

Are We Missing What This Eclipse Is Saying About the Modern-Day Church?

Today the United States will experience the first full solar eclipse that traverses the continent in nearly 100 years. Beginning at approximately 10:15 a.m. in Oregon, the path of darkness will swipe across the country and exit through South Carolina at 2:40 p.m. Traveling at approximately 2400 mph, the moon's shadow will pass quickly across the States.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the definition of the word eclipse means: the total or partial obscuring of one celestial body by another. But it also means: a falling into obscurity or decline.

There are many Scriptures that refer to celestial bodies. Even passages that appear to specifically refer to literal events occurring in the heavens that describe eclipses. The most noted in the book of Joel and Matthew 24:29, which says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Matt. 24:29).

These verses, like many of the ones in the book of Revelation pose real challenges for the believer. Are these referring to real, literal, physical events? Are they prophetically symbolic only? Or, perhaps they are both symbolic and may come to pass literally. If they are symbolic, what do they symbolize? Man can do nothing to keep the natural sun from turning dark or stars falling from the sky. But, if these are symbolic, then it is imperative that we correctly understand the symbolism, because it reveals something about our lives and what we can affect. So, what is this eclipse symbolizing?

There is much conversation and many theories regarding the symbolism of this eclipse. Some point to the significance of the timing and correlation to the Jewish calendar. That the eclipse will begin on the first day of Teshuvah and mark a 40-day season of repentance leading up to the Day of Atonement. But there is very important additional symbolism that we must not ignore.

In the discipline of hermeneutic study of the Bible, there is a long-recognized principle of "the law of first mention." This simply means that, when approaching the study of Scripture, the first time something is mentioned, it reveals its origin and context. This provides the basis for further understanding, future references, symbolism and application.

This is very important as we approach the interpretation of the Scriptures regarding the symbolism of this eclipse. We must ask ourselves, what Scriptures form the basis of the symbolism of the sun, the moon and the stars?

Other than the creation account in Genesis, the first time in Scripture that we find the sun, the moon and the stars mentioned together again is when Joseph told the prophetic dream he had to his family. "Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, 'I have dreamed another dream. The sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing to me' (Gen. 37:9).

But when he told it to his father and his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will I and your mother and your brothers really come to bow down ourselves to you to the ground?" So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind (Gen. 37:9-11).

And in these verses, for the first time, God gives us the prophetic symbolism of what the sun, the moon and the stars represent. The sun represents fathers or headship. The moon

represents mothers or supporting leadership and the stars represent brothers or peer leadership relationships.

This prophetic symbolism is reaffirmed and expanded in many other verses. The leadership of the seven churches in Revelation 1:20 are symbolized as “the mystery of the seven stars.” Christ is the “Sun of Righteousness” in Malachi 4:2. His glory replaces the light of the natural sun and the moon in Revelation 21:23. We see that the church is Christ’s bride and His wife in Ephesians 5:23-32, Revelation 19:7 and 21:2, 9, and she is called “the mother of us all” in Galatians 4:26.

So, what is the prophetic symbolism of this eclipse? That the moon; the bride of Christ, His wife, the mother of us all, is eclipsing His light. We have positioned ourselves between Him and the world and instead of reflecting his light, (the moon has no source of its own light, but reflects the light of the sun) we are obscuring it.

We have reached a state where the sin and error in the church has created areas of dark and opaqueness and light can neither pass through us in these areas nor are we reflecting it. We are called with Christ to be ‘the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14). But, the sin of racism is as dark in us as in generations past. Allegiances to political ideologies are greater than our commitment to establish the kingdom of God. Ecclesiastical and Roman forms are reasserting themselves in ways that direct us to the error of our past instead of advancing as a reformed people.

We have a crisis when those that are in headship and are supposed to father do not, or cannot. When leadership in the church walks in error, we lose the ability to provide light and are “darkened.” When there is no light from fathers, as a mother, the church loses light and stops reflecting. Even world events reveal the crisis in leadership that exists in our day. If not corrected quickly, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and stars will fall from

their places. We will enter a time when the dependability and stability of leadership will be shaken.

Perhaps we are already in this season. Many of those who led the church in previous seasons have fallen, or transitioned from the Earth. The stability of the heavens is shaking and stars have been removed.

Genesis 1:14-16 tells us that God made a “greater light and a lesser light” (the sun and the moon) and that they are for “signs and seasons.” So, in addition to the natural light they provide, God will use them as signs. We cannot miss these signs.

Ephesians 5:27 says that Christ will present to Himself a bride, “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle.” We must repent and be “washed by the water of the word” (v. 25). Instead of reflecting His light, we are in His way and our spots are eclipsing His light. {eo}

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