

The Day the Sun Died
Luke 23:26-45

Ancient cultures feared eclipses. Why not? If they worshipped the sun, then when the sun vanished, it might seem as though their god died. Let us consider for a moment the prophecy of Amos 8:9: "*And it shall come to pass in that day says the Lord God, that I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight.*"

There are many allusions in the Old Testament prophets of the sun vanishing.

Isaiah 13:10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

Ezekiel 32:8 All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, and bring darkness upon your land,' Says the Lord GOD.

Amos 5:18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light.

Such language often is used to bring fear into men; something terrible was going to happen, and it was usually a judgment on men. But most of the time this language was figurative, speaking to the terror people would experience

It is possible that this prophecy was also meant to literally look to Christ. Joel pointed out that the sun would be darkened before the terrible day of the Lord (in AD 70). This might indeed refer to the event at the cross in the Gospel accounts. In Luke 23:26-45 we read about the death of the Christ, murdered by the Jews. They failed to understand that when they killed the Christ, their own covenant hung on the cross (Col. 2:14).

Scriptures reveal that Jesus hung on the cross for six hours, from 9AM (Mark 9:25). For the first three hours Jesus was mocked by His enemies, by the people passing by, and by the two men crucified with Him (Mr. 15:29-31, Mt 27:44). Jesus made several statements; He asked His Father to forgive them (Lk 23:34); He told John to take care of His mother (Jn 19:26); He told the thief on the cross with Him he would be in Paradise (Luke 23:43).

But it was at the 6th hour, noon that the remarkable event occurred. At that moment, the sun vanished. The words used in Greek indicate that the sun dimmed; it was not an eclipse (which last at most for 18 minutes), but the sun simply ceased to shine. Maybe the sun was there, but there was no light. The Gospels reveal that the mocking ceased, and men were filled with dread at these events (Mt. 27:54). What did all of this mean?

First, it is important that we understand that while the physics of light reveal that it comes from the sun, there is a spiritual characteristic of light too. Just as life has a biological component, it comes from God. Genesis 1:3 reveals that the first thing God created after making the earth was light. This was three days before He created the sun (1:14). Light is not just from the sun, it is also supernatural.

Perhaps the answer to this is found in the Gospel where this event is not mention, John. In John there is a repeated theme of Jesus being the Light of the world (John 8:12). He says in John 9:5 "*as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*" John 1:10 says that He *was in the world, and the world was made*

through Him, and the world did not know Him. So consider that the creator of the world, the light of the world was dying. It makes sense then that the light ON the world was dying too.

Another consideration in this darkness was the language of judgment. In Isaiah 13:10 God promised that the sun would be darkened; in the next verse He says that *"I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity"*. Now moving up to Isaiah 53:6 we read that *All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.* God promised to darken the sun when iniquity was dealt with, and our iniquity was born by Christ on the cross.

When it was finished, and Jesus breathed His last, the light returned. But the Light of the World had died. Yet in three days, on the same week day that God created light, at the break of light the Light of the World returned.