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THE TWO WITNESSES

who are they? (part one)

NO.246

INTRODUCTION

When asked, "WHO ARE GOD'S TWO WITNESSES?" some answer Moses and Enoch. Others answer Moses and Elijah. I have heard some say Peter and Paul! At the end of this study we should know who God's two witnesses really are.

At the end of my previous study, I quickly wrote a short chapter on the two witnesses. The Lord had just begun to drop this word into my understanding but since then, the Spirit has developed much more on the subject and I feel constrained to write it in more details. To bring out the meat of this word as clearly as possible, I will first need to lay a long foundation.

GOD IS SPIRIT IN A PHYSICAL WORLD

Our God is INVISIBLE SPIRIT. The natural eye and natural mind cannot perceive His presence. Yet He is omnipresent which means He is everywhere and in every thing. God is life and without Him there would be no life and no creation at all.

From the foundation of the world, our God has desired to be known by His physical creation. Although the world of sciences would often prefer an intellectual explanation of the grandeur of this universe, it remains a mystery yet it is the greatest witness to our Invisible God.

Carl Sagan, the world famous astro-physicist and most vocal communicator of scientific facts once said that "not enough is known about the universe to be certain of the non-existence or existence of

God." How could so brilliant a mind not be awed by the beauty and diversity of this little blue planet? How can such a mind not see God in the precise mathematical order that moves the tides of the great oceans and regulates the timing of each magnificent sunset and sunrise? Mr. Sagan wanted more and indeed God gave us much more but these things are only seen by the Spirit and not by the intellect.

By the Spirit, Paul declared, "*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they (the ungodly) are without excuse.*" (Rom.1: 20)

The wonders of the world are all God's witnesses indeed. Jesus once said that if His disciples did not praise God, the stones would immediately cry out in praise to God. But the Rockies cannot speak and the great oceans have no voice to praise God.

One can only hear the hum of the voices from the deep, but they cannot utter a word about the love of God. Our God desires to be known through more than His speechless and emotionless creation; He wants to be known and praised through His Son and the sons in Christ. He wants His entire creation to know Him and praise Him. Moreover, He wants to be known as our loving Father.

So God set out to raise up WITNESSES to shew forth His presence, His power, His glory, His righteousness and His love. From the beginning of the

Bible to the end, we find God revealing Himself through witnesses.

“In the beginning, was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” (Jn.1: 1-3) God is Spirit and the Word is very much a part of God. Jesus said, *“..The Words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”* (Jn.6: 63b)

In essence, Jesus was saying *“The words I speak to you are a revelation of the Invisible God.”* The worlds had been created by the Word. When Adam and Eve came on the scene, there were already many living creatures in the earth but they were not in God's image and likeness.

Then the day came *“And God said, Let us make man in OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS...”* (Gen.1: 26a) Our God set out to make a true image and likeness of Himself in the earth so that His creation could know Him. But He also made a creature totally opposite of Himself. One who was big trouble to man from the start.

With much warning to His man, God indeed set the serpent in a tree right in the midst of the garden. It was not long until the woman found out that the smooth enticing words of the serpent would entrap her in the snares of death. yet this also was part of God's plan to be known of His creation.

The subtle liar works through man's knowledge; the carnal mind or carnal intellect. He planted in Eve, the idea that they could know as much as God and could lead their lives without Him. They had lost touch with the word of life (barred from the tree of life) and they believed that the life they felt in their beings would last forever. This was and still is the big deception.

From that time on, men set out to make images of God according to the desires and imaginations of their own minds. Our God was not taken by surprise because in fact, He had created the serpent and He intended to use him to show forth His glory as well.

For instance, when Moses faced the Pharaoh to let Israel go out of Egypt, it is written that God hardened the Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let them go, and each time he hardened his heart God poured out another plague upon Egypt.

This Pharaoh is a type of the serpent who keeps us in bondage of this world. Paul knew something about that. He declares, *“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”*(Rom.9: 17)

God could have slain Pharaoh or He could have turned his heart toward God's people who were laboring under heavy bondage, but instead God hardened his heart and made things much more difficult for all.

God was using this Pharaoh as a tool to shew forth His glory. Like the gale of a strong hurricane, the Invisible God was causing all these plagues to come upon the earth. He was showing His power in a very real way! He could not be denied. In a negative but powerful way, Pharaoh was a witness for God too.

There was a day when Jesus passed by a man who was blind from his birth. *“And his disciples asked him, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”* (Jn.9: 2-3) God wants us to know Him. He uses the weaknesses of the flesh to manifest His glory.

WITNESSES FROM THE PAST

One of the first great witnesses on record is ABEL. He offered the slain lamb. Through it, he testified of the atonement through Jesus Christ. God was pleased with his offering but it costs Abel his life. He was the first witness to be killed for his testimony. God asked Cain, *“What have you done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.”* (Gen.4: 10)

God did not let the matter go without grave conse-

quences. God said to Cain, *“And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.”* (Vs. 11-12)

Now God had no witness of Himself in the earth so He gave Eve another son and she named him SETH. *“For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.”* (Gen.4: 25b-26)

The name Seth means “substitute.” This was God's substitute for Abel. This new seed gave birth to Enos, the line of men who called upon the name of the Lord. God now had a line of witnesses again. The Invisible God would be made known unto men.

NOAH FOUND GRACE

From the line of Seth came ENOCH who begat Methuselah. *“And Enoch walked with God and he was not; for God took him.”* (Gen.5: 24) Enoch is a great witness for God. He walked with God. He was in step with God and that was his testimony.

One of the great witnesses of the Old Testament is NOAH. Noah lived at a time when the earth was so filled with violence that the Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth. *“...the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* (Gen.6: 5) *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord”* (Vs.8) Through grace, Noah held back the Hand of God from destroying the entire seed of the Adam creation.

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet (rain and flood), moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” (Heb.11: 7)

Noah heard the voice of the Invisible God and this dear man took down every detail and gathered every

piece of materials to build something that had never been seen in the earth. It took him one hundred and twenty years to build the Ark to the exact specifications that the Lord had given him.

Noah was mocked and ridiculed. His life was threatened but he kept on building the Ark and by this he condemned the world. His witness still goes on today as he becomes the type of those who build the Ark of the Christ within while the wicked that is in our own carnal minds and in the world around us mocks and reviles us.

Well did Jesus prophesy, *“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.”* (Lk. 17: 26) By his faith and actions, Noah became the type of Christ in the last days- Christ the Ark that preserves life in the earth.

Noah was indeed a great witness of our Invisible God! It was in his day that all wickedness was cleansed from the earth and it is in the day of the coming of the Son of Man, when the Lord appears in His body, that all wickedness will be cleansed from the hearts of men.

FAITHFUL ABRAHAM

Abraham is called “Father of the Faith.” He came from the line of Shem, one of Noah's three sons. We meet him when his name was yet Abram in the land of Ur of the Chaldees. This man heard a voice in his spirit and he listened.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. SO ABRAM DEPARTED...” (Gen.12: 1-4a)

God did not send a well known prophet to speak these words to Abram. These words came directly to Abram by the Invisible Spirit of God within. AND ABRAM BELIEVED GOD.

Abram lived in a pagan country where many false gods ruled the hearts of men. He had no Law and no Scriptures. He was not taught to hear from the true God but he had a witness down deep within and He listened to God's inner voice when he heard it. And he believed every word. This is why Abraham is the Father of the faith. Along the way, Abraham would have had opportunity to deny that God had really spoken to him, but he never wavered.

God had a great mission for Abraham. He was going to make of him a great nation! From the seed of this man who believed without questions, God brought forth a nation to be His witness in the earth. This was the literal nation Israel at the time, but God was looking forward into the annals of time to the day when He would bring forth His Son in the flesh. Jesus the Christ was of that seed. From Jesus we know God is raising up His church to bring forth a new creation of God in Christ in the earth.

Abraham heard God by the Spirit and he believed. He did not hesitate, he let go everything and followed the voice of the Invisible God speaking to his inner spirit. This is the call upon each of our lives. To hear His voice in our spirits and believe.

As we go, He teaches us to discern the many voices that come through our minds. He has given us His written Word as our greatest confirmation and those who walk with us as well. We also have the prophets that Jesus has placed in His church and if we do not kill them by rejecting them, they will confirm His voice to our hearts as well.

God revealed His ways to Abram as He declared that He would judge Egypt and later the world by the nation which He had chosen to be His witness in the earth. *“And he said to Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”* (Gen.15: 13-14)

This is an amazing prophecy indeed! And it is one of the great keys of the Bible for us. God was in-

deed speaking of Israel being led into Egypt and becoming slaves of that powerful civilization. God had decreed that in the end, the deliverance of His nation from this mighty dominance would be one of His greatest witness. As we continue this study we will see that in the end, His greatest witnesses would be killed for their testimony. His purpose is to be known by all and to judge all by His righteousness.

*“Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth: **he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.**”* (Ps.96: 12-13)

God gave Abraham many sons. Each son is a wondrous study in itself. We know that it was through his son Isaac that Jacob who became Israel was born. From that day forward, the Invisible God became known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

GOD'S STAR WITNESSES

Much can be learned at the feet of Abraham, but for this study we will move on to Moses. We find God's nation in the bondage that God had prophesied to Abraham. The Pharaoh in power had set his heart on destroying the witness of the true God. The four hundred years had passed by and God was now prepared to deliver His people and claim them as His own. He would bring them out with a high hand and lead them across the desert to test their hearts.

He would show them how much He loved them and He would teach them to know Him and to worship Him. He told them that if they obeyed His voice, He would bless them and multiply them. He would increase their goods and they would be blessed above all people.

“And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.” (Deu.7: 15) This deliverance would be on record forever and the world would know the power of the God of Israel.

To do this, God chose His man Moses. As a babe Moses was courageously saved by his mother at a time when it was decreed that all baby boys born to Israelite women were to be killed. But one valiant mother built a little ark of bulrushes daubed with slime and pitch and floated her three months old precious cargo on the river Nile.

It was God's plan! In the morning, the babe was found by Pharaoh's daughter. She took him up in her arms and called him Moses (drawn out of the waters). Moses was educated in the schools of Egypt and slated to become one of the great figures in God's plan for His universe, but first God had to take him through his trials and testing.

We have to skip through a lot of details of this beautiful story, but the day came when Moses had to make a choice. *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE.” (Heb.11: 24-27)

Moses had been chosen in Christ from the beginning and when the Lord called him into action, he was prepared to follow. God calls a people who has been prepared from the beginning. There is a “whosoever will” people who call on the name of the Lord and they are saved but there is also a company of His witnesses who are called to lay down their lives.

These have been prepared from the foundation of the world in Christ. Moses was a star witness for the Invisible God. He was a deliverer and he heard the voice of God and obeyed. He knew his calling and believed.

God commanded Moses to tell Pharaoh, *“...The*

Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness...” (Ex.7: 16a) God wanted His people to know Him and to serve Him only.

He designed their wilderness journey for just that purpose. *“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep my commandments, or no.* (Deu.8:2)

He had also told Moses to tell Pharaoh, *“...Israel is my son, even my firstborn...”*(Ex.4:22) This was the Father's heart of God speaking. Pharaoh was holding the nation that God had formed from the seed of Abraham. They were called to be His representative, His witness to all the nations around them. He would send His Angel before them and He would defend them.

“Beware of him (the Angel), and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.” (Ex.23: 21-22)

God was their shield and buckler; their Protector. God is set against those who try to hinder or stop the progress of His called out people. Our first and foremost adversary being the old nature that always resists us and has set itself to stop us. We used to think that our enemy was the person that came against us, but it is our own reactions to that other person that is the true foe of our spiritual growth. It may take us a while to get this understanding but when we do, it is liberating and healing.

We all know what severe training and testing God took Moses through before He instructed him to take a nation of roughly 600,000 men and perhaps 6 million counting women and children, toward the Red Sea and across the unknown and untamed wildernesses of the Sinai Peninsula. Moses was eighty years old when he began this hazardous journey and the people became a discontented mass of murmuring grumblers who could drive any man out

of their minds.

It was only because Moses had heard from the Invisible God Himself that he could keep on track and fulfill his calling. He never wavered through the journey except for the time when his emotions got the best of him and he disobeyed God and struck the Rock twice. Moses lost his entry into the literal Promised Land but he did not lose his place into the spiritual Land which is the best of the two.

FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE MOUNT TWICE

There came a time along the wilderness way when God had something special for His nation. He called Moses to the top of Mount Sinai and kept him there forty days and forty nights. Forty is the number which denotes the fulness of God's dealings. It rained forty days and nights when Noah and his family were in the ark with all the beasts.

Jesus was forty days being tempted in the wilderness before He began His earthly ministry. David reigned forty years on the throne of Israel. There are other meaningful forties as well.

Forty days was a long time for the people to stay without their leader so when Moses came down from the mountain, he found them having a party around a golden calf. They had given Aaron their golden earrings and he melted them into this golden calf.

When the people could no longer see a visible leader, they turned their golden earring into a false god. This is what happens to Christians who need a visible leader rather than waiting on the Word that the Holy Spirit speaks in their own ears they build a ministry of their own.

The Lord was less than pleased and said to Moses, *"I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-neck people: now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make thee a great nation."* (Ex.32: 9-10)

But Moses interceded mightily for them. He reminded the Lord that these were His people that He brought out of Egypt and now it would look like He could not take them through this wilderness! He told the Lord, *"Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people."* (Ex.32: 12)

So God gave them another chance and called Moses up the Mount again. After forty more days and nights he returned. His face was shining so brightly with the glory of God that he put a veil over it so that the people could look upon him. Moses had been in God's presence eighty days and nights now. He had received a double portion and was saturated with God's glory and in his hands he held two tables engraved with the Law and Commandments of God.

If the Lord harkened to the prayer of Moses for the people and gave them another chance, how much more will He harken to our great intercessor Jesus and take us all the way through to our land?

The Law was God's gift of love to the people. It revealed the animosity of their hearts toward God and each other. It gave them direction for their lives. It kept them from the beastly nature that would destroy them. The Law of Moses is one of God's great witness of the Old Testament. It is a testimony to His love and His righteousness.

THE PROPHETS OF THE LORD

God had raised His nation Israel to be a witness of Himself in the earth. There was a time when the nations around them were afraid of them because they had witnessed the power of their God. Then God raised up Moses and gave him the Law as another solid witness of His existence and nature.

God established a priesthood as a bridge between the people and Himself. But the day came when God's priesthood became corrupt. They perverted the laws of God. They would not hear the voice of

God as He spoke from heaven (the Spirit) and God called upon an order of prophets. God set His eye on a young boy that a devout mother had dedicated to the service of the temple. The boy, Samuel, remained under the tutorship of Eli the high priest.

Eli and his two sons were making themselves vile before the Lord and Eli did not restrain them. *“And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here I am.”* (I Sam.3: 2-4)

Samuel heard the voice of God and at first thought it was Eli calling. But after God repeated the call, Eli told him to answer: it was God Himself. The young boy answered and learned quickly to hear the true voice of the Lord. The hearing ear had been restored. Samuel became one of the great prophetic voices of the Old Testament. God gave him many assignments and Samuel was always faithful to His calling.

All of God's faithful prophets were vital to the plan of the Lord but Elijah was foremost among them. He started his ministry during the reign of the most infamous King Ahab who continued the calf worship established by Jeroboam. Then to add insult to the injury, Ahab married Jezebel the daughter of the Sidonian king Ethbaal.

Under her influence, Ahab sinned exceedingly against God. He introduced the worship of Baal on such a grand scale that the number of its priests and prophets multiplied and took over; corruption was rampant. At the same time, Jezebel's extreme hostility against God's prophets caused great persecution among them. Many were killed but seven thousand fled to hide in caves.

Elijah was outraged. He was hiding in a cave when the word of the Lord came to him and asked, *“What doest thou here Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant,*

thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (I Kgs.19: 9b-10)

ELIJAH VS. 850 PROPHETS OF BAAL

The Lord called upon Elijah several times. He had many things on His “to do” list for Elijah. Among these, God told Elijah to call for a drought on the land. It lasted three and a half years until the land was so parched it could no longer produce its crops. Famine threatened the people. So God called on Elijah to pray that it rain again.

It was after God sent back the rain that Elijah confronted Ahab and said, *“Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.”* (I Kgs. 18: 19)

This was going to be the most dramatic witness of Elijah's ministry. Eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal against one Elijah! But this was right down Elijah's alley! So all these false prophets built their altars to their gods and strutted their stuff. They were given all day long to prove the power of their gods. All Israel had been gathered to watch!

So they called on the name of their gods. *“O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.”* (I Kgs. 18: 26b-28)

What a show! But Baal never answered. In the meantime Elijah had prepared his sacrifice. *“And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.”* (Vs. 30)

Then Elijah called the people of Israel to come near and watch. *“With twelve stones he built an altar in*

the name of the Lord and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put wood in order and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time. And he said Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.” (Vs.32-35)

What was Elijah thinking? He flooded and saturated the sacrifice with water! How could the fire of God come down and consume this? It was at the time of the evening sacrifice that Elijah lifted his voice and cried, “*Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that **I have done all these things at thy word.** Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.*

Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.” (Vs. 36b-39) What a witness to the Invisible God and Father!

There was a day when Jesus was teaching about the prophets and about John the Baptist. Then speaking of John He said, “*And if ye will receive it, this is Elias (Elijah) which was for to come.” (Matt. 11: 14)*

When Jesus said that John the Baptist is the same as Elijah who was prophesied to come, He was revealing that the same Spirit that came against the sins of Ahab and Jezebel had now come to judge the leaders of Israel. Jesus spoke of John the Baptist as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, yet He said that the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John.

John was thrown into prison when he fearlessly reproved Herod the tetrach, for Herodias his brother

Philip's wife and for the evils which Herod had done. Herod feared John but it was Herodias who wanted him dead and who arranged to trap him when her daughter tempted him and required the head of John.

The spirited John did not have a chance among such corruption and when he finished his testimony he found his place with those under the altar who had been killed for the Word of God and those in the Hall of Faith of whom we read that “*They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” (Heb.11: 37-38)*

Moses and Elijah are certainly part of the Old Testament Company who are witnesses for God. They come under the title of “The Two Witnesses” being that by the words of their mouths God's word is fully established. They indeed represent the Law and the Prophets and they are very much a part of the “*...two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of earth...*” that both John the Revelator and Zechariah saw in visions.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

The greatest witness of all who came in the flesh is God's dear Son “*Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” (Col.1: 15)* There has not been a truer witness of the Invisible God than the Son of God who declared “*When you have seen me, you have seen the Father.”*

When the Christ appears again in the Body of His people, the world will see the glory of God cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. This day is about to dawn.

This study will continue in the next issue. May the Lord richly bless all who read and may He stir the spirit of revelation within us and give abundant and clear understanding to all our minds and hearts.

Because of His love, *Jackie Caporaso*