

comments that we should be more surprised at their *absence* than their presence. He speaks of connections sometimes made between the religious practices found in the *Community Rule* and among the early Christians as “weak”, and in regard to the mention in one scroll of the new covenant, he quite correctly comments that, whereas both groups independently refer to Jer-

emiah 31:31-34, the last verse of this passage, about the forgiveness of sins, was fulfilled only in the Son of God.

There is much more in the book of a technical nature for those who wish to delve deeper, but sufficient has been said to make it absolutely clear that the Dead Sea Scrolls present no challenge whatsoever to Christian faith.



## Science

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# Science and the Creator

## “To shake terribly the earth”

David Burges

**T**HE PSALMIST, contemplating the glory of the night sky, rejoiced that “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork” (Ps. 19:1). But the heavens also conceal more sinister objects, which, it is now realised, could pose a real danger to the earth. Every few months there are sensational headlines in the media because an asteroid has been reported to have passed close to the earth, only narrowly avoiding the peril of a catastrophic impact. Hollywood has cashed in on the concern with more than one ‘disaster movie’ based upon the idea of heroic efforts to save the earth from devastation by an asteroid impact.

### Asteroids

In fact scientists are now taking seriously the potential hazards because improved observation techniques have shown that there are a large number of such objects in earth-crossing orbits, and also there is ample evidence of past impacts.<sup>1</sup>

The moon and the other inner planets, Mercury, Venus and Mars, are all covered in impact craters. The Apollo missions to the moon confirmed conclusively that its craters were formed by the impact of asteroids or comets and not by volcanic action. Moreover, radar mapping from space has likewise revealed many such cra-

ters on the earth’s surface, in addition to the famous Arizona Crater, even though most are less obvious because of erosion and vegetation cover.

Asteroids are irregular pieces of rock varying in size from less than a kilometre to several hundred kilometres across. Some 8,000 of them occupy the asteroid belt orbiting the sun in the region between Mars and Jupiter, but many others have been identified in elongated orbits which cross those of the inner planets, including the earth. It is thought that these have been shaken from the asteroid belt by the gravitational influence of Jupiter.

The danger they pose to the earth arises from their enormous kinetic energy, resulting from their mass and high speed, typically fifty kilometres per second. It has been calculated that an object only ten kilometres across striking the earth would generate a blast far greater than any nuclear explosion that man has released. And this in turn would produce firestorms, vast clouds of smoke, bringing an extended period of darkness and cold,<sup>2</sup> as well as widespread hurricanes, poi-

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1. “Bolts from the blue”, John and Mary Gribbin, *New Scientist—Inside Science No. 113*, 12 Sept. 1998.
  2. Similar to the so-called ‘nuclear winter’ which it is predicted would result from a nuclear war.

sonous gases and vast tidal waves, bringing devastation to most of the world.<sup>3</sup>

### Scanning the heavens

Faced with this threat, NASA has established the Spaceguard Survey, in conjunction with observatories in several countries, to detect and monitor near-earth asteroids, which are undetectable by the naked eye and must be found with specialist telescopes. In 2001 they located over 100 such objects with diameters of one kilometre or more, bringing the total so far to 587 out of the 1,750 estimated to be out there.<sup>4</sup> In fact an asteroid coded 2001 YB5 passed the earth on 7 January 2002 at a distance of just 510,000 miles, less than three times the moon's distance, a very close shave in astronomical terms. It was estimated to have been 300 metres across, large enough to have caused considerable devastation.

Although governments have shown some interest in establishing monitoring systems, there are at present no plans for dealing with the threat should an asteroid on a direct collision course be detected, and it would be hard to convince them to prepare costly planetary defences that may never be required. Scientists pin their hopes on detecting such an object with sufficient time to prepare a method of defence, probably involving the use of nuclear missiles to deflect it, in order to save the earth.

However, it is recognised that smaller asteroids are even more difficult to detect and could still cause widespread damage. It is believed that a small asteroid or comet was responsible for the Tunguska explosion which struck Siberia on 30 June 1908, causing earthquakes and widespread fires, and felling trees outwards in a radial pattern over an area of 2,150 square kilometres. If that event had occurred in a populated area, the loss of life would have been immense.

### God's Day of Judgement

Many of the Old Testament prophets, in describing the coming Day of Judgement by the Almighty upon the nations, use descriptions of the resulting destruction which are strikingly similar to the effects predicted for an asteroid impact. Thus common features are fire from heaven, thick darkness and earthquake, at the time when God arises "to shake terribly the earth". For example:

"And they shall go into the holes of the rocks . . . for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of

His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19);

"For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh" (66:15,16);

"For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel . . . and I will rain upon him [Gog], and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone . . . And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles" (Ezek. 38:19,22; 39:6);

"the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion . . . and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:14-16);

"Seek Him That . . . maketh the day dark with night: That calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth . . . the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light" (Amos 5:8,18);

"The great day of the LORD is near, it is near . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zeph. 1:14,15);

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations" (Hag. 2:6,7).

It is appreciated that many of these references have an immediate fulfilment in the circumstances of the prophets' times, and also often

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3. Some fifty years ago Immanuel Velikovsky proposed that global catastrophes at the times of the Exodus and Hezekiah's deliverance, and including the Flood, were caused by the close approach to the earth of planets or comets. His ideas, partly based upon Scripture and many ancient histories and myths, were dismissed at the time as heresy by the scientific establishment, whereas some are now widely accepted. See "[What happened to the dinosaurs?](#)", *The Testimony*, May 2001, p. 189.
  4. "Incoming", Eugenie Samuel, *New Scientist*, 16 Feb. 2002, p. 11.

have a symbolic dimension, but all can be seen as having an ultimate fulfilment in the great day of God's wrath yet to come. Furthermore, the analogy drawn by Scripture between the Flood and the final judgement strongly suggests that God will impose His punishment on the wickedness of man by wholesale destruction of his environment and a consequent cleansing of the planet, which man has so polluted.

Of course, the Almighty Creator has all the resources of nature at His command, and it may well be that His judgements on the nations will be achieved in quite different ways. But it does seem significant that, at the very time in history when the prophetic signs of Christ's coming and the Day of Judgement are so powerful, men's eyes are turning with increasing concern to the heavens as a potential source of destruction and

disaster. Yet for those whose lives rest upon the God of Israel and His promises there is no cause for fear, but rather a message of encouragement and reassurance:

"Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isa. 26:20, 21);

"Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zeph. 2:3).



## Prophecy, History and Archaeology

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# Ezekiel's visions of the Millennium

## 5. The priests and the worshippers

Geoff Cave

**T**HE PURPOSE of this article is to look at some of the information given in Ezekiel and elsewhere about the operations of the sanctuary in the age to come. It will concentrate on who will work in the sanctuary, and who will come to the sanctuary to worship and bring sacrifices.

### The priests of Israel

Ezekiel 44 speaks of the two different priestly orders who will serve in the sanctuary: "the Levites that are gone away far from Me", and "the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok" (vv. 10,15). The first of these two groups is described thus: "And the Levites that are gone away far from Me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from Me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the

people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them" (vv. 10-12).

These priests fulfil two main roles: they are to be gatekeepers and to minister to the people. They will work in the outer court of the sanctuary only: "And they shall not come near unto Me, to do the office of a priest unto Me, nor to come near to any of My holy things, in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed" (v. 13). These priests will take the sacrifices brought by the people, slay them and prepare them for sacrifice, but they will not be allowed to enter into the temple building.

### The sons of Zadok

The sons of Zadok are the priests who minister in the inner court and in the temple: "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near