

Midnight total lunar eclipse coincides with original Good Friday darkening 2,000 year ago

Neel Roberts

The Sky's the Limit

Looking at a blood red moon at the stroke of midnight can be eerie enough but many don't know that the original Good Friday in Jerusalem, estimated to have taken place April 3, 33 AD, also a lunar eclipse, according to NASA.

The crimson affect displayed on the surface of the moon is the result of the Earth blocking the sunlight and the jargon "blood moons" is not a scientific term. Rather, it is more superstitious and does not line up with any proven truth. If you're burning the midnight oil Monday, April 14, you will be able to watch this without any visual aids at all. It will start at about 10:45 p.m., peak at 12:46 a.m. April 15 and end at about 3:30 a.m. No visual aids will be needed as it's very obvious to see in the south sky. This is also the same week as Good Friday that'll take place in a few days.

Sky watch for the next month

Venus leads to Neptune on Saturday, April 12. Look to the southeast-east before sunrise at 4:30 a.m. when Venus rises, and you can find Neptune below it with a telescope.

The annular Antarctic solar eclipse occurs Tuesday, April 29 just after midnight. You can go online to Nasa's website and watch the Annular Solar eclipse near the South Pole.

The Lyrids Meteor Shower, which is also known as April shooting stars produced by dust particles left behind by a comet, will peak late during the night of Monday, April 21 and continue throughout the night. Look east to the constellation of Lyra and you should be able to catch 10-20 meteors per hour on average with rare surges of up to 100.

Public events for the next month

Drop by for the monthly public stargazing session at the Trek Station, courtesy of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Calgary), starting at 7:30 p.m., on Friday, April 11. A brief indoor presentation on "Easter,

Blood Moons and Astronomy" will be followed by observing through our 11-inch telescope. Everyone is welcome to this free event and refreshments are provided. Come early as space fills up by the start of the presentation. For more information, visit www.vulcantourism.com or call the Trek Station at 403-485-2994.

Saturday Observer's Night at the Telescope Farm in Didsbury is hosted by the All Star Telescope just outside Didsbury on May 3, starting at 9 p.m. until midnight. This full facility telescope dealer has a heated showroom and washrooms, and refreshments are available. Everything is provided for no charge. I am planning to attend, and you are welcome to caravan with a group I am assembling leaving Vulcan at about 5 p.m., weather permitting. We stop for a Chinese buffet before heading to the celestial farm for the evening and Tim Hortons on the way back. For more information, visit www.all-startelescope.com/pages/observer-nights or contact Ken From at 866-310-8844.