

# MIRACLES

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A miracle is sometimes described as an event not explainable by natural or scientifically known laws.

In this article I focus mainly on those events described in the Bible that can be placed in the category of 'miraculous'. We will see that some of these events can partly be explained by what we know about the laws governing our universe and world, but other events have no explanation and are normally classified as totally supernatural.



Examples of the first type of event includes some of the recorded 'plagues of Egypt', such as locusts, hail, frogs and livestock sickness. In these cases the miraculous is seen in the timing and intensity of the events and in the fact that Moses was told when each event would start and when it would end.



Some of the examples of 'supernatural' events include the death of all Egyptian firstborn, the 'manna' food provided for the Israelites in the desert, many of the events around the life of Jesus, such as walking on water and supremely his resurrection.

I will consider miracles under three headings:

1. Miracles that are partly understood through scientific discoveries.
2. Miracles not understandable through known laws of our universe.
3. Miracles that happen in our personal experience.

## Miracles that are partly understood through scientific discoveries

Some examples include the following:

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1. The 'darkness that could be felt' that covered most of Egypt but not the area where the Israelites lived in Goshen.
2. Israelite crossing of the sea on dry ground .
3. The 'sun standing still'.

### **The 'darkness that could be felt'**

Most of the 'plagues of Egypt' events left no archaeological evidence. However, one of the 'plagues' did leave evidence, namely the 'darkness that could be felt'. We read, *Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand towards the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt – darkness that can be felt" So Moses stretched out his hand towards the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived (Exodus 10:21-23).*

A darkness 'that can be felt' sounds very much like a cloud of volcanic ash from a volcanic eruption. A report in the scientific journal NATURE (Stanley & Sheng 2013) says that sediment cores drilled down in the eastern Nile Delta have revealed an ash layer corresponding to the mineral characteristics of the Santorini (Thera) volcano situated in the Aegean Sea, between Greece and Turkey.

The ash composition and the calculated age of this deposit coincide with the probable date of the cataclysmic eruption of Santorini. This shows that ash from an eruption in the northern Mediterranean Sea can be blown as far south as Egypt. However, the C-14 dating of this core deposit suggests it was deposited somewhere between 1595 and 1512 BC (Anon 1986).

This ash deposit in the Nile Delta does not seem to correspond with the Bible date for the exodus from Egypt. However, the Bible account states that the Israelites lived in Goshen which is situated in this eastern Nile Delta. Therefore, if there was another ash cloud that covered Egypt just before the exodus date of 1446 BC, we will not expect this to be present in the sediment core if it had only covered the western Nile Delta. The Bible account specifically states that the darkness did not cover the Goshen region that is situated in the eastern Nile Delta and the ash layer found in the drilled cores is dated 100 years after the exodus of Israel from Egypt.



However, other studies of volcanic eruptions in the northern Mediterranean Sea show that ash deposits from three volcanoes are all dated to about 1370 BC, with an accepted margin of error of 80 years (Vogel et al: 1990). In other words, 1370 plus 80 = 1450 BC, about the time of the Israelite exodus from Egypt!

It is therefore very probable that the ash cloud that covered Egypt in about 1446 BC did originate from one of these volcanoes.

We may ask how an ash cloud blown across the Mediterranean Sea to Egypt could cover all of Egypt except the North-Eastern Goshen area. This is easy to understand when patterns of ash dispersion are studied. A strong wind can blow a column before it like a river of ash, but on either side of this 'river' any observer would be in sunlight.

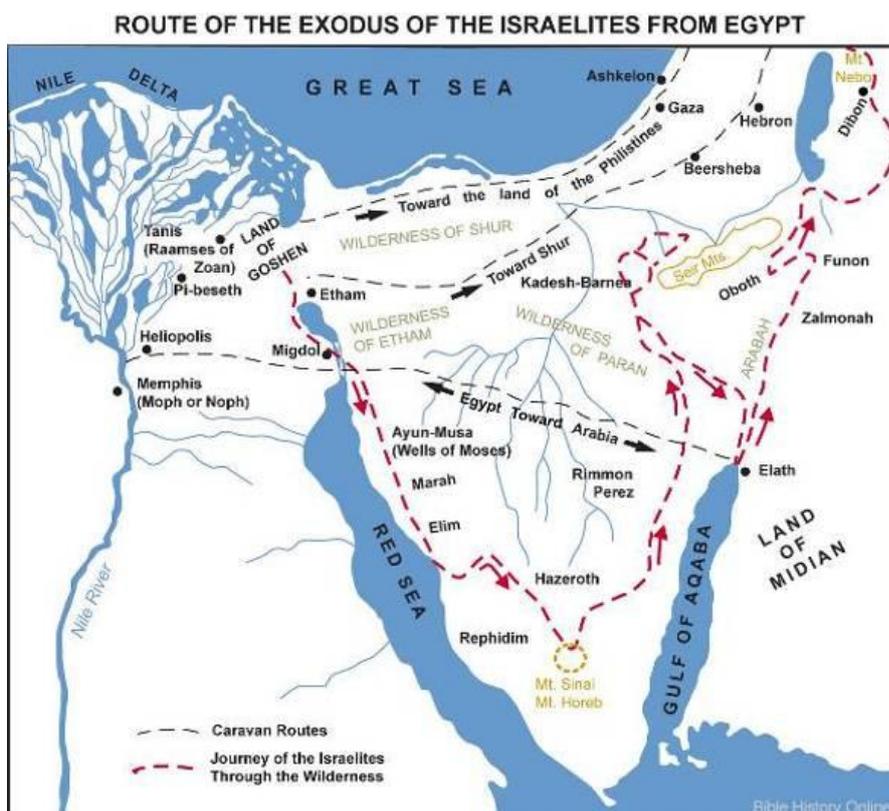


This Bible reference to a 'darkness that could be felt', is a good example of a Bible account where the writer described events without understanding their cause. In other Bible passages we read words like "I saw what looked like"

This example and its probable scientific explanation in no way reduces its miraculous nature. The miracle was in

the timing, the intensity and the fact that it only affected part of Egypt, not Goshen and the fact that Moses was told when the darkness would start and when it would end. The scientific explanation also helps us accept the Bible time-line for when the Israelites left Egypt.

### Israelites crossing the Sea?



If we look at the possible routes taken by the Israelites leaving Egypt, the most likely one took them through an extensive body of water known as the 'Sea of Reeds'.

On the map the most prominent dashed line gives one possible route. Starting from the Land of Goshen in the North East of the Nile Delta, they then went south to near Migdol

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and then miraculously crossed the 'Sea of Reeds' situated just north of Migdol.

Archaeologist and biblical scholar James Hoffmeir places Migdol of Egypt's New Kingdom period near Magdolum (not shown on the map). *Pi-hahiroth* is thought to mean 'mouth of the canal (s)'. The Pelusiac branch of the Nile was used in ancient times as a canal for transportation and irrigation, as were smaller channels passing near Migdol itself (Drews & Han 2010). This places Migdol closer to the Mediterranean than shown on the map above.

The Bible account reads, *Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon"*

Further support for this crossing site comes from a Major-General Sir Alexander B. Tulloch. He served in the British army in 1882. He witnessed an event that reminded him of the Bible account. He wrote, *One day, when so employed (surveying) between Port Said and Kantarah, a gale of wind from the eastward set in and became so strong that I had to cease work. Next morning on going out I found that Lake Monzaleh, which is situated on the west side of the (Suez) canal, had totally disappeared, the effect of the high wind on the shallow water having actually driven it away beyond the horizon, and the natives were walking about on the mud where the day before the fishing-boats, now grounded, had been floating. When noticing this extraordinary dynamical effect of wind on shallow water, it suddenly flashed across my mind that I was witnessing a similar event to what had taken place between three and four thousand years ago, at the time of the passage of the so-called Red Sea by the Israelites (Drews 2011).*

**This scenario has now been scientifically tested**, as reported in NEW SCIENTIST scientific journal (McAlpine: 2010). This is also reported by Drews and Han (2010).



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The scientific study, reported in New Scientist journal, created computer simulations of the area that may have been the site of the Bible account. They found that a strong wind from the east, blowing for 12 hours, could have exposed a five kilometre wide mud flat that could enable a few hundred thousand Israelites to cross. A 100km per hour wind would have needed a little over 8 hours to blow water in the Lake of Tanis westward and back up into the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, parting the waters around the peninsula from which it is assumed the crossing would have started. When the wind stopped the water would flow back in.

It should be noted that this Reed Sea is not a body of water that could be crossed on foot. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that it was almost certainly deeper 1,500 years back and has slowly become shallower due to silt deposits over time.

So we can again conclude that the Bible account can be based in realistic history. The importance of a strong east wind was also mentioned in the Bible account. We read, *Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground with a wall of water on their right and on their left* (Exodus 14: 21-22).

This crossing of the Reed Sea is in **no way less miraculous than it would have been anywhere else**. The miraculous is seen in God's timing, his leading Moses to an exact place at an exact time and causing the east wind to blow for a precise time while the Israelites crossed over. Then causing the Egyptian army to be drowned immediately after the Israelites had finished crossing over.

It should also be noted that all the Bible references to crossing the sea on dry ground refer to the **Reed Sea, not the Red Sea**. The Hebrew words are *Yam Saph*. The word Yam means 'sea' and Saph means 'reeds'.

The same words *Yam Saph* are used in Numbers 14:25, Deuteronomy 1:40, Joshua 4:23, and Psalm 106:7-9. Clearly it is an incorrect translation to refer to the Red Sea. The Israelites did not cross the Red Sea, they crossed the Reed Sea !

### **The sun standing still**

Recently an article by Humphreys and Waddington (2017) suggest that a solar eclipse of 1207 BC might explain the Bible account of the sun standing still, as recorded in Joshua 10:12-14. However, according to dates given in the Bible, the events recorded in Joshua would have taken place close to 1400 BC, about 200 years before the eclipse mentioned in this article.

The Joshua account gives other details that cannot be explained by a solar eclipse. We read:

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1. As they (the enemy) fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.
2. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day.

In order to understand these accounts it is helpful to note that the Bible writers were often describing events as they seemed to them. We have already noted the 'darkness that could be felt' account. In other places we read words such as 'It looked like'.

With this in mind I feel it is justified to remind ourselves that daylight comes from sunlight. If it is daylight around us then we assume the sun is shining, even if it is hidden from our view by clouds. If the Israelites experienced a supernatural extension of daylight, far beyond the normal day length, would it not be natural to conclude that the sunset had been delayed or the sun had stopped moving?

We should try to find an explanation for the recorded extension of light, plus the recorded shower of large hailstones and the comment that it was light right through the expected night-time. In fact one whole night was missing.

It is fascinating that an event occurred on 30 June 1908 over Podkamennaya Tunguska River in Siberia, Russia, that most probably caused events similar to what happened in the battle recorded in the book of Joshua. This area was not inhabited.

This event has been extensively studied. What we do know is that there was a large explosion over this forested area. Trees were flattened radiating away from the epicentre and a probable explanation is that a comet entered earth's atmosphere and exploded before reaching the ground, but fragments of an icy comet could still have reached the ground.



**After this event the night sky remained light even as far away as Britain. At midnight people could play cricket and golf.**

A Wikipedia article on this Tunguska event lists many of the scientific papers relating to it.

We now know that the explosion of an icy comet high in Earth's atmosphere could create a cloud of minute particles that would catch the sun's rays and create reflected light right round the earth. This was well illustrated when we started sending people into space. The rocket engines caused a very fine mist around the earth, far higher than any natural cloud formation.

We read about this in a report from Cornell University with the title 'A mystery solved: Space shuttle shows 1908 Tunguska explosion was caused by comet' (Ju 2009)

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In other words, the most likely explanation for the events recorded in Joshua chapter 10 are as follows:

1. God knew what was about to happen and so he prompted Joshua to pray for extended daylight.
2. When the daylight was prolonged it is natural that the Israelites concluded that the sun had stopped. This conclusion was natural because we all know that daylight comes from the sun.
3. If a comet had exploded high in the atmosphere some distance away from the battle, this would in all probability have created very high altitude cloud that actually obscured sight of the sun, although sunlight still passed through the cloud.
4. This event created large 'hailstones' that rained down on the fleeing enemy (actually fragments from the exploded comet?)
5. This event caused bright light throughout the night and so the Israelites experienced daylight for a period lasting two normal day lengths. To them it seemed that the '*The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day*' (Joshua 10:13)

Why do I detail this very plausible cause of the Joshua events? Well, as a scientist I know that God has created our solar system in such a way that the earth rotates around the sun and day and night is caused by the rotation of our earth.

The laws of physics tell us that it is impossible for the earth to suddenly stop rotating and if it could stop then everything on earth would be propelled out into space at an enormous speed. Because the basic God-ordained Laws of our Universe prevent the earth from suddenly stopping its rotation, this passage in the Bible has been ridiculed by many who wish to discredit the Bible.

Therefore, since we live in the Age of Science and we desire to 'give reasons for the faith that we hold' it is helpful for Christians to search for explanations that remove perceived challenges to logic and which help many people raised in our scientific age to accept biblical events in ways that do not conflict with established laws governing the universe.

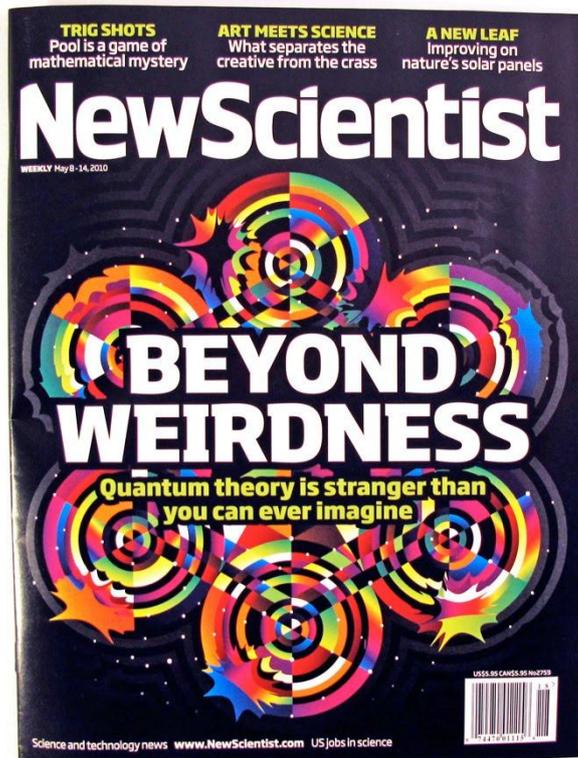
**The Bible speaks very clearly about the importance of telling the truth.** It is very sad that some Christians have been circulating a story about 'NASSA finding a missing day' on their computer analysis of our past and suggesting the explanation is the 'missing day' of the Bible account. In fact this is a case of Fake News created by some misguided person. There is absolutely no truth in this NASSA story.

### **Miracles not understandable through known laws of our universe?**

I find it exciting that science can help us understand how other miracles, that are not understandable through known laws operating in our universe, may be caused through laws that operate outside of the restrictions of time.

These laws could be the same as existed in the Timeless Dimension from which our universe was created at the Big Bang event. We call any such laws, that existed before creation of our universe, Transcendent Laws.

Science is starting to investigate events that seem to be independent of the restrictions of time. This research is taking place within the scientific discipline known as Quantum Mechanics.



Scientists making these studies all admit that they are discovering things that are so mysterious that no-one really understands them. This is shown by headlines such as on this front cover of New Scientist Journal.

These studies relate to the microscopic building blocks of our universe. We used to believe that there is nothing smaller than atoms and that everything we can see in our universe is built up from these microscopic 'building blocks'. However, quantum mechanics has demonstrated that there are many even smaller units of energy that

we call 'particles' but which are actually bundles of energy.

The really amazing discoveries relate to how this microscopic world, containing the energy interactions that form our visible universe, defy our understanding of time and space. Scientists have had to invent terms such as 'superposition', 'entanglement' and to accept the reality of instantaneous interactions over vast distances and that 'quantum particles' can exist in more than one place at a time!

In scientific machines such as the Particle Accelerators it has been shown that sub-atomic realities can interact with each other instantaneously over vast distances. In fact, it looks as if this sub-atomic world is operating in a Timeless Dimension.

Realities existing in a 'superposition' of many states only materialise as specific realities when we measure them with our time bound instruments. These measurements of multiple realities (superpositions) become detected as things like electrons, positrons and many other varieties of energy manifestation, when we 'freeze' their timelessness into our time-bound universe.

We and our universe are locked into time. Events happen in sequence and we speak of the 'Arrow of Time' that takes us and the whole universe from our past via our ever moving 'present' and into our future.

Amazingly, our universe that is locked into time, seems to be built up from a reality that is independent from time. Furthermore, Einstein and other scientists have provided much evidence that our universe started at a very specific event, namely an enormous explosion of energy that we call the Big Bang. Science understands that time and space came into existence at this Big Bang Creation.

So what was before this dramatic start of our universe when space and time came into existence? We know that the Big Bang event had to be a very precise event otherwise we would not exist. We can imagine that a very precisely determined amount of Timeless Dimension energy was instantly transformed into an explosive Big Bang NOW event. It had to be a truly God event.

Everything that we can see around us had a beginning. All beginnings demand a cause of the beginning. The universe is no exception to this universally observable truth. Therefore the universe also had a cause of its beginning. What was that cause? The most logical conclusion is that God was the cause.

Since science believes that time only started at the Big Bang Creation it seems logical to conclude that God existed and still exists in a Timeless Dimension. The Bible tells us this truth. God revealed himself to Moses as the I AM and in a number of places the Bible refers to God as existing from 'eternity to eternity' or 'timelessness to timelessness'.

When we look at God's visible Creation we see that it is held together by consistent laws and processes. We are told that God is in some way present throughout our vast universe and in fact *'in him all things consist or are held together (Colossians 1:17), or 'sustaining all things by his powerful word (Hebrews 1:3)*. It is not surprising that Quantum Mechanics is revealing that our time-locked universe is built up from and held together by mysterious interactions that defy the limitations of time and locality. Our universe is held together by a timeless energy matrix!

So, what does the Bible tell us about what existed before our universe was created? We read, *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible (Hebrews 11:3)*. We are not told that our universe was created from nothing. Since God exists outside of time and he made our universe from realities that are not seen and since he has revealed himself as a God of order and consistency, it is not hard to believe that the Timeless Dimension also contains energy and laws.

Laws that existed in God's Timeless Dimension, before our universe was created, are called Transcendent Laws. Once we accept the probability of Timeless Dimension Laws, used by God to create our universe and to hold our universe together, this helps us understand that

God can from time to time cause one of the Transcendent Laws to temporarily overrule the normal operation of the laws that govern events in our universe. We see examples of 'higher Laws' overcoming other laws. For instance the laws governing aerodynamics enable an aircraft to overcome the normal operation of the Law of Gravity.

These realities help me to understand a little bit of how God can cause those miracles that we classify as 'totally supernatural'. His powerful Mind directs 'Transcendent Laws' of the Timeless Dimension to temporarily suspend the usual function of the laws that we have experienced and understood through the studies of science.

### Miracles that happen in our personal experience.

Some people experience more 'miracles' in their lives than other people. In some cases we simply fail to recognise miracles that are less spectacular than others. For instance, how often have you or I met people we needed to meet or have been 'in the right place at the right time'. These encounters may have led to meaningful consequences in our lives or they may have prevented us from harmful situations.

The laws of chance and statistics do sometimes explain unusual situations or apparent coincidences. However, if these meaningful and unexpected events happen often then we can more easily believe that God has been guiding our steps.

I have been blessed with many events where I realised that chance was not the explanation. Some of these events were during war situations in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Several times I was saved from very probable death by a series of very unlikely split-second timing of aspects of those events. I list some of these as a free download from my webpage [www.factandfaith.co.za](http://www.factandfaith.co.za). The article is titled '[Personal journey of discovery](#)'.

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