

The Sower

The Lord's Day-----August 13, 2017

Arthur Church of Christ

415 W 4th Street, Arthur, IL 61951

Preacher: Ron Bartanen

Times of Worship

9:30 a.m. (Bible Classes)-----10:30 a.m. (Morning Worship)----1:30 p.m. (Wednesday Bible Class)

New Web Site: <http://arthurcoc.com>

Check out the Apologetics Press Website

<http://apologeticspress.org>

“LET THERE BE LIGHT!”

In the beginning of creation God said, *“Let there be light, and there was light”* (Genesis 1:3). In a new spiritual creation God again speaks in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, dispelling spiritual darkness. The apostle Paul wrote of this in 2 Corinthians 4:6: *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

During the second World War, a song of hope, sung countless times was, “When the Lights Go On Again All Over the World.” With the threat of an air raid under the cover of darkness, city lights which would give bombers a target would be turned off. When the threat of air raids was no more, lights did eventually come on again, bringing great joy. No longer under threat, blackouts became a thing of the past as cities were once again transformed by light.

In the Bible, darkness is seen as a symbol of evil and spiritual ignorance. The central message of the Bible is that God sent His Son, who declared, *“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* (John 8:12). One who would refuse Christ is said to *“walk in darkness, knowing not where he is going”* (John 12:35). Those in Christ, however, are *“light in the Lord”*, and, as such, are urged to *“walk as children of light”* (Ephesians 5:8). Satan will do all he can to eclipse the light of Christ *“lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”* 2 Corinthians 4:4). In no way are we told to negotiate with the powers of darkness, compromising the light of truth, but rather to *“wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:12).

Friend, has Christ, through the gospel, spoken light into being in your heart? Acceptance of Christ, the “light of life” in faith and obedience to Him in repentance and baptism into Christ, will deliver you from “*the power of darkness*” and into “the kingdom of (God’s) dear Son” (Colossians 1:13; cf. Acts 2:38-39). Let nothing shield your eyes from the light of Jesus Christ, but look upon “the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6b).

--Ron

THE ECLIPSE AND THE OCCULT

This past Monday, August 21st, 2017’ Jason Henderson, Damien Ferguson, Danielle Smith and I traveled to Harrisburg, Illinois for the specific purpose of viewing the solar eclipse in its totality as the Sun was completely blocked by the Moon. I know I shall never forget it; and I’m also pretty sure Jason will never forget it, too, because his daughter Malory also just happened to be celebrating her eighth birthday on that day as well.

According to Webster’s dictionary: “A solar eclipse (as seen from the planet Earth) is a type of eclipse that occurs when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth, and when the Moon fully or partially blocks (“occults”) the Sun.” Webster further defines “occult” as meaning “to shut off from view or exposure.” I found it interesting that the word “occult” was used in the definition of a solar eclipse because the word “occult” is also used to describe a certain type of false religion in which the practitioner dabbles in spiritual darkness. Occultism is a religion which leads people away from Jesus, the One Who is the “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6).

That’s exactly what an occult does. It’s something that shuts off or blocks a person’s view or exposure to the one and only true “Light of the world” (John 8:12). Satan thrives on deception, and “almost true” religions are an old standby in his arsenal of weapons he employs against mankind. He constantly uses them in order to persuade people into believing the lie perpetrated by the enemy of their soul. That’s been Satan’s plan all along, ever since his first encounter with Eve way back long ago in the Garden of Eden. He has always sought to eclipse the One and Only Son of God, Jesus Christ.

About halfway to our destination this past Monday I commented (half-jokingly) "You know, it just occurred to me, but we are driving two and one-half hours one way, and several hundred miles in all...to see a shadow." We all got a nice chuckle about that observation, and so it wasn’t too long before I added, "Not only had I made one, but I had made TWO whole sermons this past Sunday...about a shadow!"

But as it turned out, this wasn’t “just a shadow” that we observed. It’s really very hard to describe and put into words just how wondrous this occasion was. It certainly was a unique point in time in which God had blessed us and allowed us to share in such a glorious moment involving His blessed creation. Even the slow darkening of the day as the Moon journeyed across the face of the Sun was other-worldly. Where we were located in Harrisburg it was as if a light switch had suddenly been turned off as totality occurred. A hush fell over the crowd for a few seconds before an eruption of cheers applauded it raucous approval. There was a feeling which permeated the air, a feeling that can only be described as somewhat 'magical', and a cathedral-like atmosphere descended upon us, very similar to what one experiences when one enters into the Redwood Forest for the very first time. Later, we all felt physically drained and tired out. but it was good feeling of tiredness.

No, this wasn’t just another shadow! And it was joyous, indeed, to hear the cheers and jubilation ringing out, for whether or not the people knew it, the cheers and sounding joy were for the God and Creator of the universe Who made it all possible! 1 “Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the Earth. 2 Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. 3 Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He Who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. “ (Psalm 100:1-3 [NASB])

--David Ferguson, Lake Land Church, Mattoon

“The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth his handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).

TO BY-PASS DISCOURAGEMENT

*Dear Lord, exempt me not from life and death and judgment.
I can take all of it, but I can't take discouragement.
I do not seek smooth paths, my skies need not be fair,
But in the struggle, Lord, exempt me from despair.
Grant me such gladness, Lord, and peace amidst the strife
That I'll by-pass discouragement that saps the strength from life.*

--Perry Tanksley

"SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD, Part 2" is to be today's message, with Psalm 3 as the reading and text.

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY to: Mary (9-30); and Ron (9:10).

IN OUR PRAYERS: Eva underwent a cat scan, but will not know her problem until tomorrow. Keep her in your prayers. *** If no other uri-nary tract infection arises, Ron is scheduled for Sept. 28 for procedures dealing with a bladder stone. *** Continue to remember Lyla; Nadine; Boyd; Linda; and Rodger. *** Pray for our nation as many are laboring to sever us from our Christian roots. Pray for our nation's leaders that they may respect and honor God's laws as they govern.