

# The Moon Goes Rogue

August 20, 2017

The Moon Is A Mirror; Tomorrow, It Goes Rogue. Tomorrow a total solar eclipse will be visible in totality within a band across the entire contiguous United States. It will only be visible in other countries as a partial eclipse. The eclipse begins in Lincoln City, Oregon, at 8:46 a.m. PDT and ends in South Carolina at 5:04 p.m. EDT.

What is an eclipse? Quite simple, really: An eclipse occurs when the moon stands in front of the sun, that is, between the sun and the earth, blocking its light.

A moon is not supposed to do that. And, truth is, the moon doesn't do this very often. The last time in the U.S. was 1979, and the last time the moon positioned itself in front of the sun all the way across the contiguous United States was June 8, 1918, almost 100 years ago.

During an eclipse what you have is a situation in which, basically: The moon is photobombing the sun's selfie. The moon is upstaging the diva. For a few hours, the moon is going rogue.

In this eclipse, we have a reminder of our role as followers of Jesus. If this role is not clear to you, here it is in simple terms: Jesus is the Son. We are not. We are moons. We should not step in front of the Son and block the light. Ever.

Jesus used many metaphors to describe himself and his ministry. "I am the Bread of Life," he said. "I am the Living Water." "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." "I am the Good Shepherd." But he also said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Our role? To be moons ... without going rogue ... without EVER blocking the light ... to be reflective surfaces that bounce the light of God into the dark corners of the world. So just as the moon is, in a sense, a mirror, we are mirrors, reflecting the light and glory of the son of God. The light of Jesus *will shine*, unless we block it.

Question is: How do we sometimes block the light?

1. Good mirrors reflect light without distorting the light. Think of the Fun House in a carnival, that place with all the goofy mirrors that make you look tall or short, thin or wide.

As faithful followers of Jesus we should not distort the light. We shouldn't make it into something it is not. There's no bait and switch. We do not make promises about health or wealth. We only promise a cross ... and a crown. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). That light should be the reflection of the Light of the World.

2. As mirrors, we need polishing and cleaning from time to time.

You clean the bathroom mirror, right? Mirrors need cleaning and sometimes polishing.

Here are some excerpts from a report about a certain telescope and its mirror system: "The Giant Magellan Telescope is easily the most ambitious terrestrial astronomy program humanity's ever devised. It has -- quite literally -- been built from the ground up by leveraging a brilliant, unique off-axis design and cutting-edge fabrication techniques. And nowhere is that more apparent than in the telescope's enormous mirror system. ...

"It's a very iterative process. We go through 50 to 80 cycles of polishing and measuring. When we measure, we generate a contour map of the errors in the mirror surface. We feed those maps into a computer that controls the polishing tools so that it either spends more time or exerts more pressure on the high spots.

*"How long does it take to fully grind and polish a mirror segment?"*

"It's roughly a year of polishing per mirror. ... We're already beginning work on the second mirror and we're expecting that, once we hit our stride, it will be a year of polishing per segment." (Andrew Tarantola, "How the enormous mirrors on the world's largest telescope are made." *Gizmodo Website*, September 3, 2014, [gizmodo.com](http://gizmodo.com).)

Years of grinding and polishing. Sounds painful. But mirrors, true mirrors, probably just don't "happen." If we are going to be true mirrors of Jesus, it will take some work.

3. Mirrors, functioning *improperly*, can become death rays.

This occurs when we misuse the light of Jesus, twist his words and ignore the totality of Scripture, choosing only those passages that reflect *our views and opinions, not His*. When we do this, our prejudices usually cause injury.

Here's an example of a mirror becoming a "death ray." In London, a new building with a glass exterior was built with a concave shape that led the locals to nickname it the "Walkie Talkie" (because its shape is similar to old walkie-talkies). Martin Lindsay made the mistake of parking his black Jaguar XJ near the building one day and came back to notice that the exterior of the car had melted. Seems that the "Walkie Talkie" was actually more like the laser dish on the Death Star, concentrating the sun's rays on a particular spot on the pavement that made Lindsay's Jag look like an ant fried with a magnifying glass. A local barbershop reported that its carpet was set on fire by the building's death ray, and the owner of a neighboring Vietnamese restaurant demonstrated what the 196.3-degree beam of light can do by frying an egg for reporters on the front steps of his establishment. Apparently, nobody had bothered to think about what effect sticking a giant concave mirror in the middle of London might have on people. One of the most destructive things *we* could ever do is become "death rays" in the name of Jesus.

4. Thus, mirrors should not block the light, but reflect it.

Robert Fulghum, in his book "It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It," talks about Alexander Papaderos, a teacher of Greek culture, politician, doctor of philosophy and a remarkably complete human being. On the island of Crete, next to the mass graves of Germans and Cretans who fought each other so bitterly in World War II, Papaderos has founded an institute for peace which has become the source of bridge-building between the two countries. What kind of vision motivates a man like Papaderos to transcend the focus on the individual self and dedicate his life to compassion and peace?

"When I was a small child," he said, "during the war we were poor and lived in a remote village. One day, on the road, I found the broken pieces of a mirror. A German motorcycle had been wrecked in that place. I kept one, the largest piece. ... By scratching it on a stone, I made it round. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated by the fact that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine -- in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find.

"I kept the little mirror, and as I went about my growing up, I would take it out in idle moments and continue the challenge of the game. As I became [mature], I grew to understand that this was a metaphor for what I might do with my life. I came to understand that I am not the light or the source of light. But light, truth, understanding, knowledge -- is there, and it will shine in many dark places only if I reflect it."

"I am a fragment of a mirror," Fulghum writes, "whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have, I can reflect light into the dark places of the world ... and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise."

You're not the Son. Be a moon. Reflect the Light. Amen.

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