



# **JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK**

## **MONDAY - 11/12/2007**

Every year around November 17, we are treated to an unusual and fascinating sky show called the Leonid meteor shower.

### **HOW DID THE TERM "*METEOR SHOWER*" ORIGINATE?**

***How Stuff Works:*** The Leonid "*meteor shower*" is an event caused by the Earth passing through an especially dusty area of space. In this case, the orbit of the Temple-Tuttle comet that passes near Earth's orbit every 33 years and leaves behind a dusty trail.

To view the Leonid shower, you just go outside at the appropriate hour, look toward the constellation Leo (hence the name "Leonid").

***Origin:*** Chinese, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman records of "*meteor showers*" date back about 3,000 years. The most ancient records of meteor showers show that people interpreted the showers as magical or religious events.

The Leonid storm of 1833 was the first recorded in America – it was spectacular with hundreds of thousands of meteors per hour. Since most meteor showers produce only a few meteors per hour, the subsequent Leonid storms in that century gave birth to the term "*meteor shower*" (circa 1875-1880).

**Conventional Wisdom:** Meteor Shower = A natural fireworks display

**Moment of Zen:** Spectacular heavenly events are still scary today