



## **UNCLE BOB'S MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT VISITOR**

**(Children's Story/Parable)**

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Uncle Bob was very tired. He was working in Africa as a missionary and had been traveling all day on the roof of a truck.

Have you ever traveled like that? It sounds like fun, sitting high atop an ancient truck, watching the blue sky and the different animals roaming on the vast African Savannah. But I hope you never have to do that, because it gets hot and dusty sitting with the boxes and crates all day!

That's why Uncle Bob was tired, but the truck had been full that morning, and the only place he could sit was on the roof with the cargo.

Finally, after traveling all day, the truck stopped for the night and all the people that had been riding inside got off to go sleep in nearby houses. But the houses were small and plain, just a cluster of thatched-roof huts – and they were also full!

So Uncle Bob decided to stay on the roof of the truck and sleep there. It was probably more comfortable than sleeping in a lumpy straw bed anyway. By now the sun had gone down and the night was cool, so he was feeling better.

After eating one of the two sandwiches he brought with him, Uncle Bob put the uneaten one back in the paper sack he carried. Then, because he was sleepy, he decided to lay down and go to sleep.

But first, Uncle Bob did what he did every night before going to bed. He prayed. He thanked God for being with him during the day, and asked Him to protect his family far away. He also asked God to send His angels to protect him as he slept under that beautiful African sky so bright with stars.

Sometime during the night he awoke and immediately knew he was not alone. Someone was on the roof with him – and they were going through his things! He could feel them rummaging among his belongings, and hear the crunch of paper. Then they were on top of him!

As he tried to get up, Uncle Bob recognized the dark form that had been moving about. It was the huge trunk of an elephant. Turning in the darkness, he could just make out the giant head looming above the side of the truck.

Uncle Bob lay very still as the elephant inspected all his things. He knew how quickly elephants can get angry if provoked and how many people lose their lives every year because of angry elephants. So he didn't dare move, even when the elephant's trunk passed over his body and smelled him!

Then, the elephant smelled something else—his sandwich! In one swift movement, the animal deftly grabbed the sandwich—bag and all—and the trunk disappeared down the side of the truck.

Uncle Bob lay unmoving for a few moments, waiting for the animal to reappear. But pretty soon he heard the lumbering steps of the elephant as it walked away. Whew! What a relief!

For a while afterwards, Uncle Bob couldn't sleep. But then he thought about how God had protected him, and how the angels must have been right there with him. He thanked God that he had only lost his sandwich, but remained unharmed, and finally he slept again.

When he opened his eyes, a red dawn was breaking in the horizon, and he felt rested and refreshed. God had been with him.

That evening, when Uncle Bob arrived at the meeting place where he was to speak, he told the children—and the adults, too—how glad he was for God's protection. He reminded everyone to always remember to pray—and never forget that Jesus loves them. When we least expect it, we may need His protection, and He's always there when we call on Him.