Blood Moon Prophecy

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The Blood Moon Prophecy is a hypothesis proposed by some Christian ministers, such as John Hagee and Mark Biltz, which states that an ongoing tetrad (a series of four consecutive lunar eclipses—coinciding on Jewish Holidays—with six full moons in between, and no intervening partial lunar eclipses) which began with the April 2014 lunar eclipse is a sign of the end times as described in the Bible in Acts 2:20 and Revelation 6:12.

On April 15, 2014, there was a total lunar eclipse. It was the first of four consecutive total eclipses in a series, known as a tetrad; a second one took place on October 8, 2014, third one on April 4, 2015 and the remaining one will take place on September 28, 2015. It is one of eight tetrads during the 21st century AD. As with most lunar eclipses, the moon appeared red during the April 15 eclipse. The red color is caused by Rayleigh scattering of sunlight through the Earth's atmosphere, the same effect that causes sunsets to appear red. Hagee also connects the solar eclipse of March 20, 2015 in the middle of the sequence.

The idea of a "blood moon" serving as an omen of the coming of the end times comes from the Book of Joel, where it is written "the sun will turn into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." This phrase is again mentioned by Saint Peter during Pentecost, as recorded in Acts, although Peter says that date, not some future date, was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The blood moon also appears in the book of Revelation chapter 6 verses 11 - 13, where verse 12 says "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood".

Around 2008, Biltz began predicting that the Second Coming of Jesus would occur in the fall of 2015 with the seven years of the great tribulation beginning in the fall of 2008. He said he had "discovered" an astronomical pattern that predicted the next tetrad would coincide with the end times. When the prediction failed, he pulled the article from his website, but continued to teach on the "significance" of the tetrad.

Hagee would later seize on Biltz' prediction to write Four Blood Moons, which would become a best seller, spending more than 150 days in Amazon.com's top 150 by April 2014. For the week ending March 30, 2014, it was the ninth best selling paperback, according to Publishers Weekly. By mid-April, Hagee's book had hit No. 4 on the The New York Times best-seller list in the advice category. Hagee's book (and subsequent sermon series at his home congregation, Cornerstone Church) did not proclaim that any specific "end times" event would occur (as did Biltz in his original prophecy), but claimed that every prior tetrad of the last 500 years coincided with events in Jewish and Israeli history that were originally tragic, yet followed by triumph.

Media attention and critics

Hagee and Biltz's speculations gained mainstream media attention in publications such as USA Today and The Washington Post. Earth & Sky reported receiving "a number of inquiries about Blood Moon", prompting a response. Despite the attention, it is not clear if many people actually believe the ideas. According to Christian Today, only a "small group of Christians" saw the eclipse as significant.

Writing for Earth & Sky Bruce McClure and Deborah Byrd point out that the referenced verse also says the "sun will be turned into darkness", an apparent reference to a solar eclipse. They note that since the Jewish Calendar is lunar, one sixth of all eclipses will occur during Passover or Sukkot. Furthermore, there have been 62 tetrads since the first century AD, though only eight of them have coincided with both the feasts. Thus, the event is not as unusual as Hagee and Biltz imply. Additionally, three of the four eclipses in the tetrad will not even be visible in the biblical homeland of Israel, casting further doubt on Hagee and Biltz's interpretation. Writing for Space.com, Geoff Gaherty said he was saddened that "'prophets of doom' ... view these life-enriching events as portents of disaster" and said the eclipse was "hardly something to be concerned about."

In January 2014, Mike Moore, the then General Secretary of Christian Witness to Israel, wrote a lengthy article dismissing the claims of Biltz and Hagee. Moore's view was that no significance can be drawn from the eclipses.