

Joshua 10:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse records one of Scripture's most extraordinary miracles—God stopping celestial motion in response to Joshua's prayer (Joshua 10:12). The Hebrew *vayyadom* (וַיַּדֹּם, "stood still") means to be silent, cease, or stop completely. The parallel verb *amad* (אָמַד, "stayed") reinforces the cessation of normal movement.

The phrase "until the people had avenged themselves" (ad yiqom goy oye'vav, אַד יִקֹּם גּוֹי אוֹיְבָו) reveals the purpose: the extended daylight allowed Israel to complete their divinely mandated conquest of the Amorite coalition. The reference to "the book of Jasher" (Hebrew *Sefer HaYashar*, סֵפֶר הַיָּשָׁר, "book of the upright") cites an ancient poetic collection of Israel's victories, now lost but demonstrating that this miracle was widely known and documented.

The description "hasted not to go down about a whole day" emphasizes the miracle's duration and completeness. This event demonstrates:

1. God's absolute sovereignty over creation

2. His responsiveness to faith-filled prayer
3. His commitment to fulfilling covenant promises,
4. His power to intervene supernaturally in human history.

Whether understood as actual celestial cessation or miraculous atmospheric phenomena extending daylight, the miracle affirms God's active involvement in accomplishing His redemptive purposes.

Historical Context

This miracle occurred during Israel's conquest of Canaan around 1400 BC, when five Amorite kings formed a coalition to attack Gibeon (Joshua 10:1-5). The Gibeonites had made a treaty with Israel through deception (Joshua 9), but Joshua honored the covenant and came to their defense. The battle at Gibeon became a decisive moment in the conquest of southern Canaan.

Ancient Near Eastern warfare typically ceased at nightfall due to practical limitations of fighting in darkness. The extended daylight gave Israel a supernatural advantage, allowing them to pursue and destroy the fleeing coalition forces completely (Joshua 10:10-11). God had already sent hailstones that killed more Amorites than Israelite swords (Joshua 10:11), demonstrating divine intervention before Joshua's prayer for extended daylight.

The astronomical phenomenon has been debated for centuries. Some interpreters understand it as literal cessation of earth's rotation, others as atmospheric refraction extending visible sunlight, still others as poetic description of God's intervention. Ancient extrabiblical sources from Egypt, China, and Mexico record unusual day-lengths, though dating these accounts is problematic. Regardless of mechanism, the miracle accomplished its purpose: complete victory over enemies threatening Israel's covenant mission. The event became legendary, cited in Jewish tradition as proof of God's power and responsiveness to prayer.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this miracle demonstrate the relationship between human prayer and divine sovereignty?
2. What does God's willingness to alter creation's normal operations teach about His commitment to His covenant purposes?
3. How should we understand and respond to biblical miracles that seem scientifically impossible?
4. What principles from Joshua's bold prayer can guide our own prayers in seemingly impossible situations?
5. How does this passage challenge deistic views that God created the world but does not actively intervene in it?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּדָם	וַיֵּדָם	וַיֵּדָם	וַיֵּדָם	וַיֵּדָם	וַיֵּדָם
stood still	And the sun	and the moon	stayed	H5704	had avenged
H1826	H8121	H3394	H5975		H5358
גוֹי	אֶלֶיָּהֶם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם
until the people	themselves upon their enemies			H3808	Is not this
H1471	H341			H1931	H3789
וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם
in the book	of Jasher	stayed	And the sun	in the midst	of heaven
H5612	H3477	H5975	H8121	H2677	H8064
וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם	וְעַמָּם
and hasted	not to go down	day	about a whole		
H213	H935	H3117	H8549		

Additional Cross-References

Habakkuk 3:11 (Parallel theme): The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

Isaiah 38:8 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

Psalms 148:3 (Parallel theme): Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

Luke 18:7 (Parallel theme): And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

Joel 2:10 (Parallel theme): The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:

Joshua 10:14 (Parallel theme): 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.

2 Samuel 1:18 (Parallel theme): (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)

Judges 16:28 (Parallel theme): And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

Psalms 19:4 (Parallel theme): Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Joel 3:15 (Parallel theme): The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.