

March 10, 1969

Mr. David Brewer
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Dear Mr. Brewer:

Your question about Joshua 10:11-14 is a difficult one. Many people have been content to seize a few words out of the middle of the passage and to build a complete interpretation upon these few words. I feel that the whole passage must be interpreted as a unit.

Verse 14 says that there never was a day like that before or after, "that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel." Verse 11 states that God cast down great stones from heaven andd"they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." Thus the major activity of God in this connection would seem to be the sending of the hailstones which wrought such havoc among the Canaanites.

In its comments on the Book of Joshua The New Bible Commentary suggests that after the Israelites "went up from Gilgal all night" and attacked just before dawn, Joshua prayed, not that the sun would not set, but that the sun and moon would not give light and thus hinder the defeat of the enemy. There is much to be said for this suggestion. The fact that the Lord killed more with hailstones than the Israelites killed with weapons would suggest the presence of a storm which would certainly have produced a great darkness and made the sun and moon silent, and thus might be a reasonable explanation of the passage.

Dr. Robert Dick Wilson considered the passage to be a description of an eclipse. Personally I do not know exactly how to take it. These three verses are in the middle of an account in which the great emphasis is on the Lord's fighting for Israel by causing the hailstones to wreak havoc among the enemy.