

Think & Believe

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Why? Why? Why?

by *Mary Jo Nutting*

A frequent question at our university lectures is: “If there really is a good God, then why is there so much pain, suffering, and death in the world?” Sometimes the questioner is honestly wrestling with this topic, trying to hold onto faith, or make sense of the situation he or she is in. Other times, though, the question is posed more as a challenge or a justification for unbelief – challenging either the very existence of God or accusing Him of being ignorant, impotent, unkind, unjust, or even evil.

Maybe you have asked these kinds of questions yourself when pain or suffering strikes you, or someone you love. This can be a real challenge to faith and may raise many questions about the character of God. You may be tempted to think, “Why me? What have I done to deserve this?”

Smarter people than I have attempted to answer these questions and I hesitate to write on the subject, knowing that others have suffered so much more than I can even imagine. However, as I pray for friends and family members with serious needs, the topic continues to resonate in my heart and emotions. Sometimes the needs seem so overwhelming I experience emotions of grief, confusion, frustration, and despair. I want answers. I want to “do something,” but I feel so powerless. Of course I can pray and sometimes we see the answer right away. But when it doesn’t come as soon as I’d

like or in the way I’d like, it is tempting to get mad at circumstances or even at God. After all, God can do something about it, but why doesn’t He?

When we feel this way, what can we do? Where do we go for answers? Though it may sound trite to some, the only approach I know is to go back to the Bible. The suffering is still painful, but viewing it from a Biblical perspective may help bring some measure of peace and comfort.

The Bible tells of God’s original “very good” creation, and the subsequent fall of man into sin. It declares that death and suffering, and thorns and thistles came into the world through that sin, and demonstrates the effects and impact of sin throughout the generations. It tells of Satan’s ongoing efforts to deceive and of mankind’s bent toward sinning. If it stopped there, the picture would be pretty bleak. But the Bible also tells of God’s ongoing, purposeful plan to restore mankind back to Himself. It talks about the ultimate triumph of good over evil, through the redeeming work of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. And it tells of a time when death itself will be done away with and God will wipe away every tear.

So where do we find hope? The same place Job did. The same place Jesus did. The same place Paul and a myriad of other believers down

through the ages have found hope and endurance. It must come from the knowledge that God is still sovereign – that He is in control – and that He is good. It seems to me that any other “answer” brings only despair and hopelessness. Evolution tells us that we are just molecules – that there is no purpose or meaning in life – that this life is all there is. Reincarnation tells us we suffer in this life to pay off bad “karma” from past lives and that we need to try again and again and again until we get it “right.” How many lifetimes would it take? Would we ever get it right?

I’m so glad that the Bible offers a better explanation and a solution that gives hope. In effect, Adam’s sin “sold” the whole world into sin. Jesus paid the price to buy us back. As we place our faith and trust in Jesus and

His finished work,
we can share in

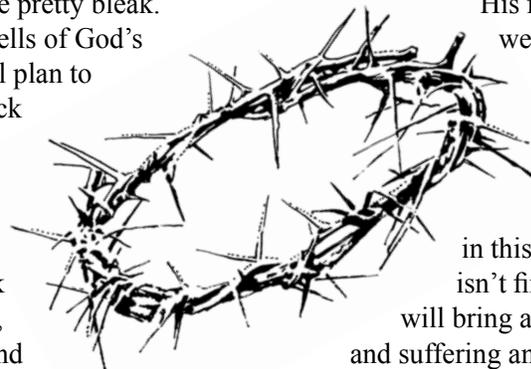
His inheritance,
eternal life.

Yes, we still
experience the
impact of sin

in this world, but God
isn’t finished yet. He

will bring an end to death

and suffering and the works of the devil. In the meantime, He promises to comfort us and be with us in our trials. And, as the apostle Paul says, our momentary afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come. Oh, how we need this eternal perspective! **T&B**



Gems From Genesis

What Happened to God's Good Earth?

by Mary Jo Nutting

In our last issue of Think & Believe, we focused on Genesis 1:31: "And God saw that it was very good." And truly it was, but as we look around our world today, we see many things that are NOT good. How do we reconcile these things with the Bible? How do we reconcile them with a loving, powerful Creator God?

We need to read further in Genesis. Genesis 3 describes the steps leading up to the tragic event that theologians have come to call The Fall. The first human beings, Adam and Eve, had been created in the image of God, placed in a beautiful garden, given abundant provision for all their needs, provided with meaningful work, and blessed with daily personal communion with their Creator. And yet, even in these most ideal of all conditions, they turned their backs on God and chose to go their own way. The result was thorns and

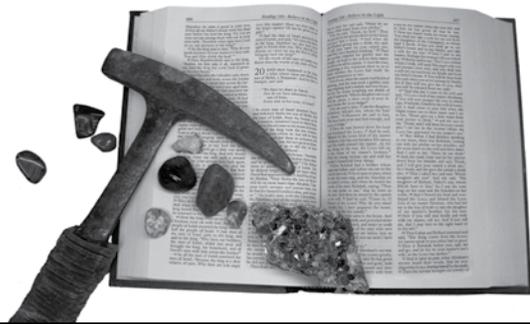
thistles, pain, suffering, and death that impacted not only Adam and Eve, but also all their as yet unborn children all the way down to us.

There are many lessons for us in the account of the Fall – many things for us to learn. We plan to look at some of these in future issues, but for now, we ask the question: Can we believe this account? Is it consistent with observable evidence? I believe it is.

Just pick up a newspaper, turn on the evening news, or look at the world around to see clear evidence of the truth of the Genesis 3. Drought, famine, hurricanes, flooding, tornados, earthquakes, plagues, and epidemics ravage the earth. Along with these "natural" disasters come wars, racism, genocide, rape, abuse, political injustice and all sorts of evidence of human depravity on a worldwide scale, while closer to home, we and our loved

ones deal with sickness, genetic deformities, accidents, financial struggles, broken relationships and more. Yes, there is abundant evidence of the Fall.

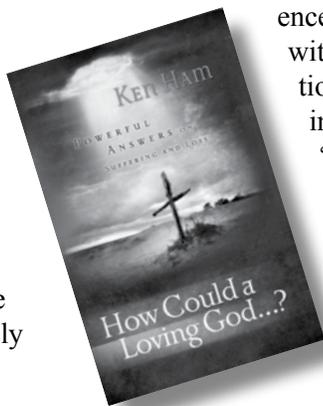
The book of Genesis provides a foundation for understanding our world and the human condition. It reveals answers that we could find nowhere else. We see evidence of God's creativity and power – of complexity and design – of love and goodness, but we also see evidence that something is desperately wrong with our world – we see evidence of the Fall. The evidence is consistent with the Word. God's Word and His world agree! **T&B**



Book Review: How Could a Loving God...?

by Dave Nutting

Ken Ham's book, *How Could a Loving God ...?*, was born out of a heart-wrenching time of pain and family tragedy. Ken's theological beliefs were deeply tested as he watched his brother – a godly husband, father, and pastor – suffer a rare debilitating and ultimately fatal brain disease. In this book, Ken shares



some of his own personal struggles as he walked through this experience with his family, wrestled with the agony of the situation, and sought understanding and peace. There are no "pat" answers here – no trite religious platitudes. Ken's sound, Biblical teaching and personal reflections go deep. He deals with the tough questions in a clear, yet compassionate and insightful way.

We recommend this book for anyone going through a time of personal tragedy and loss – and for those who seek to help others by offering sound Biblical answers, compassionate comfort, and practical help. It is also helpful for answering skeptics and those who cite the question of suffering as an excuse for rejecting God. Get several copies – one for yourself and more to share with others. (Available from AOI for \$13.00. Free shipping and handling if ordered before September 31, 2008.) **T&B**

The Amazing Stinging Nettle: Blessing and Curse

by Stephen B. Austin

[**Note:** This article is a condensed and modified version of an article by Steven B. Austin that originally appeared in the March/April 2008 issue of *Creation Matters*, published by the Creation Research Society. For references and further reading see the original article. Steve has led wildflower walks, taught beginning plant identification classes, and contributed articles for T&B for many years. He has also collected and prepared specimens for several herbaria, including the one at the Van Andle Creation Research Center.]

The common plant, Stinging Nettle, *Urtica dioica* L., is a paradox, providing an abundance of benefits, both for humanity and wildlife, while at the same time being a purveyor of pain and suffering. One may ask, “How does this plant show evidence of a loving Creator, and why is there the curse of the stinging hairs?”

Description

One unique feature that distinguishes these plants is the presence of tiny, inconspicuous stinging hairs. These hairs are hollow, and the bulbous or cylindrical base of each of these hollow hairs contains a tiny droplet of formic acid. This is the curse with which this amazingly useful plant is plagued. When human skin makes contact with these hairs, the stiff translucent tip breaks off, leaving a sharp point that readily pierces the skin and allows the acidic fluid to enter. Thus, each hair is somewhat like a tiny hypodermic needle!

Amazing properties

Pain, yes, but nettles also have

amazing properties, provided by our Creator God for our use. Nettle fibers were used to make cording, rope, and cloth. The fibers are considered superior to cotton and were said to be more durable than linen. The plant is also quite edible in many ways. The young greens can be cooked in the manner of spinach and served with salt, pepper, a little vinegar, or lemon juice. They can be added to omelets or soups or made into a tea, beer or wine. They are rich in vitamins A, C, and D, and contain iron, sodium, potassium, phosphorous, and calcium. Medically, the seeds have been used to treat coughs and shortness of breath, and for many years were used to treat consumption, which we now call tuberculosis. As if this wasn't enough, it can be used for scalp conditioning and the roots may be boiled to produce a yellow dye.

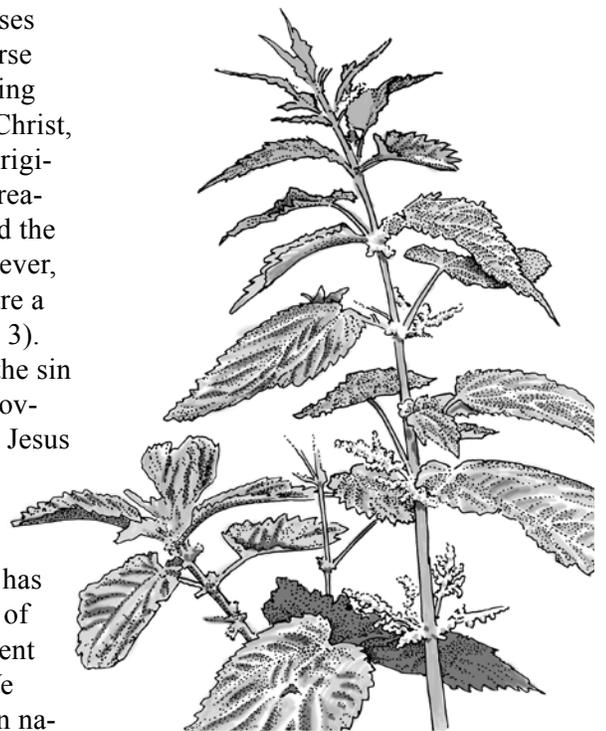
The Paradox

This plant that has so many uses has a notable and seeming curse upon it. Why is that? Our loving Creator God, the Lord Jesus Christ, obviously created this plant originally to be a benefit for His creation – the people He loves and the animals of His creation. However, the stinging hairs obviously are a result of Adam's sin (Genesis 3). To us they are a reminder of the sin in our lives that needs to be covered by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, the Creation groans as it awaits its eventual deliverance: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” (Romans 8:22 NIV) We look forward to the time when na-

ture will be delivered from its bondage, and when such things as thorns, poisonous plants, and stinging nettle will be a thing of the past.

In the meantime, our loving Creator has provided a remedy for the poison found in those stinging hairs. The poison is an acid, and it can be neutralized by applying a paste of baking soda, or by rubbing with the leaves of dock (*Rumex* species). Even human spit is said to be enough to counteract the effects of the acid, although we haven't tried that remedy. At the very least, calamine lotion can bring relief for the blisters that stinging nettle leaves in the skin.

So, despite the disobedience and sin of Adam, as recorded in the Book of Genesis, our loving Creator has provided a suitable remedy for the ravages of this plant, just as He has provided a remedy for sin through the sacrifice of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. **T&B**



Volunteers are Much Appreciated!

by Gail Tompkins & Dave Nutting

As most of you know, AOI is a small organization and we rely on donors and volunteers to help with projects and costs of running this ministry. We would like to introduce you to four individuals who have recently volunteered their time to help with various projects at AOI.

Paul and David came all the way from Ohio to Colorado to evaluate the database system we are currently using and to work on our computer system. They are designing a more effective and efficient program to track and record donations, camps, seminars, books, and events. David has also volunteered to maintain our



network system and to troubleshoot our computers as problems arise.

Leonard's hobby is woodworking. A mutual friend called Leonard and asked if he would be willing to make some custom cabinets for our in-progress hands-on science center. Leonard donated his time to make three cabinets, which exceeded our expectations! They are beautiful!

Lance's business is installing telephone systems. When he saw how antiquated and malfunctioning our old phone system was, he donated his time



to install a new system. This new system has all the features needed to help AOI be current and productive in our day-to-day operations.

We are so appreciative, not only to these four individuals, but to the many volunteers over the years who have used their time and talent for various projects at AOI. This has really helped AOI stretch the budget and extend the ministry. We are also grateful for each of you who support this ministry through prayer and donations! THANK YOU all for being part of the team! **T&B**



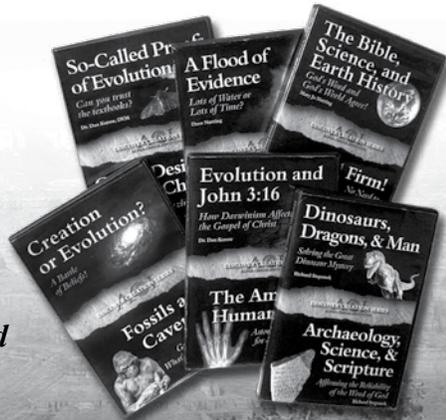
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Upcoming Events

G= Galbraith, J=Johnson, N=Nutting, S=Stepanek

- 7/11, CO Spgs, CO, Mesa Hills Bible, Lisa Gemmill, J
- 7/13-18, Battlement Mesa, CO, VBS, Grace Bible, Charlie Horneck, (970)-285-9862, J
- 7/21-25, Indiana, PA, Calvary E-Free, Gino Cosentino (724) 349-4264, J
- 7/11-13,18-20, Browning, MT, Glacier Meadow Camp, Dean Landis, N, G
- 7/24-26, Colorado Springs, CO, The Beginning and End of the Universe Conf., (719) 477-2100, N
- 8/3-8, Lake City, CO, Camp Redcloud, (970) 523-9943, N, S, G
- 8/10-11, Dodge City, KS, First Baptist, Chad (620) 255-5463, J
- 8/10-15, Lake City, CO, Camp Redcloud, (970) 523-9943, N, S, G
- 8/13-14, Arapahoe, CO, Arapahoe Community, Tom Burch, (719) 767-5598, J
- 8/17, Albuquerque, NM, Faith Bible, David Broersma, (505) 301-1424, J
- 8/19, Glorieta, NM, Family Retreat, Chad Roach, (303) 956-3455, J
- 8/23, Bloomfield, NE, Glad Tidings Bible Camp, Mike Chase, (402) 373-4433, S
- 8/27-28, Col Spgs, CO, Summit Youth Ministries, (718) 685-9103, N
- 8/29-9/1, Idaho Falls, ID, OI Faithful Christian Ranch Inc., Perry C. Rotenberger, (307) 367-4661, S
- 9/20, Tualatin, OR, Rolling Hills Community Church, Design Science Mtg., Howard Mudder, (503) 384-8345, N
- 9/21-26, Trout Lake, WA, Camp Jonah, Becky Duke, (509) 395-2900, N, G
- 9/27, Kaysville, UT, Awana Conf, Dave Farmer (970) 434-6803, J
- 9/27-28, LaPine, OR, Cascade Bible Church, (541) 536-9310, N, G
- 9/30-10/2, Redding, CA, Trinity Lutheran Church, Stace Rolfe-son, (530) 221-6686, N, G
- 10/5-6, Eureka, CA, Sequoia Bible Church, Daniel Driesenga, (707) 443-1372, N, G
- 10/7, Greeley, CO, Awana Conf, Dave Farmer, (970) 434-6803, J
- 10/8, Franklin, NE, Franklin Missionary Church, Bryan Balasa (308) 470-0597, J
- 10/10-12, Santa Rosa, CA, Creation Society Area Seminar, Kirk Glen, (707) 823-5671, N, G
- 10/12-13, McCook, NE, McCook EV Free, Bruce (308) 345-1661 ex 2, J



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