

The Sun Will Be Turned to Darkness and the Moon to Blood

Joel 2: 30-31

DIG: What do you think people's reaction will be when this first blackout occurs? When has this happened before? What is the purpose of these five blackouts?

During the end time period, including the last days of the Dispensation of Grace (see my commentary on *Hebrews - The Dispensation of Grace*), as well as the Tribulation, the Bible talks about **five blackouts during the end times** (Joel 2:31; Revelation 6:12, 9:2, 16:10-11, Matthew 24:29-30). This is the first blackout. Just what is a blackout? It means that the light from the sun, the stars and the moon will be suddenly **blacked out** so that the earth receives no light from them at all and is in total **darkness**. It will be similar to **the blackout** that took place during the ninth plague in **Egypt** (see my commentary on *Exodus Bs - Moses Stretched Out His Hand Toward the Sky and Total Darkness Covered All Egypt For Three Days*). Then God said to Moses His servant: **Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt - darkness that can be felt. So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in their places where they lived (Exodus 10: 21-23).** Another example of such a blackout took place during the crucifixion of Christ. **From the sixth hour until the ninth hour, darkness came over the Land (Mattityahu 27:45).**

But the first of the five worldwide **blackouts** that will happen in the last days clearly takes place before the Tribulation and the prophet Joel speaks of it. He prophesied that **God would show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire billows of smoke would erupt up from the earth's depths, and as a result, the sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of ADONAI, or the Great Tribulation (Joel 2:30-31).** Fire and columns of smoke are apocalyptic, foreboding images, especially combined with **blood (Ezekiel 32:6-8; Revelation 8:7).** For human author, **Joel, the moon turning to blood** displays a parallel and poetic way to its being **darkened**. In Hebrew poetry, the second line enhances or further explains the first line. It's not possible to determine exactly when the first **blackout** will occur in the sequence of pretribulational events, but when it does, it will be considered **the sixth birth pain.**