

Inmates Released to View Eclipse for 'Worship and Prayer'

Six inmates in a New York State prison will be allowed to venture outside to view the solar eclipse.

As Fox News reported, the inmates filed a lawsuit because they believed the prison's decision to stay locked down during the eclipse violated their religious rights. The inmates believed they had the right to view the eclipse for "gathering, celebration, worship and prayer."

Each inmate had a different religious belief they each felt required the opportunity for a religious celebration. From atheism to Islam, Santeria, Seventh Day Adventism to Baptist, each believed they had a valid reason to watch the eclipse.

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As the complaint filed for the inmates stated, they "expressed a sincerely held religious belief that April's solar eclipse is a religious event that they must witness and reflect on to observe their faiths."

The atheist of the group, Jeremy Zielinski, believed viewing the eclipse was for the purpose of "science and reason." The other inmates believe this calls for a special time of Islamic prayer and reading from the New Testament.

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Whether these inmates' desires to view the eclipse is for religious purposes or just to go outside, there's one thing

that we should gauge from this. The eclipse, while it very well could be a sign of the end times, is not in and of itself something to be worshipped.

The eclipse may be a sign of what is to come, but we must remain careful not to use it for idolatry. We also cannot gain right standing with God simply by performing a religious ceremony or religious acts during the eclipse. It is only with a truly repentant heart toward Christ that we can be saved.{eo}

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