

Was the Book-of-Joshua Miracle Connected to a Solar Eclipse? Scientists Weigh In

In research recently published in the journal *Astronomy and Geophysics*, a professor of metal physics and a professor of astrophysics have postulated that the famous miracle described in the biblical Book of Joshua of the sun “standing still” was a natural event.

The verses in question, Joshua 10:12-13, refer to a war being waged with the Amorites, where the Israelite leader, Joshua, needed more time to finish off the victory. He therefore prayed, “Sun, stand motionless over Giv’on! Moon, you too, over Ayalon Valley! So the sun stood still and the moon stayed put” (Josh 10:12b-13a).

In their article, Professors Sir Colin Humphreys and W. Graeme Waddington from the University of Cambridge’s Department of Materials Science & Metallurgy and Department of Astrophysics, wrote that verse 13 may very well be describing an actual astronomical event known as an annular solar eclipse.

To bolster their theory, the two say that they reinterpreted the biblical text. “Going back to the original Hebrew text, we determined that an alternative meaning could be that the sun and moon just stopped doing what they normally do: they stopped shining. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Hebrew word translated ‘stand still’ has the same root as a Babylonian word used in ancient astronomical texts to describe eclipses.”

Many scholars have thought that Joshua was describing a solar eclipse, but could never find any such phenomena in the time frame of the Israelites conquering Canaan, which is commonly thought to be anywhere from 1500 to 1050 B.C. However, they

were only looking at total solar eclipses, in which the Moon completely covers the sun.

Humphreys and Waddington calculated instead for the more common annular eclipse, which looks like a ring (“annulus,” in Latin) of fire, as the moon’s shadow isn’t big enough to cover the sun. They figured out that the only such eclipse visible from Canaan during that time period occurred on Oct. 30, 1207, B.C. {eoa}

Do you agree? Let us know in the comments below! {eoa}

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