

# Adventure Club

A weekly lesson for children, young people, parents and grandparents, from the GCI Watford Church.  
Number 8, 15th May 2020

**'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'** Genesis 1:1

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## The Visited Planet

A Short Story by J.B. Phillips

From his book: *New Testament Christianity*

(*The New Testament in Modern English* is translated by J.B. Phillips.)

Once upon a time a very young angel was being shown round the splendours and glories of the universe by a senior and experienced angel. To tell the truth, the little angel was beginning to be tired and a little bored. He had been shown whirling galaxies and blazing suns, infinite distances in the deathly cold of inter-stellar space, and to his mind there seemed to be an awful lot of it all. Finally he was shown the galaxy of which our planetary system is but a small part. As the two of them drew near to the star which we call our sun and to its circling planets, the senior angel pointed to a small and rather insignificant sphere turning very slowly on its axis. It looked as dull as a dirty tennis-ball to the little angel, whose mind was filled with the size and glory of what he had seen.



"I want you to watch that one particularly," said the senior angel, pointing with his finger.

"Well, it looks very small and rather dirty to me," said the little angel. "What's special about that one?"

"That," replied his senior solemnly, "is the Visited Planet."

"Visited?" said the little one. "you don't mean visited by -----?"

"Indeed I do. That ball, which I have no doubt looks to you small and insignificant and not perhaps overclean, has been visited by our Prince of Glory." And at these words he bowed his head reverently.

"But how?" queried the younger one. "Do you mean that our great and glorious Prince, with all these wonders and splendours of His Creation, and millions more that I'm sure I haven't seen yet, went down in Person to this fifth-rate little ball? Why should He do a thing like that?"

"It isn't for us," said his senior a little stiffly, "to question His 'why's', except that I must point out to you that He is not impressed by size and numbers, as you seem to be. But that He really went I know, and all of us in Heaven who know anything know that. As to why He became one of them - how else do you suppose could He visit them?"

The little angels face wrinkled in disgust.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that He stooped so low as to become one of those creeping, crawling creatures of that floating ball?"

"I do, and I don't think He would like you to call them 'creeping, crawling creatures' in that tone of voice. For, strange as it may seem to us, He loves them. He went down to visit them to lift them up to become like Him."

The little angel looked blank. Such a thought was almost beyond his comprehension.

"Close your eyes for a moment," said the senior angel, "and we will go back in what they call Time."

While the little angel's eyes were closed and the two of them moved nearer to the spinning ball, it stopped its spinning, spun backwards quite fast for a while, and then slowly resumed its usual rotation.

"Now look!" And as the little angel did as he was told, there appeared here and there on the dull surface of the globe little flashes of light, some merely momentary and some persisting for quite a time.

"Well, what am I seeing now?" queried the little angel.

"You are watching this little world as it was some thousands of years ago," returned his companion. "Every flash and glow of light that you see is something of the Father's knowledge and wisdom breaking into the minds and hearts of people who live upon the earth. Not many people, you see, can hear His Voice or understand what He says, even though He is speaking gently and quietly to them all the time."

"Why are they so blind and deaf and stupid?" asked the junior angel rather crossly.

"It is not for us to judge them. We who live in the Splendour have no idea what it is like to live in the dark. We hear the music and the Voice like the sound of many waters every day of our lives, but to them - well, there is much darkness and much noise and much distraction upon the earth. Only a few who are quiet and humble and wise hear His Voice. But watch, for in a moment you will see something truly wonderful."

The Earth went on turning and circling round the sun, and then quite suddenly, in the upper half of the globe, there appeared a light, tiny but so bright in its intensity that both the angels hid their eyes.

"I think I can guess," said the little angel in a low voice. "That was the Visit, wasn't it?"

"Yes, that was the Visit. The Light Himself went down there and lived among them; but in a moment, and you will be able to tell that even with your eyes closed, the light will go out."

"But why? Could He not bear their darkness and stupidity? Did He have to return here?"

"No, it wasn't that" returned the senior angel. His voice was stern and sad. "They failed to recognise Him for Who He was - or at least only a handful knew Him. For the most part they preferred their darkness to His Light, and in the end they killed Him."

"The fools, the crazy fools! They don't deserve ----"

"Neither you nor I, nor any other angel, knows why they were so foolish and so wicked. Nor can we say what they deserve or don't deserve. But the fact remains, they killed our Prince of Glory while He was Man amongst them."

"And that I suppose was the end? I see the whole Earth has gone black and dark. All right, I won't judge them, but surely that is all they could expect?"

"Wait, we are still far from the end of the story of the Visited Planet. Watch now, but be ready to cover your eyes again." In utter blackness the earth turned round three times, and then there blazed with unbearable radiance a point of light.

"What now?" asked the little angel, shielding his eyes.

"They killed Him all right, but He conquered death. The thing most of them dread and fear all their lives He broke and conquered. He rose again, and a few of them saw Him and from then on became His utterly devoted slaves."

"Thank God for that," said the little angel.

"Amen. Open your eyes now, the dazzling light has gone. The Prince has returned to His Home of Light. But watch the Earth now."

As they looked, in place of the dazzling light there was a bright glow which throbbed and pulsated. And then as the Earth turned many times little points of light spread out. A few flickered and died; but for the most part the lights burned steadily, and as they continued to watch, in many parts of the globe there was a glow over many areas.



"You see what is happening?" asked the senior angel. "The bright glow is the company of loyal men and women He left behind, and with His help they spread the glow and now lights begin to shine all over the Earth."

"Yes, yes," said the little angel impatiently, "but how does it end? Will the little lights join up with each other? Will it all be light, as it is in Heaven?"

His senior shook his head. "We simply do not know," he replied. "It is in the Father's hands.

Sometimes it is agony to watch and sometimes it is joy unspeakable. The end is not yet. But now I am sure you can see why this little ball is so important. He has visited it; He is working out His plan upon it."

"Yes, I see, though I don't understand. I shall never forget that this is the Visited Planet."

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See if you can memorize some, or all, of these words:

**'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.'** Psalm 19:1, NIV

Milky Way



## A Prayer Answered on the Moon

John Glenn was the first American to orbit the earth (in 1962). He went into space again in 1998 aged 77! He said: 'To look out at this kind of creation and not believe in God is to me impossible.'

In 1968, on the Apollo 8 mission, Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders were the first space crew to orbit the moon. Looking down on the earth from 250,000 miles away, they decided to share their 'feeling of closeness to the Creator of all things'. Borman, Lovell and Anders radioed back a message to nearly one billion people listening on earth, in turns they read all of Genesis chapter one: 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. . . .' As Borman later explained: 'I had an enormous feeling that there had to be a power greater than any of us, that there was a God and that there was indeed a beginning.'

Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin are well known as the first astronauts to land on the moon in 1969. However, not many people know that Aldrin's first act on the moon was to celebrate communion.

James Irwin went to the moon in 1971; On one occasion he was having a problem with an experiment on the moon's surface, so he decided to pray about it. He said 'God I need your help right now'. Suddenly the solution came to him and he felt God was with him, he even looked over his shoulder to see if God was standing right behind him! As a result of this experience Irwin left NASA and became what he called a 'goodwill ambassador for the Prince of Peace'. For about 20 years he travelled widely telling people that 'Jesus walking on the earth is more important than man walking on the moon.'

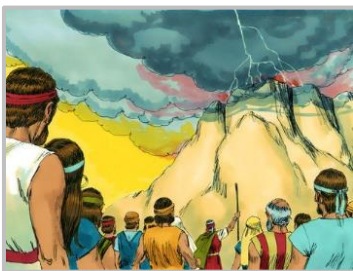


James Irwin in 1971 with the Lunar Roving Vehicle.

Charlie Duke, was the lunar module pilot on the 1972 Apollo 16 mission. He was the 10<sup>th</sup> person to walk on the moon. He wrote: 'A number of years after my moonwalk, I began another walk — a walk with God. This experience is even more exciting than my first trip. It has exposed me to the supernatural and mighty power of God. But most exciting of all, it has led me from a life of continual striving and restlessness to one of peace and fulfilment.' He became active in mission work and said: 'I make speeches about walking ON the moon and walking WITH the Son [of God].'

## The 'Pillar of Cloud', the 'Thick Cloud' and the 'Cloud of the Lord'

'The Lord showed them the way. During the day he went ahead of them in a **pillar of cloud**. And during the night the Lord was in a pillar of fire to give them light. They could travel during the day or night. The pillar of cloud was always with them during the day. And the pillar of fire was always with them at night.' . . .



'There was thunder and lightning with a **thick cloud** on the mountain. And there was a very loud blast from a trumpet. All the people in the camp were frightened. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God. They stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke. This happened because the Lord came down on it in fire.' . . .



'Then the cloud covered the Meeting Tent. The greatness of the Lord filled the Holy Tent. Moses could not enter the Meeting Tent. This was because the cloud had settled on it. And this was because the greatness of the Lord filled the Holy Tent. When the cloud rose from the Holy Tent, the Israelites would begin to travel. But as long as the cloud stayed on the Holy Tent, the people did not travel. They stayed in that place until the cloud rose. So the **cloud of the Lord** was over the Holy Tent during the day. And there was a fire in the cloud at night. So all the Israelites could see the cloud while they travelled.'

Exodus 13:21-22, 19:16-18, 40:34-38, *International Children's Bible*



How do NASA organise a space mission? They planet!  
What meal do astronauts eat after breakfast and before dinner? Launch!  
What do moon people do after they get married? They have a honeyearth!



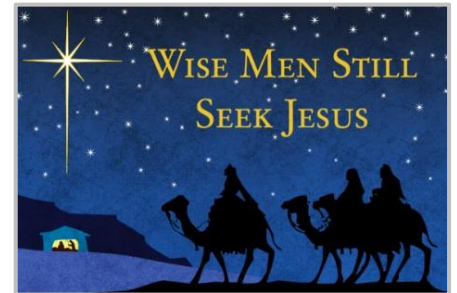
## A Small Cloud the Size of a Man's Fist

'Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel. There he bent down to the ground with his head between his knees. Then Elijah said to his servant, "Go and look toward the sea." The servant went and looked. He said, "I see nothing." Elijah told him to go and look again. This happened seven times. The seventh time, the servant said, "I see a small cloud. It's the size of a man's fist. It's coming from the sea." Elijah told the servant, "Go to Ahab. Tell him to get his chariot ready and to go home now. If he doesn't leave now, the rain will stop him." After a short time the sky was covered with dark clouds. The wind began to blow. Then a heavy rain began to fall.'

1 Kings 18:42-45, *International Children's Bible*

## They 'Saw His Star in the East'

'After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him." When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ would be born. They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are important among the rulers of Judah. A ruler will come from you. He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.'" Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, "Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too." The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy.



Matthew 2:2-10 *International Children's Bible*

It's interesting that the first question in the Old Testament comes from God to hiding sinners: Where are you? *Genesis 3:9* and the first question in the New Testament comes from seeking sinners: Where is He? *Matthew 2:2*

## Did You Know

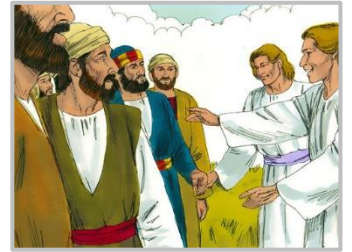


- 1) Arcturus (sometimes referred to as the Bear) is about 170 times more luminous than our sun! It's probably the 3<sup>rd</sup> brightest individual star in our night sky. It's big, it makes our sun look tiny! Arcturus is referred to in Job 38:32.
- 2) The Orion constellation is over 1,500 light years away. Currently 10 of its stars are believed to have planets. 'Orion's Belt' consists of three stars evenly spaced and in a straight line. Orion is mentioned in Job 38:31.
- 3) Each and every rain drop can create a rainbow, but for the human eye it needs millions of raindrops to combine their rainbows and create a big one for us to see it. The inside of a rainbow often appears brighter than the outside of a rainbow! A rare 'moonbow' is a rainbow produced by light from the moon. If a rainbow has a reflection the colours in the second rainbow are inverted. God explained to Noah the meaning of the rainbow (see Genesis 9:8-17).
- 4) The Pleiades cluster is about 444 light years away and contains over 1,000 stars, about 14 can be seen with naked eye. Pleiades is mentioned in Job 38:31.
- 5) A small minority of Bible translations translate a word in Amos 5:26 into 'Saturn'. Galileo Galilei, from Italy, discovered Saturn in 1610. Saturn's rings stretch out more than 120,000 km, but generally are only about 20 metres thick! 82 moons have been discovered around Saturn! Saturday gets its name from Saturn.
- 6) If the sun was empty it could hold over one million earths inside! It takes light millions of years to travel from the core of the sun to its surface, but then only 8 minutes and 20 seconds to reach the earth. The temperature at the centre of the earth is about 15 million degrees. Psalm 19:6 says nothing is hidden from the sun's heat.

## Why Are You Looking into the Sky?

‘Jesus said to them, “The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. These things are not for you to know. But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses — in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.” After he said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up. A cloud hid him from their sight. As he was going, they were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men wearing white clothes stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus taken away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go.” ’

Acts 1:7-11, *International Children's Bible*



## ‘When I Consider Your Heavens’

‘O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth,  
Who have set Your glory above the heavens! . . .  
When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,  
What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?  
For You have made him a little lower than the angels,  
And You have crowned him with glory and honour.’

Psalm 8:1, 3-4, *NKJV*



Hubble is an orbiting telescope. This is one of its most famous images, *Pillars of Creation*, showing stars forming in the *Eagle Nebula*.

‘He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name’ Psalm 147:4, *NKJV*.

‘He who counts the stars and calls them by their names is in no danger of forgetting his own children’ Charles Spurgeon.

## WORD SEARCH

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BEGINNING  
GOD  
CREATED  
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HEAVENS  
AND  
THE  
EARTH  
MILKY WAY  
HUBBLE  
MOON  
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ASTRONAUT  
CONSTELLATION

CLOUD  
STARS  
ACTURUS  
ORION  
RAINBOW  
PLEIDES  
SATURN  
SKY  
ORBIT  
SPACE  
GALAXY  
UNIVERSE  
LUNAR  
PLANET

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The world showing lights: [NASA/GSFC/Visualization Analysis Laboratory](#). Rainbow: [Christopher Martin Photography, WordPress.com](#). Sun: [NASA/GSFC/SOHO](#). Moon: [Andrew McCarthy, Pinterest](#). Earthrise: Apollo 8, [NASA](#). Clouds in Exodus, Mt Carmel cloud and two men in white clothes: [Free Bible Images](#). Wise Men Christmas Card: [freechristianmessagecards.wordpress.com](#).

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