

A Gift of Faith Book

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*Nature
Exploration*

Part 2

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Nature Exploration

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Photo by tf-photography.com



Moon


The bright moon on a clear night makes a shining, glowing outdoor nightlight. Each night it's a bit different in its appearance than it was the night before. The shadow from the Earth covers it a bit more each night, and then uncovers it again. This helps us to know how long a week is.

Have you ever seen a ring of light around the moon? Or the moonlight shining down on a lake? Have you ever walked out at night in the silvery moonlight?

God knew that light was very important, and we on Earth need it, so He provided not only light for the day, but for the night as well!



Photo by tf-photography.com



God loves light, and it can remind us of Him. That was the first thing He said when making the world, “Let there be light!”

Thinking beautiful and peaceful thoughts that Jesus can give us, is like letting the light of His Spirit and the light of Heaven in to our mind and heart. When we do things that are good, true and lovely, it’s like walking in the light.

Even if things aren’t going so well around us, or others aren’t behaving so well, and if it feels like we are in a dark shadow—if we look to Jesus and do things His way, we will be walking in His light and we will glow. –Just like the moon glows and reflects the light of the sun. We can be just like that—and bring the light of Jesus’ words and love to everyone on Earth.



Photo by tf-photography.com



Lightning


Have you ever watched a lightning storm? If you were somewhere safe, and the lightning wasn't too close to where you were living, it was probably quite a show.

The lightning flashes in all kinds of ways and patterns. It's filled with energy and electricity. It's powerful and gets everyone's attention.

When we see things that are strong and bright, it can remind us of the amazing power that Jesus has. He's around to help us, and no matter what we need Him to do, it's never too hard for Him.



Photo by Jon Berg



A strong flash of light in the sky accompanied with some thundering sounds is only a tiny thing compared to how much power and energy Jesus has.

He also has a lot of love, while using His power to help people, and to make things in the world change for the better!

For those that are doing what makes Jesus glad He can do wonderful things that in turn make them very happy as well. He will also use His power to protect and provide for them.



Photo by tf-photography.com




Sun

Everyone on Earth knows about the sun! It makes the day light, and gives the world warmth, colour, and beauty. The sun is a good illustration to show a bit of what Jesus is like.

The sun is always there, helping to provide what the Earth needs, and it keeps on shining day or night, whether you see it or not. So is Jesus—He's always near.

When you see the miracles that Jesus does, it's almost like you can see Him a bit, or at least you know He's around. But there are also times when you can't see a whole lot of





demonstrations of His power, and it's at that time that you just need to have faith to believe that it's not because He's gone away, or is sleeping, but that it's time for you to rest in heart. You can know that at just the right time the light will come again.

Jesus will bring good things your way, just like the bright and cheery sun shines on the land at the right time that it is meant to each day.

Jesus is right with you and will bring wonderful things into your life, as you wait for the right timing. His joy will brighten your day and make you glad.



Photo by Chariane Quille



Colours


If you look around you at nature you will be amazed to see just how many colours there are. Some people like to paint or use other things to create colourful pictures—but where did they get the idea? From the colourful things of nature that God created!

A rainbow is a special treat to see in the sky, and it can only happen at just the right time, as sunlight and water mix, and the light's rays show colour to everyone around.

Spring-time flowers can be a feast for your eyes to look at, when they are planted to create a colourful garden.



Photo by Gaetan Charron




A sunset can amaze you with its beauty. Perhaps the clouds were white or grey, and then all of a sudden it's as if someone painted the sky, and all sorts of colours are displayed in shining and glowing ways—pink, purple, yellow, orange, blue, green, and all sorts of shades and hues of each one!

Even though people on earth aren't painted with wild and bright colours, still Jesus created such wonderful variety of shades and colours of skin, hair and eyes.

Some people are very dark brown, so dark that they are called "black", others are so light-coloured that they are called, "white". Some are rather brown, and have skin with varied shades and tones.



Photo by Chariane Quille



There is so much variety, colour, shapes, patterns and styles in nature—in all the things Jesus made, from the tiniest flower, to the tallest person; from the smallest fish, to the sky way up high! See how many colours you can spot today!

And did you know that there are even some colours that can't be seen with your natural eyes?

Maybe one day in Heaven you'll even see new colours that you never saw before. Jesus loves creating new things!—Even new colours!



Photo by Naomi



Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter

If you live in a part of the world that experiences great differences in the seasons of the year, you learn to appreciate things before time passes and the weather changes.


Spring is a welcome season for most of us. The weather starts to warm up. It may be windy or have showers of rain, and that's to help the plants to grow. The rain waters the land and softens it up, and the wind helps to blow seeds around to be planted and grow in other places.

Flowers and leaves spring to life and fill the land with colour and beauty—a welcome sight after a cold, bare, grey or white winter, where few things grow well.

As the days continue to warm, and the crops grow, it's a time when many like to relax and have fun. And in places where it gets real cold during the winter, the warmer weather makes it easier for people to get



Photo by Jon Berg



around then because the roads aren't covered in ice, and people don't have to wear a lot of clothing and coats.


Summer then follows spring, and in some places the weather not only warms up but then gets too hot and there's not enough rain, and things might get rather dry. But a nice splash in a pool or lake brings refreshment. Food that is fully ripe can be harvested and enjoyed, sometimes in abundance, and extra fruit and food can be preserved for later on when the time of harvesting is past.

Then the heat begins to pass, and things start settling down, preparing for the winter that is to come. Not much can grow when it is real cold, so autumn is a time of preparation. It can be a beautiful time too, full of colour in a new way.

Rather than new plants that paint the land with all shades and hues, it is the leaves that some trees shed



Photo by Francesco Moldavian



that are very colourful as they lose their solid green colour transforming into many other varied, rich, bright colours.


The sight of a deciduous forest can be vibrant at this time of year, before the leaves flutter down to mingle and become one with the soil, providing fresh nutrients for the coming growth after the cold.

As the bare branches of trees are seen it makes us appreciate what has been hidden, while fully clothed in foliage. Now we get to see what has been working to make the tree what it is—the strong branches that tirelessly hold up their arms, as if in a constant praise to its Creator.

Then icy winds blow, and sparkles of snow that glisten in the sun or moonlight place a blanket of white on the ground in many places. Other times it's just cold and rainy. But there is always beauty in some form.



Photo by M. McNally



A tree covered in a layer of ice when lit in just the right way can be gorgeous. The scene of stark, dark branches of a leafless tree against the vibrant evening sky is a picture worth painting. This time of cold is a blessing and it is a time of rest for many parts of nature. Some animals sleep the entire winter!

The fruit-bearing trees, along with other deciduous trees, can relax from their labours as the sap goes down into the roots of the tree for a time, waiting to be released with new vigour at our Creator's word.

Spring will come again, yes, and the life-giving changes that the Earth's seasons bring will keep going on and on. We can better appreciate each stage of nature as time goes on. When a new season arrives, it has been nearly a year since we had been able to enjoy that season. We relish it and appreciate it before it passes and the next season greets us, and we embrace it as a friend returning from a journey.



Photos by Jon Berg



Animals


There are so many types of animals in the world—from the large and tall creatures that run wild through the African plains, to the tiniest ant that you may see, as it's busy doing what it was made to do.

There are far more animals, fish, birds and bugs of all types than there are people on Earth. Did you know that? And what's more amazing is that God is aware of each and every little living creature that has ever lived on Earth as well as all that are still living.

That can give you peace in your heart, as you think how much more important people are—for they were made in the likeness of God, and are extra special to Him—and God knows where each and every person is right now.



Photos by Jon Berg



Pretty amazing, isn't it? And not only that, but He knows what they are doing, feeling and thinking—and what they should be doing, and what would make them the happiest.


Just like He cares for all the creatures, and provides all that they need to survive, He can and will take care of you. He knows what you need and wants to make you much happier than you have ever been.

So when you see a little bug crawling around in the grass, or see a bird soaring high in the sky, Jesus see and knows about it too—and He's got His eyes on more than just the creatures that help to make the world an interesting and thriving place to live.

Jesus is watching you—the person that He made this beautiful, wonderful world, full of animals and plants, for.



Photos by M. McNally (t) & Jon Berg (b)



Jesus made it all as a home for you to live in and enjoy. And when you realise that everything is going to work out well in the end, because Jesus will take care of all the things that need fixing in the world, and help people to live in love and peace, then you can enjoy His natural creation around you so much more.

The Bible says that one day the animals will all be friends again. The wild ones will be tame. The harmful ones will not hurt. You and all those on Earth will enjoy it far more then, don't you think?

So do the best you can to take good care of the world that God made, and trust that one day it'll all be so much better!



Photo by Chariane Quille



Forest


When you look at a forest from far away it looks like a mass of green, and you can't see much else. However, when you are walking in the forest that is when you feel in awe.

Maybe it's a forest where there are real tall trees, and you are amazed at how small the seed is compared to the big tree that grew from it.

Perhaps most of all you are enjoying the display of all types of shapes of leaves and branches in a forest, and the varied patterns on the bark of the trees, or the shades of green.



Photo by Chariane Quille



Maybe the way the sunlight shines through the branches and makes them look heavenly is a delight to see.

There are so many things you can enjoy when actually being among the trees and walking under the shade they provide, and breathing in the fragrance and the fresh air.

Trees provide so many things that people on earth need and appreciate. Can you list some? And did you know there are some areas where it's too cold for trees to grow?

So it's really something to be glad for—being able to see such beautiful trees.



Photo by Chariane Quille



Snow


Snow is so very cold, and perfectly white. It's one of the whitest things on Earth. It's easy to see if someone has walked through the freshly fallen snow as there are footprints made—like you can see when you walk on a sandy beach.

If you look at snow real closely you will see that it's made of a whole lot of real small snowflakes. It falls silently down from the sky, where the air is so cold that, rather than rain, the water comes down in this powdery, frozen way.

The amazing thing is that each and every tiny snowflake is special and looks different than any other snowflake that has ever fallen.



Photo by M. McNally



Jesus really likes to create things, and He is very artistic. Every day, in every part of the world, new things are seen. –New snowflakes, new flowers, new kinds of bugs, new designs on the leaves or bark of a tree, new patterns in the sky with clouds.

No matter where you are, if you are in nature, you'll see things that many others may have never seen.

You are just as special too—you are a new creation. Never on Earth has there ever been someone just exactly like you! You are beautiful to Jesus! And He can clean our hearts and thoughts and make us all nice inside, just like the fresh, clean white snow.



Photo by Chariane Quille



River


Listening to the rustling sound of the water flowing in a river can remind you about how time passes by. Did you ever notice that when you are having fun doing something the time passes by quickly, and soon it is time to do something else?

Every day time passes, and each day you get a bit older too. You used to be real small, but now you are bigger. And time will just keep passing, and soon you'll be much older! Just like the river flows along, each of our days move along.

When a person is going along a rushing river in a canoe or boat, they need to steer it well and stay balanced so they can enjoy their trip down the river. Each day is like the next part of our journey of life, and we move through our life one day at a time.



Photo by Robin Yamaguchi



We choose where we are going to go, and how fast we will do things, and what we will turn to look at, as we go along our day.

If you want to enjoy your life, you need to be wise, careful and alert, and make good choices while on the journey of your life.

When you get to Heaven, you'll find there's a special river there called, "The River of Life". I think you'll discover it's the most beautiful and refreshing river you ever saw! The water will be just perfect! And best of all, you'll live forever in that beautiful place.

As you sail on the River of Life, and think about the time you spent on Earth, it will probably seem like time went by real fast, and you'll be so glad for the good choices that you made, and the ways you made Jesus happy while still on Earth.



Photo by M. McNally



Lake

Have you ever seen the reflection of the sun or moon or the surrounding trees on the surface of a lake? It looks beautiful.

If the lake is calm and the water is still, the reflection can look like a mirror reflecting the lovely nature around it. If the wind is blowing and making waves on the surface, or if a fast motorboat is zooming along it, the water can't make a pretty picture on it, reflecting what is above and beside it.

That can be like our hearts and faces too. If we are calm on the inside, and aren't getting troubled and upset about things, then Jesus' Spirit and thoughts can be reflected in our actions and words. People will like to be around us, just like people enjoy relaxing beside a tranquil lake.



Photo by Jon Berg



Bees


When you hold a delicious piece of fruit in your hands and you are about to take a bite, I bet you don't stop to think about some amazing little creatures that helped that fruit to grow.

Did you know if there were no bees around, there wouldn't be many of the yummy fruit that you enjoy, either? Bees don't only make honey—that's just one of the things God made them able to do.

Most of all they help to pollinate the plants and flowers, and that helps fruit and food to grow. There are so many things that God planned in nature. Each animal and bug helps with a job that keep things working well.



Photo by Naomi



It's like a big puzzle, with each creature and plant, sun, water, air and so much more helping to keep things growing and working well. Next time you see a bee remember all the other little creatures that help to do all kinds of things to make the world a nice place.

Jesus made you just right too, and put you here for a reason. If you listen to Him as you grow up, you can find out what you can do to make the world a better place, and to bring His love and joy.

Maybe you will just help in small ways and do things that not many people even know you do. But Jesus sees you and will be so glad that you did your part to help His world and the people in it.



Photo by tf-photography.com



Ocean


The water in all the wide and deep oceans can't be measured—and that's a bit how big God's love is too. It's immeasurable. You can sail in the ocean; you can dive in and discover some of the secrets below; you can use the tides to help to create energy—like people who make electricity from its movement.

You can travel to distant places on the surface of the water. It can house the fish that provide nourishment and health. Salt from the ocean can be gathered and used for a multitude of purposes.

Beautiful beaches can be enjoyed. Waves can be surfed on. Gorgeous sunsets can be seen as the sun sets on the horizon of the ocean.



Photo by tf-photography.com



But what you can never do is measure just how much water there really is. It will always be too much! God's love is a bit the same. You can rest on it, in faith, knowing that it will always be enough to support you. There are secrets that He can show you when you take time with Him.

He can provide you with what you need to maintain a happy and healthy life as you love Him more than anything else. He can give you fun and enjoyable times as He gives you His blessings. He can give you inspiration and faith to do all kinds of things. You can find the peace and joy in your heart knowing that you are loved so very much by the God who made you.

And no matter how much you discover or realise that God loves you, there's always going to be vast amounts of love for you—more than you can ever imagine.

The End