



Where a Planetary Bolt Struck the Ground

We recognize in the change in Jupiter's motion the cause of great catastrophes in the solar system which affected also the Earth in the age of the patriarchs, or at the close of the Old Kingdom. In that period Jupiter became the supreme deity, having removed Saturn from its orbit. Classical historians, speaking of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, told of "fire from the sky." Tacitus narrated that the catastrophe of Sodom and Gomorrah was caused by a thunderbolt—the plain was "consumed by lightning"—and he added: "Personally I am quite prepared to grant that once-famous cities may have been burnt by fire from heaven." ⁽¹⁾ Also Josephus asserted that the cities had been "consumed by thunderbolts." ⁽²⁾ Philo wrote that "lightnings poured out of heaven," ⁽³⁾ destroying the cities.

Since the time of Abraham was the period of Jupiter's domination that followed Saturn's and preceded that of Venus, we are led to the surmise that the thunderbolts which destroyed the plain with its cities originated from Jupiter, or from a magnetosphere or ionosphere overcharged by the nearby presence of the giant planet. Even today discharges leap between Jupiter and Io, one of its satellites. The charging of the Earth's atmosphere in the presence of Jupiter's huge magnetosphere prepared the way for a discharge: a planetary bolt struck the ground in the Valley of Sittim.

For a long time I thought that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and other cities of the Plain resulted from an interplanetary discharge caused by Jupiter: classical historians speaking of this event told of "fire from the sky." The period was that of Jupiter's era of domination that followed that of Saturn and preceded that of Venus; and reference to the king and high priest Malki-zedek ("My King is Zedek," Zedek being the usual name of the planet Jupiter), in the days of the patriarch Abraham and of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, seem to support my interpretation of the agent of the catastrophe. This very catastrophe caused the origin of the Dead Sea and also of the entire African Rift that extends from north of the River Jordan all the way through two thirds of the length of Africa. But, reading in 1960 of a reference to Professor Agrest, a Russian astronomer who thought that an atomic explosion had taken place, I saw some alluring points in it. If, as Prof. Agrest seems to assume, the three angels were extraterrestrial beings that followed Abraham from Mamre to Sodom and placed a time device in Sodom, the warning to Lot and his family to leave the place and not to turn their faces to the city they soon would flee, finds some parallels in the atomic age.

The observers of the first atomic explosion at Alamogordo, New Mexico were told, as was Lot and his family, not to look at the fission, but the wife of Lot looked; she may have been blinded—in the legend she turned into a pillar of salt.

At Alamogordo the observers were impressed, actually overwhelmed, by the tremendous light effect, even with their eyes closed. Next rose a pillar of smoke as if from a furnace (Genesis XIX: 28): Abraham "looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and towards all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of the furnace."

If the time of the event is asked to be determined, I would strongly question the implication that extraterrestrial visitors came to Earth as late as the end of the Old Kingdom of Egypt, for this is the time to which the age of the Patriarch Abraham belongs—and on this I would expand somewhere else.

Yet we are left with my original idea that goes back to the early forties—that the agent of the destruction was a bolt from Jupiter, or from the magnetosphere or ionosphere, overcharged by the nearby presence of the giant planet.

References

1. *Histories* V. 7, transl. by K. Wellesley (London, 1964).
2. *The Jewish War* IV. 480.
3. *Moses* II.53ff.

