

CLARIFYING
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BIBLICAL PASSAGES

CHAPTER TEN

THE CALL FOR A 'BLACKOUT'
AND THE SOLAR ECLIPSE IN
JOSHUA 10:7-15

Thomas F. McDaniel, Ph.D.

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X

THE CALL FOR A ‘BLACKOUT’ AND THE SOLAR ECLIPSE IN JOSHUA 10:7–15

INTRODUCTION

The brief quotation from *The Book of Jasher* in Jos 10:13b and the related text of Jos 10:12b–13a read:

שָׁמֶשׁ בְּגִבְעוֹן דָּוָם
וְיָרֵחַ בְּעֵמֶק אֵי־לֹן
וַיִּדְמָה הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְיָרֵחַ עֲמֹד
וַיַּעֲמֹד הַשָּׁמֶשׁ בְּחֶצְי הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְלֹא־אָצַן לָבוֹא כִּיּוֹם תָּמִים

“Sun, over Gibeon be still,
Moon too, over Aijalon Valley.”

Sun was stilled, And Moon stood fixed

The sun stayed in the center of the heavens
and did not hurry to set for almost a whole day!

(Boling 1982: 274)

The nouns and names in these lines are not problematic, but the verbs דָּוָם and עֲמֹד are open to different interpretations. Tradition has identified the former with דָּמָם “to be or grow dumb, to be silent, to be still or motionless” (BDB 198),¹ like the LXX στήτω ὁ ἥλιος “let the sun stand (still).” The latter has been identified with עָמַד “to stand, to stop, to cease,” the cognate of Arabic عمد (*‘amada*) “to prop up, support” (BDB 763), like the LXX καὶ ἔστη ὁ ἥλιος “and the sun stood.”

Everything from myths² to meteorites³ have been appealed to by commentators to clarify the claim that the sun and moon actually stood still—long enough for the phenomenon to make it into Israelite tradition, but too brief for it to be referenced in any other world literature⁴—assuming the sun orbited the earth, rather than the earth's orbiting the sun. Soggin (1972: 122–123) made the following comments which illustrates the possibility of a mythological origin of the tradition,

For the sun not to have set is directly related to the continuance of the battle until victory was achieved, but then the mention of the moon makes no sense . . . The theme in itself is also found in the *Iliad*, II, 412ff., in almost identical circumstances: Agamemnon prays Zeus not to let the sun go down before the Achaeans have been victorious, and this is what happens.

Holladay (1968: 175–176) added an astrological component to the mythological interpretation in light of Akkadian omens which deemed it favorable “when the great lunar and solar orbs ‘stood’ in the ‘balance’ [on the fourteenth of the month],” expressed in Jos 10:13 by references to the sun at Gibeon on the east and the moon over the valley of Ajalon to the west, as if Joshua was encamped between Gibeon and Ajalon.⁵

However, Gilgal near Jericho was Joshua's base of operation (Jos 10:6), with Gibeon and Ajalon lying about twenty and twenty-two miles due west of Joshua's encampment. For Joshua to have asked for an ‘Akkadian style’ omen, the sun should have “stood in balance” over Heshbon to the east of Gilgal, and the moon should have “stood in balance” over Gibeon and Ajalon, to the west of Gilgal.

The key to the interpretation of Jos 10:12–13 comes not from mythology or astrology but from lexicography. A full

review of the Arabic, Aramaic/Syriac cognates of דָּוַם and עָמַד offered this interpreter options which had yet to be considered. Once all options are in focus the logical sequence of events and the nature of those events become transparent.

THE COGNATES OF דָּוַם AND עָמַד

The Arabic *عمد* (*ʿamada*) is of interest because it was used with reference to the dawning of the day, as in the following expression: *عمود الصبح* (*ʿamûdu ʿaṣṣubḥi*) “the bright gleam of dawn, the dawn that rises and spreads, filling the horizon with brightness” (Lane 1874: 2153).⁶ If Hebrew עָמַד parallels this Arabic usage it would suggest routine sunrises or lunar appearances. However, it is unlikely that any reference to routine sunrises or other ordinary solar and lunar appearances would be recorded in and quoted from *The Book of Jasher*.

The Arabic *دوم* (*dûm*) as a cognate of the דָּוַם of Jos 10:13 also deserves attention. Comparable to the $\text{דָּוַם} . . . \text{שָׁמַשׁ}$ is the Arabic expression *دومت الشمس في السماء* (*dawwamat ʿaššams fi ʿaššamâʿi*) “the sun spun in the sky” . . . meaning as though it were spinning or was as though it were motionless . . . when the sun is [apparently] stationary in the summer midday,” (Lane 1867: 936; Lane’s brackets). Moreover, *دام/دوم* (*dûm/dâma*) can also mean “it continued, lasted, remained, or endured,” which would seem to be the natural parallel for the traditional understanding of $\text{דָּוַם} . . . \text{שָׁמַשׁ}$, “sun remain (at Gibeon).”⁷ However, it is unlikely that the common visual illusions produced by the midday summer sun would be noteworthy enough to be recorded in *The Book of Jasher* or a

phenomenon of much help to Joshua and the Israelites.⁸ Consequently these two cognates, عمد (*ʿamada*) and دوم (*dûm*), can be disregarded as being germane to the interpretation of Jos 10:12–13.

However, two other cognates from Arabic provide clues to the original meaning of MT עָמַד הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיְרַח עָמָד. They are غمد (*ġamada*) “to conceal” (= עָמַד) and دهم (*dahama*) “it became black” (= דָּהַם = דָּהַם), and the related لون مدمى (*lûn mudammiy*) “a color in which is blackness and redness” (Lane 1867: 917, 925; 1877: 2291).

The Arabic غمد (*ġamada*) was used (1) for *sheathing* a sword, (2) for thorns being *concealed* by leaves, (3) for wells having their water *covered* by dirt, (4) for the sky being *obscured* by clouds, (5) for a cloth put over something to *conceal* it from the eyes of another, (6) for concealing something with a veil, and (7) in expressions like اعتمد الليل (*ʿigtamada ʿallayla*) “he entered into [the darkness] of the night.” In light of this evidence it is reasonable to conclude that עָמַד, stem II, could mean “to cover, to conceal, to be engulfed in darkness.”

This conclusion is supported by the Syriac ʿamad (ʿamad) “to set, to go down,” the cognate of غمد (*ġamada*) and עָמַד stem II. The כָּבוֹא־הַשָּׁמַיִם “about sunset” in II Sam 3:35 and I Kings 22:36, appears in the Syriac as כַּד דִּי ʿamad šemša (kad di ʿamad šemša). The basic meaning of the Syriac root is “to plunge, to sink, to set (used with the sun or stars), to immerse, and to baptize” (R. Payne Smith 1901: 666; J. Payne Smith 1957: 416) (see below note 6).

The Arabic دهم (*dahama*) (in forms 2 and 9) means “it blackened, it became black,” with the derivative nouns دهمه

(*duhmat*) “blackness,” الدهمان (*’addahmānu*) “the night, الدهيم (*’adduhaimu*) “a dark trial or a calamity,” and ادهم (*’adhamu*) “black.” This last noun was used for “the twenty-ninth night of the [lunar] month because of its blackness,” just as ادهم (*’adduhmu*) meant the “three nights of the [lunar] month [during which is the change of the moon] because they are black” (Lane 1867: 925–926; Wehr 1979: 342).

In Gen 15:17 the MT וַיְהִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּאֶחָד וְעַלְטָה הָיָה “when the sun had gone down and it was dark,” became in the Arabic column of Brian Walton’s *London Polyglot* (1657: 59) فلما عابت الشمس وكانت الدهم (*falammâ ’âbat ’aşšamsu wakânat ’adduhma*), with the Hebrew וַיְהִי עֲלֵטָה “darkness” having been rendered by دهم (*duhmu*). Similarly, Castell (1669: 661) noted the use of دهم (*duhmu*) in the Arabic translations for the “black horses” mentioned in Zech 6:2, 6, and Rev 6:5. The Akkadian cognate of دهم (*duhmu*) was *da’ ā mu*, as in the expressions: *id-ḫi-im šamšum* “the sun became darkened” and [*ūm*] *ū šu utekkilu šamu id-da[’u-mu]* “the day darkened for him.” (*CAD* 3: 1; *KBS* I: 214).

In light of the cognates مدمى (*mudammiy*) “blackness” and دهم (*duhmu*) “to be black or dark,” the וַיְהִי and וַיִּדְם in Jos 10:12–13 can well mean “to become dark or black” and can be derived from וַיִּדְם, a by-form of וַיְהִי “to be dark.” Other similar by-forms include (1) נֵר “lamp” and מְנִירָה “lamp stand” which are related to נָהַר “to shine,” (2) מְהַל and מוּל “to circumcise”; and (3) the דָם of אַבְרָם “Abram” which, as traditionally interpreted, is related to the דָם of אַבְרָהָם “Abraham.”

When the subject of a clause is the *sun* and *moon*, and the verbs are דָּוָם “to be dark” and עָמַד “to conceal,” the statements can be referring to a lunar and solar *eclipse*.⁹ Here, then, is the philological support for the proposal made more than a hundred years ago by Conder (1899: 161–162) that the poetic fragment in Jos 10:12–13 speaks of a total eclipse of the sun. Here, also, is the philological support for the astronomical evidence presented by Sawyer (1972: 140–142) and Stephenson (1975: 119) that the complete solar eclipse of September 30, 1131 B.C. at 12:35 PM (lasting for 4.5 minutes at an altitude of 58°)—which darkened the area between Sidon and Jerusalem—accounts for the solar and lunar phenomena in *The Book of Jasher* cited in Joshua.

Margalit’s (1992: 480–483) more recent contention that neither Habakkuk 3:11 nor Joshua 10:12–13 spoke about “the arrested movement of either the sun or the moon, but rather of the interrupted incandescence of both . . .” is also noteworthy:¹⁰

Though one should never attempt to “explain” such matters in pure naturalistic terms . . . one may nevertheless state with confidence that this motif is the imaginative response to, and literary development of, the relatively rare complete solar-eclipse whose psychological effect on peoples ancient and modern is well known.

By repointing the verb of הָשֶׁמֶשׁ בְּחֶצְיֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם (Jos 10:13) as a *Niph’al*, the line can be translated “the sun concealed itself while in the middle of the sky.” Similarly, by reading the אֵל of the next line, וְלֹא-אָזַן לְבוֹא כִּיּוֹם הַיָּמִים, as the emphatic אֵל “indeed, surely, actually” this line can be translated “and [the sun] *actually* hasten to set as though it were a whole day.”¹¹

The Greek text of Sirach 46:2 (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) lends support to this interpretation. It reads, ἀνεποδίσειν ὁ ἥλιος καὶ μία ἡμέρα ἐγενήθη πρὸς δύο “the sun changed routine and one day became two.”¹² Ἀνεποδίζω was used regularly for the retrograde or reversal of a planet’s motion (Liddell and Scott 1966: 117). In this verse it suggests that there were two sunrises and two sunsets in a twenty-four hour period, a very logical way to describe what happens as a result of a total solar eclipse when μία became δύο.

REARRANGING THE VERSES

As commonly interpreted, Jos 10:7–15, provides the following sequence of events:

- Joshua’s troops initiated an overnight surprise attack from Gilgal against Gibeon which was held by the anti-Gibeonite coalition.
- Yahweh put the anti-Gibeonite coalition forces to flight, permitting the Israelites to kill many of their enemies in Gibeon.
- *Yahweh finalized* the defeat of the anti-Gibeonite coalition by hurling down hailstones from Beth Horon to Azekah upon those who fled Gibeon, causing heavy casualties.
- *After the victory* against the Amorites, Joshua called for the sun and moon to ‘stand still’ until the Israelites took vengeance on their enemies.
- A quotation from the *Book of Jashar* was cited as the source for the tradition about Joshua’s command to the sun and moon, which resulted in a unique day in history when Yahweh fought for Israel.

- *Then* Joshua returned to Gilgal for a very brief stay before returning to the battle ground.

One would expect Joshua to have made his petition to Yahweh (articulated as a command to the sun and moon) at the beginning of his attack upon Gibeon, not at the conclusion of the attack. The mop-up operation described in 10:20 hardly required extra-terrestrial coordination or cooperation.

One possible solution for correcting this unlikely sequence of events would be to recognize that the יָמֵי of Jos 10:12 could be the cognate of Arabic يَدٍ (*ʿid*), an adverbial noun denoting past time, meaning “when” (Lane 1863: 38–39). This is apparently the basis for the NRS paraphrase of יָמֵי as “on the day when.” This interpretation would permit 10:12–13 to be read as a short digressionary flashback of what took place just prior to Joshua’s assault on Gibeon, meaning: “*earlier when* Joshua was speaking with Yahweh he said, “Sun, be dark over Gibeon! Moon over the valley of Aijalon!”

An alternative solution is simply to reorder the sequence of several verses/phrases in Jos 10:7–15, along with translating the חָשׁוּךְ as “be dark” and the עָמַד as “be concealed/engulfed in darkness.”¹³ The following translation may well reflect the original sequence of phrases in this text:

(7) Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. (12) *Thereupon* Joshua spoke to Yahweh—at the time when Yahweh was to give the Amorites over to the Israelites—and said¹⁴ in the sight of Israel: “*Sun, be dark over Gibeon! Moon [be dark] over the valley of Aijalon!*”

(8) Then Yahweh said to Joshua: “Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; there shall not a man of them to stand before you.”

(9) So Joshua came upon them suddenly—all night long he went up from Gilgal.

(10a) Yahweh threw them [the Amorites] into a panic before Israel.

(13a) *The sun became darkened, and the moon stayed concealed,*¹⁵ *whereupon*¹⁶ the people took vengeance on their enemies

(10b) and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth Horon, and smote them as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

(11) Then as the [Amorites] fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth Horon, Yahweh threw down large stones from the sky upon them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than those the Israelites killed with the sword.

(13b) Is it not written in *The Book of Jashar*: “the sun concealed itself while in the middle of the sky and actually hasten to set as though it were a whole day.”

(14) There has been no day like it before or since. Yea!¹⁷ Yahweh hearkened to the voice of a man. Yes!¹⁸ Yahweh fought for Israel.

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

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 7–15

In this sequence of verses it becomes clear that Joshua intended to attack Gibeon directly from Gilgal, requiring a twenty-two mile march for him and his troops. Prior to departure Joshua address Yahweh and provided a hint of his strategy. He commanded (10:12a) *the sun and moon to remain dark* over the area of combat to the west, namely from Gibeon to Ajalon. This hint, hidden in the imperatives “Be

dark over Gibeon . . . Be [dark] over Ajalon,” appears also in the indicative in verse 10:9 (which, in this scheme, followed verse 10:12a): “all night long he went up from Gilgal for a surprise attack.”

Darkness was essential for the success of Joshua’s attack against the anti-Gibeonite coalition. Joshua wanted no moonlight or morning sunlight; he wanted a blackout as he approached Gibeon. So intense was Joshua’s plea for darkness he used a directed imperative—rather than intercessory jussives—in his appeal to Yahweh: “O sun, O moon, stay dark!” He was not asking for a *prolonged day* but for a *prolonged night*. He wanted his fighters to travel undetected in the dark as they approached Gibeon some twenty-two miles distant. A shield of darkness would guarantee his success.

The intensity of Joshua’s petition was matched in Yahweh’s response in *word* (“there shall not a man of them stand before you.”) and *deed* (“and Yahweh threw them [the Amorites] into a panic before Israel”).

The moonless overnight march was obviously successful for Joshua; and the opposing forces, no doubt, prepared for a day-long battle. But the Amorites’ panicked when suddenly “*the sun became darkened, and the moon stayed concealed . . . the sun concealed itself while in the middle of the sky and actually hastened to set as though it were a whole day!*”

The solar eclipse, which brought panic to the Amorites, brought inspiration to the Israelites who took advantage of the chaos precipitated by a ‘premature nightfall’ to inflict heavy casualties upon the anti-Gibeonite forces. Following the brief total eclipse (which would have lasted for only several minutes) and the ensuing slaughter at Gibeon which followed the eclipse (which could have lasted for many hours), the fleeing Amorites were further felled in a storm of hailstones from the sky along their route of retreat.

Reports of such divine activity on Israel's behalf were recorded in *The Book of Jasher*, and the narrator/redactor of Joshua 10 injected a quotation from the book as a kind of 'endnote' to corroborate this account of the solar eclipse and to validate his assertion that the day the anti-Gibeonite coalition was defeated was a unique day in history. Hail storms come and go, but a solar eclipse turning the sky dark above Gibeon and Ajalon at noontime was a different matter. Joshua wanted only a blackout, a prolonged dark night for safely moving his troops into position around Gibeon. But as recounted in *The Book of Jasher* and in Jos 10:7–13a, he was given not only a moonless night but a solar eclipse during the day, as well—with hailstones from heaven thrown in for good measure. For the deuteronomic historian, Yahweh had responded to Joshua not only with assuring words but also with astrological and meteorological force.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Arabic cognates $اِنْدَ$ (*ind*) “earlier when” and $عِنْدَ$ (*inda*) “whereupon” provide helpful insights for alternative translations of the $אֶתְ$ and the $עַד$ in Jos 10:12–13. Because the verb $עָמַד$ can be a homograph for the Hebrew cognates of Arabic $عَمَدَ$ (*amada*) “to prop up” and $غَمَدَ$ (*gamada*) “to conceal,” as well as being the cognate of Syriac $ܥܡܕܐ$ (*ʿamad*) which was used for the setting of the sun or a star, there is no reason to insist that $עָמַד$ in Jos 10:13 be translated “to stand.”

The MT phrases $וַיִּעְמַד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ . . . וַיִּרְחַ עֲמֹד$ can be read with passives verbs: $וַיִּעְמַד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ . . . וַיִּרְחַ עֲמֹד$ “the moon was concealed . . . the sun was concealed.” Because $דָּוַם$ and $וַיִּדָּם$ can be from an $ע''ו$ stem (rather than the $ע''ע$ stem

חָמָה) and can be derived from the by-form חָמָה (which is the cognate of Arabic *دھم* [*duhmu*] “to be black or dark” and the Akkadian *da’ā mu* “to be dark”), the וַיִּדְם . . . דָּוִם of Jos 10:12b–13a can be repointed and translated “Be dark . . . and it became dark.”¹⁹

Despite the ambiguity of Hebrew by-forms and homographs, as well as the limitations of the standard lexicons of Biblical Hebrew, there is compelling lexical evidence for interpreting Jos 10:12–13 as references to the darkened skies associated with a total solar eclipse,²⁰ rather than insisting that the text speaks of the earth doing a cataclysmic and catastrophic quick stop in its orbit around the sun (which is what would have been the reality since, relative to the earth, the sun has never moved).

Setting aside the need to modify the sequence of several phrases and verses in Jos 10:7–13, the MT of Jos 10:12b–13a should be repointed and translated as follows:

שָׁמַשׁ בְּגִבְעוֹן דָּוִם
 וַיִּדְם בְּעֵמֶק אַיְלֹן
 וַיִּעְמַד הַשָּׁמַשׁ וַיִּרְחַ עֲמַד . . .
 וַיִּעְמַד הַשָּׁמַשׁ בְּחִצֵּי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְלֹא אָזַן לְבוֹא בְּיוֹם תָּמִים

“Sun, be dark over Gibeon!”

“Moon over the valley of Aijalon!”

The sun became darkened,
 and the moon stayed concealed

The sun concealed itself
 while in the middle of the sky,
 and actually hastened to set
 as though it were a whole day!”

NOTES

1. The translations of *דַּמּוּ* “Wait!” in I Sam 14:9, *דַּמּוּ* “Stay still!” in Jer 47:6, and *לֹא־דָמוּ* “they never stop” in Job 30: 27 are not without question. While it is true that men, swords, and bowels do “move”—so that in all three of these verses *דָּמוּ* could mean a cessation of motion—men, swords, and bowels also make noise, and the *דָּמוּ* could just as readily mean “to be silent.” Texts like Jer 8:14, 48:2 and Lam 2:18, which speak of cessation of life and someone’s perishing, are best derived from *דָּמָה* “to cease” rather than *דָּמוּ* “to be dumb, to be still.”

2. Note the study of Heller (1966: 73–78) who denied that these verses were about an astronomical miracle. In his view they tell of Yahweh’s silencing the gods Sun and Moon, after which they were powerless to withstand the Israelites. Only after the worship of the sun god and the moon god was forgotten was this tradition reshaped as an astronomical event. See also Nelson (1995: 3–10) who concluded that these verses reflect a demythologizing of tradition, resulting in the sun and the moon becoming only chronological markers instead of deities.

3. Soggin (1972: 123) also cited the proposal of J. Phythian-Adams and F. Ceuppens to link the events of Joshua and *The Book of Jasher* to the fall of a meteorite in Asia Minor in the fourteenth century B.C., which, as Soggins noted, was an event at the wrong time and the wrong place to be relevant for understanding these verses.

4. Note Herodotus (II: 142) quotation of Egyptian records which speak of unusual solar events:

Four times in this period [of 11,340 years] (so they told me) the sun rose contrary to his wont; twice he rose where he now sets, and twice he set where he now rises; yet Egypt at these times underwent no change, neither in the produce of the river

and the land, nor in the matter of sickness and death. (Godley 1920, I: 448–449)

A total solar eclipse in the eastern hemisphere could appear to be a sun setting in the east; and a similar eclipse in the western hemisphere could appear to be the sun rising in the west.

5. Holladay summarized his position as follows:

Within this context, the meaning of Josh 10:12c–13b could hardly be more clear. The first stitch is a prayer (or an incantation) that the sun and moon will “stand” (*dmm* = *izuzzum*) in opposition (= *šitqulu*; hence the very necessary reference to Gibeon on the east and the valley of Ajalon to the west) on a day favorable to “the nation” (most probably the fourteenth of the month) rather than to her enemies (the result if the moon were to “flee” from the approaching sun, thus delaying the conjunction until the unfavorable fifteenth of the month).

6. Lane noted that Arabic makes reference to a “false dawn that rises without extending laterally, which appears black, presenting itself like an obstacle [on the horizon]” and a “true dawn” which arises after the first, or false فجر (*fajr*) has disappeared, and with its rising the day commences.” Other meanings of عمد (*amad*) which are contextually inappropriate include: (1) “to intend, to purpose,” (2) “to oppress,” (3) “to moisten,” (4) “to be angry,” and (5) the Syriac loanword “to baptize” (= معمدان [*muʾmidānu*] “Baptist” with the ع rather than the غ (Lane 1874: 2151–2153; Wehr 1979: 751ff.). (Arabic معمدان [*muḡmidānu*] is unattested.)

7. Boling (1982: 284) dismissed this identification as proposed by Gaster (1969: 528), stating, “Usage in this passage is not much clarified by pointing to the Arabic root *dwm*, used specifically of the sun’s turning in its course. . . . [דָּוַם] means simply ‘stay put,’ to ‘hold a position,’ or ‘strike a pose.’” But these latter meanings also fit دَوْم (*dūm*), as indicated again in the next note.

8. The Arabic *دوم* (*dûm*) “still, motionless” is also used with reference to water, such as the water left in a pool by a torrent or the whirlpool of the sea and the middle of the sea upon which the waves circle. The idea of spinning—yet being motionless—comes from a toy, the *دوامة* (*duwwâmat*) “a top which spins on the ground by means of a string” (Lane 1867: 937). Note the Rabbinic Hebrew *הַמָּוֶה הַבֹּרְחָנִי* “the time in the morning and the evening when the sun appears to stand still or be silent, . . . dawn or sunset” (Jastrow 1903: 312).

9. Stephenson (1975: 118) identified, along with Soggin, the eclipse of June 15, 763 B.C. with Amos 8:9; he also suggested that Joel 2:31 speaks about any one of the three solar eclipses between 356 and 303 B.C. which were total in Judah. Sawyer (1972: 140–144; 1981: 87–89) identified the stellar phenomenon of the stars fighting against Sisera (Jud 5:20) with the 1131 B.C. eclipse since, “Venus was prominent and the bright stars Vega, Spica, Arcturus, and Antares were high in the sky.” If the battle with Sisera was around 1190, as I have argued elsewhere, a reference to the eclipse was not a part of the Deborah tradition originally.

10. Lacking any real lexical support, aside from Rabbinic Hebrew *הַמָּוֶה* “dusk/twilight” (though he failed to mention that *הַמָּוֶה* is also used for “dawn,” as mentioned above in note 8), Margalit argued his case as follows:

It is easily shown that one of the most frequent motifs in the “Day-of-the-Lord” tradition is that of “daytime darkness”. The motif underlies the ironic taunt of the prophet in Amos v 8, and the pronouncements of doom by the same prophet in viii 9ff. In neither of these texts is the “darkness” merely metaphoric for doom. Together in such texts as Isa. xiii and xxxiv; Joel iii-iv; and Zeph. i, they point to “darkness” as a standard fixture of storm-god theophany and divine warfare.

11. The literature on the emphatic ל continues to grow. Note especially Blommerde (1969: 31, with a list of thirteen references), Richardson (1966: 89), McDaniel (1968: 206–208); Dahood (1975: 341–342); Whitley (1975: 202–204; and Huehnergard (1983: 569–593, especially 591). Soggin (1972: 76–77) identified its presence also in Jos 5:14.

12. Codex Alexandrinus has ἐνεποδίσθη ὁ ἥλιος “the sun was foot-cuffed,” which reflects a mistake of an initial $\acute{\epsilon}$ for an initial $\acute{\alpha}$. (Note the B-text of Jud 5:22 where it is used with horses being foot-cuffed.)

13. Other texts which require major changes in the sequence of phrases/verses include, for example, Ezek 13:17–23; 28: 2–23; and Zech 4:1–10. (See Chapters XXI and XXII below.)

14. Boling (1982: 283) would make Yahweh the subject of this verb. Were the phrase “he spoke in the hearing of Israel” rather than “he said in the sight of Israel,” this suggestion may have some merit. But to have Yahweh being *seen* while speaking to Israel adds an unnecessary difficulty to the text since seeing Yahweh could be fatal. The Greek text has Joshua by name as the subject here.

15. A solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes between the earth and the sun. Consequently, the reflected light from the moon would then face the sun, not the earth. On earth the moon would be concealed somewhere in the darkness.

16. The עַד in this case is not the common preposition meaning “as far as, up to, until,” but the cognate of Arabic عند (*inda*) used as an adverbial noun of time meaning “at, upon, thereupon, where-upon” (Lane 1874: 2171). The medial ד of עַד was assimilated creating a homograph, though not a homophone, of עַד “until.”

17. Reading the ל here as an emphatic particle (= לֵּל). See note 11.

18. Reading the ׀ here as an asseverative particle. For other examples and bibliography, see McDaniel 1968: 210.

19. This reading of the text also frees the interpreter of Joel 2:31 from having to find evidence that the moon turned into blood or into the color of blood (see Chapter XXIII). While Stephenson cited numerous witnesses over the centuries who reported that the moon turned red during a solar eclipse, reports of the August 11, 1999, solar eclipse speak of a wide variety of colors, including ruby-red. Were the color *red* the intent of the authors of *The Books of Jasher* and Joshua, אָרֶם rather than אָרֶם would have been the word of choice, and if “like (the color of) blood” had been intended, אָרֶם, rather than the MT אָרֶם, would have been the prepositional phrase of choice.

20. Reading the MT of Jos 10:12–13 as poetic lines speaking of a moonless night and a total solar eclipse raise the possibility of dating the eclipse. With 3,190 total solar eclipses having occurred *or* having been predicted to occur between 2000 B.C. to 3000 C.E., the only one that approximates the time of Joshua is the eclipse of September 30, 1131 B.C. at 12:35 PM. Whether Joshua’s activities are compatible with this time frame is a separate issue and needs further study.