

Eclipse of the Sun and Return of the Son **Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:2** **SLIDE #1**

1 Thessalonians 5:2 – "...for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

Monday is the day! Rain or shine, the total solar eclipse is coming. SLIDE #2 The whole process of the moon blocking the light of the sun will take place over three hours. Gainesville will not see a total eclipse, just a 99% eclipse! Be sure to wear your solar glasses, even though you'll only see 99% of the eclipse! Total eclipse for Gainesville will be at 2:37:04p.m. I hope the weather cooperates. It will be a sight to see! The totality area is about 70 miles wide (starting in Oregon and ending in South Carolina), but the entire country will see at least a partial eclipse. Everyone will see something! And that's the point!

Everyone will see something. Everyone who goes outside and looks up will see at least some of the eclipse. More than likely, our nation will slow down a bit. Perhaps many will stop their work for a while and look up. I'm sure many cars will pull over and people will get out to look up. Like no other event, the solar eclipse will unite us together for a moment. There is only one sun that provides light and warmth and nourishment to our planet. This eclipse will take place over every person, no matter what political persuasion you may be. It will occur over every race and color represented in our country. It will be seen by every person of every religious belief system imaginable, including

atheists. There will be no political debate, no racial divide, no disagreement over whose right and whose wrong about anything.

The sun will have everyone's attention, at least for a short time.

There are few things that can bring people together, but this will be one event that will. And no matter who you speak with on Monday, you will be able to find common ground in talking about the solar eclipse.

We are all excited about the eclipse and well we should be. These don't happen very often. Most people will take the opportunity to go outside and see day turn to night for a few minutes. What many will not do is take the time to discover the SON...the son of God...Jesus in their lives. This applies to non-believers, seekers, and believers alike.

An eclipse is when the moon is aligned in such a way that it blocks the sun partially and then completely over a period of three hours. But, we often allow Jesus to be eclipsed in our lives so that his brilliance never reaches our hearts and lives. I thought about this and I'd like to categorize these spiritual eclipses in three ways:

DENIAL SLIDE #3

Do you know I had one of our church members to tell me that they had a friend that didn't believe the solar eclipse was going to happen at all. Their comment was: "I just don't believe it's going to happen."

Well, I can assure you, that based on strong scientific evidence, that this solar eclipse WILL occur, even if it's cloudy or raining. Darkness will come for a time in the

middle of the day. So plan on it and get ready because it will occur. To believe anything different is foolish. No, you may not see the sun due to the clouds, but darkness will occur no matter what, because the sun will be blocked for a short period of time. Deny it if you want to, but you will miss our on a once in lifetime opportunity to witness a solar eclipse in our own backyards AND, you will have some explaining to do on Monday afternoon.

There are many people who deny the reality of the Son of God, Jesus our Lord. They simply believe that he either didn't exist or if he did, then he was just a mere man – but not Savior and Lord. And yet the evidence of the Bible, the impact of changed lives, the continuing existence and strength of the church, the impact of his life on culture including our very calendars, the validity of archeological evidence, and the commitment of the disciples of Jesus to the truth of his lordship, even to their deaths – their violent deaths...are all just some of the proofs of the reality of Jesus Christ.

Deny Him if you want to, but you will miss out on the blessings of His work in your life. His love, joy, peace, salvation, forgiveness, hope and home that He's prepared. In addition to that, you'll have some explaining to do when he actually does return one day.

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

Then, there is the eclipse of **DELAY** that gets in the way of Jesus actively working in our lives. SLIDE #4

When we procrastinate and delay our preparation it creates a lot of obstacles along the way. Did you see the news reports of the long lines of people standing in line to get solar eclipse glasses? Most places have run out and if you ordered on line in the last day or so, you paid too much – hundreds even. I went on Amazon and the glasses I bought for \$1.99 were \$90.00 for three on Friday!

We have all known this eclipse was coming. Why have we delayed our preparation for it? The same question could be asked spiritually. If we are convinced of the truth of Jesus, then why do we delay submitting our lives to him?

The Lord is patient with us, thankfully.

In fact 2 Peter 3:9 reminds us: *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

But, there is coming a day when His patience will be no more. Jesus will return. He will bring with him his judgment and reward. And there will be no excuses. We have been given ample time. And yet a lot of people want it their way, not God's way. My friend, delay is not the answer. As if to remind us of the danger of delay, Jesus gave a parable about ten virgins...or we would call them bridesmaids...that were getting ready for the bridegroom to come and meet his bride for the wedding feast. In ancient times, that's the way they did weddings. It was a surprise. You knew it was coming. You knew it was close even. You just didn't know the day or the hour. But when the bridegroom came and knocked on the door of the bride, the wedding would begin. Listen to the story Jesus told:

The Parable of the Ten Virgins **SLIDE #5**

25 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴ The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

⁷ "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

⁹ "'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰ "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹ "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'

¹² "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'

¹³ "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Do not delay. Jesus is coming. We must be ready. We must be prepared. We must yield to Him. No more excuses!

Lastly, there is the eclipse of **DISTRACTIONS and DUTIES.** SLIDE #6

Some will miss the Monday eclipse because they were distracted by something else. Oh, it could be a variety of things that seemed more important at the time. You have

to go to the restroom, you go inside for a moment, you fall asleep for your afternoon nap.

Others will miss the eclipse because of duty. My dad, for instance, is scheduled to have dialysis on Monday.

Emergency room doctors may be in the middle of a procedure. Emergency responders may be called to an emergency. Employees will need to do their called duty at their place of work.

There is no doubt that some will be distracted or called to perform their respective duty and will miss the eclipse. It will not be the worst thing in the world. There will be ample coverage on TV and the internet showing the solar eclipse from a variety of angles.

But I can assure you that there is coming a day when we will not be distracted and no duty will take you away.

This time it will be a global event – one that will occur at some point in the future. It may be in the near future, and it may be some time from now. But it is an event that will cause every eye to see. It is the promised return of Christ.

The Bible says in Revelation 1:7 SLIDE #7 – *"Look, he is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see him..."*
EVERY EYE. No exceptions. Every eye will see Jesus when he returns. And, another difference will be that no scientist will be able to predict the day or the time. Jesus said, *"Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."*
(Matthew 25:13)

He also cautioned us with these words:

SLIDE #8 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36)

So, do not be alarmed by those false prophets who are proclaiming the return of Christ within weeks of this eclipse or any other time. This is a case where literally, "God only knows."

And I can assure you that when He does return that there will be no denial, no delay, no distractions and no duty that will get in the way of being focused on his coming.

When He returns he will bring his judgment and reward with him. And, this time, it will not be the S-U-N, but the **S-O-N** that will have everyone's attention. SLIDE#9

So, are you ready for the solar eclipse? But, more importantly are you ready for the return of the **SON**?

I cannot say it any better than the book of Revelation, chapter 22:20-21 – the concluding words of the Bible, where we find these words recorded ...

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”
and “every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him”;
and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”
So shall it be! Amen.