

JOSHUA'S LONG DAY AND THE COMPUTERS

From time to time, articles have appeared in the *Biblical Astronomer* and in its predecessor, the *Bulletin of the Tychonian Society*, describing the phenomenon commonly known as Joshua's long day. The scriptural account is found in Joshua chapter 10. An entire chapter is devoted to all aspects of Joshua's long day in *Geocentricity* (see back cover of this issue). Indeed, it is by far the longest chapter in the book. One such aspect involves reports that Joshua's long day has been found either by computers or by ancient calendars.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s two stories appeared in print about a computer finding a missing day. The first is told by Harold Hill in his book, *How to Live Like a King's Kid*.¹ In Hill's own words:

When NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center here at Greenbelt, Md. first went on the air, a horrendous technical boo-boo surfaced, causing a complete shutdown [of the computer] after less than an hour's operation.

I was called in as an outside consultant and came up with a "quick-fix" that saved the day for them.

After things fired up I stayed around as an interested observer, to catch the very beginning of our Space Exploration activity. That was somewhere back in the sixties. ...

A large team of IBM technicians was present to debug the system and get it running. No one really knew much except that it looked O.K. on paper.

It was during that time that I heard about the aberration in the location of the Heavenly bodies that led to the Bible account of how the MISSING DAY incident came about.

I was not the one who came up with the Bible answer, nor do I know the names of those involved. I simply reported it as it came to me and used it in my lectures on the Bible and Science, which I frequently deliver in schools and Colleges in Science Seminars.

1. Hill, H. "How to Find a Missing Day," *How to Live Like a King's Kid*, (Baltimore: Logos), Chapter 13, pp. 65-77.

A Newspaper reporter in Spencer, Indiana [Mary Kathryn Bryan in 1970, —*Ed.*] came across a copy, and fed it into the major News Services. To date I have received over 10,000 letters from all parts of the world.²

Many have correctly pointed out that computers do not stop "and put up a red flag." Some have reported that Hill has retracted his story, but that is not true. Hill still maintains its veracity even though NASA has disavowed any and all knowledge of him, and others have charged him with various degrees of fraud. I suspected that Hill had based the story on a book by Totten,³ written more than a century ago, but Hill claims not to have known of the Totten book at the time.

The main problem with Hill's story is that it finding a missing day would require an exact date for some event, such as an eclipse of the sun, *prior* to Joshua's long day. The most ancient of these observations does barely go back as far as 700 B.C., let alone 1,500 B.C., the time of Joshua's long day. Still, Hill's story raised quite a bit of interest.

Dr. Bolton Davidheiser has done considerable research into the backgrounds of not only Harold Hill's story, but the man himself. He found no record of Hill having ever worked as a consultant for NASA Goddard or anywhere else. No one there recalls finding any missing day, and although many have heard the tale, none can recall Mr. Hill.

Well, all that is old stuff form most readers. I do have something new to report. It came by way of an email inquiry from one Dave Benson, dated 27 March, 1999. Mr. Benson is a reported for the *Evening Star*, ... but I'll let him tell the story:

My name is Dave Benson and I am a writer with *The Evening Star* newspaper in Auburn, Ind. Recently the story of Harold Hill and the NASA astronauts supposedly finding Joshua's Lost Day has resurfaced.

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2. Hill, H. 1984. Private correspondence. Letter dated October 1.
 3. Totten, C. A. L., 1891. *Joshua's Long Day and the Dial of Ahaz, A Scientific Vindication and A Midnight Cry*, 3rd Edition, (New Haven: Our Race Publ. Co.) Reprinted in 1968 by Destiny Publishers, Merimac, Mass.

As you will no doubt recall, the story was first published in *The Evening Word* of Spencer, Indiana, but somewhere the legend was changed to *The Evening Star*, which is our newspaper. I am working on a story about it.

I have in my hand the January 1985 *Bulletin of the Tychonian Society* with your article on the subject.⁴ Your final question brings matters to a head: "Does any reader know someone who may have been working on the navigation problem, especially around Greenbelt, in the sixties?"

I was curious. Has anyone ever stepped forward to provide independent confirmation of Hill's story?

The answer is still "No, no one has ever confirmed Hill's story." I referred Mr. Benson to Dr. Davidheiser, but I don't know if he pursued the matter with him. If not, he missed out on some fascinating material.⁵

The second computer account of a missing day appeared in the Swedish *Goteborgs Tidningen* on March 15, 1981. According to that story, Stig Flodmark of the University of Stockholm discovered that the earth's axis had flipped on May 3, 1375 B.C. and associated that with Joshua's long day. This proposal is one that has resurfaced from time to time in creationist circles.

According to Flodmark, an Ugaritic astronomer described the event and gave the date. Flodmark refers to a book entitled *Tidal Friction and the Earth's Rotation*.⁶ The comment by the author of the quoted paper,

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4. Bouw, G. and H. Hill, 1985. "NASA's Missing Day?!" *Bulletin of the Tychonian Society* no. 39, pp. 9-13.
 5. By the way, Dr. Davidheiser is finishing a revision of a book, a critique of the wanderings of Dr. Hugh Ross. The first version, entitled *Creation, Time, and Dr. Hugh Ross*, saw a very, very limited distribution and was sheer dynamite. Though now in his eighties, Dr. Davidheiser has a discerning mind with keen spiritual insights. If his revision is anything like his first work on Ross, expect to find the book available through the *Biblical Astronomer*.
 6. Brosche, P., & J. Sndermann, eds., 1978. *Tidal Friction and the Earth's Rotation*, (New York: Springer-Verlag), p. 12.

F. R. Stephenson, in summarizing the Ugaritic observation, is "Sun put to shame; went down in daytime." This hardly describes a tippie top phenomenon, especially with Gibeon at the rotational north pole for the day, for the sun would have been circumpolar (above the horizon all day long) for the Ugaritic astronomer; it would not have gone "down in daytime."

The Ugaritic note sounds more like Hezekiah's sign (Isaiah 38) viewed from the east coast of North America or from South America, both of which have accounts of the sun rising and then setting again in the eastern sky to re-arise at its regular rate. There is some evidence to support the notion that regular trade occurred between the Americas and mid-Eastern merchants at the time, so it is not impossible that the account, though recorded in the mid-East, describes an event seen in the Americas.