“The Day The Sun Stood Still”
Joshua 10:7-15 (NKJV)

(Turn Lapel Mic on!!!)

Please open your Bibles to our scripture text this evening in Joshua chapter ten. And let’s read VERSES 7-15.

Joshua 10:7-15

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 L ORD 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 L ORD 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 L ORD 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 L ORD in the day when the L ORD 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 L ORD heeded the voice of a man; for the L ORD fought for Israel.

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

P R A Y E R
One of the things I love about the Old Testament is that it is filled with many accounts of fascinating and sometimes very strange miracles that were performed by God.

For example we read in the Old Testament where........

* God rained down fire and brimstone out of the heavens on Sodom and Gomorrah.

* He parted the Red Sea and the Jordan River so His people could cross on dry ground.

* He turned water into blood........He brought water out of a rock.......He made bitter water turn sweet.......and He even made an ax head float on water.

* He sent plagues of frogs......and lice......and flies.......and locusts.

* He made a donkey talk.......and opened up the earth to swallow Korah and his band of 250 men who rebelled against Moses.

These miracles and many more like them provide us with some fascinating reading.

In tonight's message we are looking at one of the most incredible and strangest miracles God performed in the Old Testament and that is “The Day He Made The Sun To Stand Still.”
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before we look at this incredible miracle let me give a brief background of what was going on that led up to this miracle.

Joshua and the Israelites were in the process of claiming the Promised Land.

In Joshua 6 God had already given them Jericho. You remember Jericho fell when the walls came tumbling down.

Well after the fall of Jericho, Joshua and his men became over-confident and tried to take the small town of Ai by “human force” rather than seeking God’s wisdom as to go about it. God allowed them to suffer a humiliating defeat at the hands of the men of Ai to teach them a valuable lesson about trusting in Him rather than themselves. After they got their hearts right with GOD, God then gave them Ai.

After the conquests of Jericho and Ai word quickly spread to all the other inhabitants of the land of Canaan that Joshua and his Israelite army were on their way to defeat them just as they had Jericho and Ai.

Now these other inhabitants had funny names like the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. All of these were heathen people who practiced
idolatry and worshiped false Gods. God determined they had to go!

Well there was one other group of people who lived in the land that I didn’t mention. They were called **THE GIBEONITES.**

When the Gibeonites heard what Joshua and the Israelites had done to Jericho and Ai, they concocted a deceptive plan to “save their own hides.”

Pretending to be ambassadors from a foreign country, the Gibeonites came to Joshua bearing gifts. They told Joshua how they had heard about the great things his God had done in Egypt and how He had given them the victory over *Sihon, the King of Heshbon* and *Og, the King of Bashan.* Their intent was to get Joshua to make a peace treaty with them by offering themselves as servants to the Israelites.

Without consulting God on this matter, Joshua agreed to make a peace treaty with them. It wasn't until three days later that Joshua found out the truth. These people weren't foreigners at all. They were **the Gibeonites** who lived nearby.

Well it didn't take long for word to spread to the other inhabitants of the land that **the Gibeonites had “defected” and become allies with the Israelites.** So five kings decided to form **“an alliance”** of their own and send their armies to attack the Gibeonites to teach them a lesson.

Although the Gibeonites were renowned as the strongest men in the land, they knew they were no match for the allied armies of the five kings; so they sent word to Joshua that they desperately needed the help of the Israelites to defend themselves against these approaching armies.
As we come now to our text in **VERSES 7-15** I want to point out two key points.

First of all notice.............

I. The PROVIDENCE of GOD (vs. 7,8)

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

v. 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.”

1. I believe God reveals His **divine providence** in two ways here:

   (A) For one thing, God could have allowed the Gibeonites to fight this battle all by themselves to punish them for deceiving Joshua and the Israelites.

   (B) And for another, God could have told JOSHUA, “You got yourself into this mess, now you can get yourself out.” He could have allowed Joshua and the Israite army to go into this battle without His divine protection just as He had done at Ai earlier.

2. Here is a case where **God works all things together for the good of those who love Him who are called according to His purpose**.
3. **By His goodness and His grace**, God can take our **dumbest mistakes**....
   our **foolish decisions**........and our **ill-advised plans** and work them out in way that brings glory and honor to Him.

4. **God demonstrated His goodness and His grace towards the Gibeonites** by allowing Joshua to keep his word that he would help defend them. **And God demonstrated His goodness and grace towards Joshua and the Israelites** by promising them victory over the enemy and protecting every last Israelite soldier in the battle.

But not only do we see **THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD**. We also see ...........

II. **The POWER of GOD** (vs. 9-15)

1. In **verses 9-15** we see **four acts of God** that assured Joshua and the Israelites the victory.

   **(A)** We see the first “act of God” in **verse 9** and that is **God gave His soldiers supernatural STRENGTH**.

   In **verse 9** we read, “Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal.”

   How could Joshua and his army march all night long from Gilgal to Gibeon, a distance of 25 miles, and be prepared to fight all day long? There is only one explanation. God gave them supernatural strength!
We see “the second act of God” in verse 10 and that is God ROUTED the enemy Himself before Israel.

v. 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-Heron, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

Some translations say, “The Lord threw them into a panic” or “The Lord threw them into a state of confusion.” In either case, God made it impossible for the enemy to fight back.

We see “the third act of God” in verse 11 and that is God cast down large HAIL STONES upon them.

v. 11 And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth-Heron, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them......

The latter part of verse 11 tells us these huge hailstones killed more enemy soldiers than were killed by the swords of the Israelite army.

This brings us to “the fourth act of God,” which is a miracle that has puzzled scientists even to this day, and that is: God made the SUN to stand STILL for about one day.

vs. 12-14 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 Aljalon.” 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. 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.
We know scientifically the earth orbits around the sun, not the sun around the earth; so just what happened that day? I want to read an interesting article on this subject that I came across on a Bible Study website called BIBLE.ORG:

The article was written by Harold Hill, who is a consultant for NASA. Mr. Hill writes:

“One of the most amazing things God has for us today happened recently to our astronauts and space scientists at Green Belt, Maryland. They were checking the position of the sun, moon and planets out in space and where they would be 100 years and 1,000 years from now. We have to know this so we won’t send a satellite up and have it bump into something later on its orbits. NASA ran the computer measurements back and forth over the centuries and it came to a halt. The computer stopped and put up a red signal, which meant there was something wrong either with the information fed into it, or with the results as compared with the standards.

They called in the service department to check it out and they said, “what’s wrong?” Well they found out there is a day missing in space, in elapsed time. They scratched their heads and tore their hair. There was no answer. Finally a Christian man on the team said, “You know, one time I was in Sunday School and they talked about a day the sun stood still.” While they didn’t believe him, he went to get his Bible and turned to the Book of Joshua chapter ten. They checked their computer data and found out the time period that was unaccounted for occurred about 3,000 years ago, which placed it in the days of Joshua. They discovered the elapsed time that was missing was exactly 23 hours and 20 minutes not a whole day. Then they read Joshua 10:13 again and noticed it said, “So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.” That little word “about” was very important. It validated the findings on their computer even more.
So what happened that day? Donald Campbell summarizes it this way in THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY:

“The best explanation seems to be the view that in answer to Joshua's prayer GOD caused the rotation of the earth to slow down so that it made one full rotation around the sun in about 48 hours rather than the normal 24. The sun delayed going down almost a full day, thus the sun was abnormally slow in getting to sunset, giving Joshua and his soldiers sufficient time to complete their victorious battle.”

CONCLUSION

I don't know about you, but these kinds of things just fascinate me. But what can we learn from this account by way of practical application?

For one thing, this passage teaches us the importance of SEEKING GOD IN EVERYTHING.

Joshua made an ill-advised peace treaty with the Gibeonites that could have resulted in the deaths of many Israelites had God not intervened. JAMES 1:5,6 (NKJV) “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of GOD, who gives to all liberally without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” It is better to seek God's wisdom and counsel before we act than to have to ask GOD to “bail us out” after we have made a foolish decision.

I believe another valuable lesson we can learn from this passage is GOD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL TO HIS PEOPLE EVEN WHEN THEY MAKE BIG MISTAKES.

It didn’t take Joshua long to realize he had really made a BIG mistake by entering into that peace agreement with the GIBEONITES. But God was faithful to Joshua and the Israelites. He protected them and preserved them despite themselves.

Don't ever think GOD is finished with you just because you make mistakes in life. With GOD “failure is not fatal.”