some exercise and to be rejuvenated by the fresh pine-scented air of the Sierra Nevada foothills. The sun, though no longer at its summertime height in the sky, still shone brightly while reflecting its glory on the turning shades of deciduous

trees and bushes. All negativity flew from my mind as I simply soaked in the simple joy of the moment.

I lifted my eyes to the tall pine tree ahead that pointed heavenward so proudly yet silently testifying of its Creator. Into the splendor of the moment broke the strains of a lofty choir as promised in Psalm 104:12, “The birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches.” My eyes strained to identify the source



Jenny Miner

A flicker (above), a squirrel (below), and a hawk (right) all add to the Creator's message to us.

of the joyous trills. High in the stately pine tree they appeared to be very plain little birds—brown and tan in color. Determined to figure out exactly who my benefactors were, I stopped and watched closely.

Two flickers lingered nearby occasionally flying from tree to tree while always staying protected by the pine boughs. Behind me a rustle in the bushes caught my attention, and unbeknown to him, I spied a sneaky gray squirrel who thought he could scamper around without being noticed. But God watches over every creature. “I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine” (Psalm 50:11, NLT). All nature seemed strangely alive, yet shrouded in careful, quiet maneuvers. Even the shiny blue stellar jay refrained from his raucous, chattering cries and listened to the stirring notes of the pine-tree chorale.

Ominously gliding through the sky with reddish-brown wings tipping from side to side, a hawk swooped and perched above the little bird choir that I had so quickly come to admire. The raptor seemed oblivious to the charm of the moment. The joyful singers were forced to flee the potential threat as they made a hasty flight to another tree with the hawk in quick pursuit. I anxiously watched, thinking surely that with one sharp swoop of his talons he would carry one of the cheery singers away, but he seemed content to merely disturb them.

Soon the refrain of a familiar hymn came to mind.

*All nature sings,
And 'round me rings
The music of the spheres.*

These words of worship and gratitude suddenly took on new and deeper meaning to me. Do we, like the squirrel, the flicker, and the stellar



Calab Steuer



jay, find quiet joy in the things of our Creator God? Do we hear the music He so freely provides through His creatures? Or could it be that like the aggressive hawk, we find ourselves unaware of the beauty around us and drive away the angel choirs of heaven?

It is in the delicately perfumed flower, the green bough of the fir tree, the spray of a nearby waterfall, and the cheerful song of innocent birds that we may discern the love of God who created it all. O hasten away, gossip! Let discontent find no home! With open eyes and ears you will reap a sweet and pure message floating from forest and brook.

Another tune may fill your heart and mind as it did mine.

*This is my Father's world,
O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong
Seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.*

My experience confirmed that He watches over all His creation and is worthy of all the honor and glory. "All Your works shall give thanks to You and praise You, O Lord, and Your godly ones will bless You" (Psalm 145:10, AMP). **C**

Heather Boyd writes from Whitwell, Tennessee, where she keeps busy homeschooling two young daughters while seizing moments of restoration and meaningful lessons from the wonders of Creation.



A bountiful harvest results from months of hard work.

the joy of the

In the northern part of America, autumn can cause melancholy moods triggered by scenes of bleakness—saying farewell to the greenery, leaves falling from the trees, and frost killing the once flourishing plants. The season gets likened to old age and approaching death; but while we cannot totally escape from this concept, there is a much more positive aspect to both the fall season and old age. In God’s plan, both denote a time of maturity and of ripening for a joyful harvest.

Today so many people have lost touch with the land and farming (or even gardening) that they no longer grasp the many spiritual lessons God provides based on the agricultural lifestyle of an earlier time. People who lived off the land closely monitored the seasons, and they knew that unless God blessed them with a good harvest, they faced a long winter of trying

gardens from eden



Carol Mowdy Bond

Modern machinery helps with large harvests.

harvest

to subsist on venison or other game and minuscule portions of their crops that could be gleaned and preserved. For dedicated agrarian populations, a trip to the local supermarket was not an option, and they eagerly looked forward to offering heartfelt thanks to God for the blessings of the harvest.

In this modern era, most grain farmers cultivate vast tracts of land with powerful machinery. Yet, only a few generations ago farms were generally smaller, and one threshing machine would be shared by a whole community. All the farmers would work together to cut and thresh the crops on one farm after another. This involved long hours of hard work as they rushed to get all the fields harvested before the harsh prairie winter set in.

In the kitchens the women pooled their culinary skills to produce nutritious meals for

by evelyn sayler



An early winter storm can ruin a harvest.

the hungry workers. Harvest time required *all hands on deck*. No one was excused. I remember my mother-in-law telling me how she helped to cook for threshers all day, gave birth to a baby during the night, and returned to the kitchen to continue cooking the next day. The work had to be done. The harvest was at stake!

At harvest time, the climax of the year, farmers received their reward for many months of steadily attending to their crops. Even though they felt great pressure to finish the reaping task before winter, they also enjoyed a great feeling of accomplishment and rejoicing to see the year's labor draw to a close in a fruitful bounty, especially if they were blessed with an abundant harvest.

One might ask why the farmers did not start harvesting earlier in the season so that they were not so pressured to finish before winter. The simple answer to this question is that immature grain is useless. It must be ripe before it can be gathered in. Sometimes the grain matured slowly because of poor weather conditions, and this would cause great anxiety among the farmers. Sometimes winter would arrive early, and there would be no harvest. This led to great hardship and suffering for early pioneers.

Many years ago our family lived in Australia. This move presented quite a dramatic change from our home in Canada, and gardening down under challenged us with a variety of new experiences. I planted a row of bell peppers there, though I can't really remember why. Green peppers had never been a popular food with our family, and at the time I did not realize that they would turn red if we let them mature. In the warm climate the peppers grew rapidly and soon produced an abundant crop of large green peppers, but unfortunately, no matter



Everyone must participate in the harvest when it is ripe.

how I prepared them, no one would eat them. Our children picked large bags of them to sell or give away to the neighbors. It wasn't until years later I realized that if we had just let them ripen until they turned red, we would have enjoyed eating them. We needed to learn the first principle of the harvest—wait until the crop ripens!

The coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven also has both negative and positive aspects. For those who are not abiding in Christ, His coming will be a time of fear and death, but for those whose lives bear the mature fruit of the Spirit, His appearing will be a time of rejoicing to know that the time has come for Jesus to “thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe” (Revelation 14:15).

We need to think of harvesting souls, not only in terms of our own salvation, but also think of it from God's perspective. If we grow weary of the few years we have been waiting, think of how long Jesus has waited to “see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:11). Our Savior is also waiting anxiously for the spiritual harvest of the earth. He says, “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain” (James 5:7).

Why has this harvest been delayed so long? It remains postponed for the same reason that earthly farmers do not rush the harvest season. Both the earthly and the heavenly harvest must be mature before they can be gathered in. God is patiently and lovingly waiting for His people to open their hearts to receive the early and latter rain. He must be certain that “affliction will not rise up a second time” (Nahum 1:9).



The sheaves stand tall after a successful harvest.

Unlike the crops in the fields, God's people have choices to make. We can help to hasten His great harvest by cooperating with Jesus as He works in us to bring our characters to maturity. "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter 3:11, 12). That day will be a time of unbounded rejoicing for our Savior. "He will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17, KJV).

Just as everyone who grows even a small garden can experience the joy of the harvest, so also everyone who has had even a small part in "bringing in the sheaves" (as the familiar hymn refrains) will share God's joy in the final harvest of souls for His kingdom as told in my poem.

*In our hearts the seed is planted by the Son,
And He watches when its growing has begun.
Until in our lives perfected,
He can see His love reflected,
And rejoice to know His work is fully done. **C***

Evelyn Saylor writes from Oliver, British Columbia, where she and her husband, Floyd, explore the wonders of Creation to share its lessons with a hurting world. A version of this story first appeared in the Fall 2010 edition of Creation Illustrated.



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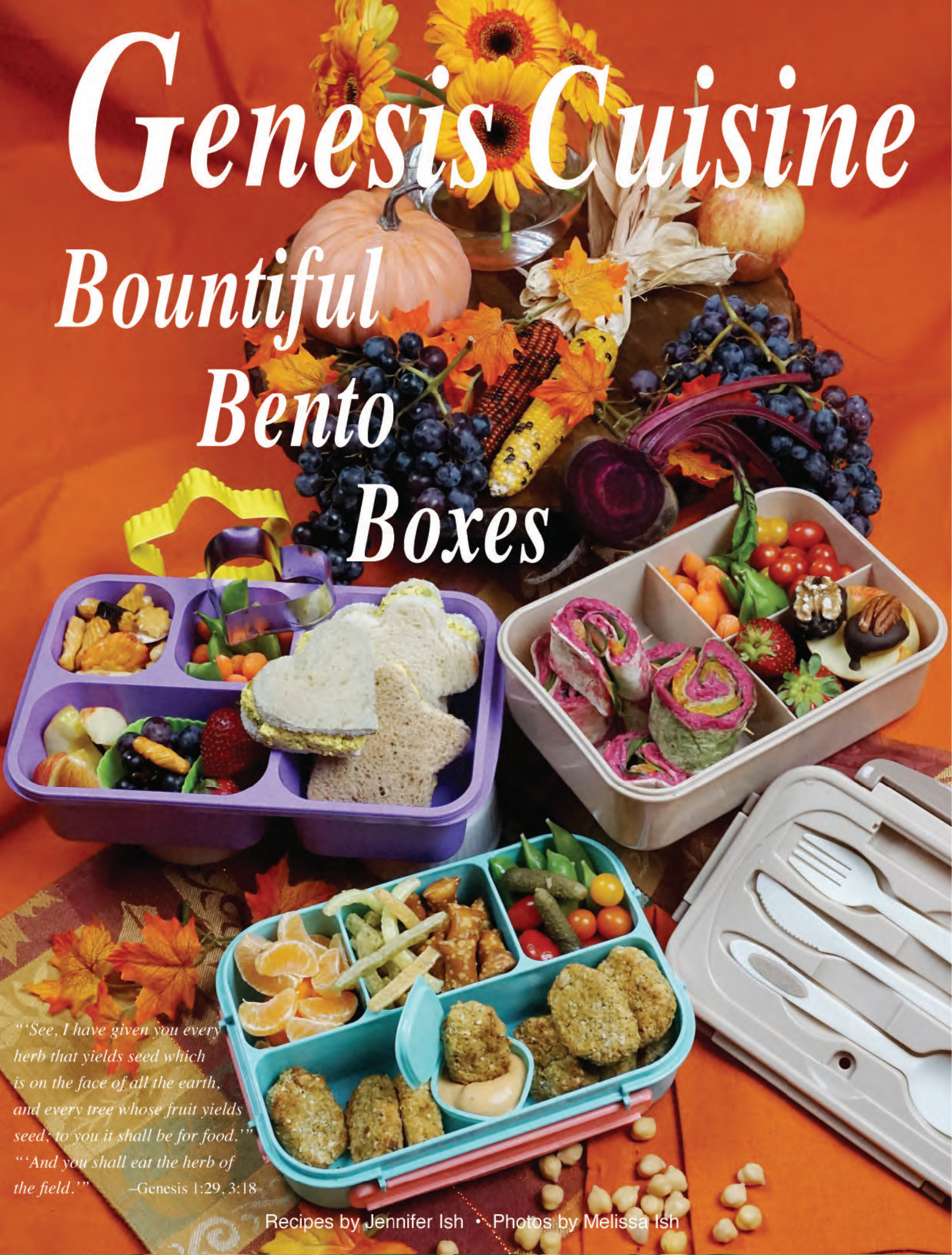
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*"See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food."
"And you shall eat the herb of the field."
—Genesis 1:29, 3:18*

Recipes by Jennifer Ish • Photos by Melissa Ish



Egg-less Salad Sandwiches

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 pk. firm tofu | 1 Tb. mayo type dressing |
| 1/3 C. celery, diced | 1 tsp. onion powder |
| 2 Tb. pickle relish | 1/2 tsp. turmeric |
| 1 Tb. capers | 1/2 tsp. dill weed |
| 2 Tb. stuffed green olives, chopped | 1/2 tsp. paprika |
| 1 Tb. mustard | Salt and pepper to taste |

Drain, rinse, and pat dry tofu. Mash with fork, and mix in other ingredients. Enjoy in a sandwich or on crackers.



Roasted Beet Hummus Wraps

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 med. sized beet | 2 cloves garlic |
| 1 can white beans, drained, rinsed | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 3 Tb. tahini butter | Optional seasonings: |
| 2 Tb. olive oil | 1 tsp. sumac |
| 1 lemon, juiced | 1/2 tsp. paprika |

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Wrap the beet in foil and roast for 40 to 60 min. until tender. Let it cool, peel the skin off, and cube. In a food processor, combine the cubed roasted beet, white beans, tahini, olive oil, lemon juice, and garlic. Blend until smooth and creamy. Add salt, pepper, and optional seasonings to taste. Blend again to mix well. Spread on flour tortillas and add cucumber slices, spinach leaves, and roasted bell pepper strips. Roll and cut into rounds secured with a toothpick.



Chick-less Nuggets

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 can chickpeas, reserve liquid (called aquafaba) | 3/4 C. rolled oats, milled to flour |
| 1/4 C. hemp hearts | 1/4 C. cornmeal |
| 2 garlic cloves, crushed | 1/4 C. panko breading |
| 1 Tb. flax meal | 1/4 C. sesame seeds |
| 1 tsp. Everything Bagel Seasoning | 1 tsp. onion powder |
| 1 Tb. olive oil | 2 Tb. nutritional yeast |
| 1 lemon, juiced | 1 tsp. salt |

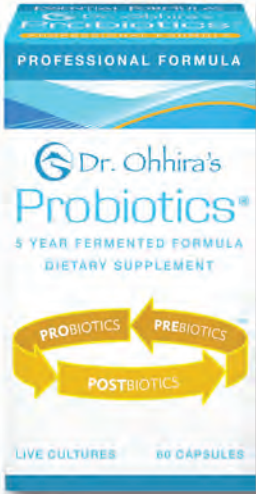
Blend oats in a processor to a fine flour. Mix in other breading ingredients on a shallow dish. Add beans, hemp, garlic, flax, and seasonings to a processor and pulse into a rough dough. Form 1 Tb. scoops into nugget shapes. Dip in aquafaba and roll in breading mix. Spray each nugget with avocado cooking spray, and bake in air fryer at 375 degrees for 10 to 12 min. flipping halfway, or bake in oven at 425 degrees for 20 min. Serve with favorite dipping sauces.

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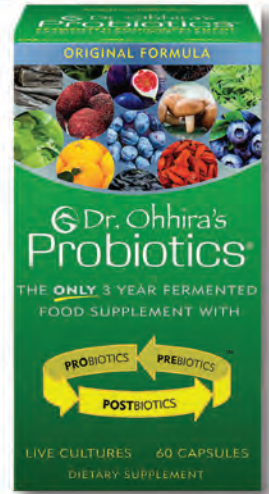
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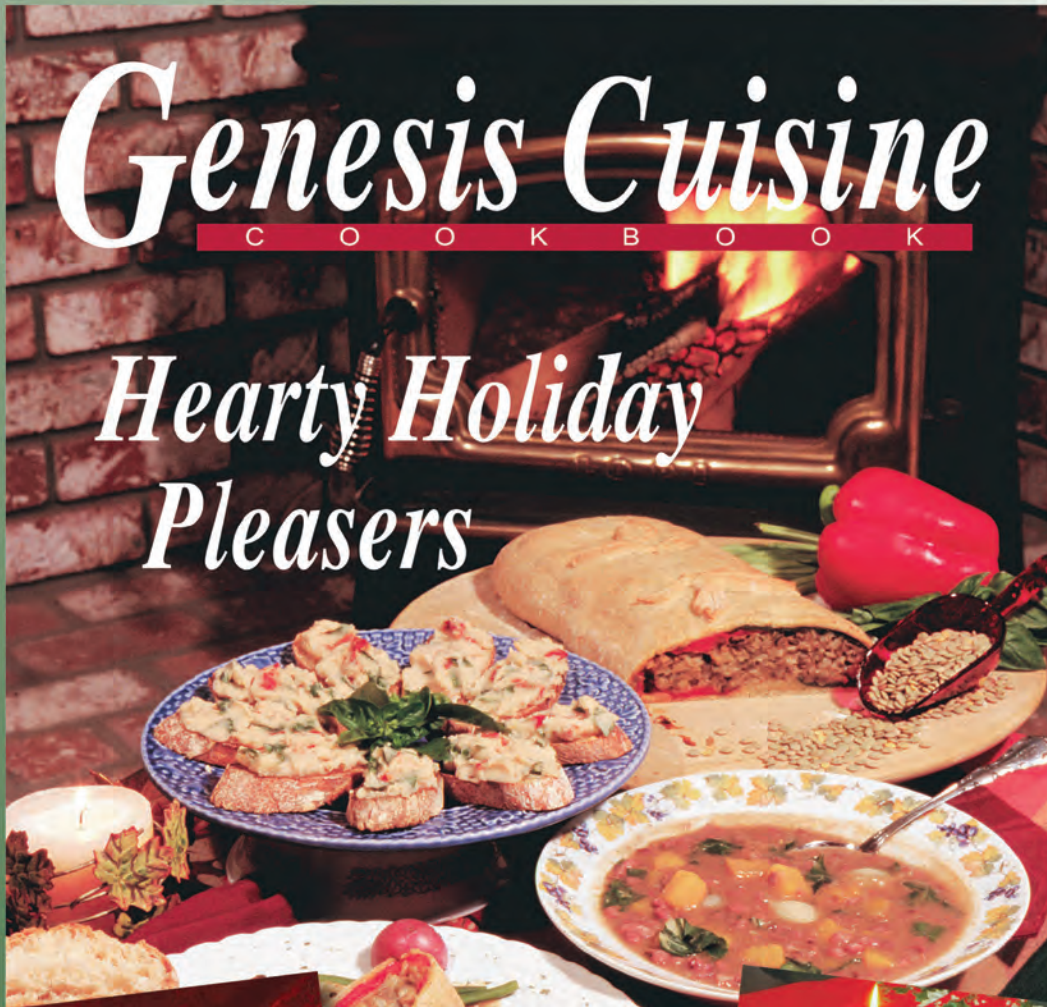
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"See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree which its fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. And you shall eat the flesh of the field." -Genesis 1:29, 3:11



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Miracle Pumpkins



Jeremy and his grandmother planted pumpkins with high hopes of sharing them with their neighbors. However, the pumpkins often wither and get relegated to the compost heap. Despite the disappointment, Jeremy kept praying for a miracle.

One day a pail of water sloshed back and forth as Jeremy ran to the garden.

"Jeremy, slow down! You're spilling all the water," his grandma warned.

"Oops, sorry," he said, glancing at the dripping pail.

When he reached the pumpkin patch, he stopped and stared. Once green vines traced a dry path in the dirt. Their limp leaves hung like broken umbrellas shielding tiny, green pumpkins. Jeremy turned to his grandma with tears in his eyes and shouted, "Come quick! The pumpkins are dying!"

Grandma knelt down and examined the plants. She didn't see any bugs or signs of disease,

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



and the vines were still planted firmly in the ground. She rose and put her arm around her grandson's shoulder and consoled, "You're right. They are dying, and I don't know why. We watered and fed them. We put straw around them to control the weeds. We even sang to them. But . . ."

"We also prayed for them. Don't forget that," Jeremy interrupted. "I prayed that there would be lots of big, orange pumpkins to share with our neighbors. Why didn't God answer my prayers?"

B Y K A T H Y

B U N S E

"I don't know," Grandma spoke softly. "But I do know that God can make something good out of this situation."

"How?" Jeremy asked while wiping his eyes. After all, he was 10 years old—too old to cry over wilted vines.

"We'll pull up the vines and put them on the compost pile. They will decay with the other leaves and sticks and make plant food for next year. In the spring we'll work the compost into the soil before we plant our garden. Perhaps they're meant to help grow next year's crop of pumpkins," Grandma explained. "Come on, let's get the wheelbarrow."

He helped Grandma pull the vines and load them on the wheelbarrow while wondering why the cantaloupe and watermelon vines were growing just fine. As he pushed the wheelbarrow out of the garden, he remembered a text from the Bible. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). "That's it!" he shouted.



"What's it?" asked Grandma.

"I'll keep praying. I'll ask God to make these vines grow again so there'll be pumpkins this fall," Jeremy smiled confidently. After tossing the limp vines onto the pile, he and Grandma stood nearby under a shady tree and prayed. "God, please bring these vines back to life so they can grow pumpkins. I believe you can work miracles," Jeremy prayed.

"Amen," Grandma finished. "Anything is possible with God," she added as they walked to the house. "Let's keep praying and see what He has in store for us."

Summer passed by quickly. Jeremy and Grandma filled buckets and baskets with vegetables and fruit from the garden. They harvested golden ears of sweet corn, ripe red tomatoes, crisp cucumbers, green beans, cantaloupe, juicy watermelon, and oodles of zucchini. While Grandma got busy in her kitchen to cook, preserve, and prepare to eat some of their wonderful bounty, Jeremy loaded the rest into his wagon and took it to their neighbors.

One day later in the season Jeremy met his friend Caden while delivering melons. "Hi, Jeremy!" Caden said as he parked his bike next to Jeremy's wagon. "Wow! Those are giant watermelons. Can I have one?"

"Sure," replied Jeremy. "God gave Grandma



and me lots of garden produce to share this year.” He lifted a watermelon and put it in Caden’s bicycle basket.

“Thanks! My family loves watermelon. If your pumpkins get this big, I can’t wait to see them,” Caden said as he pedaled his bike cautiously down the sidewalk toward home.

“Maybe it’s time to check on the pumpkins,” Jeremy said to himself with confidence that he would find pumpkins growing out of the compost pile.

When his wagon was empty, Jeremy hurried back to Grandma’s house. He parked the wagon in the garden shed and walked to the compost pile. Suddenly his legs felt weak and his heart pounded in his chest as doubt crept into his mind. What if all he saw was a big brown pile of dead leaves? He brushed the negative thoughts away with a prayer. “God, I know you can work miracles. I will see pumpkins!” he shouted at the clouds.

Sure enough, green vines covered the brown compost pile. Green pumpkins streaked with yellow and orange peaked out from beneath large leaves. Jeremy jumped up and down yelling, “Thank You, God! Thank You for answering my prayer!”

Grandma dropped what she was doing when she heard Jeremy shouting. “I’m coming!” she hollered.

“God gave us pumpkins! Lots of them! Come see!” Jeremy grabbed her hand and pulled her toward the vines.

“He did indeed!” Grandma exclaimed. She gently moved the vines and counted. “I see twelve. It’s hard to believe those dried up vines grew any pumpkins. Maybe the shade and moist soil revived them.”

Jeremy stood up straight with his arms folded across his chest. “Or, maybe God worked a miracle. That’s what happened,” he quickly declared.

Grandma studied his serious expression. “You’re right. There’s no other explanation,” she agreed. “Now, what will we do with these miracle pumpkins when they ripen?”

“We’ll keep two each and share the rest with our neighbors,” Jeremy explained. “And when I deliver them, I’ll tell everyone the story.”

On the last weekend of September, Grandma and Jeremy carefully loaded eight big orange pumpkins into the wagon and delivered the plump, freshly-harvested miracles to their neighbors and told them how God answers prayer. **C**

Kathy Bunse writes from Cosby, Missouri, where she enjoys watching the wonders of Creation unfold into uplifting stories worth sharing to inspire others.



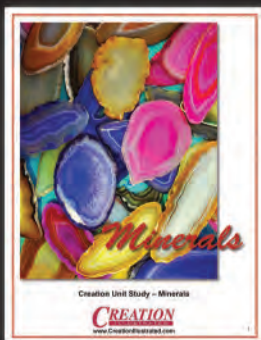
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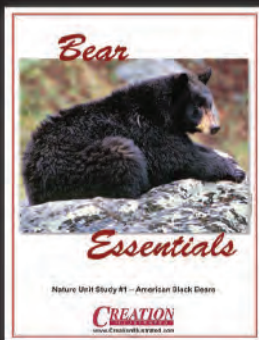


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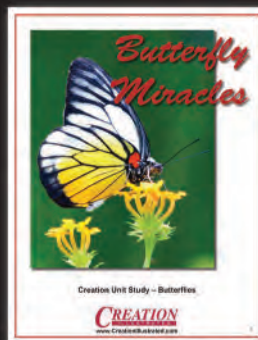
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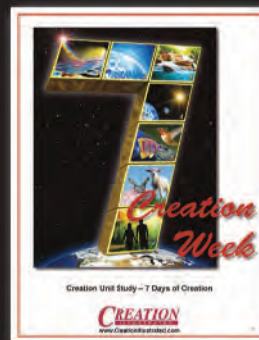
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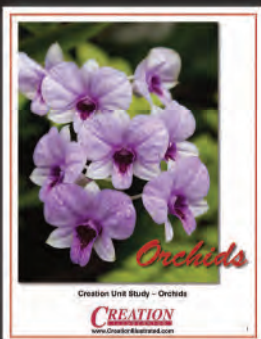
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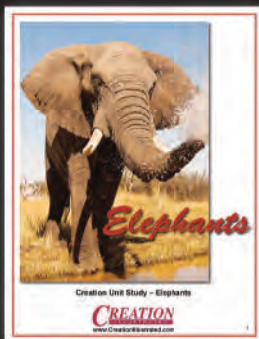
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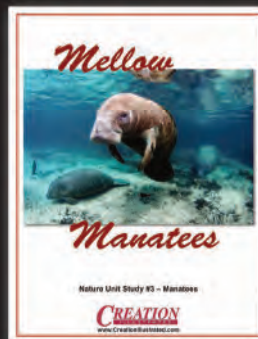
Creation Week



Orchids



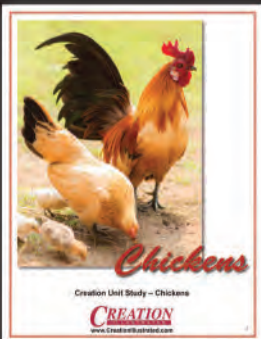
Elephants



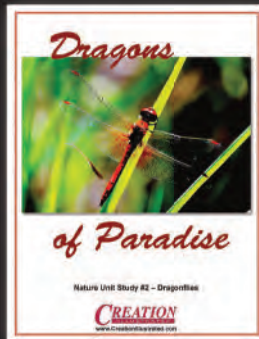
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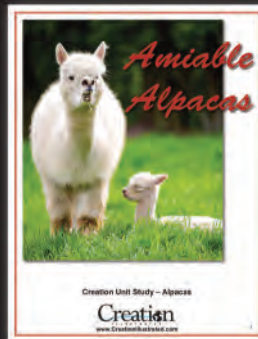
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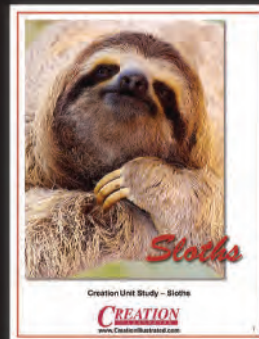
Chickens



Dragonflies



Alpacas



Sloths

with Cellphone Addiction!

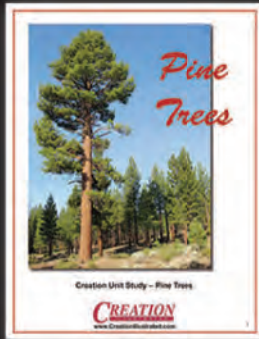
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Inspire Youth to Explore Nature !



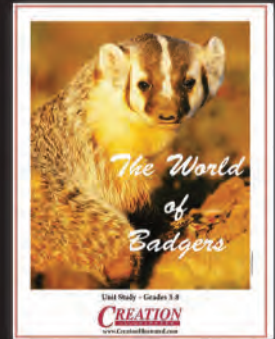
Fragrance



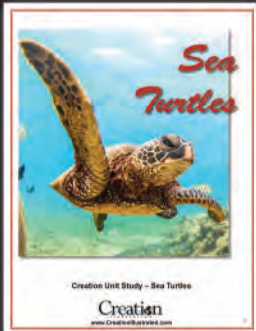
Pine Trees



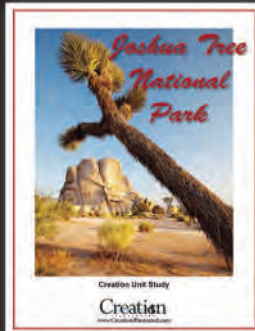
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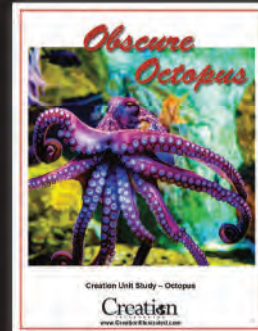
Badgers



Sea Turtles



Joshua Tree National Park



Octopus

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Growth

Out of every million seeds hanging on trees in autumn, perhaps only one will actually sprout. Even after receiving the gift of life, each tiny seedling still has many obstacles to surmount before it will become a mature tree.

Below ground, seedlings are attacked by insects such as cutworms. Above ground, armies of termites, blackwood ants and others, take their toll. Different insects are attracted by different species of trees. Squirrels, chipmunks and sparrows, all eye them as fresh green salad. Deer browse on them. If a seedling survives its first year, it has hope of decades, or even centuries, of further growth.

Children today experience some of the hazards of young saplings. Diseases and accidents take their toll. And in early childhood, some are crippled by lack of love and attention from father or mother. Fears and pressing needs may hide the sun of God's love from their view.

Psalms 68:5 gives us this assuring promise,

“He is a father to the fatherless.”

In order for the tiny sapling to continue growing by the roots of its parent, its needs must be met. No growth takes place through any anxiety or power of its own. It grows not by trying; but relying on what is provided. It lays hold on water and nourishment from the ground and absorbs the air and light from above.

So it is with children. Often the innocence of childhood has almost been wiped away by the glare of television and the roar of condominium living; but a most delightful promise for wise young sprigs is found in Jeremiah 17:7, 8: “Blessed is the man (boy or girl) who trusts in the Lord ..For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”



PRACTICAL PROJECT:

Walk in a woods and note how many seedlings you can find in a given area.

Compare that to how many mature trees are growing in the same area.

With parents or teacher, make a list of the hazards of youth and childhood.

Which ones do we have any control over?

What promises can be found in scripture to secure growth, especially the growth that lasts eternally?

Find a promise for every hazard of youth.



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





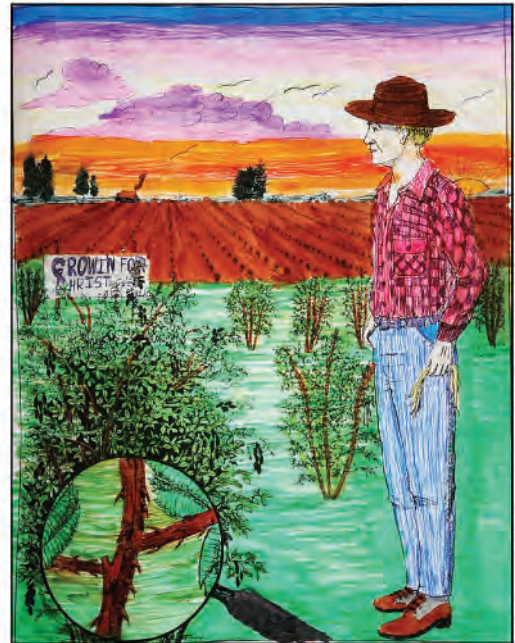
Fall 2024 Coloring Contest First Name: _____ Last Initial: _____ Age: _____
(deadline & details on following page) City: _____ State/Prov. _____

Creation Illustrated Coloring Contest

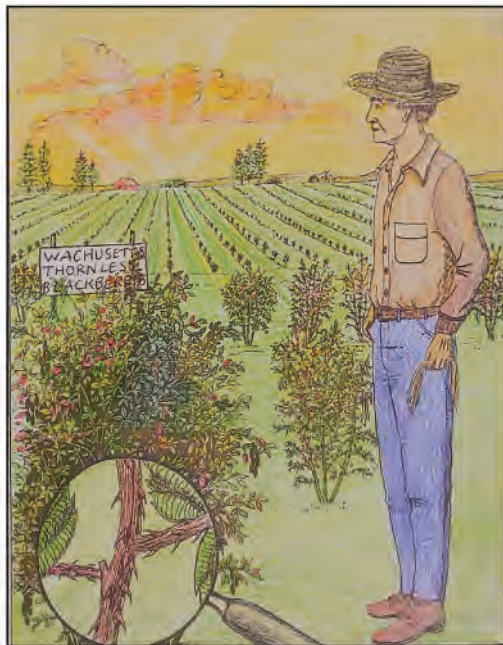


First Place, ages 6–11
Isaiah C., age 7
Pasco, Washington

Winners From the Summer 2024 Edition Character-Building Lesson



First Place, ages 12–18
Lukas R., age 12
Landrum, South Carolina



First Place, ages 19+
Beth B., age 44
Lake Havasu City, Arizona

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 fall 2024 entries is November 15, 2024.** 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 December from fall-edition pictures, the first week of March from winter-edition pictures, the first week of June from spring-edition pictures, and the first week of September from summer-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 Summer 2024 Submissions



First Place, ages 6–11 (left)

Mattias M., age 10, of Bondurant, Wyoming, quoted Matthew 6:34, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself” (NIV).

First Place, ages 12–18 (right)

Name: Priya B., age 15, of San Jose, California, took this photo at Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska.



First Place, ages 19+ (left)

Grace K., age 19, of Port Orange, Florida, quoted Psalm 124:7, 8, “Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” She added, “I love taking pictures of the incredible nature around our woodsy home, and this particular cardinal is very special to our family! Her name is Regina, and she loves coming to my sister’s window each morning for peanuts and seeds!”

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 fall 2024 entries is November 15, 2024**. 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 December from fall submissions, the first week of March from winter submissions, the first week of June from spring submissions, and the first week of September from summer 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*, Fall 2024 Edition, Vol. 31, No. 3

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—“Fascinating Fox Squirrels” story, pages 6–11

1. What are baby squirrels called? How long are they completely dependent on their mother? p. 8
2. What are they like when born? List the four things the mother does to care for her babies. p. 8
3. How do they protect themselves from predators? List the ways they use their bushy tails. pp. 8, 11
4. What Greek word is their common name derived from; what does it mean? p. 11
5. How many different species of squirrels are there? p. 11
6. List the amazing senses the squirrels have and how they are used to help the creatures survive. p. 11

II. Creation Up Close—“Seasonal Endings” story, pages 12–16

1. What is the scientific name and the Latin meaning for the wild beach rose? p. 12
2. List some of the ways beach roses are used in summer and fall. pp. 13, 14
3. Explain Ecclesiastes 7:1 that says, “A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth” (NIV). p. 14
4. How does the beach rose help protect the sand dunes? pp. 14, 15
5. Why is death no longer to be feared? (See 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14.) p. 15

III. Re-Creation Outdoors—“Christmas at a Kenya Game Reserve” story, pages 18–25

1. What game reserve in Northern Kenya did the family visit on Christmas day? p. 20
2. What creatures make up the *special five* that are favorites for visitors to photograph? p. 20
3. What helps bring a plethora of wildlife to this area? p. 21
4. What bird sighting contributed to the family getting their vehicle stuck in the mud? pp. 21, 22
5. How did God rescue the family and answer their prayers to avoid spending the night among the wild lions, leopards, poisonous snakes, and other creatures in the game park? pp. 22–24

IV. The Creation Week—“Creation Day 4—The Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Stars” story, pages 28–37

1. What is the range of the possible number of galaxies in the universe? What does the Bible say who actually knows the exact number of the stars? p. 31
2. Describe what qualifies as a “main sequence star” and what percentage of the stellar population they hold? Why do some stars seem brighter than others? p. 31
3. What type of star is our sun? How many miles is our sun from the earth? How much bigger than earth is our sun? pp. 31, 34
4. What do astronomers use to distinguish a star's apparent brightness? What different factors are used for measuring the brightness of a star? pp. 34, 35
5. What specific scriptural text tells us to look to the heavens? List some different types of stars and star groups to find and study when star gazing? pp. 35, 36

Fall Family Fun Activities

Start by finding a beautiful deciduous tree in your yard or local park. Have your children take a photo of the tree about every five days while logging the date and time in a notebook. Research the tree species and interesting facts and record these in the notebook. When the tree has shed all its leaves, take a final picture.

Gather as a family to watch a slideshow of the photos that illustrate the tree's transformation over time. Let your children choose their favorite photos to create a collage. Each family member can then share the interesting facts they discovered about the tree.

To add a creative touch, provide drawing paper and colored pencils. Encourage everyone to draw the tree or create their own imaginative version. These drawings can be added to the notebook.

This activity teaches children about the changing seasons and fosters creativity and family bonding.

Another fun fall activity to help get everyone outdoors is to combine a nature scavenger hunt with a creative craft project. Create a scavenger hunt list that can include different colored leaves (red, yellow, orange, brown), pinecones, pine and fir needles, fern fronds, acorns, seed pods, specific rock shapes or colors, twigs, berries, etc. Head to a local park, forest, arboretum, or even around your own neighborhood or backyard. Teams of participants can work together to find and collect the items on the list.

After the hunt, gather around a table and creatively arrange the items on paper. Glue or tape them in place to create a beautiful fall collage. Discuss how the leaves change color in the fall, the role of pinecones and acorns, and the types of animals that might use the items you found. Enjoy sharing your artwork with neighbors, friends, or shutins who may not be able to get out and enjoy nature.



A scavenger hunt collage.

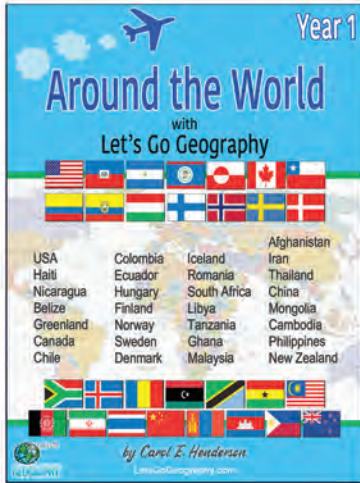
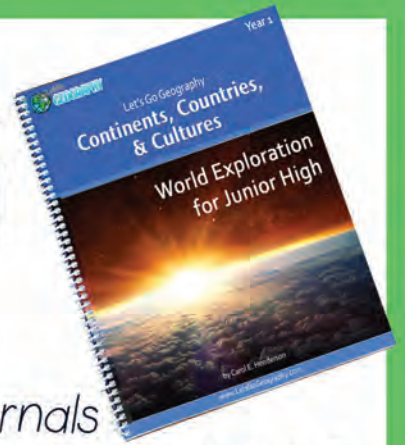
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WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

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

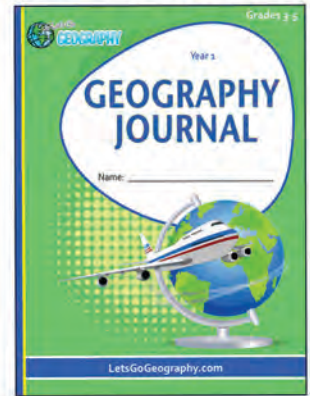
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|----------------|---------------|
| 1. AUDUBON | 11. PARKS |
| 2. BEACH | 12. RESERVE |
| 3. BIRDS | 13. ROSE |
| 4. BLOSSOMS | 14. SQUIRRELS |
| 5. FOX | 15. STARS |
| 6. GALAXIES | 16. STUCK |
| 7. GAME | 17. SUN |
| 8. HEAVENS | 18. TAIL |
| 9. KITS | 19. UNIVERSE |
| 10. LUMINOSITY | 20. WILD |

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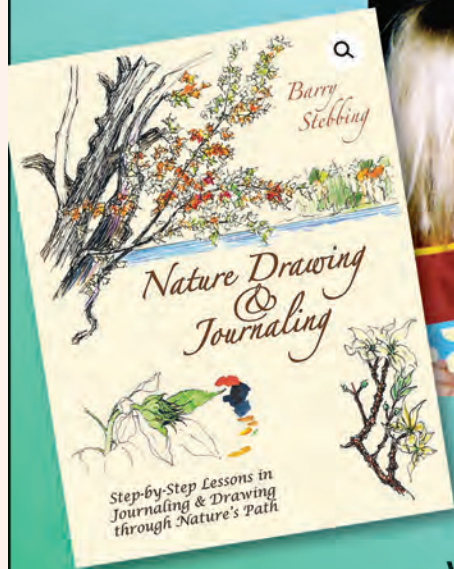
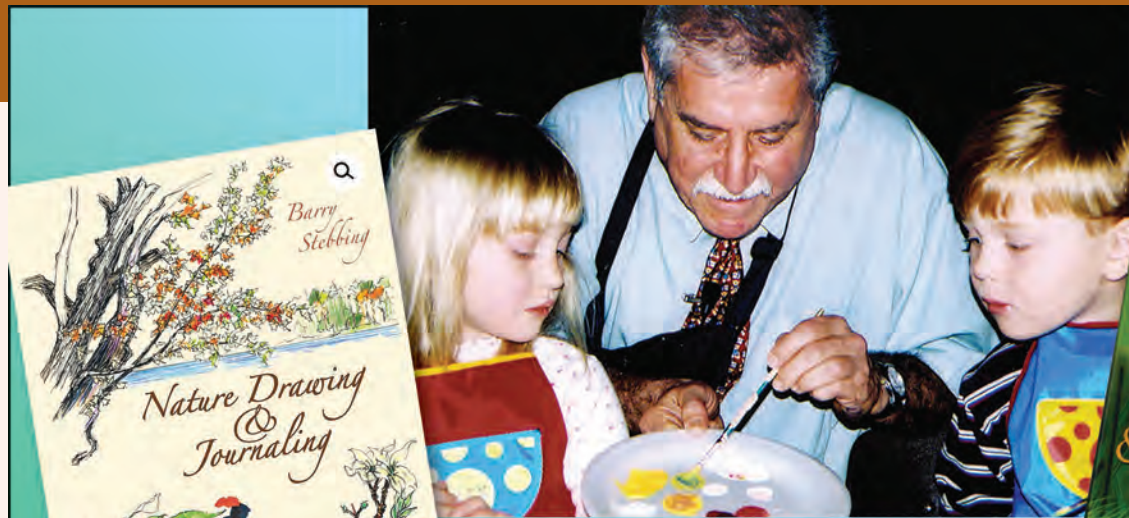
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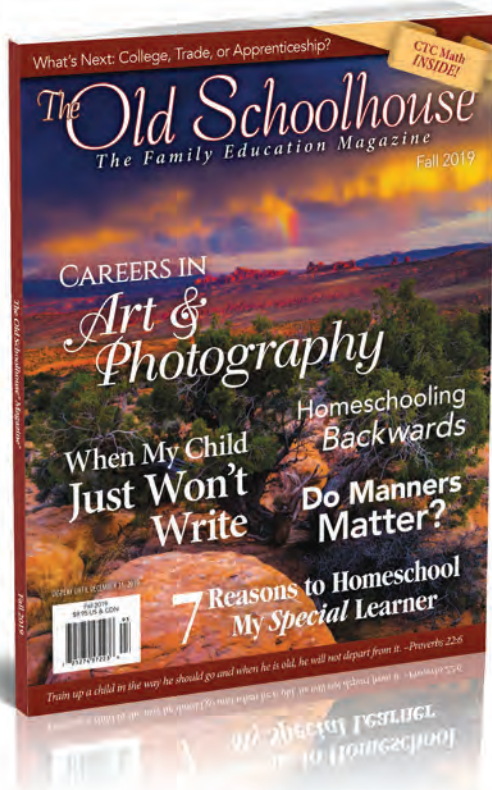
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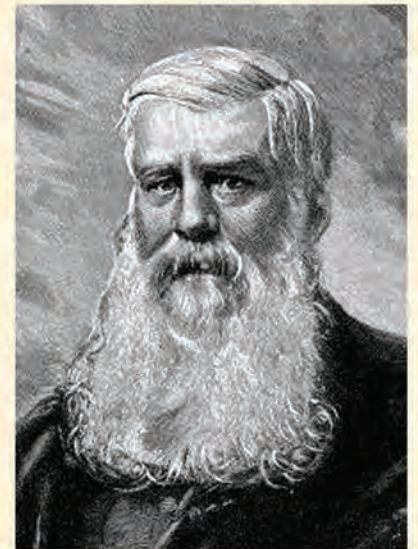
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Silent

Symphony





**I saw a glorious symphony,
As sunrise filled the skies.
My soul rose up with praising wings,
Greeting God in this lovely disguise.**

**I saw a marvelous symphony,
Rippling from cloud to cloud.
And felt Creation's immensity,
As an eternal promise avowed.**

**I saw a majestic symphony,
Of brilliant color unfold.
And knew that of God's mercy,
Greater could not be told.**

**I saw a silent symphony,
Which blessed me without a word.
I promised to live my life today,
As joyful love both felt and heard.**

- Pollyanna Sedziol

*"The seed is the
word of God."*

– Luke 8:11



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