

Awake!

MARCH 2014



THE
UNTOLD
STORY OF
CREATION

The Untold Story of Creation

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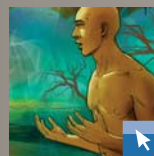
Find Bible-based answers to dozens of questions, including:

- “What if I Just Don’t Fit In?”
- “How Can I Stop Procrastinating?”
- “Is This Person Right for Me?”

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(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS)

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(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > CHILDREN)

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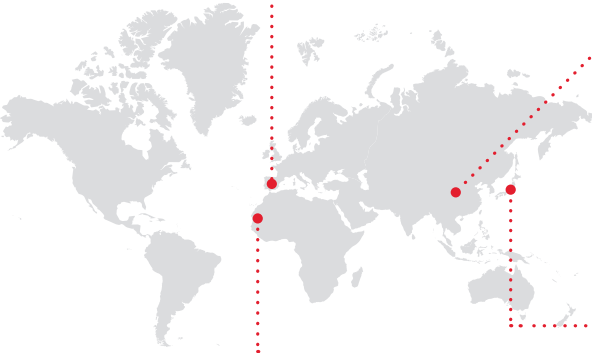
SPAIN

A group of scientists believe that human activity may have influenced the **2011 earthquake** at Lorca, in southern Spain, which killed nine and injured dozens. The geologists found a correlation between the deadly quake and locations from which huge quantities of underground water had been extracted for irrigation.



CHINA

Tourists from China spent \$102 billion (U.S.) on international travel in 2012. According to the UN World Tourism Organization, this figure for the first time ranks **China top among spenders** in international tourism—ahead of Germany and the United States. International tourists from each of these two countries spent about \$84 billion (U.S.).



MAURITANIA

The importation, manufacture, and use of **plastic bags** have been banned in order to protect the lives of marine and land animals, which can die after ingesting them. The government is promoting the use of biodegradable alternatives instead.



JAPAN

A study reported on in *BMJ*, a British medical journal, followed almost 68,000 people in Japan for an average of 23 years. Researchers found that women born between 1920 and 1945 who began **smoking before age 20** lived an average of ten years less than women who had never smoked; men lived eight years less.

WORLD

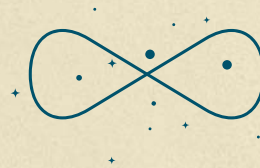
Insurance losses resulting from **weather disasters** average about \$50 billion (U.S.) a year. Such losses, adjusted for inflation, have more than doubled every decade since the 1980's.

THE UNTOLD STORY OF CREATION

BILLIONS of people have read or heard what the Bible says about the beginning of the universe. The 3,500-year-old account starts with the well-known statement: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Many people, however, are unaware of the fact that Christendom’s leaders, including so-called creationists and fundamentalists, have spun the Bible account of creation into numerous tales that deviate from what the Bible really says. These interpretations fly in the face of scientific fact. Even though those tales are not found in the Bible, they have caused some people to dismiss the Bible account as mythical allegory.

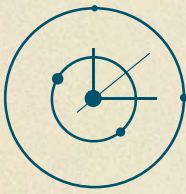
The real Bible story of creation has gone largely unnoticed. This is a shame, for the Bible actually presents a very logical and credible explanation of the beginning of the universe. What is more, that explanation harmonizes with scientific discovery. Yes, you might be pleasantly surprised by the Bible’s untold story of creation!



THE UNCREATED CREATOR

The Bible account of creation hinges on the fact that there is a Supreme Being, Almighty God, who created all things. Who is he, and what is his nature? The Bible reveals that he is quite different from the deities found in popular culture and mainstream religion. He is the Creator of all things, but most people know very little about him.

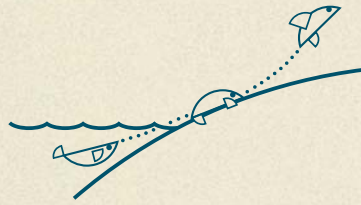
- God is a person, an individual. He is not a vague force devoid of personality, floating aimlessly throughout the universe. He has thoughts, feelings, and goals.
- God has infinite power and wisdom. This explains the complex design found everywhere in creation, especially in living things.
- God created all physical matter. Hence, he cannot be made of physical elements that he himself has created. Rather, he is of a spiritual, or nonphysical, nature.
- God’s existence is not limited by time. He has always existed and will always exist. Hence, no one created him.
- God has a personal name, which is used thousands of times in the Bible. That name is Jehovah.
- Jehovah God loves and cares for humans.



HOW LONG DID GOD TAKE TO CREATE THE UNIVERSE?

The Bible states that God created “the heavens and the earth.” This broad statement, however, makes no reference to the length of time involved in creating the universe or to the methods he used to shape it. What about the widespread creationist belief that God created the universe in six literal 24-hour days? This concept, widely rejected by scientists, is based on a gross misunderstanding of the Bible account. Consider what the Bible really says.

- The Bible does not support fundamentalists and creationists who claim that the creative days were literal 24-hour days.
- The Bible frequently uses the term “day” to designate various periods of time. In some cases these periods are of an unspecified length. The account of creation found in the Bible book of Genesis is one example of this.
- In the Bible account, each of the six creative days could have lasted for thousands of years.
- God had already created the universe, including a lifeless planet Earth, by the time the first creative day began.
- Evidently the six creative days were long periods during which Jehovah God prepared the earth for human habitation.
- The Bible account of creation does not conflict with scientific conclusions about the age of the universe.



DID GOD USE EVOLUTION?

Many who do not believe in the Bible embrace the theory that living things emerged from lifeless chemicals through unknown and mindless processes. Supposedly, at some point a bacteria-like, self-replicating organism arose, gradually branching out into all the species that exist today. This would imply that ultimately the mind-bogglingly complex human actually evolved from bacteria.

The theory of evolution is also embraced by many who claim to accept the Bible as the word of God. They believe that God produced the first burst of life on earth but then simply monitored, and perhaps steered, the process of evolution. That, however, is not what the Bible says.

- According to the Bible, Jehovah God created all the basic kinds of plant and animal life, as well as a perfect man and woman who were capable of self-awareness, love, wisdom, and justice.
- The kinds of animals and plants created by God have obviously undergone changes and have produced variations within the kinds. In many cases, the resulting life-forms are remarkably different from one another.
- The Bible account of creation does not conflict with the scientific observation that variations occur within a kind.

THE TIME LINE OF CREATION

THE BEGINNING

The material heavens and earth are created.
—Genesis 1:1.

DARKNESS

The earth is formless, desolate, and dark.—Genesis 1:2.

FIRST DAY

Diffused light evidently penetrates the earth's atmosphere. If there had been any observer on the surface of the earth, the sources of light would have been imperceptible to him. Yet, the difference between night and day became discernible.
—Genesis 1:3-5.

SECOND DAY

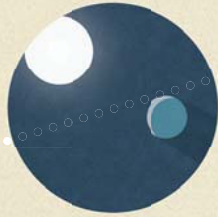
The earth is covered with water and a dense mantle of vapor. These two elements are separated, creating a gap between the watery surface and the canopy of vapor. The Bible describes this space as “an expanse between the waters,” and calls it “Heaven.”—Genesis 1:6-8.

The Bible does not support
fundamentalists and creationists
who claim that the creative days
were literal 24-hour days



THIRD DAY

Surface water subsides and dry ground appears. The atmosphere clears up to allow more sunlight to reach the ground. Some vegetation appears, with new species sprouting through the third and subsequent creative days.—Genesis 1:9-13.



FOURTH DAY

The sun and moon become discernible from the earth's surface.—Genesis 1:14-19.



FIFTH DAY

God creates underwater creatures and flying creatures in great numbers with the ability to procreate within their kinds.—Genesis 1:20-23.



SIXTH DAY

Land animals are created, both large and small. The sixth day culminates with a masterpiece of God's physical creation: the first human couple.—Genesis 1:24-31.

**The Bible account of creation
does not conflict with the
scientific observation that
variations occur within a kind**

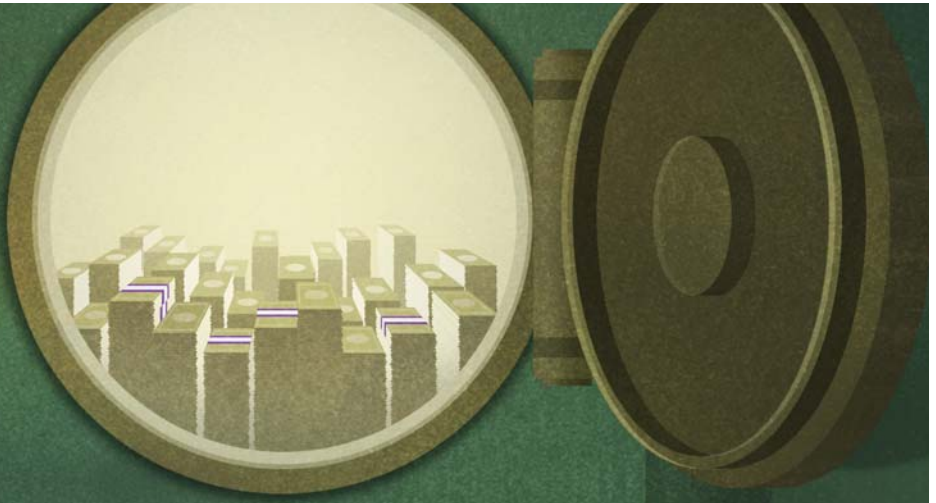
A CREATOR PERCEIVED IN CREATION

In the mid-1800's, British biologist Alfred Russel Wallace agreed with Charles Darwin on the theory of evolution by natural selection. But even this renowned evolutionist is said to have stated: "For those who have eyes to see and minds accustomed to reflect, in the minutest cells, in the blood, in the whole earth, and throughout the stellar universe . . . , there is intelligent and conscious direction; in a word, there is Mind."

Almost two thousand years before Wallace, the Bible had already observed: "For [God's] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." (Romans 1:20) From time

to time, you might want to take a moment to reflect on the marvelous complexities found in nature—from a single blade of grass to the countless heavenly bodies. By examining creation you can perceive the Creator.

'But if there is a loving God who created all things,' you may ask, 'why would he permit suffering? Has he abandoned his earthly creation? What does the future hold?' The Bible contains many other untold stories—truths that have been buried under human ideas and religious agendas and, therefore, hidden from most people. The publishers of this magazine, Jehovah's Witnesses, would be happy to help you examine unadulterated Bible truth and learn more about the Creator and the future of his human creation. ■



MONEY

Is money the root of all evil?

*“The love of money
is a root of all sorts
of injurious things.”
—1 Timothy 6:10.*

WHAT SOME PEOPLE SAY Money is the root of all evil.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS “The *love* of money”—not money itself—causes “injurious things.” In the Bible, wealthy King Solomon identified three kinds of injurious things that often happen to people who love money. Worry: “The plenty belonging to the rich one does not permit him to sleep.” (Ecclesiastes 5:12) Dis-satisfaction: “A lover of silver will never be satisfied with silver, nor a lover of wealth with income.” (Ecclesiastes 5:10) Temptation to break the law: “The one hastening to get rich will not remain innocent.”—Proverbs 28:20.



What purpose does money serve?

WHAT SOME PEOPLE SAY Money makes you secure and happy.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS The myth that money buys happiness and security is part of “the deceptive power of riches.” (Mark 4:19) Still, “money answers every need.” (Ecclesiastes 10:19) For example, money can buy the things you need to survive—such as food and medicine.—2 Thessalonians 3:12.

“Money is a protection.”

—Ecclesiastes 7:12.

Money also helps you to take care of your family. In fact, the Bible states: “If anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith.”—1 Timothy 5:8.

How can you use money wisely?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS Use money in a way that has God’s approval. (Luke 16:9) It is wise to use money responsibly and honestly. (Hebrews 13:18) To avoid the burden of living beyond your means, “let your way of life be free of the love of money.”—Hebrews 13:5.

“First sit down and calculate the expense.”

—Luke 14:28.

Although the Bible does not condemn debt, it warns: “The borrower is a slave to the lender.” (Proverbs 22:7) Avoid impulse buying, because “all who are hasty surely head for poverty.” (Proverbs 21:5) Instead, “set something aside according to [your] own means” and save money for what is important to you.—1 Corinthians 16:2.

The Bible encourages us to “practice giving.” (Luke 6:38) People who want to please God have good reason to be generous, because “God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7) Therefore, “do not forget to do good and to share what you have with others, for God is well-pleased with such sacrifices.”—Hebrews 13:16. ■



A Visit to **El Salvador**



NEARLY 500 years ago, when the Spanish arrived in what is now El Salvador, the predominant tribe in the area called their territory Cuscatlán—a name that means “Land of the Jewel.” Today, most people in El Salvador are descendants of indigenous tribes and European settlers.

Salvadorans are known for being industrious and friendly. They are also courteous and respectful. People greet others politely before starting a conversation or when entering a business by saying, “*Buenos días*” (good morning) or “*Buenas tardes*” (good afternoon). In fact, Salvadorans in rural areas and small towns consider it rude to ignore a passerby and not say a greeting.

One of the foods Salvadorans enjoy most is the *pupusa*—a cornmeal (or rice) tortilla stuffed with cheese and beans, as well as pork or other fillings. *Pupusas* are often served with tomato sauce and *curtido*—a mixture of cabbage, carrots, onions, and spicy vinegar. Although some people use a knife and fork, the traditional way to eat *pupusas* is with the fingers.



Los Tercios Waterfall,
Suchitoto

Coffee growing has greatly influenced the history of El Salvador



Pupusas are one of El Salvador's most popular foods



Volcano rising above
Lake Ilopango

DID YOU KNOW? El Salvador has been called the land of volcanoes. There are more than 20 volcanoes, some of which are still active. Los Tercios Waterfall cascades over tall hexagonal columns of rock formed by volcanic activity.

There are more than 38,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses in El Salvador, and they are organized into about 700 congregations. They teach the Bible to some 43,000 people in Spanish, English, and Salvadoran Sign Language. ■

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Answer true or false.

- A.** El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America.
- B.** El Salvador is the most densely populated nation in Central America.
- C.** Most Salvadoran foods are very spicy.
- D.** Coffee growing greatly influenced the history of El Salvador.

Answers: A, B, and D are true; C is false. Most visitors find the spices in Salvadoran foods to be mild.

FAST FACTS

Population: 6,267,000

Capital: San Salvador

Official language: Spanish

Climate: Very warm along the coastal and interior lowlands; milder at higher altitudes

Land: Mostly mountainous with a central plateau



Your Mysterious Tears

CRYING accompanies us from the day we are born. One expert explains that as babies, crying became our “acoustic umbilical cord,” because we cry to have our emotional and physical needs cared for. But why do we shed tears as we grow older, when we can communicate in other ways?

Emotional tears flood our eyes for a variety of reasons. We may cry because of grief, frustration, or physical or psychological suffering. But euphoria, relief, and

Surveys estimate that 85 percent of women and 73 percent of men reported feeling better after crying

achievement likewise provoke emotional tears—in this case, tears of joy. Tears can also be contagious. “If I see someone else weeping—whatever the cause—I can’t help but feel moved to tears,” says María. Maybe imaginary situations in a film or a book have also made you cry.

Whatever the reason, crying is a powerful nonverbal language. “There are few other ways to say so much in such a brief interval,” explains the book *Adult Crying*. Tears provoke reactions. For example, most of us find tears of sadness difficult to ignore because they alert us that someone is suffering. In response, we may try to comfort or help the one who weeps.

Some experts believe that crying provides a useful outlet for our emotions and that *systematically* holding back tears may damage our health. Others argue that the physical or psychological benefits of crying have not been scientifically verified. Nevertheless, surveys estimate that 85 percent of women and 73 percent of men reported feeling better after crying. “Sometimes, I know I need to cry,” explains Noemí. “Afterward, I can take a deep breath and see things more clearly, in their true perspective.”

But this feeling of relief may depend not only on tears. The way others respond to our crying also plays an important role. For instance, when our tears move others to comfort us or to help us, we feel re-

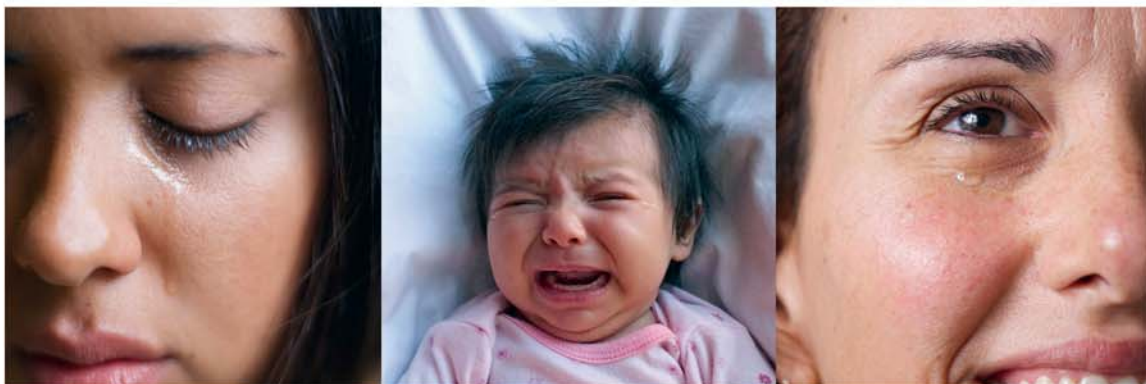
DID YOU KNOW? Newborn babies usually do not shed tears when they cry. They have enough moisture to protect their eyes, but tears appear after several weeks when their tear ducts develop fully.

lieved. But if the response to our tears is not good, we may feel ashamed or rejected.

Clearly, mysteries about crying remain. What we do know is that shedding tears is one of the intriguing emotional responses God has given us. ■

Three Different Types of Tears

- **Basal Tears.** Tear glands constantly produce this clear liquid to protect and lubricate our eyes. It also improves our eyesight. When we blink, this fluid is spread over the eyes.
- **Reflex Tears.** These tears flood our eyes when an irritating substance or particle gets into them. Reflex tears are also associated with actions as varied as yawning and laughing.
- **Emotional Tears.** These are the “human” tears that we shed when we feel a strong emotion. They contain a 24 percent higher protein concentration than reflex tears.





When You Are Disappointed With Your Marriage



THE CHALLENGE

You and your spouse seemed to have so much in common—before you got married, that is. Now, disillusionment has driven a wedge between you, making you feel more like cell mates than soul mates.

You *can* improve your relationship. First, though, consider why you might be disillusioned.



WHY IT HAPPENS

Reality sets in. The daily routine of working, raising children, and dealing with in-laws can chip away at marital bliss. Additionally, unexpected problems—perhaps a financial setback or caring for a family member who suffers from a chronic illness—can strain a marriage.

Differences seem irreconcilable. While dating, couples tend to overlook differences. Once married, though, a man and woman discover just how unlike they are in such areas as communication styles, money management, and problem solving. Differences that once were merely an annoyance may now seem intolerable.

You have become emotionally distant. Over time, a buildup of unkind words or actions and a backlog of unresolved conflicts can cause a husband or wife to withdraw into an emotional shell or, worse yet, begin to form an emotional attachment with someone else.

Your expectations were unrealistic. Some people walk into marriage believing that they have found the *one person* they were meant to be with. While that notion may seem romantic, it can be a setup for disaster. As soon as problems arise, the myth of the “perfect match” is shattered, leaving both spouses with the feeling that they made a mistake.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Focus on your spouse's good qualities. Try this: Write down three positive qualities that your mate possesses. Keep the list with you, perhaps on the back of a small wedding picture or in a mobile device. Regularly refer to this list as a reminder of why you married your spouse. Focusing on the positive qualities of your mate promotes peace and will help you put up with your differences. —*Bible principle: Romans 14:19.*

Plan special time together. Before you were married, likely you both set aside time to do things together. Dating was new and exciting, but it was not left to chance. Why not do something similar now? Plan occasions where you and your spouse can spend special times together, as if on a date. Doing so can help you draw closer to each other and enable you to cope better with life's unexpected problems.—*Bible principle: Proverbs 5:18.*

Discuss your feelings. If you have been hurt by your spouse's words or actions, can you overlook the matter? If not, do not play games by resorting to the silent treatment. Calmly talk things out with your mate as soon as you can, that very day if at all possible.—*Bible principle: Ephesians 4:26.*

Discern the difference between your feelings and your spouse's intentions. Likely neither one of you ever intends to hurt the other. Assure your spouse of this by sincerely apologizing for any hurt feelings you may have caused. Then discuss what specific things you both can do to avoid unwittingly causing hurt feelings. Follow the Bible's advice: "Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another." —Ephesians 4:32.

Be realistic in your expectations. The Bible acknowledges that those who marry "will have tribulation." (1 Corinthians 7:28) When you experience such tribulation, do not hastily conclude that your marriage was a mistake. Instead, work with your mate to resolve differences and "continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely."—Colossians 3:13. ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

"Pursue the things making for peace."—Romans 14:19.

"Rejoice with the wife of your youth."—Proverbs 5:18.

"Do not let the sun set while you are still angry."—Ephesians 4:26.

LIVING UP TO YOUR WEDDING VOW

Do you remember the words of your wedding vow? Why not review them and ask yourself, 'How well am I doing in living up to what I promised?' Resist the urge to dwell on how your spouse may be doing in this regard. Your vow contains words that *you* expressed regarding what *you* would do. If *each* of you focuses on living up to your vow, *both* of you will likely be pleased with the results.

If you have been hurt by your spouse's words or actions, can you overlook the matter?



Snake Skin



© Chua Wee Boon/age fotostock

BECAUSE they move without limbs, snakes need robust skin that can withstand constant friction. Some species climb up rough tree trunks, while others burrow into abrasive sand. What makes the skin of a snake so durable?

Consider: The skin of snakes can differ in thickness and structure from one species to another. However, the skin of all snakes has one thing in common: It is firm on the outside and becomes progressively softer toward the inside. Why is this advantageous? “Material that has a transition from a stiff outside to a flexible inside can distribute an impacting force over a larger area,” says researcher Marie-Christin Klein. The unique structure of snake skin allows sufficient traction

between body and ground for the snake to be able to move, and at the same time, it evenly distributes pressure from sharp-edged stones so that there is less damage to the skin. Durability is vital, since snakes usually shed their skin only every two to three months.

Materials with the properties of snake skin may be useful in the field of medicine—for example, in manufacturing slip-resistant and extra-durable artificial implants. Also, drive and conveyor machinery that mimics the construction of snake skin may require fewer pollutive lubricants.

What do you think? Did snake skin come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

