

The Eclipse

by Tricia Berg

These are dangerous times we're living in. Not because we'll be harmed by today's total eclipse (August 21, 2017), but because of the risk we take when we let anything obscure the Light of the world from our view.

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the **light of the world**. Whoever follows me will not walk in **darkness**, but will have the **light of life**." John 8:12*

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But **sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.** For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But **when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible**, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." **Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore **do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is**. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another **out of reverence for Christ**. Ephesians 5:1-21***

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. **Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too **once** walked, when you **were** living**

in them. But **now** you must **put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.** Colossians 3:2-10

Let me just say this. Anyone who encourages us to blend in with this evil, fallen world is NOT OUR FRIEND. And there's something else important to know if we go along with them. We're NOT THEIR FRIEND, either! If we are believers, then we're supposed to be a good influence on those around us. How will they see the light if we hide ours under a bushel? Jesus said we are His friends if we do as He says. (Yes, He really said that! We are to love one another, and that does not mean casting stumbling blocks before others that cause them to sin, joining in their sin or encouraging them to sin.) We're not here to please ourselves, but the One who saved us from the eternal punishment we deserve. Jesus paid a very high price to make us His own! (2Cor. 6:14-18, John 10:14-18, Rev. 5:9)

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **You are my friends if you do what I command you.** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and **bear fruit** and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. **If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.** Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.**" John 15:12-21*

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who **dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and **could not shake it, because it had been well built.** But **the one who hears and does not do them** is like a man who built a house on the ground **without a foundation.** When the stream broke against it, **immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.**" Luke 6:46-49**

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.** John 15:8-10

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us **to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,** waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us **to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.** Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Titus 2:11-15

For this is the will of God, that **by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.** Live as people who are free, **not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.** 1 Peter 2:15-16

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought **to walk and to please God,** just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For **this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

"Blessed are those who are **persecuted for righteousness' sake,** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others **revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the **salt of the earth,** but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the **light of the world.** A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.** Do not think

*that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore **whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*** Matthew 5:10-19

How could anyone who knows God think that the pleasures of this short, temporary life are more valuable and desirable than those in the world to come—the one that lasts forever? On judgment day, there will not be ANYONE who is thankful for having had a friend who didn't care enough to steer them the right way when they made a wrong turn. The broad path is easy but it leads to destruction. The narrow path is harder to find and difficult, but it leads to eternal life. Those who belong to Jesus must choose the narrow path. Whoever loves the world and its ways more than Jesus is not worthy of Him or His kingdom. Whoever says they know Him and yet loves the world (or anything or anyone) more than Him is deceived.

*Therefore, **preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."** And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with holy fear throughout the time of your exile [temporary residence on earth], knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:13-19*

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. **If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.** Matthew 6:19-24*

*"Enter by the narrow gate. For **the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**" Matthew 7:13-14*

*"So **everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.** Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. **Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.** Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. **Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.** The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." Matthew 10:32-42*

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
1 John 2:15-17

*You adulterous people! Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God?** Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God **opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**" **Submit yourselves therefore to God.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.** James 4:4-10*

Or do you not know that **the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. **The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.** And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. **Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.** 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. 1 Corinthians 15:33-34

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us **do good** to everyone, and **especially** to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:7-10

Imagine if we lived in darkness most of the time and the big event were the sun actually coming out where we could see it. How depressing, but that's what people are doing who live in spiritual darkness! Don't go along with the children of the devil! You can recognize them by their fruits. Even if they claim to love God, they still do everything their own way instead of His. How does that show we love God if we invent our own version of Him? Many lost people do think of themselves as believers. They want the salvation part, but not on God's terms. They only believe the parts of the Bible that they like. They are NOT born again, or they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to desire and do God's will instead of their own.

Here's a clue: People who claim to believe, but who call other believers (their "brothers and sisters" in the Lord) "haters" because they don't revel in sin are the real haters. The Bible calls them murderers!

Everyone who **makes a practice of** sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. **No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.** Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. **Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.** By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the **children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.** For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And **why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. **Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.** 1 John 3:4-15

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin**, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh **no longer for human passions but for the will of God.** For **the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.** With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 1 Peter 4:1-5

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always **obeyed**, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.** Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be **blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world**, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Philippians 2:12-16

Don't be fooled by them. They will answer for themselves and we will answer for ourselves. Those who have been enjoying sinning against God and "getting away with it" will "get theirs" one day (Psalm 37, Psalm 73, Rev. 20:11-15), but our goal is to help them see the light, in time (2Pet. 3:9)—not to become one of them and share in their punishment because they didn't care to acknowledge God and turn from their sins to the salvation He offered through His Son. (Rom. 1, John 3:16-18) If someone lies to us and says that God only cares if we make a confession with our mouths that we believe in Jesus, and after that we can live like heathens, fully expecting to hear Him call us a "good and faithful servant" when we see Him face to face—we have no excuse, because the Bible is readily available for us to learn the truth (and if we truly believed in our heart, we would have the Spirit within us as our Helper and Teacher). (Rom. 10:8-10, John 14) There's good news, though! It's never too late to change our ways until we've left this earth. (Just don't play games with God—He's the only One who knows when that will be for each of us. Heb. 3:13) His grace and mercy will cover ANY sin that we confess to Him and turn from, asking His forgiveness. Delight in HIM and He will give you the desire of your heart (Psa. 37:4)—the amazing part is that HE is your desire when you delight in Him. 🌹

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. **Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' **Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:15-27

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: **"The Lord knows those who are his,"** and, **"Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."** Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver

but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, **if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.** Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, **correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.** 2 Timothy 2:19-26

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may **not sin**. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And **by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.** By this we may know that we are in him: **whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.** 1 John 1:5-2:6

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we **do not lose heart**. But we have **renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways**. We refuse to practice cunning or to **tamper with God's word**, but by the open statement of the truth we would **commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God**. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is **veiled to those who are perishing**. In their case **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God**. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. **For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** But

we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. **We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.** So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we **do not lose heart.** Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. **For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.** 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and **the light of a lamp will shine in you no more,** and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth." Revelation 18:21-24

And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. **Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.**" "Behold, **I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." **Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.** Revelation 22:10-15

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