

## Solar and Lunar Eclipses in 2014/15

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As you may know, this year is a Sabbatical Year in the Jewish Calendar. Starting next September 29, 2008, a new Sabbatical cycle will commence. It will run for seven years and conclude with another Sabbatical Year in 2014/15.

Also, you may know that Daniel's seventieth week will be a seven-year Sabbatical cycle. Students of biblical prophecy have long compared Daniel's seventieth week with the Tribulation Period as laid out in the book of Revelation.

Intrigued with the Scriptures that repeat over and over again that our Savior's Second Coming will be heralded with signs in the heavens, in which the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, Pastor Mark Biltz went on the Internet, to a U.S. Government web site, to see if he could find any solar or lunar eclipses over the next few years that might be significant.

To his surprise, he found four lunar eclipses and two solar eclipses in the Sabbatical Year of 2014 and 2015. Also, he noticed that they all appear on Jewish Holy Days!

### Lunar Eclipses

The four lunar eclipses will occur on:

**Passover, April 15, 2014**

**The Feast of Tabernacles, October 8, 2014**

**Passover, April 4, 2015 and The Feast of Tabernacles, September 28, 2015**

This is most unusual. It is a rare occurrence for four lunar cycles to happen on successive Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) observances. It will not happen again for hundreds of years. However, Mark found that a series of four lunar eclipses on these particular holy days did occur in the twentieth century -- not once, but twice! The first set occurred in 1949-1950, the year after Israel became a state! The second set happened in 1967-1968, the year Israel liberated Jerusalem! Such a phenomenon is nigh unto impossible, unless it was set up by Divine design. Mark looked back in history and noticed that the last time this set of four lunar eclipses occurred on Passover and *Sukkot* was in 1493, the year after Columbus sailed the ocean blue and Spain expelled all Jews.

Mark is convinced that God was telling the beleaguered Jews that He was fully aware of their circumstances! In that case, we wonder what is God telling the Jews in the 1949 and 1967 lunar eclipses? And, as we look at the next seven years, we wonder, "What is God telling Israel through the upcoming lunar eclipses?" Is it possible that these are fulfilling biblical prophecies?

## **Solar Eclipses**

In addition to the four lunar eclipses in 2014-15, Mark also found two solar eclipses. They will occur on:

**Adar 29/Nisan 1, March 20, 2015**

**The Feast of Trumpets, September 13, 2015**

These two dates are quite significant because they are special days in the Jewish calendar. For example, it was on *Nisan 1*, the first anniversary of the Exodus, that Moses raised up the tabernacle for the first time and the glory of God descended. Two weeks later, the Chosen People observed their first Pentecost since the Exodus.

*Nisan 1* marks the beginning of the religious festival cycle. Six months later, on *Tishri 1*, the Jews observe Rosh Hashanah, the Feast of Trumpets. This day is highly prophetic, because it is said to be the anniversary of the Creation of Adam. It is Adam's birthday. And, even though it is a Jewish observance, it is prophetically significant as a day for Gentile nations.

It is the day when God will sit down upon His throne of Judgment and take the books in his hand. That is when He will begin the judgment of the world. So, a solar eclipse on *Rosh Hashanah* could precede the Second Coming of Christ in power and great glory, and fulfill the biblical description.

## **The Solar Eclipse This Year**

Coming up this summer, there will be the first of three solar eclipses on the day that introduces the first of *Av* (August 1, 2008). That's right, all three solar eclipses will be on the biblical date of *Av 1*, for the next three years -- 2008, 2009, and 2010. Our Gregorian calendar dates are:

**Av 1 - August 1, 2008 - partial eclipse**

**Av 1 - July 22, 2009 - partial eclipse**

**Av 1 - July 11, 2010 - partial eclipse**

In the Jewish calendar, they are all on the first of *Av*, the day when Jews lament the destruction of their temples. As the story goes, Moses caught the people worshipping the Golden Calf on *Tammuz 17*. Therefore, the three weeks from *Tammuz 17* to *Av 9* are called "the dark time" and "between the straits." It is the most sorrowful time of the year for Jews. From *Av 1-9*, no bathing is allowed; no comforts; no clean clothes; the Jew takes his shoes off; sits on an overturned chair and reads the book of Lamentations.

However, there will come a time when God will reverse the fast days and turn them into feast days. Zechariah said:

*"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month [Tammuz 17], and the fast of the fifth [Av 9], and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be*

*to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace” (Zech. 8:19).*

Mark Biltz seems to think that the solar eclipses on Av 1, could change the course of history, because solar eclipses are designed for Gentile nations, whereas lunar eclipses are designed for Israel. Therefore, he thinks that God could begin judging the nations this summer. Will there be a war in Israel this summer? It is entirely possible. If so, then the solar eclipse could be announcing judgment upon the world -- a sobering thought!

### **Bible Predictions About the Sun and Moon**

Now, let's look at the places in the Bible that speak of the sun being darkened and the moon not giving her light. First of all, Isaiah wrote:

*“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger ... the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

*“And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible” (Isa. 13:9-11).*

We are told that this will occur in the “*day of the LORD.*” It is the time when God will punish the Gentile nations for their wickedness. We are not talking about ordinary everyday living, but gross wickedness against God and His Chosen People. God calls them arrogant, proud and haughty. He says that they are terrible, evil and wicked. It seems to me that he is referring to the nations that are trying to destroy Israel. Again, Isaiah said:

*“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:23).*

Since neither the sun or moon has a conscience, the references to being confounded or ashamed seem to be metaphoric of the condition of man on earth. The darkening of the sun and moon, therefore, are signs of man's condition. These conditions will prevail at the time of the Lord's return to judge the wicked and establish His kingdom. Isaiah was the first prophet to write about solar and lunar eclipses, but Joel's passages are the most widely quoted. Joel wrote:

*“The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:*

*“And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel 2:10,11).*

Again, Joel said:

*“And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.*

*“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come” (Joel 2:30,31).*

Finally, Joel said:

*“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*

*“The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining” (Joel 3:14,15).*

Isaiah and Joel are the only Old Testament prophets that mentioned solar and lunar apparitions in the day of the LORD. In each case, however, it is apparent that they are referring to events that precede the messianic kingdom. Joel adds earthquakes, blood, fire and pillars of smoke. I think he is describing the battles that attend the Tribulation Period, especially the final Battle of Armageddon.

### **Passages From the New Testament**

In the New Testament Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said:

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*

*“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:29,30).*

In His Olivet discourse, Jesus described His glorious appearing at the close of the Tribulation Period. My guess (and its only a guess) is that the darkening of the sun and moon could be eclipses. Stars falling from heaven could be missiles used in the war. Powers of the heavens being shaken could refer to many nuclear explosions around the world, disrupting the atmosphere. The “sign” of the Son of Man, could be His actual appearance in “the clouds of heaven.” The clouds may be an ancient description of celestial vehicles, rather than simple clouds. The only clouds that prompt fear today is the kind with a twister coming out of them. Therefore, I think the term “clouds” is used to describe something that flies in the sky.

The Gospel of Mark repeats the Savior’s statement:

*“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light” (Mark 13:24).*

Luke also records the occasion:

*“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;*

*“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

*“And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory” (Luke 21:25-27).*

On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted Joel’s prophecy:

*“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:*

*“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:20,21).*

In the book of Revelation, John enlarged upon the prophecy:

*“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;*

*“And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind” (Rev. 6:12,13).*

*“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise” (Rev. 8:12,).*

The idea that a third of the sun is smitten may be a reference to a partial eclipse, similar to the one that will occur on Rosh Hashanah in the Jewish year 5775 -- September 13, 2015.

These are the biblical passages that deal with the subject. We cannot tell you that the solar and lunar eclipses that will occur in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014, and 2015 are the fulfillments of Biblical prophecy, but they are fascinating enough to issue, not a warning, but a watch. As we have said for years at the close of each of our telecasts,

“Keep looking up!