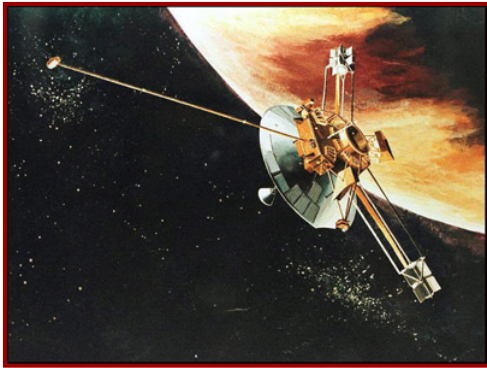


Voyage of Pioneer 10

In 1972, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched the exploratory space probe Pioneer 10.

According to Leon Jaroff in *Time* magazine, its primary mission was to reach Jupiter, photograph the planet and its moons, and beam data to Earth about Jupiter's magnetic field, radiation belts and atmosphere. Scientists regarded this as a bold plan, for at this time no probe had ever gone beyond Mars, and they feared the asteroid belt would destroy Pioneer 10 before it could reach its target.



But Pioneer 10 accomplished its mission and much more. Swinging past the giant planet in November 1973, Pioneer 10 was then hurled by Jupiter's immense gravity at a higher rate of speed toward the edge of the solar system. At 1 billion miles from the sun, Pioneer 10 passed Saturn, then swept past Uranus at some 2 billion miles, Neptune at nearly 3 billion miles, and Pluto at almost 4 billion miles.

By 1997, which was 25 years after its launch, Pioneer 10 was more than 6 billion miles from the sun. Not bad for a device that was designed to have a useful life of only three years.

And despite that immense distance, Pioneer 10 was still beaming back radio signals that scientists on Earth could decipher. "Perhaps most remarkable," wrote Jaroff, "those signals emanate from an 8-watt transmitter, which radiates about as much power as a bedroom night light, and take more than nine hours to reach Earth."

While the spacecraft is believed to still operate properly, communication has been lost since January 23, 2003.

Even a faint message can travel a long way.

Similarly, even prayers with small faith can reach the heart of God, who created this vast universe and whose great strength can work the impossible.

– Beecher Hunter