

### SCENE 1 - INTRO

It was a clear, crisp night in Watchful Forest, and all was quiet. Well, *almost* all was quiet. You see, a family of owls lived on top of a big tree in Watchful Forest, and owls, as you may know, are nocturnal. Nocturnal is just a fancy way of saying that owls like to sleep during the day and stay awake *all night long*. So, while *the foxes* were sleeping; while *the deer* were sleeping; while *the bears* were sleeping; while most of the other animals of the forest were sleeping, there was *one family* that certainly was *not* sleeping. In fact, the sound of *whooo...whooo...whooo*-ing could be heard bouncing around the forest every night, mixed with the sound of snoring coming from the other animals.

This family of owls had five members. There were Daddy Owl and Momma Owl, and three children owls named David, Hope, and Judah. David was the oldest. He was six. His sister Hope was four. Judah was the baby. He was two and was just starting to talk more and more like a big-boy owl.

Now, if you were an owl who lived up at the top of a tall tree; and if you were an owl who stayed up all night every night, what do you think *you* would spend your time doing? Well, Daddy and Momma Owl would spend some of the night hunting for food for the children. But, there is a lot of time between breakfast, lunch, and dinner. What would you do *in between*? Would you just sit there and spend the whole night looking at branches that don't move? Would you just sit there and listen to all of the other animals in the forest snore while you're awake but they're asleep? Would you spend the whole night trying to tickle each other with your feathers?

Actually, this family of owls stayed very busy. And they were not just busy doing anything. They were busy most nights doing something that was very, very important. You see, Daddy Owl and Momma Owl were followers of Jesus the Messiah, and they knew that it was very important for them to teach their children about the ways of the Lord. So, this family of owls would spend time together every night learning the Bible, praying, and asking Jesus for grace to love Him with all of their hearts. They also got to do something that most of the other animals in the forest didn't get to do because they were sleeping at night. This family of owls got to spend *a lot* of time – and I mean *a lot* of time – looking up at the moon and stars every night, and then watching the sun come up in the morning just before they went to bed. *And*, because Watchful Forest was so far away from any big city with lots of bright street lights and car lights, it became very dark there at night. Because of this, and because they lived so high up in a tall tree, this family of owls could see the stars *very* clearly at night.

Now, as you know, when the stars and moon come out at night, they are very beautiful to look at. The sky sometimes looks like strings of twinkling Christmas-tree lights spread out over a big dark blanket. And when the sun comes up in the morning, it is really pretty too –though it shines so

brightly that you can't even look straight at it without hurting your eyes! But did you know that God did not just put the moon, stars, and sun in the sky to make the sky look beautiful? Did you know that God put them in the sky to teach us about the good news of His Son Jesus the Messiah? Well, three little owls named David, Hope, and Judah did *not* know that, but they were about to learn. And that is where our story begins.

## **SCENE 2 - THE SUN**

The night was almost over, and Daddy and Momma owl were getting ready to put the children down to bed for the day. The sun was just starting to rise, and the little owls were tucked in nice and cozy in their part of the nest. As Momma and Daddy were giving kisses and hugs good morning, David, who loved to ask questions, turned his head toward the east, where the sun was rising. As he watched the sun begin to rise, a question popped into his head.

"Daddy and Momma, *whoooo* made the sun?" David asked.

"*Whooo* do you think made the sun, David?" Momma Owl replied.

Before David could answer, Hope screeched out in an excited voice, "I know, I know! *God* made the sun! He made everything in the whole world! He made the clouds, and the animals, and the stars, and the elephants, and the trees, and...and...everything!"

"*Hey*," David said, noticeably a little perturbed. "That's what I was going to say!"

"Sorry, David," Hope apologized. "I get really excited when I think about all of the beautiful things God has made!"

"That's OK," David said. "I understand. I think God's creation is really, really cool too."

"Well, you're *both* right," Daddy Owl said with a smile. "God *is indeed* the One who made the sun, the moon, all of the stars, and everything else in all creation. And David you're right," he added. "His creation is *really* cool too. One of my favorite things to do is watch the sun come up in the morning while sipping a good cup of hot chocolate, just before bedtime."

The words "hot chocolate" caught little Judah's attention. He jumped up and began to run around the nest screeching, "Hot chockie! Hot chockie! Hot chockie!"

David and Hope began to laugh, and then jumped out of bed to join little Judah in his race around the nest. Momma Owl, on the other hand, was raising her owl-brow at Daddy Owl. Getting little Judah down and settled for bed hadn't been easy. Daddy Owl knew what Momma owl was

thinking. He leaned over and gave her a kiss on the beak and chuckled. Momma Owl's frown slowly turned into a smile.

Then partly laughing and partly sighing, Momma Owl said, "Yes, I agree, God's creation *is* amazing and very beautiful. But children, have your Daddy and I ever told you about *what* God is *speaking* through the sun, moon, and stars?"

Judah kept running around the nest, but when David and Hope heard Momma say this, they stopped in their tracks and began staring at their parents with a puzzled look on their faces.

Then David asked, "What do you mean? Are you saying that God is using the sun, and moon, and stars *to* say something to us?"

Daddy Owl replied, "Yes, David, that is exactly what your Momma means. Every morning when the sun rises in the east, and every night when the moon and stars come out, God is telling us a very important message. In Psalm 19, King David says: 'The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.'"

"*Whooaa!*" David and Hope said at the same time, with their eyes open wide. Then Judah, who loved to repeat his brother and sister, chimed in, "whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa."

"Will you tell us more?! Will you tell us more?! *Please!*" David and Hope began to beg.

All eyes were on Momma Owl. "*Well,*" she said with a grin, "since it seems that everyone is now wide awake...*and* since the hot chocolate is *almost* finished heating up," she said as Daddy Owl winked at her, "I suppose this morning we can all have a little cup of hot chocolate and stay up a little later to watch the sunrise and talk about what God is saying to us through the sun. But, we'll have to wait until tomorrow night to talk about the moon and the stars. How does that sound?"

"*Yeah!*" the children shouted together.

Then Daddy Owl went to get the hot chocolate, and David and Hope sat down in front of Momma Owl while Judah climbed up onto her lap. As Daddy Owl poured the hot chocolate into their cups, Momma Owl began by asking the children a question.

"Tell me, what do you know about the sun?" she asked.

David answered first, saying, "Well, when it is dark outside at night, you can only see a few things from the forest around us. But when the sun rises at the beginning of the day, there is a lot of light, and you can see many things, even things that are very far away. You can even see Ant Hill way

over there across the river! When the sun comes up, there is no more darkness, and everything becomes visible.”

Then Hope said, “*And*, the sun is really, really bright, and it is really, really hot. It’s so bright that it even hurts my eyes if I try to look straight at it!”

“Very good, David and Hope,” Daddy Owl said. “The Bible teaches us that this present age is an evil age full of darkness. In this age of darkness, Satan goes around trying to hurt everyone. He uses lies to try to get all the animals of the forest and all the people of the world to disobey God. When someone listens to the voice of Satan and disobeys God, it is like they are walking around in a dark room that has no light. They keep bumping into the walls and tripping over their feet because they are blind and can’t see where they are going. Yes, my little ones, Satan’s voice is a voice of deception and darkness. He even tries to get little owls to forget about God’s light and do things that God doesn’t like. Whenever we listen to Satan and disobey God, it is called sin. And the more we sin, the darker this wicked age becomes.”

“Wow, I don’t like Satan *at all*,” Hope said with a serious look on her face. “And sin sounds awful, too.”

“It is *very* awful, Hope,” Daddy Owl replied, shaking his head with a sad sound in his voice. “Sin makes God’s creation not work the way God wants it to work. Because of sin, there are many bad things that are messing up God’s beautiful creation in this age of darkness. In fact, sin is the reason that death first entered the world. In the beginning, God told Adam and Eve not to eat from a certain tree in the Garden of Eden called ‘the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’ He told them that if they disobeyed Him and ate that fruit, their punishment would be death. Well, one day Adam and Eve ate that fruit, and death entered the world and began eating up all of God’s good creation.”

“*But*,” Momma Owl chimed in, “that is not the end of the story. There is a great hope as well.”

“Hey, that’s my name!” Hope said with a beaming smile.

“That’s right,” Daddy Owl said with a twinkle in his eye. “Your name gives us courage to never stop following Jesus with all of our hearts, even when life in this age of darkness gets really difficult.”

Then Momma Owl continued, “Every morning when the sun rises, the light of the sun shines over all the land as far as the eye can see, and it drives the darkness away. In the same way, Jesus’ kingdom is a kingdom of light. When Jesus comes back, His kingdom will destroy sin, death, and Satan’s kingdom of darkness forever.”

Then looking down at David and Hope, Daddy Owl said, “The other day we were talking about the time that John the apostle saw the resurrected Jesus while on the island of Patmos. Do you remember what John said about Jesus’ face?”

Hope answered, “He said that Jesus’ face was shining...hey, *brighter than the sun!*”

“And do you remember,” Daddy Owl asked again, “what did Jesus say would happen to the righteous in His kingdom? He said that in His coming kingdom, they would shine like the...”

“Like the sun!” David said proudly, completing Daddy Owl’s sentence. Then David continued, “So, when we see the sun, God is speaking to us about the Second Coming, the resurrection from the dead, and the kingdom of God? That’s *the gospel!*”

“Yes,” Momma Owl answered, “that’s exactly right. God uses the sun to teach us about the shining glory and bright light that shines out from Jesus’ resurrected body now, and which will also shine out from our resurrected bodies when Jesus comes back to raise us from the dead. When Jesus comes back, He will come down from the sky shining brighter than the sun. And when He does, He will speak the word of life, and will raise His people from the dead. When Jesus comes back, the light of His life in the resurrection will conquer the darkness of death that came into the world when Adam and Eve first sinned. Death won’t destroy God’s good creation anymore. We will receive brand new bodies that will shine brighter than the sun forever and ever, just like Jesus’ body does. Every day when we see the sun come up, God is reminding us to never stop following Jesus. If we keep trusting and obeying Jesus, even through the hard times, then when Jesus comes back, we will shine like the sun with Him in the resurrection. It will be the beginning of a new Day. It will be the dawning of the kingdom of the Messiah.”

“Wow,” said Hope as she began to yawn. “I can’t even look at the sun without hurting my eyes. And we’ll shine brighter than *that* in our resurrected bodies?”

“That’s right,” Momma Owl said slowly, gently nuzzling Hope’s beak with her own. “Even *brighter...than...that.*”

Then Daddy Owl said, “There is just one more thing I need to tell you, children, about the sun, and then it is time for bed.”

“What is it, Daddy?” David and Hope asked, their eyes growing droopy with sleep.

Judah climbed up onto Daddy Owl’s lap, and Daddy Owl spread his wings over him and gave him a big owl hug. Then, as Daddy Owl began to speak, a tear suddenly appeared in the corner of his eye and began to trickle down his face. Then lifting up his eyes, he gazed deep into the sky.

"We need to pray," he said in a gentle but serious voice, "for those who are still disobeying God, and who still haven't repented of their sins and believed the good news of Jesus. Yes, we need to pray for them with all of our hearts, and we need to share the gospel with them. The Bible says that those who refuse to repent and obey God are like dry grass or flowers. What happens to dry grass and flowers when there is no rain and the fire of the burning sun gets too hot for them?"

But before Daddy Owl could get an answer, he looked down and saw three little owls fast asleep. He leaned down and kissed each of them on the beaks. Then he whispered a prayer over them: "Father, in Jesus' name I ask You to help these little ones hold on tight, tight, tight to Jesus, without giving up, until the Day dawns and the light of Your kingdom fills the whole earth."

### **SCENE 3 - THE MOON**

The day's sleep was finished, and it was now time for David, Hope, and Judah to wake up and begin a new night. Tonight the moon was full and the stars were particularly bright. From the nest, this family of owls could see the entire sky. Momma and Daddy Owl told the little owls that after breakfast, they would all continue talking about God's message in the sky. David and Hope could hardly wait! They were very excited and were singing and dancing the whole morning before breakfast. And because David and Hope were excited, little Judah was excited too. He knew that when David and Hope began to sing and dance, something good was about to happen.

After breakfast was finished, they all sat down together on one side of the nest. After spending some time in prayer and worshipping the Lord, Momma Owl stretched out her wing, pointed to the moon, and began to talk.

"My precious ones," she said, "do you see that big full moon over there, shining just over those mountains?"

"Yes, Momma," they replied.

"Well, what would happen if the moon didn't shine at night?" Momma Owl asked.

Hope answered, "It would be very, very dark outside, even darker than it already is!"

"That's right, Hope," Momma Owl said. "And do you know where the moon gets its light from?"

David and Hope looked at each other with a puzzled look on their face. They weren't sure about that one. Momma Owl could see this, and so she continued, "The moon get's its light from the sun. During the day, you can see the sun directly, but during the night, you only see a little bit of

the sun's light as it bounces off the moon. It is the sun's light bouncing off of the moon that makes it white and shiny at night."

"Wow, that is so cool!" David exclaimed.

Then, as Daddy Owl reached into a drawer and pulled out a flash-light, he began saying, "In this age of darkness and disobedience, *not everyone* in the world has turned away from God. There are many who still seek to follow Jesus with all of their hearts, and who are trying to share the gospel with others. These ones are like the bright moon in this age of darkness. One day, we will see Jesus, the one who shines brighter than the sun, directly face-to-face in our resurrected bodies. Until that day, just as the sun shines its light on the moon in the darkness, so Jesus in this age of darkness shines His light in, through, and upon His people. When He shines His light *in them* through the Holy Spirit, His light and fire burns away the darkness and evil from their hearts. When He shines His light *through and upon them*, His light flows through them and bounces off of them, so that those who are still stuck in the darkness can see the light of the good news of Jesus, too, before the sun comes in the morning and they have no more time to repent."

Daddy Owl then turned on the flashlight and shined it toward little Judah's head. When he did this, Judah's head began to shine as the light bounced off of it into David and Hope's eyes. David and Hope giggled, turning their eyes away from the light because it was hurting their eyes.

Then Momma Owl said, "But that isn't all. The moon also teaches us about the life of Jesus when he came the first time and entered into this world of darkness to save us from our sins. Children, I have a fancy word for you to learn. Repeat after me: *in-car-na-tion*."

"*In-car-na-tion*," David and Hope repeated together, squinting their eyes as they tried to focus very hard. The only part of the word *in-car-na-tion* that little Judah understood, however, was *car*. So he began running around the nest making car noises with his beak. Everyone laughed.

Then Momma Owl continued, "We use the word incarnation to talk about a very special miracle that God did because of His great love and mercy for us. David and Hope, when Adam and Eve sinned and ate the fruit they were not supposed to eat, do you remember what their punishment was?"

"Death," David and Hope responded.

"That's right," Momma Owl said. "Now, do you think God *wanted* them to receive the punishment they deserved?"

"Nooo," David and Hope answered, with a look of relief on their face.



“That’s right,” Momma Owl said again. “God didn’t want people to receive the punishment of death. But they still deserved the punishment of death. God’s solution to this problem was to take the punishment of death that we deserved, and to put that punishment upon Himself. But, God was not a man, so He couldn’t die. So what do you think God would need to do in order to take our punishment of death on Himself?”

David and Hope stared at each other as they thought about the answer. Then David’s eyes got very, very big, and he said, slowly, “He would need to become *a man Himself*!”

Then Daddy Owl said, “That’s exactly right David. And that is *exactly* what He did. God, whose throne in the heavens is surrounded only by light, love, and goodness, in His great mercy choose to leave that beautiful place of light and glory and come into this age of darkness as a man in order to save us. And that man went to the cross and died so that we could live forever with Him in the resurrection. Do you know what that man’s name is?”

“Jesus!” David and Hope shouted.

“And,” Momma Owl continued as she picked up Judah, “before Jesus could become a man, he first had to become...*a baby!*” As soon as she said that, she began to tickle Judah under his wings as he giggled.

Daddy Owl then said, “And when Jesus came, God used the moon to tell the world what He was doing. Let me ask you a question. When the moon first starts to appear in the sky every month, does it start out small or big?”

David, who had been studying the different phases of the moon in his night classes at owl school, had the answer. He said, “The moon goes through a cycle every month. It starts off as a teeny-tiny crescent moon that looks like the letter C. Every night after that, the crescent moon gets bigger and bigger, until it becomes a half-moon. Then, after that, the moon keeps growing until it becomes a *full* moon and looks like a perfect circle in the sky. Then after the full moon, the process goes backwards until the moon disappears and starts the cycle over again the next month. While the moon is getting bigger and bigger before it becomes full, it is called a waxing moon, and while it is getting smaller and smaller after the full moon, it is called a waning moon. Every month, the moon starts this same process of waxing and waning over again.”

“Very good, David,” said Daddy Owl. “On the day when God told Mary that He was putting baby Jesus in her belly, in the sky that night there was a teeny-tiny crescent moon in the sky. God was telling the world that He, the God of all power and light, had just entered this age of darkness and become a teeny-tiny baby in Mary’s belly.”



“Woah, that is amazing!” Hope shouted. “God must really love us if He was willing to leave all of that light and glory behind to become a man in this age of darkness!”

“Indeed,” Momma Owl said. “And you know what else? The day Jesus died on the cross and had finished His work, there was a full moon in the sky that night. It was the Passover, and every year at the Passover there is a full moon in the sky. On that day, the sky was telling us that Jesus had lived a full life and had completed His work of fully saving us from our sins.”

Then Daddy Owl said, “And the night Jesus died, it wasn’t just *any* full moon that appeared in the sky. Sometimes, God makes the color of the moon or sun change colors if He wants to tell us something very special and important. After Jesus died, that night a *red* full moon appeared in the sky. That kind of special full moon is called a *blood* moon, because the moon looks red like blood. What do you think God was saying to the world through the blood moon hanging in the sky that night?”

Then with words of wisdom that were clearly not her own, Hope said, “He was saying that Jesus, the only light of this dark world, had just bled on the cross in our place for the forgiveness of our sins.”

As soon as she said that, the power of the Holy Spirit gently came upon all of them in the nest, and tears of thanksgiving and joy came into everyone’s eyes.

Then picking up a tissue, Momma Owl blew her beak and said, “Well children, we still haven’t gotten to the stars yet. But I think we’ll need to wait until tomorrow night to talk about that.”

The rest of that night, whispers and songs of “thank You, Jesus” echoed out from this family’s nest and could be heard throughout Watchful Forest.

## **SCENE 4 - THE STARS**

The next night, David and Hope ate their breakfast very quickly because they were anxious to hear about how God uses the stars, too, to teach us about Jesus. Thankfully, it was another very clear night, and all of the stars could be seen twinkling in their place. After they finished eating, they washed up and sat down to snuggle up with Daddy and Momma Owl. They could hardly contain their excitement, saying, “OK, OK, we’re ready, we’re ready! OK, OK, we’re ready, we’re ready!”

Daddy Owl smiled, lifted his eyes up to the sky and said, “When you first look at the stars, it seems that they are spread out all over the sky. However, if you look more closely, you’ll see that some stars are closer together and form a *group* of stars.”

David and Hope looked up at the sky and focused their eyes on the stars. As they kept looking, they noticed that Daddy Owl was right. Some of the stars were grouped together!

Then Daddy Owl continued, “Those groups of stars are called constellations. And in the beginning when God created the stars, He gave the constellations names and tied imaginary pictures to them, and decided to use the constellations to tell a story. Now, if God is the One who made the constellations, and if this same God is the One who gave us the story of the Bible, what story do you think God is telling us through the constellations?”

David and Hope both knew the answer right away. “The same story as the Bible!” they exclaimed.

“That’s right,” Daddy Owl said. “Now, from the beginning there have been twelve constellations in particular that God has used to tell the story of the Bible. This is because there are twelve months in the year. Each month of the year, in the morning the sun rises in a different constellation. These twelve special constellations are called the “twelve signs of the zodiac.” David, I have a question for you. When you are writing out words, do you ever use your pen or pencil to underline or circle any of the words you’re writing?”

“Yes,” David said, “I do”.

“Why do you do that?” Daddy Owl asked.

“I do that,” David said, “when I want to remind myself that the word I’m underlining or circling is a very important word that I need to remember.”

“Good,” Daddy Owl said. “These twelve constellations are like the words God has written in the sky, and the sun is like the pen or pencil He uses to underline and circle these important words. Each month when the sun rises in one of these twelve constellations, it is like God is underlining them or circling them to remind the earth how important each part of His story really is to Him. But, sadly, over the years something very evil has happened with these twelve constellations.”

“What is it?” Hope asked, feeling very curious.

“Well” Daddy Owl answered, “as we will soon see, the story of the stars, just like the story of the Bible, ends with Jesus returning to punish Satan for his wickedness and rebellion. Because of that, since the beginning, Satan has worked very hard to hide the true message of the stars from people. He has gone throughout the world and tried to get people to believe that these twelve constellations tell a story different than the story they *actually* tell. Sometimes, he has even tried to get people to worship the stars, moon, and sun instead of worshipping the Creator who made them! And sometimes he has tried to deceive people into believing the lie that these constellations

are in charge of their lives, instead of the God who has power over everything! He is such a liar and a deceiver!”

“But,” Momma Owl jumped in with an unusual boldness in her voice, “from the Bible we know the true story of the stars! And we will proclaim it fearlessly to the earth until Jesus returns to throw that deceiver Satan into the Lake of fire!”

David and Hope rarely saw their Momma speak with such zeal and fire in her eyes. They knew that what she was saying must be very important.

Then David asked, “Momma and Daddy, will you teach us the true story of these twelve constellations, so that we can proclaim it boldly too, like you?”

“Yes, my son, yes,” Daddy Owl answered with strength in his voice. “King David from the Bible was a shepherd before he became a king in Israel. He spent many nights looking up at the stars while he was taking care of the sheep. David understood the true message of the stars, and because of this, he sought to live a righteous life as man after God’s own heart. You have the same heart as King David, my son, and so we have named you after him. We will teach you to proclaim the gospel from the stars like a king! And your sister and brother will proclaim the hope of this message to the nations as well!”

Then Momma Owl began muttering to herself, saying, “Hmmm, we’ve got twelve constellations to cover. Hmm...How should we do this? OK, Daddy, we’ve got twelve constellations to talk about. How about you take the first six, and I take the last six.”

“Sounds like a plan to me,” Daddy Owl said with enthusiasm. “The first constellation is called ‘Virgo.’ Virgo is a picture of a woman who is not married yet. She is holding a branch in her right hand, and a sheaf of grain or wheat in her left hand. Falling out of the sheaf of wheat in her left hand are lots of seeds. When God called Abraham out of Babylon, he promised that He would multiply Abraham’s seed, and that His seed would outnumber the stars. In the Bible, the Messiah is called “the Seed” and “the Branch.” When Jesus came, by the power of God he was born of Mary, a woman not married yet. When Jesus, the Branch, comes back the second time, then all those who are in Jesus, the Seed, will be raised to life like Jesus. In this way, Jesus, the resurrected Seed, will be multiplied, and God’s promises to Abraham will be fulfilled once and for all. The constellation Virgo teaches us about the promises God made to Abraham.”

“The second constellation,” Daddy Owl continued, “is called ‘Libra.’ Libra is a picture of a pair of scales used for weighing and measuring things. In the old days, a scale was a symbol of justice and righteousness. When Moses and the people of Israel left Egypt and came to Mount Sinai, God gave the people of Israel His Law. In that Law, He taught them about the things that He sees as righteous. He told the people of Israel that if they wanted to stay in the land He was bringing

them into, then they had to obey His righteous laws. If they didn't, then He would kick them out of the land. The constellation Libra teaches us about the Law God gave the people of Israel through Moses."

David and Hope looked at each other in amazement. The story of the stars *really was* the same story as the Bible!

Moving on to the next constellation, Daddy owl said, "The third constellation is called 'Scorpio.' Scorpio is a picture of a scorpion. Scorpions have poison in their stingers, and they live in the wilderness. After God gave Israel His righteous Law through Moses, it didn't take long for the people of Israel to start disobeying that Law. God told them to go into the land, but they sinned and disobeyed many times. Because of their sin, they had to wander the wilderness with all of those snakes and scorpions for forty years. When they sinned, it was like they stung themselves with the poison of sin in the same way that a scorpion stings people. The constellation Scorpio teaches us about the sting of sin and about the punishment that the people of Israel received in the wilderness when didn't obey God's Law."

"The fourth constellation," Daddy went on, "is called 'Sagittarius.' Sagittarius is a picture of a mighty warrior going into battle on a horse while shooting a bow and arrow against his enemies. Sagittarius teaches us about the days when God brought the Israelites into the land of Canaan under Joshua their leader. God gave the Israelites the victory, and by God's power the land of Israel became theirs."

After the fourth constellation, Daddy Owl took a deep breath and said, "OK, just two more to go, and then Momma's turn. The fifth constellation is called 'Capricorn.' Capricorn is a picture of a goat with a fish's tail. When David was running away from Saul, one of the places he went was "En-Gedi," which means "spring of the young goat." There were *a lot* of goats around En-Gedi. Near En-Gedi is a big Sea called the Dead Sea, or the Salt Sea. Even today the water of the Dead Sea has so much salt in it that fish can't even live in it! However, God promised David that one of his descendents would be the Messiah. God said that the Messiah would sit on David's throne as King in Jerusalem forever. And God also promised the people of Israel that when the Messiah from David's line established His kingdom, the water of the Dead Sea would be made fresh again, and there would be lots, and lots of fish there. The constellation Capricorn teaches us about the promises that God made to King David."

And finally Daddy Owl came to the sixth constellation, saying, "The sixth constellation is called 'Aquarius.' Aquarius is a picture of a strong man holding a water pitcher, with a fish from the south being gathered up into the pitcher. God had told the people of Israel that if they didn't obey His Law, He would kick them out of the land. Well, after Israel entered their new land, they kept sinning by turning away from God and worshipping idols. Because of this, God sent

Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon down south to Judah, and just as a fisherman catches fish in his net, so Nebuchadnezzar captured the people of Judah into his pitcher and took them out of Israel. The constellation Aquarius teaches us about the time that God used King Nebuchadnezzar to punish His people for their disobedience.”

As Daddy Owl finished talking about the sixth constellation, Momma Owl came over from the other side of the nest with a surprise for everyone. From a basket she pulled out some strawberries, some apples, and some crackers with peanut butter. She also took out some cups and a thermos, and began to pour hot chocolate for everyone. She said, “Just thought I’d bring out a few snacks for you to nibble on as I talk about the next six constellations.”

David, Hope, and Judah cheered and immediately began to jump up and down, and Judah, like always, started running in circles around the nest. Daddy Owl said, “Thank you so much my dear! Just what we needed!”

After Daddy Owl and the children got settled down with their snacks and hot chocolate, Momma Owl started talking about the seventh constellation of the zodiac.

“The seventh constellation,” she said, “is called ‘Pisces.’ Pisces is a picture of two fish – a northern fish and a southern fish – tied to cords and being brought back to the land of Israel. After the people of Israel had been disciplined in Nebuchadnezzar’s land of Babylon for 70 years, under Cyrus, a Persian king, God brought many Jewish people back to the land of Israel from both the north and the south. The constellation Pisces teaches us about when God brought many of the people Israel back to their land after their time in captivity.”

“The eighth constellation,” Momma Owl continued, “is called ‘Aries.’ Aries is a picture of a ram, which is male sheep. After many years of disobeying God’s Law that came through Moses, many people in Israel were realizing that they really, *really* needed God’s mercy and forgiveness, and that they couldn’t obey God by themselves. That’s when God sent Jesus. Jesus was the ram or the lamb that God sacrificed on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. On the day Jesus was crucified, the sun rose in the constellation of Aries. God was underlining His message of mercy on the cross so that the world would never forget all that Jesus did to save us. The constellation Aries teaches us about the blood sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, on the cross, and about how much God loves mercy.”

“The ninth constellation,” Momma Owl continued as Judah started munching on his third strawberry, “is called ‘Taurus.’ Taurus is a picture of a big, strong, hard-working ox. In Israel, oxen were used to get the harvest ready. First, the oxen would pull a plough along the ground, and the plough would break up the soil so that seeds could be planted. Later in the year, once the harvest had come in, now the oxen were used to loosen the grain (the tasty part of the wheat) from the

chaff (the yucky part). The oxen would do this either by walking on the stalks of grain, or by pulling a board with sharp metal teeth on the bottom over the stalks. These oxen worked very, very hard, and without them, the people of Israel would not have had any bread to eat. In the same way, after Jesus rose from the dead, he sent his apostles to the nations to share the gospel and teach people about God's ways. Like oxen, they worked very hard and went through very hard times to make sure the seed of the gospel could be planted in people's hearts. And they also worked very hard to make sure that Jesus' people had the grain of the Word of God to eat, and not the chaff of a false gospel. The constellation of Taurus teaches us about the ministry of the apostles whom Jesus sent to the nations with the gospel."

After Momma finished talking about the ninth constellation, she noticed that most of the snacks had already been eaten! "OK," she said, "Let's slow down a little bit. We still have three constellations to go."

Hope said, "That's OK, Momma. We can sip our hot chocolate slowly for the last three, because it is still really hot."

"That is a great idea, my love," Momma Owl replied as she moved on to the tenth constellation. "Now the tenth constellation is called 'Gemini.' Gemini is a picture of two twin brothers sitting very close to each other, and giving each other a big hug. After Jesus sent out His apostles, many Jewish people and many non-Jewish, called Gentiles, began repenting of their sins and accepting the good news of Jesus. Jews and Gentiles were very different from each other, and sometimes they didn't like each other very much. But through the gospel, Jesus was changing that. Now, Jesus' Jewish people and Jesus' Gentile people were being called by Jesus to stop hating each other, and to start loving each other with the same love that He showed them on the cross. Through Jesus' blood, Jew and Gentile were now part of one big family. The constellation Gemini teaches us about Jewish and Gentile brothers and sisters in the Lord learning to love each other by the power of the cross."

"The eleventh constellation," Momma continued, "is called 'Cancer.' Cancer is a picture of a crab with ten legs. In the Bible, the crab is an unclean animal that comes out of the sea. And in the Bible the sea is often used as a symbol of the Gentile peoples that still don't know God. At the end of the age, just as a crab tries to use its pinchers to crush its prey, so the Anti-Christ is going to gather an army of unbelieving Gentiles to persecute Israel and Jesus' followers around the world. In the same way that a crab has ten legs, so the coming Anti-Christ Empire will have ten kings who will be under the control of Satan and the Anti-Christ. And just as the crab was seen as an unclean animal in Israel, so God will see the Anti-Christ as a wicked, unclean king who needs to be destroyed. God's people will be persecuted by the Anti-Christ for three-and-a-half years. God is going to use that persecution to see if His people will love Jesus not just through the easy times, but through the hard times, too. When we love Jesus through the hard times too, that shows Him



that our love for Him is real love, and not just a pretend love. The constellation Cancer teaches us about the coming Anti-Christ Empire and the coming persecution of the saints.”

When Momma Owl finished saying this, David looked at her and said, “Wow, Momma, the time of Cancer sounds like it is going to be very, very hard.”

“Yes, my love,” Momma Owl replied. “It will be the hardest time the world has ever known, and the saints will face the greatest persecution they have ever known. But God will be with us, and as we cry out to Him in prayer, His Spirit will give us power and grace to persevere until the Lion of the tribe of Judah returns.”

When little Judah heard his name used with the word lion, he stood up and began to roar loudly like a lion. When he roared, Daddy Owl, Momma Owl, David, and Hope all looked at each other in surprise. They didn’t know that such a loud roar could come from such a little owl! Daddy put his wing on Judah, looked into His eyes, and said, “Yes, my son, you will boldly proclaim the coming of our King in glory.”

“And that brings us to the twelfth and final constellation of the zodiac,” Momma Owl said. “The twelfth and final constellation of the zodiac is called ‘Leo.’ Leo is the picture of a very strong lion trampling and crushing a fleeing serpent named Hydra. When people talk about lions, they usually say that the lion is the king of all the animals. Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He is the King of all kings! And when He comes back, He is going to crush the head of the wicked serpent Satan! He is going to save His people from the persecution of the Anti-Christ! He is going to raise His people from the dead and establish His kingdom on the earth! And He is going to make all of the wrong things right! The constellation Leo teaches us about the Second Coming of Jesus and about the Kingdom of the Messiah that will be set up after the Anti-Christ is crushed by Jesus. This is our blessed hope!”

When Momma Owl finished saying this, everyone shouted, “Hooray!” Then Hope said, “Momma and Daddy, I want Jesus to come back now!”

Daddy Owl replied, “I know, my love, I know. I do to. And He will come soon. The reason He is waiting to come back, is that He is giving everyone around the world time to repent and turn to Him before He comes back and it is too late. He is waiting to return because of His mercy toward the wicked.”

“Oh,” Hope responded. As she thought about this, in her heart she began to thank Jesus for the mercy he had shown to her during this time of delay. She then started praying quietly for her friends and family who still didn’t know Jesus.”



Then David, curious once again, asked, “Daddy and Momma, the time of Cancer, or the time of the Anti-Christ is still ahead, right?”

“That’s right, David,” his parents answered at the same time.

“Well,” David continued, “how will Jesus’ people around the world know that we’ve entered into those three-and-a-half years of great testing and hardship?”

“Great question, David,” Daddy Owl responded. Then he said, “In Psalm 19, which we talked about earlier, we learn that when God wants to speak a message to everyone, everywhere around the world, He likes to use the things that He put in the skies to speak that message. This is because no matter where His people are living around this big world, all of them will still be able to see the sun, moon, and stars. Let me ask you a question, David. When the Anti-Christ comes to power, what kind of time do you think that will be on the earth – a time of great darkness, or a time of great light.”

“It will be the darkest time the world has ever known!” David exclaimed with a serious face.

“Yes, you’re right,” Daddy Owl said. “The sun rises at the beginning of the day, and it teaches us about the beginning of something. From the prophet Isaiah we know that when the last three-and-a-half years begins, at that time the sun will rise in the east, but unlike usual it will not be shining with light when it rises. Instead, it will be black and covered with deep darkness. This rising dark sun will be God’s signal to us that the time of greatest darkness the world has ever seen is about to begin on the earth. The prophet Joel also tells us that later that same night, the moon will follow this dark sun into the sky, and it will be a very red blood moon. Through this, God will be telling us that the time of the Anti-Christ has now arrived, and the persecution of the last 3.5 years has begun. During this time, Satan will be very angry, much war will fill the entire earth, and many of Jesus’ people will die because they love Jesus even more than their own lives. The blood moon is God’s way of telling His people to start praying with all their hearts, because much blood is about to be spilled on the earth during the coming 3.5 years.”

When Daddy Owl finished saying this, everyone sat quietly and for several minutes didn’t say a word. Then Daddy Owl said, “But that is not the final message of the sun and moon. David and Hope, when Jesus comes back, will that be a time of brightness or darkness!”

This time Hope answered, “It will be the brightest, shiniest time the world has ever known.”

“That’s right, my beautiful Hope,” Daddy Owl said. “The prophets also tell us that when Jesus comes back, the sun and moon will stand still in the sky, just like it did in the days Joshua led the Israelites into the land of Israel a long time ago. And Isaiah tells us that while they are standing

still, both the sun and the moon will be shining seven times brighter than normal. And you know what?”

“What?” David and Hope said together, their eyes open wide and fixed on Daddy Owl.

“When the sun and moon are standing still in the sky,” Daddy Owl continued, they will be shining in the constellation of Leo. God will be clothing the message of Leo with the brightness of the sun even as Jesus comes through the sky. This is called ‘the sign of the Son of Man,’ and this sign will be blazing in the sky when Jesus comes back, Himself shining in glory brighter than the sun!”

“Hooray! Hooray!” the whole family shouted together. Then with one voice, they shouted, “Come Lord Jesus, come!” And this is what they *kept* saying, over and over and over again, throughout the rest of the dark night.

**THE END**