

Sonny,

Do you have any thoughts on Hezekiah's sign of regressing time? I'm leading a Bible study in the book of Isaiah, and I'm not getting any satisfaction on this one. You recall the incident in Isaiah 38:8, also mentioned in 2 Kings 20:9-10, where King Hezekiah wished for a sign to confirm the word of the Lord that he would recover from his illness. Isaiah picked a sign that was as high as heaven: he offered Hezekiah the choice of having the shadow of the sun either skip ahead ten steps or backward ten steps. Hezekiah chose the one that would be the more difficult to falsify; then Isaiah called to the Lord, and he brought the shadow back ten steps. None of the commentaries that I checked offer an explanation: it is a miracle, plain and simple, and there is no point in looking for a natural cause. What do you think?

-Lynn Andrew

Hey Lynn,

Yeah; I have an idea. Where does your Bible study meet? Does it happen to be in a room where there is a clock on the wall?

Sonny

Sonny,

Yes, there is a clock. It's one of those large decorator clocks with hands.

-Lynn

Lynn,

There is a gadget you can get that will set the clock without you having to touch it—assuming it is synced to the atomic clock by low-frequency radio signals, as most clocks are. In fact I have one that you can borrow. You can step the minute hand forward or backward just by pressing a button. So when you get to into a discussion about Isaiah 38:8, ask someone whether they would like the clock to skip forward or backward ten minutes. Then for dramatic effect call me and tell me the request before you press the appropriate button ten times. You could keep the device hidden your pocket, and for anyone in the room who doesn't know about those gadgets it will be impressive.

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Sonny,

I don't see how that explains anything about a miracle that moved the sun before there were atomic clocks—or any clocks at all.

-Lynn

Lynn,

Right. I expected to have to explain. Remember that essay I sent you some months ago, the one about the interpretation of Genesis Chapter One where it proposed that the universe as we know it is, from the point of view of heaven, like a simulation on some heavenly computer? What that means is that the creation process was like formulating the principles and writing the program that makes everything work. Ask any programmer whether it would be possible to

have the orderly working of those programs interrupted, and you are likely to get something like, "Where have you been?" Everyone knows software is generally built in such a way that it can be modified, which is what gives hackers the opportunity to mess things up. What we call natural laws are not immutable in an absolute sense.

I'm sure you have had times when your computer did something you did not expect it to do because of some software program that had gotten into it. It might have been for a good or bad purpose, but regardless of that it was a surprise. For example, I could send you an attachment to an email that would display a working clock on your screen and also in the background be downloading other information. Then you could call me up and ask me to set the clock back ten minutes, which I could do quite easily even if I were thousands of miles away. Of course it would affect only that clock, not any others. And so that it would not cause anyone to be late for an appointment if you kept the clock on your screen, I would have it speed up and gradually get back to the right time. Your clock on the wall would correct itself too, by the way; as soon as you quit sending the overriding signals it would again respond to the normal signals from the atomic clock and get back to showing the correct time.

Sonny Elam

Sonny,

No need to borrow that gadget. I'll just read your comments and see how it goes.

Thanks.

-Lynn Andrew