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Wormwood: Asteroid of Judgment

"And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood;
and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter"
(Revelation 8:11).

by Tom Stewart
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Carolyn and Eugene Shoemaker, along with fellow comet hunter David Levy, watched through their telescopes for six days-- between July 16th and 22nd 1994-- as the 21 major fragments of their jointly discovered comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 battered the planet Jupiter. "The Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork" (Psalm 19:1). Described by some observers as a "string of glowing pearls", the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet fragmented as a result of a near collision with Jupiter in July 1992, and was calculated "to unleash an energy equivalent to several million megatons of TNT each during their [1994] plunge into Jupiter's atmosphere" (from Britannica CD 99, "Book of the Year (1995): Astronomy: Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9: A Spectacular Good-bye"). "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (62:11). Further, this event most "likely attracted more observations than any other astronomical event in history" (Britannica CD 99). Shoemaker-Levy 9, along with the entertainment media, has recently fueled the public's interest in the collision of astronomical bodies. "10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a Great Star from Heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Revelation 8:10-11).

The New Testament Greek word for "star" is *aster*, as in asteroid. Providentially, the not-too-distant occurrence of the 3rd Trumpet Judgment (Revelation 8:10-11) of the Tribulation Week, places Wormwood-- the Asteroid of Judgment-- in prophetic focus. *Apsinthos*, the Greek word for "Wormwood", means undrinkable. "Therefore thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink" (Jeremiah 9:15). The Apocalypse of the LORD Jesus Christ prophetically discloses what appears to be the Earth being struck by an asteroid, with the result that the "third part of the rivers" and the "fountains of waters" (Revelation 8:10) became "wormwood" (8:11). The aftermath will be that "many men [will die] of the waters", and specifically, "because they were made bitter" (8:11). Man's injustice or lack of Godly judgment will provoke the Almighty to perform this monumental deed "when the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23); but, the "judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:9).

It has become scientifically more acceptable to investigate and discuss the possibility of the Earth's collision with a Near Earth Object (NEO). "The Earth orbits in a cosmic shooting gallery, subject to occasional random hits by comets and asteroids. Impacts by objects a mile or more across can devastate the planet's environment. The Spaceguard Survey is used as a first step in identifying and

tracking potentially threatening objects" (from the NASA Ames Space Science Division's website on "Asteroid and Comet Impact Hazards"). In 1931, the first Earth-crossing asteroid was discovered. Luis Alvarez, in 1980, proposed that a NEO impacted the Earth-- probably on the Yucatan Peninsula-- causing a global pall of dust that resulted in the mass extinction of lifeforms on Earth, in particular, the dinosaurs. Coupled with the "close passage of asteroid 1989FC- with zero warning time - [it] helped [to] stimulate broad interest and concern in this potential threat to civilization and even to the survival of humanity" (from the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Position Paper (1995): "Responding to the Potential Threat of a Near-Earth-Object Impact").

Christianity's Creationism has attempted to account for the geological and ecological history of the planet in the Water Vapour Canopy Theory, that a canopy of water vapor enveloped the planet above the atmosphere from the time of the Creation-- "7 And God made the firmament [i.e., atmosphere], and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven [i.e., the atmosphere]" (Genesis 1:7-8)-- until the time of Noah's Flood, when "all the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of Heaven were opened" (7:11). Perhaps, the impact of an asteroid or comet-- initially, upon the Canopy, and secondarily, upon the planet itself-- was the modus operandi employed by the LORD God to trigger the unprecedented rainfall of "forty days and forty nights" (7:4). Thus, the mass extinction of the dinosaurs, which were not evidently included onboard Noah's ark, would be indirectly the result of the brief catastrophism of an NEO impact, and not from evolution's uniformitarianism. "The world by [its] wisdom knew not God" (1Corinthians 1:21).

On September 26th 1990, the United States House of Representatives, in its NASA Multiyear Authorization Act of 1990, stated: "The Committee believes that it is imperative that the detection rate of Earth-orbit-crossing asteroids must be increased substantially, and that the means to destroy or alter the orbits of asteroids when they threaten collision should be defined and agreed upon internationally." Accordingly, the secular world is unwittingly being prepared by the Almighty for their rendezvous with Wormwood, the Asteroid of Judgment (Revelation 8:11). "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). But, if the Earth has been significantly struck by an NEO projectile at the time of Noah's Flood-- about 4,348 years ago (as of 2000 AD)-- the probability that an asteroid would not be prevented from impacting the Earth by the shielding of our Jupiter neighbor, would be in the hands of the Living God to work out His purpose of judgment to an Unbelieving and Stiffnecked World. "9 The LORD is not slack concerning His Promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the Earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness" (2Peter 3:9-11).

Maranatha!