



# CREATOR

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## THE CASE FOR CHRIST'S WISDOM

Decomposers Vs. An Unbelieving World  
First Day of Testimony

*He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding.*  
Jeremiah 10:12

The following is a fictitious court hearing in which evidence was gathered and testimony heard to show the wisdom of Christ Jesus reflected in the nature of decomposition. Moldy foods and decaying wood are disgusting to most people, but can we see our wise Lord's hand moving in these rotting things? Today's courtroom judge—normally very strict and usually intolerant of procedures out of the ordinary—is granting unusual latitude for witnesses in a case involving the character of his Creator!



**Judge:** "We have the case of *Decomposers Versus An Unbelieving World*. Will the Counsel for the Defense please approach the bench."

A tiny insect known as a springtail bounds to the front of the courtroom and onto the judge's desk. He is followed by a hoard of bizarre-looking creatures. Startled, the judge moves his chair back with a jolt.

**Judge:** "Who or what are you, and what are all these bugs doing on my desk?!"

**Springtail:** "I'm a springtail, Your Honor. Please be patient with our enthusiasm—we are just a few of the many *decomposers* the Lord God has created and we have much to tell you. At this time, I would like to present to the court Exhibit A."



The bailiff presents the judge a moldy orange. The judge appears a bit repulsed. He's thinking to himself, "*I've gotten fruit baskets before, but this is ridiculous!*"

**Judge:** "I presided over a similar case back in 1994.\* At that time, I was convinced that Christ's beauty was seen in the lowliest of animals. But now you want me to believe that God's wisdom radiates in moldy things?! And how is it that the world doesn't believe in decomposition?"

**Springtail:** "It's not that the world doesn't believe in decomposition, Your Honor, it's that most people



Exhibit A

\* Mar/Apr 1994 **CREATOR**

don't see the character of Jesus in the process of decay. The decomposition of leaves and fallen trees and dead animals and the orange in front of you is a very, very complex thing. You see, Judge, the incredible wisdom and mystery of Christ, as well as His forgiveness, are imbedded in the things that rot. He's in charge of everything in the universe, because He created it,\* and that means He's in charge of decomposition as well!"

A common garden spider starts crawling up the side of the judge's desk, unnoticed as Springtail is talking. Once on top, the spider stops to rest on the back of the judge's thin, wrinkled hand. The judge looks nervous.



**Springtail:** "Jesus uses an amazing number of different creatures in decomposition. Billions and trillions of these *decomposers* must work together to accomplish what needs to be accomplished. They form a humongous assembly line...or rather, a *dis-assembly line!*"

The adventurous garden spider crawls off the judge's left hand. He seems relieved; however, several other critters are now clinging to his black robe.

**Judge:** "Wha...what needs to be accomplished?"

**Springtail:** "Well, Your Honor, we decomposers take dead plants and animals and turn them into nutrients and chemicals which can be used by other living things. When one organism becomes food for another organism, and that creature, in turn, becomes food for yet another of God's creatures, and so on, the whole group of organisms feeding off one another is known as a *food web*.\*\* Decomposition is a very special food web created by the Lord!"

**Judge:** "Where does decomposition take place?"

**Springtail:** "Just about everywhere, Judge—on the floor of forests and jungles, in meadows, in lakes and in the sea, even in your refrigerator."

**Judge:** "In my refrigerator?"

**Springtail:** "You know...all those leftovers you tucked away in the back of your frig! Check them out some time, Your Honor. That Tupperware in there once contained left-over Hamburger

Helper—it's long since turned into something unrecognizable and which you humans find revolting. By the way, this also proves that decomposition can occur outdoors in winter, as well as in summer."



The judge's face turns red with embarrassment, because he knows Springtail is right. The judge is a bachelor and his busy court schedule doesn't allow him time to clean his apartment as often as he'd like. He's perplexed that the springtail knew there were aging leftovers in his refrigerator though!

**Springtail:** "As I said, the job of decomposers is to take dead things and turn them into nutrients so that living things might thrive. This is no small job! There are invisible cities of decomposers hard at work in the soil of your garden, Judge, and in the dirt that covers our planet. We make up one of the most complex *ecosystems* in the world!"

**Judge:** "But I thought that dirt was...well...dirt. You know, dead!"

**Springtail:** "Oh, no, Your Honor! It has been said that there are more bacteria in a teaspoonful of rich soil than there are people on the face of the earth. The insects and critters that are in your courtroom today are all important decomposers, but we perform only a small amount of the work of decomposition. We 'bugs' chew up fallen trees and deceased squirrels, turning them into fine particles of organic matter, but it is bacteria and fungi that do a lion's share of the work!"

**Judge:** "Organic? I thought 'organic' meant that farmers didn't use pesticides or chemical fertilizers on their crops!"

**Springtail:** "Oh, no, Your Honor! That's not a correct use of the word 'organic.' Technically speaking, something that is *organic* is composed of *compounds which contain carbon atoms*. Jesus created all living things using molecules built with carbon atoms, thus all life is 'organic.' There is no such thing as a 'non-organic' tomato. All tomatoes are organic, whether grown with pesticides or not! And this is one reason why

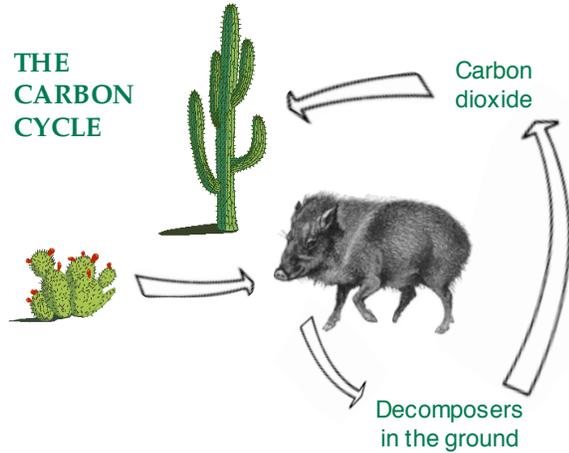


\* Hebrews 1:2

\*\* See the Jan/Feb 1995 issue of *CREATOR*

decomposition is so important! In creation, God recycles carbon so that it can be used over and over because it is essential to life. If the court will permit, I would like to show a picture to demonstrate what I'm talking about."

**Judge:** "Proceed."



**Springtail:** "There is a small amount of carbon dioxide in the air. Through photosynthesis, plants use this carbon dioxide to make sugar, which is an organic compound because it contains carbon atoms. Animals then eat the plants, and the carbon that was once part of the atmosphere becomes part of the animals. When plants and animals die, the carbon that is within them is released back into the air via decomposition. Thus, carbon moves from the atmosphere and back again in a process called the *carbon cycle*.

"Basically, the same thing happens with nitrogen, and there is a *nitrogen cycle* in nature as well. Decomposers are needed in order to release carbon and nitrogen from dead plants and animals, and animal wastes, so that they can be used again by living things."

**Judge:** "Just a little while ago you said that bacteria perform a great deal of the work involved in decomposition."

**Springtail:** "That's correct, Your Honor."

**Judge:** "Well, I thought bacteria cause disease?"

**Springtail:** "Bacteria have gotten a bad reputation, Judge. There are a few species that do cause disease, Judge, but the vast majority are harmless to man. If our merciful God had not



created decomposing bacteria and fungi, the whole earth would literally be covered many feet deep with the dead bodies of countless people, animals, and plants...and uneaten Hamburger Helper. Not a pretty thought! Bacteria secrete chemicals and enzymes that digest the tissues of *dead* plants and animals. Scientists call this *extracellular digestion* because it occurs outside the bacteria."

**Judge:** "Why don't bacteria eat away at *living* things?"

**Springtail:** "Well, Your Honor, sometimes they do; as I just mentioned, a small number of different bacteria can cause infectious diseases in plants and animals. But, again, God is merciful and He gave all organisms *immune systems* with which to protect themselves."\*

**Judge:** "Immune systems?"

**Springtail:** "Christ Jesus has given every living thing a means of defending itself against attack from other living things—especially bacteria, fungi, and viruses. The cells of your body produce chemicals that prevent serious infection when you are exposed to most germs. The Lord even gives the lowly bacteria and fungi in the soil a way of protecting themselves from other microorganisms. Soil microbes frequently produce *antibiotics*, divinely-wrought chemicals that stunt the growth of other microbes. This prevents one type of microorganism in the ground from taking over the soil. Many of the antibiotics doctors prescribe originally came from dirt! Come to think of it, this explains why I once saw a human baby playing in dirt and, as far as I know, he never got sick from eating it!"

**Judge:** "Please tell me more!"

**Springtail:** "Once the bacteria in the soil have done their job, molds move in to work on the dead things the bacteria couldn't consume."

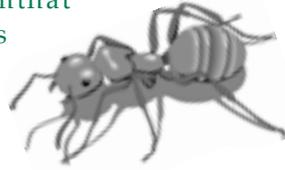
**Judge:** "Like?"

**Springtail:** "Like tough plant material, such as wood and bark. Fungi eat *cellulose* and *lignin*, things bacteria can't digest.

"There's a special kind of microorganism which is half bacteria and half fungus—God made it a *chimera* of sorts. It's called *Actinomyces* (pronounced ak - tih - no - my - SEE - teez). *Actinomyces* also helps digest the left-overs of decomposition. It forms grayish-white, spidery

\* See the Jan/Feb 1994 issue of **CREATOR**

threads in healthy soil and compost. In fact, Your Honor, the earthy odor of dirt after it rains comes from chemicals produced by *Actinomyces!*" The Judge has been so interested in what the springtail has been telling him that he has failed to notice what is happening on his desk. He looks down in horror to find several of the decomposers chewing on his notes.



**Judge:** "KNOCK IT OFF, YOU GUYS! Go decompose something else."

**Springtail:** "If you consider the tremendous speed at which decay occurs in nature, and the variety of organisms Jesus orchestrates during decomposition, it is not hard to see a tiny glimpse of the unbelievable wisdom of our Lord God!"

**Judge:** "How fast can decay occur?"

**Springtail:** "Well, the air you breathe is full of bacterial and fungal spores. When a leaf falls from a tree and onto the ground, spores land on it and grow, and the leaf begins to decompose almost immediately. The complete decay of that leaf on a forest floor may take six weeks to two years."

**Judge:** "If this is true, then everything in the world would start to rot!"

**Springtail:** "That is correct, Judge. All the things that people have made over the years will decay sooner or later, even plastic. Bacteria and fungi can eat almost anything. More British ships were lost during the Revolutionary War to dry rot than in sea battle, Your Honor!"

**Judge:** "I didn't know that!"

"You mentioned compost—is the decomposition that takes place in a compost heap any different than in ordinary ground?"

**Springtail:** "Why don't we let Brick answer that question?"\*

**Judge:** "Brick?"

**Springtail:** "Yes, Your Honor, he is my first witness."

**Judge:** "The witness may come forward."

A tall, muscular, hulk-of-a man makes his way to the witness stand.

**Brick:** "Ow ya doin', Judge? I'm Brick, and I tink I kin answer yar question."



**Judge:** "Please!"

**Brick:** "Well, dah decomposition of ah compost heap is essentially dah same as what goes on in dah soil found in ah forest or meadow. Only, in ah compost heap decomposition is speeded up some. Dah bacteria eat up dah dead leaves and grass clippings and stuff, and turn it into a rich soil called *humus*. Dat's if day git enough oxygen."

**Judge:** "What happens if day, I mean *they*, don't get enough oxygen?"

**Brick:** "Welp, den dah *anaerobic bacteria* (pronounced an- ah - ROW - bik) take over and start making some really nasty smellin' stuff! Deese bacteria kin survive in environments without oxygen, and produce chemicals like *putrescine* (pronounced pew - TRES - een) and *cadaverine*, (pronounced kah - DAV - er - een) which are dah things dat make dead bodies smell really bad!"

**Judge:** "They can produce those kind of smells in a garden compost pile?"

**Brick:** "Yep, unless ya take real good care of yar compost. Ya know, ya gotta turn yar compost over frequently so it gits plenty of air. Dis also helps keep dah compost heap warm."

**Judge:** "What dah ya mean? Errr, what do you mean?!"

**Brick:** "As dah bacteria in ah compost heap decompose dead stuff day produce ah lotta heat. Dah center of ah compost pile kin git ta 150° F. (66° C.) or more. Hot enough ta scald ya!"

**Judge:** "That's incredible!"

"Due to time constraints, the court must recess until tomorrow. We will convene at 9:00 a.m. sharp. Court is now adjourned!"



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\* Brick first appeared in the May/June 1996 issue of **CREATOR**