

Joshua 10:1-15
The Sun Stood Still

NKJ Joshua 10:1 Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it -- as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king -- and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them,

2 that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.

3 Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying,

4 "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."

5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us."

7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.

8 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you."

9 Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal.

10 So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

11 And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.

12 Then Joshua spoke 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 still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."

13 So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.

14 And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

15 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

As angry as Israel was at being deceived by the Gibeonites, the Canaanites were even angrier. Not only had the Gibeonites abandoned their own neighbors, they were good fighters, and their cities were strategically located to control the approaches to the South of Canaan, in fact they were to the west of Jerusalem which made Adoni-Bezek the king of Jerusalem particularly concerned. Now he has the Israelite army to his East, and the Gibeonites to his West. So he gathers the other kings together to fight against Israel, he reminds them ***"it has made peace with Joshua and the children of Israel"*** which no doubt would have got the other kings thinking, "what if other cities were to see their example and also surrender..." So they figure an example has to be made of Gibeon, and quickly.

In order to enter into their treaty with Israel, the Gibeonites had obviously deceived Israel, and were Joshua anyone less than the man of God that he is he might have greeted the request from the Gibeonites for assistance against the Amorite kings with a big yawn. A Machiavellian would have simply said, "well now they'll get rid of those deceitful Gibeonites, and we won't have Canaanite cities right in the middle of the future state of Israel. Joshua might even have simply taken his time about coming to their aid, but Joshua is not a Machiavellian, he is a faithful man of God who remembers the covenant promise he made to the Gibeonites before God. He remembers that he had bound himself to protecting the Gibeonites, just as they had bound themselves to serve Israel.

So Joshua immediately orders a forced night march from Gilgal, which is on the eastern side of the mountains and involves a 35 Kilometer night march, uphill. But it allows him to fall upon the camps of the confederation of Amorite kings who were besieging the Gibeonite cities and to surprise them utterly. Joshua's movement here is reminiscent of that of Stonewall Jackson during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. His amazing ability to suddenly move his army many miles and show up where they were least expected and strike the enemy earned the name "Jackson's foot cavalry" for his force.

The Lord approves of Joshua's action and reassures him that he will be victorious, this isn't new news, it's the same thing he's been telling them since they entered into Canaan.

Josh 1:9 *"Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

In a sense though this is the same message the Lord has been giving his people since the time of his first Covenant with Abraham to give him the land. The Lord's people don't need new assurances from the Lord, they require the reassurance that God's promises are still good and always will be. It is hardly surprising that he approves of Joshua's action as he is the God who always keeps his own covenants even though they are made to a less than perfectly righteous people.

Now we can imagine what happened, after Joshua and the army of the Lord fell on them. In the predawn light they fall upon the camp of the confederation and they rout the army and the enemy soldiers flee to the south. Normally, most of them could have expected to get away, prior to the advent of airpower an army pursuing a retreating foe could only attack the men at the rear of the column and as the defeated force got more spread out and dumped their goods they became harder and harder to follow. But in this case, in the rear of their flight is the Army of Israel smiting them with the sword, and then all along the line of retreat the Lord smashes the enemy armies with Hailstones. It probably produced something far more terrible to behold than even the scenes on the road of death as Sadaam's army retreated from Kuwait and were hit by Coalition aircraft. The word tells us that the slaughter of the Amorites from the hail was greater than that caused by the army of the Lord.

The whole time they were fleeing, the defeated army though, is probably thinking if we can just stay alive till dark, we can slip away in the night. The night will cover us from the eyes of Joshua and his army and we can hole up in the valleys and the caves, or take different routes back to our own fortified cities. Joshua knew what nightfall meant as well, and that darkness would indeed mean the end of his pursuit. So he prays before all Israel for the sun to stand still that they might complete the destruction of the enemy army. And that is what happened.

"The exact mechanics of how an omnipotent God could accomplish this deed are best left to God's miraculous power. God is capable of physically lengthening the time between sunrise and sunset, and

of doing it in such a way that other potential cataclysmic consequences of such a drastic change could be negated. Or God could have merely manipulated the path of the sun's light so that daylight was extended and nighttime shortened during an otherwise ordinary day."

Applications -

1) Importance of Keeping our Oaths: NKJ Psalm 15:1 A Psalm of David. LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;

3 He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;

4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

2) *The mighty God, the Lord, the Warrior who fights for his people.*

Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Throughout these passages – the Lord pursued... etc.

- "It is too bad much of the church has lost this vision of God or Christ as the warrior who fights for his people. Too many of us regard this conception as substandard, by which we mean it does not fit in our sentimental twentieth-century graven images of what God ought to be like. The imagery seems too violent. And we do the same for the Lord Jesus. The popular image of Jesus is that he is not only kind and tender but also soft and prissy, as though Jesus comes to us reeking of hand cream. Such a Jesus can hardly steal the soul that is daily assaulted by the enemy. We need to learn the catechism of Psalm 24. Question: Who is the King of Glory? Answer: Yahweh, strong and mighty! Yahweh mighty in battle! (Ps. 24:8) We must catch the vision of the Faithful and True sitting on the white horse, the One who "judges and makes war" in righteousness (Rev. 19:11-16). No mild God or soft Jesus can give his people hope. It is only as we know the warrior of Israel who fights for us (and sometimes without us) that we have hope of triumphing in the muck of life." – D. R. Davis

Rev. 6:12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.

14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!

17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

The Importance of Miracles to Biblical Christianity

God's supremacy over the works of His hands is vividly depicted in Scripture. Inanimate matter, irrational creatures, all perform their Maker's bidding. At His pleasure, the Red Sea divided and its waters stood up as walls (Ex. 14); the earth opened her mouth, and guilty rebels went down alive into the pit (Num. 14). When He so ordered, the sun stood still (Josh. 10); and on another occasion went backward ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz. To exemplify His supremacy, He made ravens carry food to Elijah (1 Kings 17); iron to float on the waters (2 Kings 6:5); lions to be tame when Daniel was cast into their den; fire to burn not when three Hebrews were flung into its flames. Thus, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Ps. 135:6).

Pink, Arthur W. The Nature of God. electronic ed. :: , .

Is. 38:5 "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years.

6 "I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city." '

7 "And this is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken:

8 "Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.

Doubt Creation, Doubt Jonah, Doubt this, but what then of the miracles of Christ, they also involved an interruption of the natural processes. What becomes of prayer (example of Blue Iliff)?

Brothers and Sisters, a Miracle-less Christianity is a useless beast indeed.