

## **We Are Not Alone!**

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Many earthbound inhabitants have asked the question: Are we alone on this planet, or is other intelligent life out there somewhere? Between 8 and 9 p.m. on the night before Hallowe'en in 1938, evidently many folks honestly think that the United States has been invaded by Martians landing in a park in the little New Jersey community of Grover's Mill, near Princeton, as a live nationwide radio broadcast on CBS, meant only as an innocent hoax, seemingly announces a very real "war of the worlds."

At this time in history, the threat of Nazi Germany is fueling existing jitters worldwide. The hysteria ensuing from this radio hoax inadvertently creates an immediate threat to national security and makes a household name of director/actor Orson Welles. Radio is a piece of furniture in many homes, and the power of realism in this performance lays bare an alarming level of credulity, or readiness to believe despite scant evidence, at a time when many might have been familiar with writer H. G. Wells's sci-fi novel *The War of the Worlds*, written just 40 years previously and upon which the radio script of the same name is based.

Some *fictitious* events associated with the broadcast:

- The cylindrical meteorite capsule has a top that comes unscrewed and out emerges tentacled monster tripod machines whose heads are even with the skyscrapers in New York City, which they soon invade
- The monsters use heat-ray guns, instantly incinerating 200 spectators
- Poisonous black smoke spreads darkness, rendering gas masks useless
- The New Jersey State militia is obliterated; the monsters are impervious to conventional missiles
- A voice sounding exactly like President Roosevelt is heard urging the nation to remain united and not to panic

Some *actual* facts and reported incidents associated with the broadcast:

- The competing NBC network runs a concurrent program featuring actor Don Ameche, ventriloquist Edgar Bergen, and singer Eddy Arnold; but after 15 minutes, the comedy sketch ends, causing many

listeners to tune their dials to CBS, thus missing the first of three warnings that the broadcast is pure fiction

- A weather report is followed by dance band music, which keeps getting interrupted by realistic-sounding news flashes
- Imaginations running wild, in the darkness the Grover's Mill water tower's A-frame support is a monster tripod machine, then a sieve riddled with bullets from panicky patriots defending against a Martian invasion
- St. Michael's Hospital in Newark treats 15 people for shock
- Panicky parishioners at Sacred Heart Church in Elizabeth surprise their priests by immediately falling on their knees and praying
- A Pittsburgh woman nearly commits suicide with a bottle of poison, saying she'd "rather die this way than like that"
- In North Carolina, five Brevard College students faint, resulting in many student phone callers requesting parents to come get them
- Despite a bogus FDR's plea, people can't get out of New Jersey fast enough, as the exit routes are clogged by "escaping" motorists
- Motorcycle cops out of radio contact helplessly watch as hundreds of speeders zoom past them doing 90 as they head for the hills
- One man gets his wife into their car, drives to the nearest gas station, demanding gas without paying, since paying "[won't] make any difference; everyone is going to die!" then speeds to Bellingham, Wash. (50 miles away) to get his priest's last-minute absolution of his sins
- Many hit the streets with towels over their faces to survive the poisonous smoke
- The following morning 72-year-old author H. G. Wells is reached by transatlantic telephone in London, saying of the panic, "How odd. I don't think I would care to comment until I hear more about it."
- In Germany, Adolph Hitler refers to the panic as "evidence of the decadence and corrupt condition of democracy"
- Estimates are that 6 million people hear the program, 1.7 million believe it to be fact, and 1.2 million are genuinely frightened



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**Water tower mistaken for invading Martian tripod death machine during the CBS radio broadcast, “The War of the Worlds” on October 30, 1938.**

All this egg-on-your-national-face embarrassment aside, the possibility of extraterrestrial life persistently poses honest and thoughtful questions. But rest easy: Ample evidence in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy writings confirms that there is other life “out there” indeed, *but* it most certainly doesn’t come in the form of gigantic monsters or even little green E.T.-type humanoids with antennae. (Now that would be taking the term “people of color” to a whole new level!)

Experience, sometimes painful experience, instead teaches us that for answers to life’s tough questions, it’s always a good idea to start with the inspired Word. And in the book of Job, which, with Genesis, represents the first Scripture revelations ever penned (and both of Mosaic authorship—see ST, Feb. 19, 1880, in 3BC 1140; cf. GC v), we soon discover where “the commanders of the angel hosts,

the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled” in “the heavenly council” (Job 1:6, 7; 2:1, 2; cf. DA 834). Evidently Satan crashes the council meeting as planet Earth’s “official” representative, an outrageously insolent usurper’s ruse which is not lost on God, Who demands of the usurper: “On what basis do you want to attend this meeting?” (Job 1:7a, *Clear Word*).

Over in the New Testament, Paul makes two references to other worlds in the book of Hebrews. “[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds.” (Heb. 1:2.) “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Heb. 11:3.) Though we could make a case for other Biblical allusions to additional worlds—even inhabited ones—Holy Writ does not elaborate upon this matter. Possession of such knowledge is not a test of faith.

For more recent inspired treatment of this topic, let me touch upon what Ellen White has to say: God “has worlds upon worlds [at least four!] that give Him divine honor” (SW July 14, 1908). Commenting on the parable of the lost sheep (Lk. 15:1–7), today’s Scripture reading, we find this intriguing, unambiguous statement:

The rabbis understood Christ’s parable as applying to the publicans and sinners; but it has also a wider meaning. By the lost sheep Christ represents not only the individual sinner but the one world that has apostatized and has been ruined by sin. This world is but an atom in the vast dominion over which God presides, yet this little fallen world—the one lost sheep—is more precious in His sight than are the ninety and nine that went not astray from the fold. Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly courts, stooped from His high estate, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, in order to save the one lost world. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth, to be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” (Isa. 53:5.) God gave Himself in His Son that He might have the joy of receiving back the sheep that was lost. (COL 190, 191.)

Other comments in Ellen White's writings abound, but I will limit my sampling to a representative few and thereby avoid the numerous repetitions occurring in her posthumous compilations. "The sun sheds its light to gladden a thousand worlds." (DA 21.) Elsewhere she expresses the number in yet more expansive terms: "The great God, Whose glory shines from the heavens, and Whose divine hand upholds millions of worlds, is our Father." (4T 653.) And if a hundred, a thousand, or even millions of worlds still weren't enough, we read of the ability of Adam and Eve, at the very beginning of Earth's history, to know all this: "God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, 'the balancings of the clouds,' the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were open to the study of our first parents." (PP 51.) Clearly, the point is not to inquire, Exactly how many worlds are there? but rather to constrain us to exclaim in wonder, How many worlds there are!

The following thought-gem not only comprehends multiple *worlds* but also very many unfallen *beings* "out there":

The world that Satan has claimed and has ruled over with cruel tyranny, the Son of God has, by one vast achievement, encircled in His love and connected again with the throne of Jehovah. Cherubim and seraphim, and the unnumbered hosts of all the unfallen worlds, sang anthems of praise to God and the Lamb when this triumph was assured. They rejoiced that the way of salvation had been opened to the fallen race and that the earth would be redeemed from the curse of sin. How much more should those rejoice who are the objects of such amazing love!

How can we ever be in doubt and uncertainty, and feel that we are orphans? (MB 104.) Did you catch that? What a display of genuine interest, even deep concern, by unfallen *extraterrestrial beings* in the outcome of the unfolding drama on puny planet Earth!

I simply must share two other choice comments from the pen of inspiration—truly, some of the most sublime statements in all of these writings. Here is the first:

Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind, brought in contact with the miracle and mystery

of the universe, cannot but recognize the working of infinite power. Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties, and year by year continue its motion around the sun. An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. A mysterious life pervades all nature—a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit. (Ed 99.)

And now the second statement:

If we will but listen, God's created works will teach us precious lessons of obedience and trust. From the stars that in their trackless courses through space follow from age to age their appointed path, down to the minutest atom, the things of nature obey the Creator's will. And God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created. He Who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without fear. When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his palace, or when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by the Heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that He does not mark.

If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now; for everything, whether great or small, would be left in the hands of God, Who is not perplexed by the multiplicity of cares, or overwhelmed by their weight. We should then enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers. (SC 85, 86.)

Lest anyone here be tempted to entertain the notion that planet Earth was the first among other subsequently created worlds, let me quickly lay to rest any such idea. The chapter "The Origin of Evil" in *The Great Controversy*, provides two clear statements in close succession. Because Satan maligned God's character, it must be shown once and for all time that he, and not God, has the character

problem: “Therefore it must be demonstrated before the inhabitants of Heaven, as well as of all the worlds, that God’s government was just, His law perfect.” (Page 498.) So these *other worlds*, obviously, were already in existence when Lucifer initiated evil in Heaven.

But now God is faced with a dilemma:

Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in Heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rely upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of Heaven and other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. (Pages 498, 499.)

Permit me to turn now to the related question of interplanetary travel. I have selected two thrilling statements at the close of the same book.

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God’s redeemed. Unfettered by mortality, they wing their tireless flight to worlds afar,—worlds that thrilled with sorrow at the spectacle of human woe, and rang with songs of gladness at the tidings of a ransomed soul. With unutterable delight the children of Earth enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. (GC 677.)

And the very last paragraph resonates with this glorious future prospect:

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him Who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love. (GC 678.)

I offer just one more example of Ellen White’s prophetic insight into our topic, and it is the absolutely enthralling narration of her encounter, in prophetic vision, with Enoch and an entire world of unfallen beings (Enoch, of course, long ago having been translated from Earth to Heaven without seeing death).

The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. Wings were given me, and an angel attended me from the [Holy] City [in Heaven] to a place that was bright and glorious. The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song. The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place. I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth. The reply was, "We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth." Then I saw two trees, one looked much like the tree of life in the City. The fruit of both looked beautiful, but of one they could not eat. They had power to eat of both, but were forbidden to eat of one. Then my attending angel said to me, "None in this place have tasted of the forbidden tree; but if they should eat, they would fall." Then I was taken to a world which had seven moons [are you with me, astronomy buffs?]. There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated. On his right arm he bore a glorious palm, and on each leaf was written "Victory." Around his head was a dazzling white wreath, and leaves on the wreath, and in the middle of each leaf was written "Purity," and around the wreath were stones of various colors, that shone brighter than the stars, and cast a reflection upon the letters and magnified them. On the back part of his head was a bow that confined the wreath, and upon the bow was written "Holiness." Above the wreath was a lovely crown that shone brighter than the sun. I asked him if this was the place he was taken to from the earth. He said, "It is not; the City is my home, and I have come to visit this place." He moved about the place as if perfectly at home. I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, "You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God." (EW 39, 40.)

I hope you have been blessed by this brief survey of life elsewhere in God's vast universe and outside Heaven itself. Imaginative though they may have been, science fiction writers Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, Isaac Asimov, and all the Trekkies together could never have imagined what God Himself has in store for us



“out there”! Paul’s familiar Scripture still says it best: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9.) That ought to do away with any notion of “boredom” as the portion of the redeemed.

Hebrews 12:1 mentions a great cloud of witnesses. All of the heroes of faith mentioned in chapter 11 are witnesses. But Ellen White adds this intriguing statement: “There are other witnesses. All about us are those who are watching us closely, to see how we who profess a belief in the truth conduct ourselves. At all times and in all places, so far as possible, we must magnify the truth before the world.” (MS 61, June 27, 1907, in 7BC 934.) And after we have done all we can for Jesus, let’s plan to do some *serious* space travel, shall we? Looks like company’s waiting!