



What do we usually do when we are expecting visitors? We have our meal in good time so that we can clear away and wash the dishes. We Hoover round to make sure that everywhere is nice and clean and we try to move things that are lying about and put them back into their proper places. On some occasions we run out of time and end up pushing things somewhere out of sight so that everywhere looks good.



The problem with pushing things out of sight is that when we need them again we may have forgotten where we put them in our haste to get ready for the visitors!

There are some occasions when visitors arrive unexpectedly. This may not always be a suitable time for us as we could be in the middle of doing a specific task that we are trying to complete that day. Have you noticed too that unexpected visitors always seem to arrive when dirty dishes are still waiting to be washed up, underwear is drying on the radiators and the state of the living room leaves much to be desired?



Before Jesus came to the earth as a human being, God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit were all in Heaven, but, they paid visits to the earth. A visitor is someone who only stays temporarily and then goes away and that is what happened in these cases.

### Visits of God the Father

When God the Father visited the earth, He did not visit as a human being but usually in the form of fire or a cloud. I assume that most of you at some point have heard about Moses and the burning bush. (Exodus 3)

God appeared as a bush that was on fire but that was not burning up and He talked with Moses. Have you noticed that God often uses ordinary things and events in our lives to speak to us or to show us something, yet does something quite unexpected and different with them – often in order to get our attention? On this occasion God's visit was concluded once the conversation with Moses was over and He went back to Heaven.



Another time we read about God's visit is when the Israelites left Egypt under the leadership of Moses. This was a much longer visit and was a very amazing appearance. I must have read this passage dozens of times, but it has only recently struck me how awesome it must have been. We read, **'The Lord guided them by a pillar of cloud during the daytime and by a pillar of fire at night so that they could travel either by day or night. The cloud and the fire were never out of sight.'** (Exodus 13) What a sight to see that must have been; visible all of the time to almost a million people. It was not a normal sort of cloud that we might see today, (Often!) but, a 'pillar of cloud' stretching down from the sky and leading them along their journey. What about a 'pillar of fire'? I wonder how we would react if a huge pillar of fire stretched down from the sky and moved ahead of us as we travelled to work or the super-market? I would think that it would be very scary.

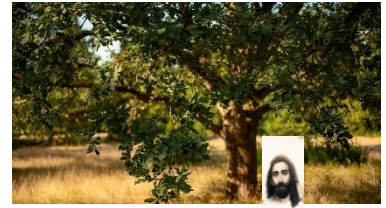
When God the Father visited in this way, He not only showed them the route they were to

When God does something unusual in our lives and we can see that it is definitely God, then our faith takes a leap forward.

## Visits of Jesus

When Jesus paid a visit to the earth He usually appeared as a person and is referred to as, '**The** angel of the Lord' rather than, '**An** angel of the Lord', meaning another angel. In some versions of the Bible the word 'angel' is written with a capital 'A' - '**The** Angel of the Lord.'

Gideon is one of the people whom Jesus visited. Gideon recognised that it was no ordinary angel who came and sat under the oak tree and spoke to him, but that it was the Lord Himself. (Not that we normally see 'ordinary angels' sitting around under trees!) Gideon saw himself as weak and unimportant but the Lord told him otherwise. (Judges 6) No matter what we think about ourselves the Lord is able to use us in ways that are unexpected, regardless of nationality, sex, age or physical make-up.



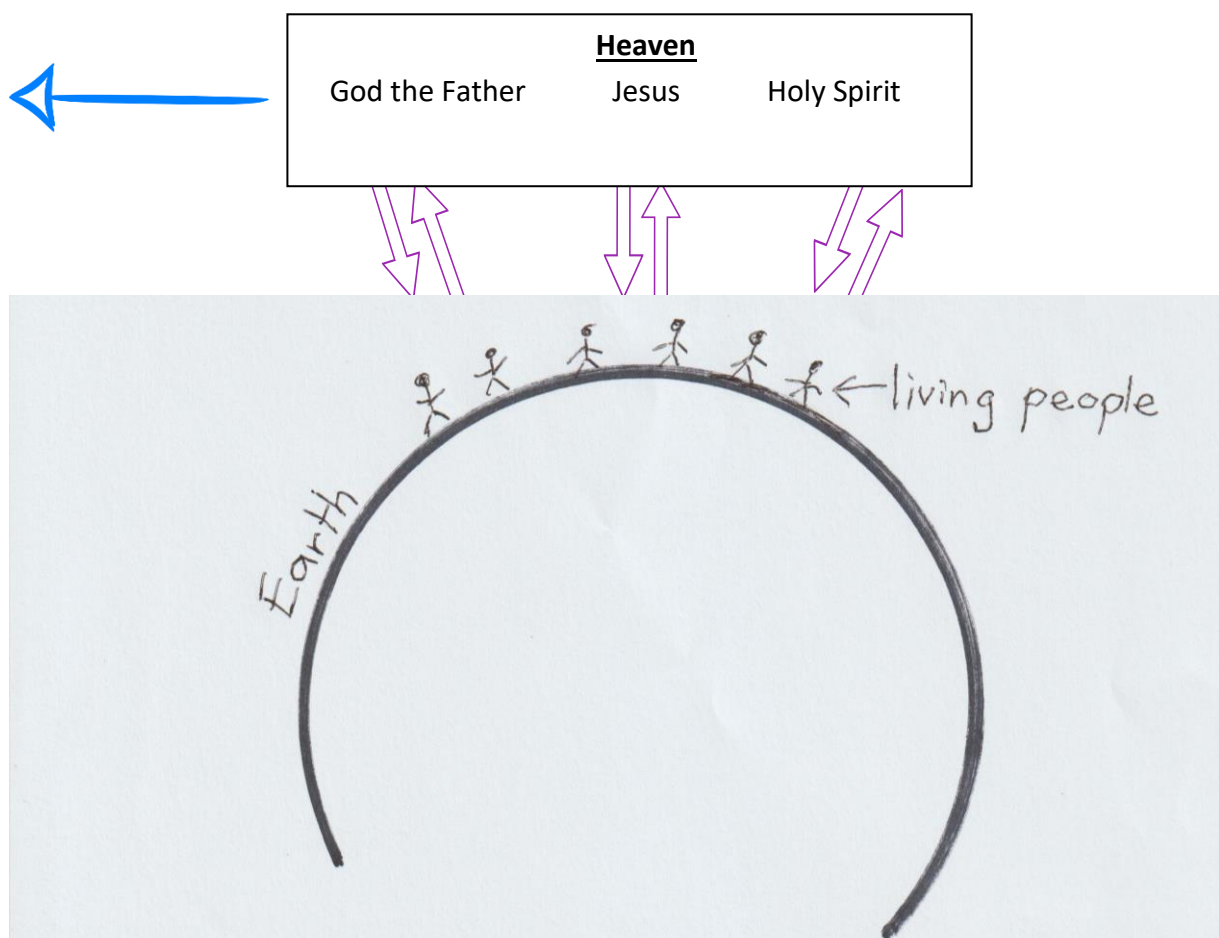
## Visits of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit also visited the earth for a specific purpose. On one occasion Moses is having a bit of a 'pity-party' and moaning to God. God tells him to gather seventy men together so that they can share the load of responsibility with him. Two of the men did not meet in the tent with the others but remained where they were in the camp. It was reported to Moses that the Holy Spirit has rested on them in the same way as He had on the others. The response of Moses was – "Great, I wish it would happen to all of God's people!" We have to remember that God is sovereign and can do what He wants, when He wants and how He wants.

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### TIMELINE OF JESUS

#### 3. Visitors



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