

Gazing at the Heavens: Bible Scholar Points to Eclipses During Jonah's Time and Christ's Crucifixion

People all over the country are making plans to watch the solar eclipse when it crosses the United States on April 8.

"It's pretty dramatic," says Dr. Daniel Kennefick, a physics professor at the University of Arkansas. "A total solar eclipse is a very unique event because the moon, by a strange coincidence, happens to be the same apparent size, in our skies, as the sun. Of course, the moon is much smaller than the sun but it's also a lot closer and it's precisely the right distance that it blocks out the sun while leaving the area around the sun which means we get to see the solar atmosphere called the corona."

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Eight major U.S. cities will be in the path of totality – that's the 115-mile-wide track falling under the moon's central shadow.

"Not only does it get dark, because the body of the sun is no longer visible, and even noticeably colder, but we get this remarkable display and it's often said that animals, like birds, will be fooled into thinking night has fallen quite quickly," adds Kennefick.

Dave Parker from the Arkansas Department of Transportation expects a lot of eclipse tourists in his state – "about a million extra people from that Thursday night, the 4th,

through Tuesday the 9th.”

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As a result, many schools in Arkansas and other states are canceling classes. Texas officials are even warning residents to top off their gas tanks and stock up on food. In Ohio, the governor signed an executive order to increase staffing for emergency management. They’re all treating the April 8 eclipse like a major travel holiday.

“Any way you cut it, the highways and interstates are going to be crowded,” says Parker.

More than 31 million people will be in the path of totality when the eclipse passes through North America. As exciting as it is for us today, eclipses took on a much different tone in ancient times.

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