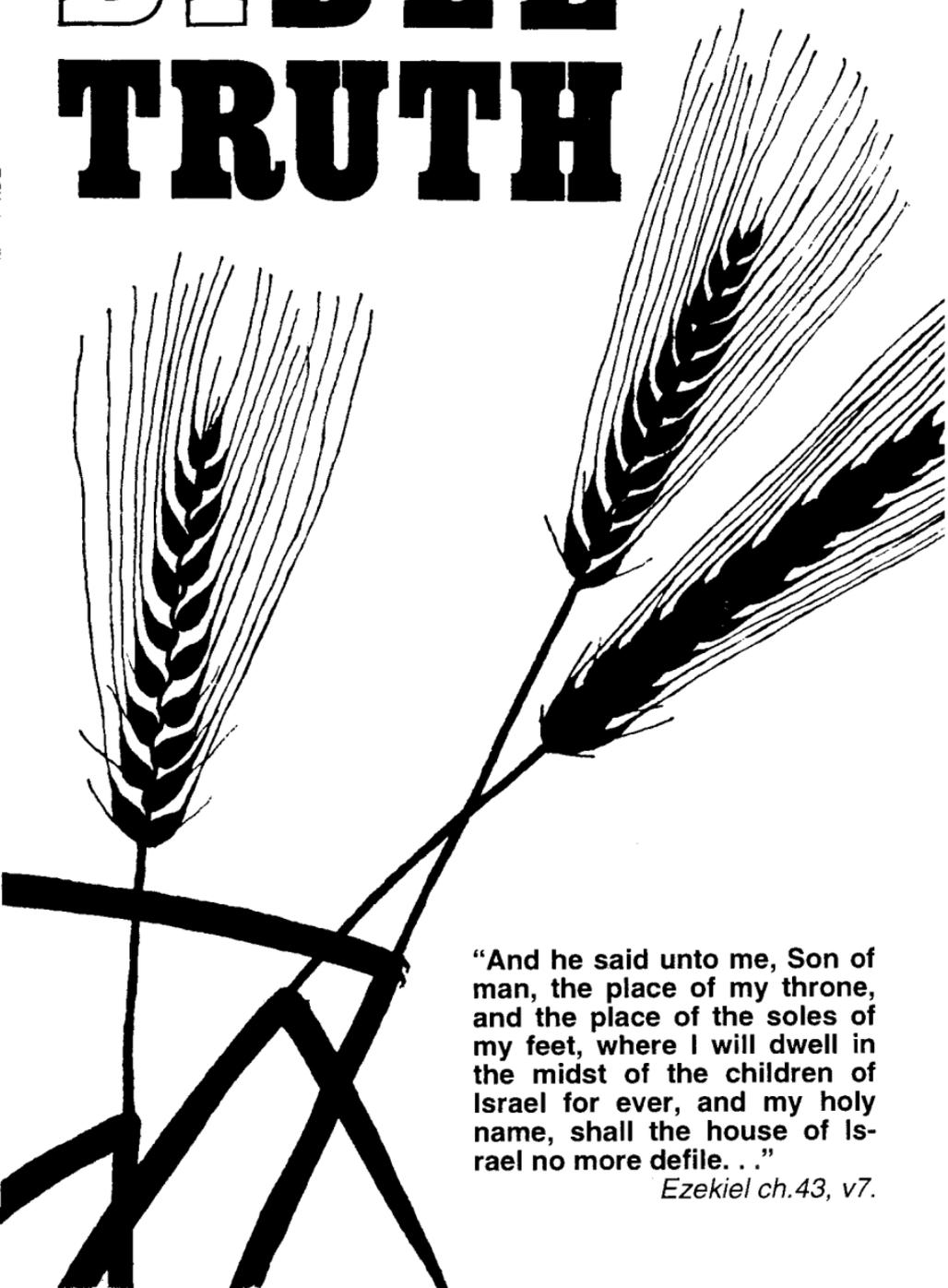


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“And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile. . .”

Ezekiel ch.43, v7.

STONES FROM HEAVEN

By Dr. Michael D. Bennett

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea, and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

Luke ch.21 vs.25-27.

1. Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9

July 1994 saw the impact of comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 with the planet Jupiter. This was no small event. One newspaper called it “the event of the millennium”. Roger Highfield and Adrian Berry writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (Saturday July 23rd, page 11) said “This week’s fireworks on Jupiter have been unprecedented in human experience. It is believed that 23 fragments from the comet. . .struck the giant planet at about 135,000 mph. One of them. . .caused an explosion of 250 million megatons, 15 billion times more violent than the Hiroshima bomb.” Later in their article they noted “attention has been renewed into what the human race might face if Earth were ever to suffer a comparable bombardment.” What indeed!

This is the age of astronomical events unprecedented in human experience. In 1969, for the first time in history, a man stood on the moon. Now in the very week of the twenty-fifth anniversary of that unique event, the comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 ploughed into Jupiter watched by earth’s astronomers. If such events are not a fulfilment of Jesus’ prophecy (“*There shall be signs in the sun, and the moon, and in the stars*”), just what greater kinds of event would be a convincing fulfilment?

It may be worth noting in passing that the timing of the period of the destructive impacts of this comet coincides with the anniversary of the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar on July 18th in 586 B.C.

Jupiter is the largest planet in our solar system. After the sun and the moon, it is the brightest body in our sky, and

hence the brightest “star” as understood by the ancients. Moreover the planet Jupiter is named for the dominant heathen god of ancient times.

The Roman god Jupiter (Diou-pater, ‘sky father’) was thought by the Romans to correspond in attributes with the Greek god Zeus, and hence the two were identified. The name Zeus in fact corresponds with the first syllable of Jupiter, and suggests the ruler of the celestial firmament. He was not the creator of the world, but its sovereign ruler. He was imagined to have usurped the authority of his father Kronos, and thus to have become the chief and ruler of the other gods. Zeus was famous for his thunderbolts which struck those who incurred his displeasure. As a usurper and the ruler of the firmament, Jupiter has many attributes in common with Satan the ruler of fallen gods and the prince of the power of the air. Thus, if the comet’s collision with Jupiter is a sign, it would indicate that Satan’s domain and power is about to be struck by heaven’s intervention. It shows that God is omnipotent and rules in the heavens. What He can do on Jupiter, He can certainly do on earth also.

2. The stones of Joshua’s long day

Not only can God bombard the earth, but He has already done so, and in a way which involved unmistakable signs in the sun and moon, and which overthrew heathen kingdoms and delivered Israel. The occasion came near the end of Joshua’s seven-year campaign as Israel fought against the five kings of the Amorites which included the king of Jerusalem. The full story is recorded in Joshua chapter ten and from which the following verses are taken:

“And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.”

Joshua ch.10 v.11.

In view of what happened next, there is every reason to believe that this hailstorm came from beyond the atmosphere rather than from within it! The very orbits of the “rulers” of day and night were affected.

“Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of

Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."

Joshua ch.10 vs.12-14.

That lethal bombardment of great hailstones, was certainly accompanied by signs in the sun and moon unprecedented in human experience — *"And there was no day like that before it or after it"*.

If the heathen imagined Zeus as famous for his thunderbolts, the living God is far greater. Indeed, the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth is always marked by the impacts of stones, some big and some small. The king of Jerusalem was defeated and executed by Joshua, immediately after the rain of great stones (Joshua ch.11 v.23).

3. David's pebble and Daniel's stone

It is noteworthy that David's public career, and the event which made him famous and led on to his becoming king of Judah and Israel, hung on the trajectory of a little stone which struck the champion of opposition to God's people and floored him. Goliath's execution by David, using his own sword, was immediately followed by a great victory for the armies of Israel:

"And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face tro the earth. . . And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled."

1 Samuel ch.17 vs.49 & 51.

It will not be found in the marginal cross references of your Bible, but real Bible students cannot help but note the symbolic link between this little stone (whose destructive

impact led on to David's kingdom) with the destructive impact of another far greater stone sent from heaven. Its coming was prophesied by Daniel to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and its effect upon the inhabitants of the earth is truly unprecedented!

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. . . Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Daniel ch.2 vs.34-35 & 45.

It is worth comparing how much interest and attention men will pay to the impact of a comet on a planet hundreds of millions of miles away, but how little attention they will give to the impact right here on earth of God's stone kingdom.

4. Spaceguard

As Roger Highfield and Adrian Berry noted in the *Daily Telegraph* (Saturday July 23rd 1994 page 11) "attention has been renewed into what the human race might face if Earth were ever to suffer a comparable bombardment." Scientists have been proposing for some years that earth may be in sufficient danger of impacts from space by bodies such as comets and asteroids as to merit developing a global protective shield using rocket-launched nuclear weapons to break-up or divert such approaching objects while they are still remote from the earth. Indeed, as Highfield and Berry stated "Astronomers have started to set up Spaceguard, costing about 30 million pounds, a world-wide telescope network to detect earth threatening objects above a certain size."

While this is in principle a very good idea, it does raise the particular possibility of men directing a nuclear attack against the sign of the LORD's coming back to the earth.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. . ."

Matthew ch.24 vs.29-30.

4. A stone to destroy modern Babylon?

We cannot know the precise cause of these celestial phenomena until this prophecy is fulfilled. They will certainly happen, for God's word is true, and He has perfect knowledge of the future. Meanwhile we can note the possibility that most of these phenomena could result from earth's meeting with something like a comet with associated dense clouds of dust. We know that sun-like stars are far too large to fall on the earth. Thus, if the prophecy concerns material stars falling on to the earth (as indicated by a parallel passage in Revelation ch.6 vs.12-13), it must refer to smaller bodies, such as asteroids, comets, meteors and meteorites.

There are other interesting passages in the New Testament, which are particularly suggestive of such activity (see Revelation ch.8 vs.8 & 10). One passage in particular describes the sudden destruction, within one hour, of a great and rich city (code name Babylon), ruling at the centre of an idolatrous system.

"And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning. . .and cried. . .Alas, alas that great city. . .for in one hour is she made desolate. . .And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

Revelation ch.18 vs.18,19 & 21.

Other verses make it clear that men will seek shelter in underground caves and bunkers from the sight of Christ's return. The Old Testament prophecy is amplified in the New Testament age, thus:

"Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. . .And they shall

go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

Isaiah ch.2 vs.10 & 19.

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Revelation ch.6 vs.12-17.

6. New Jerusalem and the precious stones

God rained great stones from heaven on Israel's enemies in the time of Joshua, and He will do so again at the end of this age. But if God can rain stones of mighty destruction from heaven upon His enemies, He can and will also send down out of heaven mighty and precious stones of blessing for His friends. If He can suddenly destroy the city of Babylon with one stone from heaven, He can quickly send down an infinitely better replacement.

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. . . And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. . ."

Revelation ch.21 vs.10-11 & 19.

This structure is composed not of the substance of earth, which must perish, but of the substance of heaven.

Moreover, the impact of these most precious stones from heaven is not destructive, but life giving. Far from hiding in caves of the earth like the old rulers, the new kings will rejoice to enter this precious stone from heaven.

“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.”

Revelation ch.21 v.24.

This city has no need of the sun or the moon.

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Revelation ch.21 v.23.

The Israel blessing will have its literal fulfilment — *“The LORD make his face shine upon thee”* (Numbers ch.6 v.25). Just imagine what will happen to the hosts of the redeemed when they see the LORD face to face! Not only will the city have no need of sunlight or moonlight, but it will have no shortage of starlight either. The saints there will shine like the stars.

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

Daniel ch.12 v.3.

The purpose of the New Jerusalem is not to scatter stones from heaven on the earth, but to gather back to heaven precious stones from the earth.

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. . .A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together. . .”

Ecclesiastes ch.3 vs.1 & 5.

New Jerusalem is God's jewel box, made for the safe keeping of His special treasure:

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels (margin ‘special treasure’); and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

Malachi ch.3 v.17.

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