

## Regarding the Recent Eclipse: An Invitation to Show up Well in Culture

Thesis: Today, I want to invite us as believers to show up well in culture. I want to encourage our hearts so that we respond with faith and not in fear to what is going on in the world ecologically, economically, politically, geo-politically, etc. And, I want to equip us on how to respond with the compassion and wisdom of God in the midst of a culture that is scared, angry, discouraged, confused, and heart-broken.

At the beginning of this message, I want to lay out some of my assumptions or presuppositions.

1. **God is at work in you and in this world all the time.**
  - a. *Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working" (John 5:17).*
  - b. There is never a time when God is not at work in your life.
2. **God has a part and we have a part.**
  - a. *Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose (Philippians 2:12-13).*
  - b. God won't do our part. And, we can't do God's part.
3. **God wants us to guard our hearts and serve at gatekeepers for our hearts, minds, and lives, which allows God to manifest his wholeness in our lives.**
  - a. *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life [flow the issues of life] (Proverbs 4:23).*
    - i. What are we feeding our souls, our minds, our emotions, our spirits?
    - ii. With whom are we processing and discerning truth, news, prognostications from experts, or prophetic words from whatever sources?
  - b. **Let's look at Philippians 4:4-9.**
    - i. Note: God is speaking to the church at Philippi collectively and to the church members individually. "The church was to make these matters its collective goal, and God would rule in them. Individual Christians were to also conduct their lives in this way. This speaks to the need of rearranging life and thought through discipline [spiritual practices] so that the God of peace can freely work" individually and collectively. (Richard R. Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, vol. 32, The New American

Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 150.)

- ii. *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:4-9).*
- c. **Our part:**
  - i. **Rejoice (celebrate) in the Lord always.**
    1. *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)*
  - ii. **Treat others gently and graciously, because God is with you.**
    1. *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near (Philippians 4:5).*
  - iii. **Pour out your anxieties, concerns, and confusion on God by prayer and petition with thanksgiving.**
    1. *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Philippians 4:6).*
- d. **God's part:**
  - i. *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).*
  - ii. God's part: The shalom of God guards, protects, and defends both our hearts (feeling, emotions) and our minds (thinking, processing).
- e. **Our part:**
  - i. **Meditate and reflect on what is excellent or praiseworthy.**
    1. *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things (Philippians 4:8).*
    2. Excellent is virtuous, moral excellency, wholeness, goodness of action. (Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete*

*Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000.)*

- ii. **Use spiritual practices which have benefited others.**
  1. a) Whatever you have learned or b) received or c) heard from me, or d) seen in me—put it into practice (Philippians 4:9).
- f. **God's part:** And the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:9).
  - i. **The promise from God is God himself will be with you; the God of shalom, is with you.**
  - ii. Summary: God's peace especially resides in those who have ordered their lives in accordance with God's will. This includes proper and disciplined thoughts and good Christian living. Thus the two sets of instructions on peace complement each other. When anxiety appears, the cure is prayer. When [one's] life is [out of order], [one] cure is [spiritual practices both] mental and practical discipline. (Richard R. Melick, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 151.)

**With this foundation in place, let's consider a case study dealing with the recent eclipse on April 8, 2024.**

Let's view this recent event as an equipping opportunity.

There was an eclipse on Monday, April 8, 2024.

In light of that eclipse, there were prophetic words given concerning the eclipse as well as end-time enthusiasts declaring their positions and understanding of where we are in human history.

For example, there were prophetic words regarding the eclipse being a call to repentance because the eclipse went over several cities in the US called Nineveh. Thus, unless we (the US) repent, we are doomed to judgment.

And, there was more about judgment of the US. The eclipse, along with another "sign" which was an earthquake in NYC, were prophetic declarations about the judgment that is on the US. According to some Christians and prophets, the earthquake that happened in NYC on April 5, just a few days before the eclipse, was confirmation of God's impending judgment.

Here is a side note: there is always an earthquake before an eclipse or on the day of the eclipse. There are 20,000 earthquakes per year, so there are about 55 earthquakes on any given day. If you are only talking about the bigger ones, with moderate earthquakes categorized at 5.0 on the Richter scale (the earthquake in NYC was 4.8, not 5.0), there are still about 1,000 moderate or more powerful earthquakes per year, or more than 3 per day per year.

Further, there was a total eclipse through the USA in 2017. When combined with this total eclipse in 2024, both eclipses makes an "X." And some people some say that the eclipse which (actually started in 2017) forms the Hebrew letter Alef and the letter Tav which means the beginning and the end in Hebrew alphabet.

According to some people and prophetic voices, if Nineveh stands for judgment and the letter Alef is the beginning, then we are at the beginning of judgment for the US.

**Here is what I think, feel, and believe:**

1. **I believe that we are in the period of the Lord's favor.**
  - a. I don't believe we are in the day or period of God's judgment yet.
  - b. When Jesus launched his ministry, he read from Isaiah 61.
  - c. *Luke 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, **to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor**" (Luke 4:14-18).*
  - d. Jesus stopped by declaring that this is the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus didn't quote the rest of Isaiah 61:2, which says: *"to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God..."*
    - i. A year is a much longer period than a day.
    - ii. Since the time of Jesus, we are in a long period of the Lord's favor, grace, and mercy.
    - iii. And, there is a coming period of judgment, which in comparison to a year is like a day or moment. That period of judgment is described in many places in the Bible, like in Isaiah 24 -27.
  - e. In this broken world, we get some of heaven and hell. In this broken world, bad things happen to good people. In this broken world, we

recognize that God is at work to save, heal, deliver, encourage, restore, confront, correct, judge, and intervene according to his wisdom and will.

- f. Currently, God has not given us what we deserve, either as individuals, cities, states, nations, or planet.
  - g. And one day Jesus is coming again to restore and renew all things.
  - h. **Be wary of judging.**
    - i. *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Matthew 7:1-2).*
    - ii. I think many people responded poorly to **Y2K**. If you are too young to remember the year 2000 and all the doomsday scenarios and prophetic words that had to do with computers and technology crashing, you can look it up on the internet.
    - iii. I think many people responded poorly to **Hurricane Katrina** and spoke God’s judgment on New Orleans. Actually, it was a miracle more people didn’t lose their lives in that category 5 hurricane.
    - iv. I think many people responded poorly to **9/11/2001**, declaring that God was judging America. Rather, I believe that God had mercy on us. Almost 3,000 lives were lost on 9/11. There were more than 100,000 who worked in the buildings of the World Trade Center. **It was a miracle that more people weren’t killed in NYC, the Pentagon, and other places.**
    - v. Does America need God? Yes. Does American need revival? Yes. If American keeps going away from God, are we in trouble? Yes. Is America in danger of judgment? Yes.
    - vi. **But if judgment comes, it starts first with the house of the Lord, with God’s people first** (1 Peter 4:17; 2 Chronicles 7:14).
    - vii. **Yes, we are in a period of passive wrath** where God lets us experience a little of what we have sown. And, we still have not suffered the full amount of judgment for what we deserve as a nation or planet. God still has mercy on us.
    - viii. **Let’s continue to stand in the gap and pray, swinging the pendulum from judgment to mercy** (Ezekiel 22:30-31).
      - i. **I believe we are living in the period of the Lord’s favor.**
2. **I believe that the eclipse speaks to us about our Loving Creator.**
    - a. According to one author, [\*The Solar Eclipse Is Proof of a Loving Creator\*](#). The 2024 eclipse isn’t a doomsday message to the church. Nor is it a cryptic message to the church about the end times. God is reminding all believers and unbelievers that he is real. “The God who set the sun and moon on their paths wants to have a relationship with you.”

- b. "The Bible says the heavens are constantly speaking to us. Psalm 19:1 (NASB) says, 'The heavens tell of the glory of God; And their expanse declares the work of His hands.' That same psalm says the 'message' of the sun, moon, stars and planets is a silent one. 'There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out into all the earth, And their words to the end of the world' (vv. 3-4)."
  - c. **I believe that the eclipse was God speaking to us.**
    - i. One of the ways Scripture says that God speaks to us is through creation.
    - ii. May we have ears to hear, and may we speak that message of love, relationship, mercy, and forgiveness on behalf of the Lord God, "who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:14-21).
    - iii. **I believe that the eclipse speaks to us about our Loving Creator.**
3. **I believe that Jesus told us not to be deceived by different so-called signs, which are really a part of normal life** (Matthew 24).
- a. *Matthew 24:3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" 4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 a) For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 b) You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 c) Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. d) There will be famines and earthquakes [even eclipses] in various places (Matthew 24:3-7).*
  - b. Jesus warns us not to misinterpret what is going on around us regarding a) false Messiahs, b) wars and rumors of wars, c) nations rising and conspiring against other nations, and d) famines, earthquakes, and natural phenomena in the world.
  - c. **Rather, here is what we should watch out for and here is how we should respond:**
    - i. *At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold (Matthew 24:10-12).*
    - ii. Grow in your faith in Christ and watch out for falling away, drifting away, or walking away from God.
    - iii. Grow in your capacity to love, refusing to betray and hate (reject, cut off, attack) others.

- iv. Grown in your relationship with the Lord so that you recognize the Shepherd's voice rather than the counterfeits who deceive and mislead many.
  - v. Grow in your love for God and others, even in the midst of increasing wickedness, so that you keep your life from despair, disillusionment, and darkness. May your love flourish rather than growing cold.
  - d. **I believe that Jesus told us not to be deceived by different so-called signs, which are really a part of normal life.**
4. **I believe that the eclipse was an invitation to pray.**
- a. When you are stirred up by signs, prophetic words, reports of wars and conflicts, and increasing wickedness, **use that stirring as a chance to pray and intercede.**
  - b. **Pray for God's purposes for the USA.**
    - i. *Jeremiah 29:7 Seek the peace and prosperity of the city or nation to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.*
    - ii. *Psalms 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it...*
    - iii. The USA is a sending nation for missionaries to other countries.
    - iv. The USA is an example of a people who live together in relative harmony as a multiethnic nation. Most other nations can't even imagine getting along with and living beside people of different ethnicities.
    - v. The USA is a protector of people around the world. Yes, it is costly. But believers around the world have told me that if America were to go away or retreat into isolationism, they would be slaughtered.
    - vi. Our nation is blessed to be a blessing. We are the first to respond to disasters. We feed a large part of the world.
    - vii. Our nation is a source of good in the earth. Not everything we export is good, but God does use us for some good in the world.
    - viii. **So, we pray for a change of heart in the USA, because what happens in America impacts the world.** Pray for the purposes of God for our nation.
  - c. **Pray for Christians in the USA to repent and turn back to God.**
    - i. **God is not pointing the finger at lost people or people who don't know God.**
      - 1. God says the problem is not in Washington or Wall Street; God says the issue is with "my people."
      - 2. *"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 14 if my people, who are called by*

*my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).*

3. The church is the heart of the nation. If the heart is sick, the body (nation) is sick.
- ii. **Instead of pointing the finger and blaming others, the Lord calls his people to identificational repentance.**
  1. Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra and others prayed identificational repentance: we and our forefathers have sinned against God and not done what is right.
  2. *I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, 5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land" (Daniel 9:4-6).*
  3. Christians are called to stand in the gap and ask God not to treat us as we deserve (Ezekiel 22:30-31).
- iii. By the way, if you believe that God is calling us Nineveh, it means that we are a nation which is not ruled by God.
  1. According to some of the eclipse prophetic words, there are several cities called Nineveh that the eclipse passed over.
  2. Nineveh was not a nation for God. It was ruled by one of the Sons of God who rebelled against God. (See Psalm 82:1-8; Deuteronomy 32:8-9).
    - a. *When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of [God]. 9 For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance (Deuteronomy 32:8-9).*
  3. The good news is that even wicked Nineveh repented and turned to God when the Lord confronted them.
- iv. **Pray for God's purposes in our nation. And, pray for Christians in the USA to repent and turn back to God.** May Christians live into who we are called to be in God.

- d. **Pray for the protection of land of Israel, the salvation of the Jews, peace for Jerusalem, and peace and protection for the Palestinians.**
  - i. May the Lord have mercy and bring an end to the war with Hamas.
  - ii. May the Lord have mercy and not allow the conflict with Iran to explode into a full-blown war.
- e. **When you are stirred up by signs, prophetic words, reports of wars and conflicts, and increasing wickedness, use that stirring as a chance to pray and intercede.**

Friends, I wanted to share with you what I think, feel, and believe, because I see more and more “prophetic signs and words” coming forth in the recent past and in the coming days ahead.

I want to invite us as believers to show up well in culture. I want to encourage our hearts so that we respond with faith and not in fear to what is going on in the world ecologically, economically, politically, geo-politically, etc. And, I want to equip us on how to respond with the compassion and wisdom of God in the midst of a culture that is scared, angry, discouraged, confused, and heart-broken.

May we show up in our spheres of influence according to the way of Jesus, as salt and light. In the name of Jesus.

**Ministry Time:**