



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 3550

John 9:5 "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

Today (**April 8, 2024**) is a big day for my state of Indiana. It's eclipse day. Social media and news outlets have been talking about this for a long time. Stores have been selling special eclipse sunglasses. It is estimated that more than two million people will flock to our state to witness the eclipse. Indianapolis is expecting 1 million out of towners. Hotels are booked, some raising their prices 400%. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway is preparing to host 40,000 people to watch it. The governor is calling upon nearby states to send some National Guard troops just to help with all the people coming. A few years ago we had a partial eclipse, but today is the big one, a complete or total eclipse.

How big is this? In my area of Southern Indiana, the last total eclipse was in 1869, 155 years ago. In the eastern part of the state, the last total eclipse was in the year 831, which was 1193 years ago. And, after today, the next one won't be for decades down the road. So this is a big deal. The total darkness will be measured in minutes, but it is something unusual and special for this area of the country.

God used darkness as the ninth plague in Egypt. It wasn't an eclipse that was measured in minutes. The darkness in Egypt lasted three days. The text of Exodus 10, where that plague is listed, states that the "darkness which may be felt" (Ex 10:21). It also states that "they did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place" (23). While it was dark in Egypt, Israel had light. This so infuriated Pharaoh that he told Moses to get out and don't let me see your face again.

One of the great contrasts in the Bible is between light and darkness. Light representing righteousness and truth. Darkness connected to sin and wrong. Jesus said that men love darkness rather than light. John promised that if we walk in the Light, as Jesus is, we will have the forgiveness of sin. Light and dark. Seeing and not seeing. In the rebuke of the Pharisees in Matthew 23, several times Jesus states that they were blind. They dwelled in the darkness.

(OVER)

Some thoughts for us on Eclipse Day:

First, some are in darkness and they don't realize it. Like sitting in a movie theatre or going inside a cave, our eyes can get use to the darkness. The same is true spiritually. Some have a conscience that is no longer working. They can say the most vile, offensive and cruel things and it not bother them in the least. Some are unable to speak one sentence without saying a cuss word. Guilt, shame, embarrassment, regret never enter their minds or heart. There are some who have lived in darkness for so long that they like it. Selfishness and sin are as normal as breathing to those who love darkness. They don't see what's wrong. They don't want to see what's wrong. They have been in darkness most of their lives and they like it that way.

Second, the contrast between light and darkness is dramatic and drastic. Have you ever been in a dark basement and then immediately gone outside on a bright sunny day? Your eyes squint. You can't see for a moment. Throw some snow on that ground on a bright sunny day, and your eyes even hurt at first. That's the light/dark contrast. That's missing these days in cultural preaching. The distinction between the world and Christ is blurred and nearly the same. And, among our people, the distinctiveness of the Gospel has been lost. Some are mocking the idea of a pattern. If there isn't a pattern, then what are we to do? When has God ever left things up to us to do? There has always been patterns. The ark. The tabernacle. The temple. The priesthood. Worship. Righteous living. God never leaves things up to us. The reason is, when things are left to us, we generally mess them up and get them wrong. Our young people ought to know that the way we worship is unique and special. What others are doing doesn't matter. We focus upon what God wants. We don't follow culture. We don't do what others are doing. Our focus is upon that ole' Gospel message. It worked then and it'll work today, if we let it.

Third, once one is in the light, there is no desire to go back into darkness. This is true physically, mentally and spiritually. Ignorance is not bliss. Those that do not know are those who get sucked into error. It is those who do not know that Satan has most fun with. Truth liberates. Truth brings confidence. Truth feels so good. Truth drives out fear, worry and doubt. Being gullible and naïve is not a compliment. We ought to know the truth and stand by it.

I have come to look at my Bible as a dear, dear friend. It has taught me. It has warned me. It has given me hope. It has helped me when I was afraid. It has rebuked me. We have been together for a long, long time and I know when it is my time to leave this place, it will be my old friend, the Bible, that will get me safely through to the other side. I have rejoiced at the promises found in my Bible. I have come to love Jesus that my Bible has introduced me to. And, more than anything else, my ole' friend, the Bible, has opened my eyes to see the light of God.

Eclipse day. It will be something. But, it will soon be over. The light of God lasts forever.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
