

ASTEROID TIME

By Rod

This sketch uses the recent interest in the media about an asteroid potentially on a collision path with earth to look at ideas about 'The Signs Of The End Of The Age'. References include Matthew 24 v 43, 1 Thessalonians 5 v 2 and Revelation 16 v 16. The main teaching point is that trying to guess (scientifically or not) is futile as 'The Day Of The Lord' cannot be predicted but will come 'like a thief in the night'.

CAST

Andy *Male but could just as easily be female. A bit of a joker. Not very deep, bright or knowledgeable.*

Ben *Male but also could be female. Well informed both scientifically and biblically.*

Thief *male or female.*

Ben is looking up to the sky through binoculars or a telescope. Enter Andy carrying a bag over his shoulder.

Andy Hi there, Ben, what are you up to out here in the dark?

Ben I'm looking for the 2002 NT7.

Andy I'll give you a hand. Hang on a minute while I put my bag down. *[Puts bag down to one side]*

Ben I wouldn't leave it there if I were you. There are lots of thieves around these days.

Andy Oh, it'll be all right for a few minutes. You don't get many thieves at this time of night. Now what's this 2002 NT7 then?

Ben It's an asteroid.

Andy Oh, an asteroid. *[Smiling at the thought of the joke he is about to make]* In that case, are you sure asteroid direction to be looking in. *[Nudges Ben in ribs]*

Ben Ha,ha. Very funny. It's probably way too small to see but I thought I would have a look.

Andy What is this asteroid NT7 anyway.

Ben Well, basically it's a lump of rock 3 kilometres across that's in orbit around the Sun.

Andy What's so special about it?

Ben What's so special is that it is on a collision course with the Earth.

Andy No kidding! Will it do much damage?

Ben Just a little. Since it weighs one billion tonnes and is travelling at sixty thousand miles per hour scientists estimate that it would strike with the violence of a million H-bombs.

Andy Wow, that would do some damage. It would mean the end of the world. Can't we do anything about it?

Ben At present space experts have come up with three possible solutions.

Andy What are they?

Ben The first is to send up a sort of tug to push it off course.

Andy *[Amused]* You mean little tugboat Annie? That would never work; there are no waterways in space. Even I know that.

Ben This would be a nuclear-powered space tug. It would throw out ions to give it thrust.

Andy You mean like steam irons?

Ben No, ions not irons.

Andy *[Not really understanding]* Oh. It doesn't sound very promising. What are the other ideas?

Ben Another idea is to attach a satellite to the asteroid and then deploy a huge solar sail. This would provide enough force to move the asteroid to a different orbit.

Andy That wouldn't work either. There's no wind in space – it's a vacuum.

Ben True, but this solar sail would respond to the force of photons – particles of light emitted by the Sun.

Andy You're having me on.

Ben No, I'm not.

Andy It still doesn't sound very good. What's the third option?

Ben Oh, that's to blast it with a nuclear explosion.

Andy *[Enthusiastic]* That sounds more like it. Nuke it! That's what Bruce Willis did. It worked for him.

Ben That was just a film. It might not work in real life.

Andy Ah well. When's all this going to happen?

Ben It might never happen. The asteroid could miss us completely. But if it does happen it will be either on 1st February 2019 or 1st February 2060.

Andy *[Thinking. Talking slowly.]* So the scientists know the day and the month – but not the year.

Ben Not for certain, no.

Andy Terrific! It doesn't lead you to have much hope that their ideas about sending up a tugboat or a sailing ship or a cruise missile are likely to have any chance of working either.

Ben I suppose not.

Andy And if this asteroid does hit us – the Earth will be blown to smithereens, right?

Ben Right.

Andy Makes you think, doesn't it?

Ben What about?

Andy Armageddon and all that. Is this the Day of Judgement that the Bible goes on about?

Ben Could be, I suppose, but I think Jesus did say that that day would come 'like a thief in the night'.

Andy To nick the video, you mean?

Ben No – unexpectedly: and if this asteroid does hit it will not be unexpected. We'll see it coming all right.

Andy *[Exuberantly]* Yes, we'll all be shouting "Armageddon". "Armageddon out of here", that is!

Ben *[Seriously]* Only there won't be anywhere to go.

Andy *[Realising seriousness]* No. *[Pause]* Still, I reckon it won't happen. I haven't got much faith in scientists and I certainly don't believe all that Bible stuff. I'm sure Jesus just spoke about the day of Judgement coming like a thief in the night to put the frighteners on people and the scientists are doing just the same. It's just a clever ploy to get more money for space research. *[Enter thief quietly, who steals Andy's bag]* It's not really going to happen.

Ben Maybe you're right.

Andy *[Yawns]* Well it's getting late so I'll be off now. *[Turns to leave. Sees bag has gone]* Hang on, where's my bag gone? I'm sure I put it down here. *[Gets very agitated]* It's been stolen!

Ben Keep calm, Andy! It's not the end of the world.

THE END