

4-06-24 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – *Shemini* (eighth)
Torah Portion; Lev 9:1 – 11:47
Haftarah: 2 Sam 6:1-7:17
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Luke 21:25-28

Under the Law – part 5 – Signs and Wonders

Central question of this message: Are you believing those who are giving erroneous teachings regarding the significance of an eclipse?

We are in the parashah *Shemini*. It takes its name from the second word in the Hebrew of the passage, and from the first sentence of the English translation of the parasha “Now it came about on the *eighth* day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons.”

Lev 9:1-3

9 Now it came about on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; 2 and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without defect, and offer them before the Lord. 3 Then to the sons of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf

and a lamb, both one year old, without defect, for a burnt offering,

וּלְבָנָיו	לְאַהֲרֹן	מֹשֶׁה	כִּי	הַשְּׁמִינִי	בַּיּוֹם	וַיְהִי	9:1
and his sons,	Aaron	Moses	that	called	the eighth	on day, And it came to pass	
<u>1121</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>4872</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>7121</u>	<u>8066</u>	<u>3117</u> <u>1961</u>	
						וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:	
						Israel; and the elders of	
						<u>3478</u> <u>2205</u>	
וְאַיִל	לְחֹטֵאת	בֶּן־בָּקָר	עֵגֶל	לָךְ	קַח־	אַהֲרֹן	2
and a ram	for a sin offering,	young	a calf	thee	Take	Aaron,	
<u>352</u>	<u>2403</u>	<u>1241</u> <u>1121</u>	<u>5695</u>	<u>3807a</u>	<u>3947</u>	<u>175</u> <u>413</u> <u>559</u>	
						וַיֹּאמֶר	
						unto	
						And he said	
		יְהוָה:	לִפְנֵי	וְהִקְרַב	תְּמִימִם	לְעֹלָה	
		the Lord.	before	and offer	without blemish,	for a burnt offering,	
		<u>3068</u>	<u>6440</u>	<u>9999</u> <u>7126</u>	<u>8549</u>	<u>5930</u>	
עִזִּים	שְׁעִיר־	קָחוּ	לְאֹמֶר	תִּדְבֹר	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	3
the goats	a kid of	Take ye	saying,	thou shalt speak,	Israel	the children of	
<u>5795</u>	<u>8163</u>	<u>3947</u>	<u>559</u>	<u>1696</u>	<u>3478</u>	<u>1121</u> <u>413</u>	
						וְאַל־	
						And unto	
		תְּמִימִם	שָׁנָה	בְּנִי־	וְכֶבֶשׂ	וְעֵגֶל	
		without blemish,	year,	first	both of the	and a calf	
		<u>8549</u>	<u>8141</u>	<u>1121</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>5695</u> <u>2403</u>	
						לְחֹטֵאת	
						for a sin offering;	
						לְעֹלָה:	
						for a burnt offering;	
						<u>5930</u>	

Let's back up a bit, to the previous parasha, to set the stage. Once Moses had first consecrated the Tabernacle - the *Mishkhan* - and all its utensils, he then consecrates Aaron and his sons into priestly service.

Moses calls Aaron and his four sons to come near, and Moses puts some of the blood of the ram on their right ears, their right thumbs, and the big

toe of their right feet. In Lev 8:31, we find a final command which completes the ordination of Aaron and his four sons.

Lev 8:31-36

31 Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons,

.

35 [eat the sacrifice] At the doorway of the tent of meeting, moreover, you shall remain day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, that you may not die, for so I have been commanded." 36 Thus Aaron and his sons did all the things which the Lord had commanded through Moses.

It is after this seven-day ordination period that our *parasha* for today begins - on the eighth day. And thus we have the *parasha*'s name.

It is clear from Scripture that Aaron and his four sons did precisely what G-d had commanded to Moses.

There is an important phrase in last week's *parasha*, found in Lev 8:35 which becomes important for our study today. Moses and his sons are commanded to "... *keep the charge of the Lord, that you may not die,*"

In Hebrew it reads “*v’shmartem et-mishmeret adonai v’lo tamutu.*”

וְלֹא	יְהוָה	מִשְׁמֶרֶת	אֶת־	וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם
that not:	the Lord,	the charge of		and keep
<u>3808</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>4931</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>8104</u>
	צִוִּיתִי:	כֵּן	כִּי־	תָּמוּתוּ
	I am commanded.	so	for	ye die
	<u>6680</u>	<u>3651</u>	<u>3588</u>	<u>4191</u>

A student of the Hebrew language might notice that the Hebrew root found in the words translated as “and keep” as well as “charge of” is the same. It is *shomar* , or in Sephardi pronunciation, *shamar*.

OT:8104 שָׁמַר **shamar**
 (shaw-mar'); a primitive root;
 properly, to hedge about (as
 with thorns), i.e. guard;
 generally, to protect, attend
 to, etc.:

Shomar carries with it the idea of “guarding,” to “hedge about,” to “protect,” and to “pay close attention to” something of high importance.

So, we can use that nuanced understanding to offer up a more emphatic English translation of the passage we just looked at in Lev 8:35. Using modern English usage, we might also translate it as, this:

“Pay close attention so as to guard and carefully protect those things of the L-rd that you must attend to, because it’s a matter of life and death.”

And it is this understanding that I wish to use as a springboard for the topic I wish to address today, as I continue in the Under the Law series. In this series I am addressing some troublesome issues that I see afflicting the larger body of faith. Why are there many winds of error blowing through the body of faith today?

It seems to me that some have pulled the mantle of “priest” around their own shoulders but have been less intent upon being careful to “guard and carefully protect those things of the L-rd that [a priest] must attend to.”

I believe the root of this problem is found in the irresponsible teachings of some who fancy themselves as teachers, but who in truth must either be ignorant, or worse – predatory and manipulative in search of money.

I wish to address today one area where there seems to be a lot of confusion, and quite a bit of teaching that has a tendency to introduce error, and bring the true faith in G-d into disrepute among the nations.

Solar and lunar eclipses.

Some of my dear friends have sent me emails of teachings they have received to the effect that a total lunar eclipse, which they call a “blood moon” must mean that G-d is proclaiming imminent judgment on us all, and we must all fall upon our knees immediately so as to avoid the coming disaster.

I do not for a moment discourage repentance, nor do I believe that America can much longer turn our back on G-d and His ways, or test G-d’s longsuffering toward the holocaust of the pre-born, the promotion of debauchery, or the sexual mutilation of our young people who are merely going through the “growing pains” that all teens must endure before they finally mature sufficiently to begin understand what kind of person G-d wired them to be from conception.

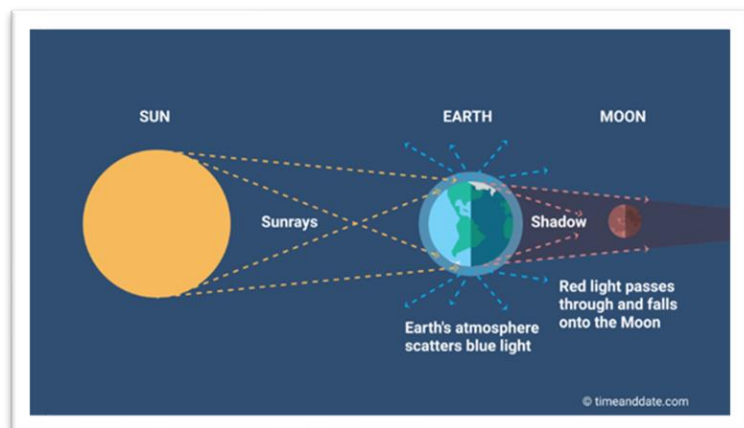
We need to be intercessors for our nation and its moral depravity every day. But is a lunar eclipse really a sign from G-d? Let’s begin answering that question by discovering, by the application of science, what a lunar eclipse is, and what it is not.

The sun is not at the center of our galaxy. It is part of the swirl of planets and suns which occupy this small slice of what we call “space.” The sun is moving in a grand, orbit around the center of our galaxy. The earth is in orbit around the sun, but our orbit is not perfectly circular.

The moon is in orbit around the earth, again in a somewhat elliptical path.

To complicate things, every day the earth is drifting further from the sun. That drift is not fast, only 1.5 cm per year.¹ But the moon is retreating from the earth at a much faster rate, at 3.78 cm per year.² Even with all these variables in play, the earth, moon and sun occasionally align with one another, and that creates either a solar or lunar eclipse.

A lunar eclipse occurs when the earth casts its shadow across the moon in such a way as to block out the majority of the light of



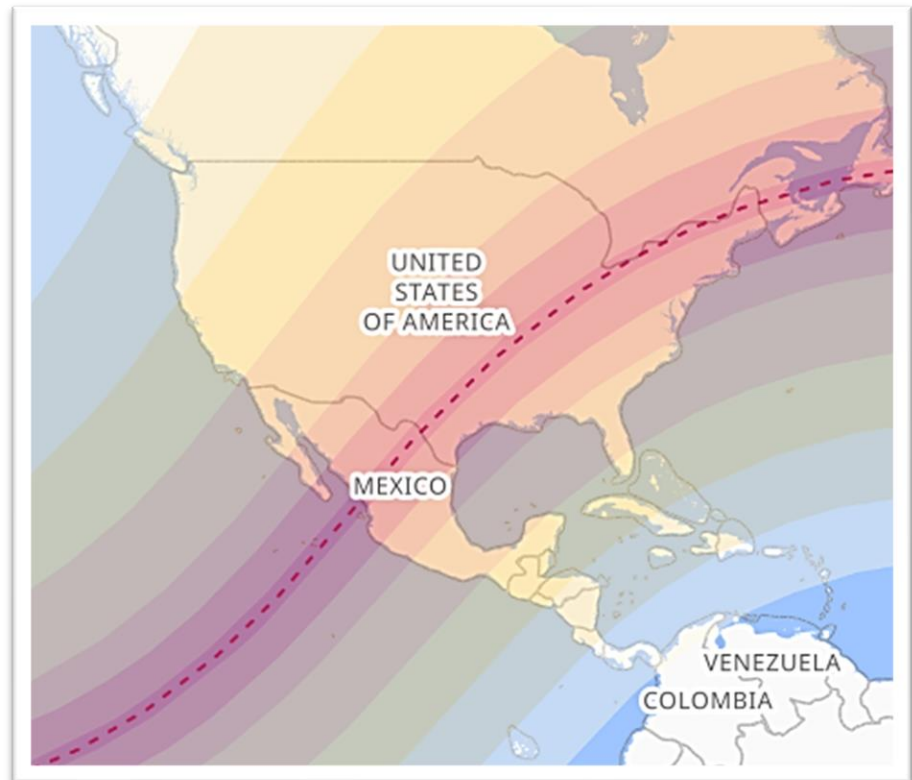
the sun. But the atmosphere of the earth reflects much of the blue, shorter wavelengths of light, and bends some of the longer wavelengths of light around it, and thus the moon is bathed in red light. This is why the confusing term “blood moon” has been applied to a lunar eclipse.

¹Earth Is Drifting Away From The Sun, And So Are All The Planets, Ethan Seigel, 2019 Forbes online.

² How quickly is the Moon moving away from Earth?, Astronomy 2022,

Then there is a solar eclipse, where the positions are changed, and the moon then blocks part (or all) of the sun's light from a pathway across the earth.

The next solar eclipse will occur on April 8, 2024 and the shadow of the moon will pass across the United States in a pattern that has already been well-predicted.



NASA has even published a chart that you can find on its website which allows you to know where all the solar eclipses will be upon the earth every time they occur, and where you can go to see them the best. The predictability of these events is so mathematically precise, that NASA has even already charted where the pathways of totality (or annularity) will occur on the earth for many years to come. ³

³ NASA Explore website. <https://science.nasa.gov/eclipses/future-eclipses/>



Total Solar Eclipse - April 8, 2024

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, passing over Mexico, the United States, and Canada. A total solar eclipse happens when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth, completely blocking the face of the Sun. The sky will darken as if it were dawn or dusk.

More Eclipses

Solar Eclipses

Date	Solar Eclipse Type	Geographic Region of Visibility
Oct. 2, 2024	Annular	An annular solar eclipse will be visible in South America, and a partial eclipse will be visible in South America, Antarctica, Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, North America
March 29, 2025	Partial	Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Atlantic Ocean, Arctic Ocean
Sept. 21, 2025	Partial	Australia, Antarctica, Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean
Feb. 17, 2026	Annular	An annular solar eclipse will be visible in Antarctica, and a partial eclipse will be visible in Antarctica, Africa, South America, Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, and Indian Ocean
Aug. 12, 2026	Total	A total solar eclipse will be visible in Greenland, Iceland, Spain, Russia, and a small area of Portugal, while a partial eclipse will be visible in Europe, Africa, North America, the Atlantic Ocean, Arctic Ocean, and Pacific Ocean

The date listed for each eclipse is the local date where the eclipse occurs.

Lunar Eclipses

Date	Lunar Eclipse Type	Geographic Region of Visibility
March 25, 2024	Penumbral	Americas
Sept. 18, 2024	Partial	Americas, Europe, Africa
March 14, 2025	Total	Pacific, Americas, Western Europe, Western Africa

The ability to predict eclipses is not new to mankind. Chinese historical records, some earlier than 600 BCE, have identified and calculated the dates for more than 900 solar eclipses.⁴ In Central America, the Maya could predict eclipses with some accuracy, because they identified the sun and moon with their gods.

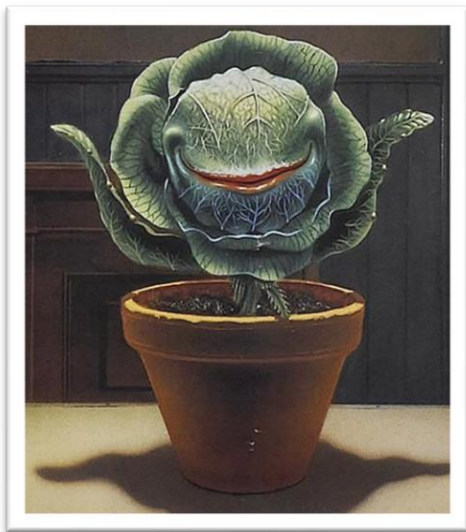
The ancient Greeks some 2000 years ago actually put together the Anikythera mechanism which, once reconstructed by researchers, was

⁴ A statistical survey of solar eclipses in Chinese history, W.S. Tsu, Popular Astronomy Vol. 42, p. 136



found to be a mechanical computer of sorts, which predicted lunar and solar eclipses.

The Assyrians became quite adept at predicting solar eclipses, and their rulers believed that a solar eclipse was an omen which meant death to them. So, in a show of great courage, they would install a “fake king” on their throne for the predicted date of the solar eclipse, and then go into hiding. The death omen was indeed true for the “king for a day,” because he would be killed following the day of the eclipse.



Solar eclipses have become so imbedded in the folklore of even American culture that it was a large part of the 1986 movie *Little Shop of Horrors*. This movie was based on the mysterious appearance of a unique sentient extra-terrestrial carnivorous plant which thrives on human blood. The alien plant arrives, of course, during a total eclipse of the sun.

I have spent much time in this lesson focusing on the aspects of scientific predictability, and the superstitions which have, since antiquity, surrounded eclipses. I did so to help us better understand the difference between a natural event, and a supernatural event.

Now, let's look at what Scripture has to say about the sun and moon.

Gen 1:14-19

14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and **let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years;** 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth ";and it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. 17 And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

Although the sun and moon are not only for giving light, they can be for “signs and for seasons and for days and years.” Clearly, G-d is giving them to allow us to reckon what time of day it is, what month it is, what time of year it is (seasons), and also for a sign. It seems that many seize on the “sign” part, and seek desperately for such signs. But there is a clear warning that we are not to focus so intently upon the sun or moon that we forget G-d, who made those lights.

Deut 4:19-20

19 And beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

Scripture reports instances where the sun or moon provided a sign.

Josh 10:12-14

12 Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

"O sun, stand still at Gibeon,

And O moon in the valley of Aijalon."

13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,

Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies.

Is it not written in the book of Jashar? **And the sun stopped**

in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down

for about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that

before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.

G-d once caused the sun to move a bit “backward” relatively to the earth sufficiently to provide a sign to King Hezekiah that his repentance had been accepted, and his life would be extended another 15 years.

Isa 38:4-8

4 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 5 "Go and say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David,' I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. 6 "And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of

Assyria; and I will defend this city.'" 7 **"And this shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that He has spoken: 8 "Behold, I will cause the shadow on the stairway, which has gone down with the sun on the stairway of Ahaz, to go back ten steps." So the sun's shadow went back ten steps on the stairway on which it had gone down.**

G-d will darken the skies as a sign of His judgment upon the world.

Isa 13:4-11

The Lord of hosts is mustering the army for battle. 5 They are coming from a far country From the farthest horizons, The Lord and His instruments of indignation, To destroy the whole land. 6 Wail, for the day of the Lord is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore all hands will fall limp, And every man's heart will melt. 8 And they will be terrified, Pains and anguish will take hold of them; They will writhe like a woman in labor, They will look at one another in astonishment, Their faces aflame. 9 Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will

exterminate its sinners from it. **10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not flash forth their light; The sun will be dark when it rises, And the moon will not shed its light.** 11 Thus I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud, And abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.

But He will also provide supernatural light upon a world cleansed of evil, and that light will not ever dim.

Isa 60:19-22

**19 "No longer will you have the sun for light by day,
Nor for brightness will the moon give you light;
But you will have the Lord for an everlasting light,
And your God for your glory.**

**20 "Your sun will set no more,
Neither will your moon wane;
For you will have the Lord for an everlasting light,
And the days of your mourning will be finished.**

**21 "Then all your people will be righteous;
They will possess the land forever,**

The branch of My planting,
The work of My hands,
That I may be glorified.

22 "The smallest one will become a clan,
And the least one a mighty nation.
I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time."

After a time of great distress for Israel, G-d promises a great restoration of security to His people, but first, there will be a sign in the heavens indicating His judgment upon the wicked.

Joel 2:26-32

26 "And you shall have plenty to eat and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame. 27 "Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the Lord your God And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame.

28 "And it will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 "And even on the male and female

servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. **30 "And I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire, and columns of smoke. 31 "The sun will be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood,⁵ Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 32 "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the Lord has said, Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.**

Note how these signs, blood, fire, smoke, a darkened Sun, and the Moon bloodied *are all* “before the great and awesome day of the L-rd.”

Joel 3:12-16

12 Let the nations be aroused
And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there I will sit to judge
All the surrounding nations.
13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.
Come, tread, for the wine press is full;
The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great.

⁵ This passage is the source for the persistent labeling by some of a natural lunar eclipse as a “blood moon.”

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

**15 The sun and moon grow dark,
And the stars lose their brightness.**

16 And the Lord roars from Zion
And utters His voice from Jerusalem,

Yeshua also spoke of this type of sign of the coming judgment upon the Earth.

Luke 21:25-28

25 "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars,
and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the
roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear
and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the
world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 "And
then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with
power and great glory. 28 "But when these things begin to
take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your
redemption is drawing near."

Note that what is happening with the sun, moon and stars, combined with the other signs, are so dramatic that they cause men to panic.

One of the most famous signs produced regarding the sun was during the sacrifice of Yeshua on the cross.

Luke 23:44-49

44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 the sun being obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." And having said this, He breathed His last. 47 Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." 48 And all the multitudes who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts.

There is another account of a special sign in the heavens which is to come, along with the judgment of G-d.

Rev 8:12

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and **a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten, so that a third of them might be darkened and the day might not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.**

Let's differentiate what we have read in Scripture as signs, from what we know about an eclipse.

The longest solar eclipse lasts about 4 minutes. And even in the center of the shadow of the moon, you can look all around you and see light still there, like a sunset all around you.

This is a photograph I took at the darkest moment of the total eclipse on August 20, 2017 near Cheyenne,



Wyoming where my family was camping in the path of that total solar eclipse.

Further, we know by actual observation that there has never been either a solar or lunar eclipse which was visible for an extended period of time *all over the world*. It is clear from these accounts of signs in the heavens that a sign is *not a local event* which is visible only for a few minutes at most, and then by people located only upon a small part of the globe.

G-d's true signs from the heavens, and especially those involving the sun and moon, are not predictable, nor natural occurrences. They are so completely unprecedented, unexpected, and widespread, that they cause virtually everyone to panic. Predictable, temporary astronomical events don't cause us to panic today, because even unbelievers understand the science.

But some believers still try to convince others that a natural solar or lunar eclipse is some sort of "sign." Are these doing so out of ignorance? That is my presumption. But if they are doing this motivated by a desire for personal recognition, or to sell books, that won't put them in good standing before the King on His throne.

I firmly believe that when the true "signs and wonders" show up, just as they did in Egypt, true believers will not mistake them for any kind of natural, predictable event. While the rest of humanity is panicking, we will be looking to the heavens to see our redemption drawing near.