

4<sup>th</sup> June

## Memory verses

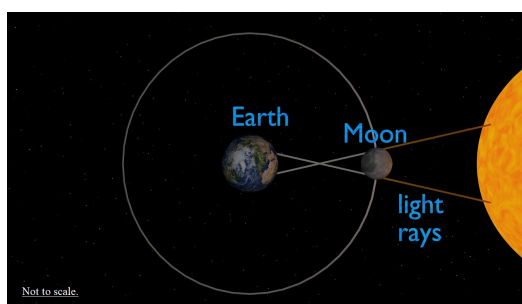
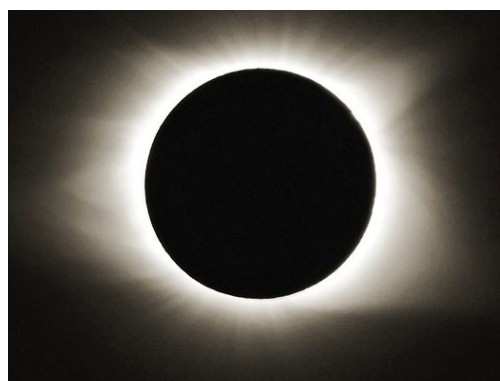
**I do set my bow in the cloud**, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. [And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh;] and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Genesis 9:13-15

More Chinese things today and some diary entries again – keep yours going!

## Astronomy

Do you remember learning about eclipses on 3rd May? The Chinese sage Confucius (551-479BC) wrote that in the reign of the Emperor Yew-Wang (781-771BC) an eclipse took place. This is the oldest Chinese record of a solar eclipse and calculations show that it took place on **4<sup>th</sup> June** 781BC. Times seem to have been difficult under Yew-Wang with “barbarians on all sides attacking the kingdom” and unless he was made of stern stuff I imagine a total eclipse might have scared him witless. At about 9 o'clock in the morning the sun was plunged into darkness for 5 minutes. As the moon passed in front of the sun, blacking it out from sight, a halo with ribbons of light streaming from it became visible. Birds stopped singing. The land darkened as if it were a moonlit night. For all Yew-Wang and his terrified subjects knew, it might be the end of the world.



Why do we see eclipses? As we learned on 3rd May, a total solar eclipse, like the one that happened 2801 years ago today, occurs when the moon passes between the earth and the sun, blotting it completely (see left). These are the most spectacular events that happen in the sky. There is a perfect fit, as you can see in the picture above, with the disc of the moon exactly the same apparent area as the disc of the sun behind it. This makes visible the sun's corona, the red solar prominences which are flares of gas

shooting out from the sun's surface and Baily's beads which are globules of light just visible through the valleys on the surface of the moon. But all this happens only because of one special feature of God's design of our solar system. As we noted in May, the moon is **400 times** smaller in diameter than the sun and has been placed exactly **400 times** closer to the earth! Thus to an observer on earth the two discs appear the same size. God has deliberately created awe inspiring eclipses!<sup>1</sup>

But what about poor Yew-Wang and his people? Were they afraid because they were too ignorant to know what an eclipse was? We are not afraid now. Is that because we are cleverer than they were?

No! We are not cleverer. We have learned from those who went before us (like Edmund Halley) and built on what we learned. The sad thing is that Yew-Wang and his people had no one to tell them about the God who made them – and the eclipse! When many years before their ancestors had dispersed from Babel they had been rebels against God. At the time of this eclipse, the evil King Jeroboam was ruling over Israel and Uzziah had just become king of Judah following his father the

<sup>1</sup> To find out more read <https://creation.com/no-coincidence>.

good king Amaziah. As far as we know, no one with the news of the true God was sent out to Yew-Wang's empire from God's people. Judging from the example of Jonah (who some people think lived around this time) those who did have the knowledge of the true God were not exactly keen to share it with other peoples of the world.

The next total eclipse visible from Britain will be 12<sup>th</sup> August 2026 around sunset. How old will you be then?

### A story from the history of science

Sir Christopher Cockerell (1910-1999), inventor of the hovercraft, was born on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Sir Christopher began work as an electronics engineer with the Marconi Company. He left Marconi in 1950 to begin a boat-hire business. He noticed that water dragged on the hulls of his boats and decided to experiment with the idea of raising a boat on a cushion of air. In 1954, he experimented with kitchen scales, tin cans, and a vacuum cleaner and was able to demonstrate that a stream of air could produce the lift that was needed. A balsa wood model with a model aircraft engine was the next step in 1955.<sup>2</sup> A full scale prototype SR-N1 (now in the Science Museum, London) was built and great expectations were raised as to what this new form of water transport would achieve with suggestions of “100 miles an hour” and “Calais in 10 minutes”. Sadly, these were never achieved. With Sir Christopher aboard, the first hovercraft crossed the English Channel in 1959 and hovercraft entered regular cross-channel service in 1968. Eventually, rising fuel costs, frequent cancellations due to bad weather, higher speed conventional ferries and finally the channel tunnel put an end to cross channel hovercraft services. However, hovercraft remain very useful in military situations. The Russians have the largest:<sup>3</sup> and the USA also use them for troop carrying and logistics. Hovercraft are ideal for marshes and swamps – what a good thing for Hereward the Wake (2<sup>nd</sup> June's lesson) that William did not have one!

### Something to make

If you want to make your own model hovercraft instructions are here:  
<https://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Hovercraft-Toy-using-a-CD>

### Map work 1

John Wesley (1703-1791) the evangelist and hymn-writer was an erratic diarist but although he was too busy to write every day he has still left an interesting record. On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June 1757 he was in Glasgow, Scotland.

“I walked through all parts of the old cathedral,” he wrote, “a very large and once beautiful structure; I think, more lofty than that at Canterbury and nearly the same length and breadth. We then went up the main steeple, which gave us a fine prospect both of the city and the adjacent country. A more fruitful and better cultivated plain is scarcely to be seen in England. Indeed nothing is wanting but more trade (which would, naturally bring more people), to make a great part of Scotland no way inferior to the best counties in England. I was much pleased with the seriousness of the people in the evening; but still I prefer the English congregation...”



<sup>2</sup> You can see the first full-scale prototype, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyiFtySkdrk>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWcctrrkG1E>



“Nothing is wanting but more trade...” said Wesley. Here is the same view today. What has happened to the fruitful and cultivated plain?

Exactly two years later on Monday, **June 4<sup>th</sup>** 1759 John Wesley was also in the north. He wrote: “After preaching (at **Alnwick**), I rode on to **Newcastle**. Certainly if I did not believe there was another world, I should spend all my summers here; I know no place in Great Britain comparable to it for pleasantness. But I seek another country and therefore am content to be a wanderer upon the earth.” Trace the journey Wesley made from Alnwick to Newcastle using map. How far is it? What kind of countryside would Wesley have been passing through that he found so delightful?

**Map work 2** further afield!

In the lesson for May 21<sup>st</sup> we looked at the route taken over the Gobi desert by missionary Mildred Cable and her friends in the 1920s. In 1935 the Swiss explorer and photographer Ella Maillart set out with a correspondent of the Times newspaper, Peter Fleming, to find out what was happening in Xinjiang, which in those days was called Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan. The Kumul Rebellion (1931–1934) had just ended and the province was involved in a series of complicated wars including the Soviet Invasion of Xinjiang (1934) and the Charkhlik Revolt (1935). The Chinese authorities in Peking had no control in the province and would not admit it. They would allow no one to visit the area. The situation was further complicated by the relationship of China and Japan. Japan virtually ruled a large area in China in the east, Manchuria, and the Chinese were straining to get free of them.



Unlike Mildred Cable and her friends, Ella Maillart spoke very little Chinese but together she and Mr Fleming managed to cross China from Peking (now called **Beijing**) to Srinagar (in the Kashmir region of modern India) through through hostile desert regions and steep Himalayan passes. They set out in February 1935 and travelled for seven months by train, on lorries, on foot, horse and camelback. Their route diverged from that taken by Mildred Cable at **Lanzhou** and they travelled to Cherchen (**Qiemo County**), **Kashgar** and **Srinagar** (pictured above).



By **June 4<sup>th</sup>** they were in Xinjiang Province, approaching the **Altyn-Tagh** mountains on the edge of the Tarim Basin. They had lost camels and horses, and were tired themselves. Water was hard to find, there was ice and snow but on the **4<sup>th</sup> of June** they had a rest. Mr Fleming had been at Eton as a schoolboy and he wanted to remember the school's special

celebrations on that day with a rest and a special meal!<sup>4</sup> “The curried rice was unsurpassed and our one tin of crab – a present from the Japanese Consul at Vladivostok – was considered worthy to be sacrificed on such a day,”<sup>5</sup> Ella wrote in her diary. Can you track their journey in your Atlas?

These are the kind of animals that carried Ella Maillart and her companions for many miles of their journey. But what kind of camels are they, Dromedary or Bactrian?<sup>6</sup>

Keep writing *your* diary!!



### Something to think about

On 4<sup>th</sup> June AD70 the Roman army under their general Titus broke through the middle wall of the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem had been under siege since April and Titus would not finally succeed in razing it to the ground and burning up the temple until August. Conditions in the city were horrific and everyone was desperate with hunger. Recent archaeological excavations have discovered where the Romans broke in through the wall and there are many of the huge missiles that their siege ballistas (a kind of huge catapult) fired before the wall was breached lying on the site.

Here is a picture of part of a great arch still standing in Rome. It is the arch built to celebrate the triumph of Titus and it shows scenes of the Roman soldiers carrying things taken from Jerusalem in a triumphal procession in Rome after the siege. What is the item they are carrying high up towards the centre of the carving?<sup>7</sup>



We know many details about the siege and destruction of the city from a Jewish writer, Josephus, who was there at the time with the Roman armies. He does not mention that any Christians had been victims of the siege. Jesus had warned his disciples that the temple would be destroyed and he told them to watch out for the signs that it was about to happen. He warned them that then they should “flee to the mountains”. You can read what he told them in Mark's Gospel chapter 13 vv1-23. The Christians had not forgotten his warning and so they escaped. There is a lesson here for us. Jesus also warned of a greater destruction coming when the whole world will be destroyed and he is our only refuge when that great day comes.

4 You can read about this here:

<https://www.newandlingwood.com/the-editorial/post/the-history-of-etons-4th-june-celebrations>

5 Maillart, Ella, *Forbidden Journey* (London, 1940) p.178.

6 They have two humps so they are Bactrian camels.

7 It is the seven branched candlestick from the temple.