

What a Believing Man Can Do.

by Horatius Bonar

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having faith in God and trusting in His power and love to accomplish great things.

Scripture: Exodus 10:21, Joshua 10:12-14, Isaiah 38:8, Matthew 27:45, Mark 9:23, Romans 8:31, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 11:1, James 1:6, Revelation 6:12

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "Faith"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the extraordinary miracle of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still, illustrating the immense power of faith and the willingness of God to respond to the requests of His people. This event, unlike any other in history, showcases God's authority and the potential of a believing man to effect change through unwavering confidence in God. Bonar encourages believers to expand their understanding of God's greatness, to cultivate reverence, and to embrace the supernatural, reminding them that faith can accomplish what seems impossible. He urges the congregation to trust in God alone, highlighting that with faith, they can overcome any challenge, just as Joshua did.

Transcript

On the day the Lord gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the Lord in front of all the people of Israel. He said, "Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon." So the sun and moon stood still until the Israelites had defeated their enemies.

Is this event not recorded in The Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day. The Lord fought for Israel that day. Never before or since has there been a day like that one, when the Lord answered such a request from a human being. Joshua 10:12-14

There are several miracles referred to in Scripture in connection with the sun. When the sun was darkened in Egypt (Exodus 10:21); when the "light of it shall become sevenfold"; when the shadow went back on the dial of Ahaz (Isaiah 38:8); when the sun was darkened at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:45); when the sun shall become black as sackcloth (Revelation 6:12); when it shall scorch men with fire. But this is the most extraordinary of them all, no, of all the miracles of the Bible. It is quiet and beneficent; it is conservative, not destructive; it arrests but does not injure. It is not like the deluge, or the plagues of Egypt, desolating and death-dealing; nor like the Red Sea, or Sinai, or Jordan, or the descending fire on Carmel. It is simply a stoppage of creation's movements, the arresting the descent of the two great lights, making day a little longer. It does not look like a miracle, for there is no change in sun, or moon, or sky, or earth; yet it is this

"no change" that is the greatest of all miracles- "Never before or since has there been a day like that one, when the Lord answered such a request from a human being."

The time had not come when they should have no more need of the sun. The thing was done in a moment, without premeditation or preparation; not by fasting and prayer, or an appeal to God, as in the miracles of Moses and Elijah; but by a command, a word, addressed directly to sun and moon; as if Joshua were assuming the Creator's authority; the command of faith, uttered in simple confidence in God; the word of one man; the word of a man in sympathy and fellowship with God. O confidence in God, what can you not accomplish! Joshua is a man of like passions as we are, yet he speaks to the sun and it stands still!

It is not only a very extraordinary miracle in itself, but it is a very manifest one; not done in a corner, but open to the eyes of all. That long long day in Palestine would doubtless be remembered forever. It could not be hidden. It was in one respect a beneficent miracle; in another, indirectly, destructive; for it enabled Israel to overthrow their enemies; and in such a ruin God is glorified. It was, we might say, a very superfluous miracle. Why not enable Joshua to cut short the work, or send the lightning or the earthquake?

God does not always economize His forces, His gifts, His treasures. He loves sometimes to show how He can lavish His fullness- how He can be, as men say, extravagant. How completely a much lesser miracle would have served the purpose! Yet he does not grudge this, in answer to the word of one of his saints. Stupendous and superfluous it does seem to us- for the one stoppage of the sun (or earth) includes so many other stoppages and the forthputting of an amount of Power, absolutely inconceivable. We can measure the amount of power put forth in severing the Red Sea or the Jordan; but the stoppage of sun and moon involves an amount of power beyond all calculation or conception.

I. Familiarize your minds with a great miracle like this. Do not try to lower it or diminish it, or empty it of the supernatural. Take it for what it is here stated to be. God means what he says. He does not exaggerate. Take it for what it is.

(1.) It will ENLARGE YOUR THOUGHTS OF GOD. He is seen in this miracle as infinitely great and powerful; able to arrest sun and moon in a moment. We need to have our thoughts elevated, expanded, greatened. It is with a great God that we have to do. Alpine magnificence declares His greatness; but this far more. In days when man tries to make himself look great, and to think himself powerful; it is well to remember the greatness of Jehovah.

(2.) It will INCREASE YOUR REVERENCE. Reverence of God comes, in part at least, from what we see of his power and majesty. We must be steeped in such views of God as this miracle gives us, that we may be delivered from flippancy and frivolity in dealing with God- in prayer and praise. Are we sufficiently reverential? Are we bowed down in spirit before this mighty God?

(3.) It will GIVE YOU A TRUE INSIGHT INTO THE TRUE SUPERNATURAL. The tendency of the age is to disbelieve the supernatural; to assume that man occupies the whole space of being; and that beyond what he sees, and hears, and feels, there is nothing- no room for angels or spirits, no room for God, no room for agencies apart from known forces and ascertained laws. The Bible is full of the superhuman and supernatural. In studying it we are delivered from superstition, which is the supernatural of the fake; and taught the world of faith, which is the supernatural of the true. For faith deals with the true supernatural, the divine supernatural. It is the evidence of things not seen.

II. Have faith in God. Here is a miracle so great that we can hardly ask for a greater; hence we ought to say, "Is there anything too hard for God." It cherishes faith and expectation. It shows what God is willing to do for men like ourselves. Let us not be staggered by the greatness or difficulty of any work, or the power of any enemy. What though we needed a miracle? If not a visible miracle, yet something as great? Is not God willing to do it for us? There is still power, still love. He still takes part with His Israel against their enemies. Let us be trustful, believing, brave. If God is for us, who can be against us? What cannot faith do? What cannot unbelief mar? Have faith in God. Not in self, man, schemes, societies, organizations, churches, money, intellect, science, progress; but in God. Let us be Joshuas. Let us show what one living man, armed with the living word, can do with the living God!

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