

The Sun Stands Still

Key Verse: *“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.”*

—**Joshua 10:14,**
New King James Version

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 10:1-15

The remarkable day set forth in our lesson has been a subject of much wonder and debate. Joshua and the army of Israel came to defend their new ally, the Gibeonites. The aggressor consisted of the five kings of the Amorites. These had joined in common cause to destroy Gibeon. They apparently reasoned, “What if Gibeon joins with the might of Israel to defeat us?” Their miscalculation devolved into folly and defeat.

“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 ... have gathered together against us. So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor.” (Josh. 10:6,7, *NKJV*) Although the forces rallied by Joshua were formidable, it was the Lord’s actions against the Amorites that won the battle.

“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. Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon ... And it happened, as they

fled before Israel, ... that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them, ... and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.”—vss. 8-11, *NKJV*

From the preceding we glean the following important facts: the Lord had arranged that not a man of the Amorites could stand before Joshua. Victory was previously assured. It was the Lord that routed the Amorite army. Lastly, the Lord cast down large hailstones upon the Amorites, slaying more of them than Israel had slain with the sword.

Visualize the battle conditions. It was not fought in broad daylight. Rather, the sun and rising moon were obscured by the dark storm clouds which covered the area, being the source of the hailstones. We read, “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. So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge upon their enemies.” (vss. 12,13, *NKJV*) We doubt that Joshua was calling for the sun to literally stand still in the sky, for the sun could not be seen. How then may we explain these verses?

The definition of the word “still” hints at our answer. *Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary* defines the word translated “still” as meaning: “to be dumb; ... to stop; also to perish.” Joshua did not want the sun to stand still but wanted it to keep silent or cease. That is, he wanted the storm of heavenly hail to continue obscuring the sun until the Amorite enemy was thoroughly defeated.

That day was not remarkable for the duration of sunlight, but for the very reason declared in our Key Verse. It was remarkable in that the Lord heeded the voice of a man, and gave Israel the victory! ■