

## **Part One – Evidences**

### **Chapter One – Biblical Evidence**

Before we begin an in-depth look at the actual evidences for this starry witness that God gave, it's important to understand that God has ALWAYS had a witness available to mankind in order that He might show His love for sinners. It has always been God's desire that people understand His grace and mercy for them even though their sin has caused a great gulf to come between them and Him. Man's sin has always been his basic problem, and God's grace has always been the answer. The great desire of God has been that mankind understands that His grace is available and sufficient. However, in order for man to act upon the loving invitation of God, he had to be made aware of it in the first place. And, though he could understand something of God's nature by simply observing the world around him (Romans 1), he had to have a special revelation from God in order to know that he could be saved by His unobligated love. Therefore, God had to take the initiative.

The first witness to God was God Himself. These were the personal encounters that he had with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. (Approx. 4000 BC) From the exodus of the Israelite slaves out of Egypt until the time of Christ, God's witness was the law He gave on Mt. Sinai (1491 BC – 4 BC). Of course, Christ's advent was next in the order of God's witnesses (4 BC – 33 AD). Following Christ's resurrection, the Church was given the written Word (Bible), which is the witness we continue to have and will have until the triumphant return of Christ as King. Those individuals who come to know Christ during the great tribulation will also be given several witnesses including the two prophets and the 144,000 Jewish believers. But did you notice the obvious gap in time? What was the witness between the Garden of Eden and Mt. Sinai? Did God really leave no testimony to His grace and mercy during those 2500 years?

Why is it so important for believers to acknowledge that God has always made His plan of redemption available from the very first bite Eve took until today? Because God's Word says plainly that He has, and we must be ready always to give an account of the hope that is within us. If we can not answer to God's witness to these men and women so long ago, then we can not believe Romans 1:20 which says that "they are without excuse." Colossians 1:23 says, "...continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to EVERY creature under heaven...." This was penned by Paul, an early church apostle, who could certainly not be referring to his own letters to the church which now make up a great portion of our New Testament. Neither could he be referring to the Law that was given and observed only by the Israelites. Paul says that every creature under heaven has been given the opportunity to know the hope of the gospel. Another passage to consider is Titus 2:11 which says, "For the grace of God that

brings salvation has appeared to all men.” Again, Paul clearly says that the way of salvation has been given or declared to everyone!

It is the purpose of this study to show that God did, indeed, have a witness for those 2500 years between the Garden of Eden and the Law given on Mt. Sinai. For two and a half millennia, man’s only knowledge of his Creator’s redeeming love came from the heavens above. Every night the great drama of redemption unfolded before his eyes. Once a year, he saw the whole plan as the sun “moved” from one sign to the next. Godly parents faithfully taught their children the many exciting themes presented in the sparkling skies above. God has ALWAYS had a witness!

*<sup>1</sup>“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.*

*<sup>2</sup>Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.*

*<sup>3</sup>There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*

*<sup>4</sup>Their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world.*

*In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,*

*<sup>5</sup>Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,*

*And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.*

*<sup>6</sup>Its rising is from one end of heaven and its circuit to the other end:*

*And there is nothing hidden from its heat.”*

Let’s begin looking at this witness of the stars by studying some of the evidence we find in Scripture. The passage above from Psalm 19 is certainly the clearest of all portions of God’s Word dealing with the witness of the starry skies. To gain a firm grasp of this exciting body of truth, you must first understand these verses well. Therefore, let’s take them almost on word at a time.

The first phrase of the first verse deals with the word heavens. The Bible recognizes three heavens. The first heaven is the atmosphere of this planet or the air that we breathe. The second heaven is what we call outer space – the stars, planets, moons, suns, and vast emptiness between them. The third heaven is the home and abode of God where He dwells in resplendent glory surrounded by countless angels and celestial beings.

The “heavens” mentioned in this first verse is the second heaven which is made clear in verse four. Therefore, we note immediately that there is something about the night skies that God Himself ordained which declares His glory. That brings us to the second word, declares.

The Hebrew word used here is *caphar* (pronounced saw-FAR) which means “to recount, to enumerate, to declare, to celebrate ... to speak a full story or to give a full accounting of a subject.” This Hebrew word is first used in Gen. 15:5 (“tell the stars, if thou be able to number them.”) It is also used in Gen. 24:66, (“The servant told Isaac all things that he had done.”) And again in Ps. 71:15, (“My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers (or “the full particulars, all the details”) of them. So let’s add that to our understanding so far – There is something about the night

skies that God Himself has ordained which speaks a full story or gives a full accounting of a subject.

But what is that subject? Let's continue to study the passage. According to the next phrase in verse one, that subject is "the glory of God." So what exactly is the glory of God?

Several portions of Scriptures help confirm that the important declaration found in Psalm 19:1, which we have just studied, is not simply a proclamation that the stars show the supreme attributes or unlimited creative power of God. Rather, they unmistakably have the person and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ for their subject.

II Corinthians 4:6 plainly states that the "glory of God" is to be found in the light of the knowledge (of the glory of God) in the FACE OF JESUS CHRIST. This is perhaps the most direct of all scriptural declarations, for it says outright that God's glory is His Son.

Look also at Exodus 16:7. This is the first reference in the Bible of the expression "the glory of the Lord." It is within the context of the Israelites' wilderness wanderings, and it plainly states that the manna provided by God is His glory. Later in history, the Lord Jesus clearly claimed this as a title intended for Himself when, in John 6:35, He states, "I am the Bread of Life," which He associates with Old Testament manna several verses above. .

Revelation 21:22-23 is the last instance of this expression "the glory of God" in the Bible. It is a passage that speaks of the New Jerusalem where it states there will be no need of the sun or moon for the "glory of God" will light the city. The passage goes on to explain that "the Lamb is its light." Of course, the Lamb is a title used extensively (28 times) throughout the book of Revelation to refer to the Lord Jesus. This then can be compared also with John 8:12 where the Lord Jesus again claims this title "The Light of the World" as his own. There can be no doubt that this precious expression "The Glory of God" refers to Jesus Christ. Let's review again what we've learned so far by paraphrasing. There is something about the night skies that has been ordained by God to give a full account of the person and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's an astounding new look at this one short verse! Let's continue searching this passage for understanding.

The next word is firmament, and as you can see by its context, this is a word that refers to the first heaven or the air around us. This is a matter of universal agreement among Bible scholars. This firmament "shows" (or "displays" in the King James Version) God's "handiwork," which is a word that refers to the creation of God. Indeed, it is in the bright sunlight of the first heaven that we can see His physical creation and enjoy its marvel of design and harmony.

So, in this first verse of Psalm 19, we see the heavens, both first and second, presenting to man both the spiritual and physical marvels of God's Son and His matchless creation.

The second verse amplifies these two themes. The daytime is the time for the physical display when His creation "speaks" to man and tells him the "invisible attributes" of God by showing him the "things that are made." In other

words, it shows the two things about God that man CAN know simply by observing the creation around him – “His eternal power and Godhead.” (Refer to Romans 1:19,20) The night skies, however, show the spiritual. It is this theme that we will pursue – the eternal plan of God whereby men may be saved from the penalty of sin is declared in the night sky or second heaven.

Notice the third verse now. The first thing we see is that this is a UNIVERSAL witness. It reached the hearts and minds of all men, and there was no “speech nor language” where it did not reach. (We’ve discussed already how important it is that this witness be declared to ALL men.) How could that be possible? Look at verse four. It says that God used lines (visual) and words (audible). So what is it about the night sky that involves lines and words? The only explanation that meets all the requirements is the ancient star charts. Think of the universal saturation that the Zodiac has accomplished.

Even with all this confirmation, the most telling part of all is found in verse four. It says that God created these starry wonders so that the sun would have a “tabernacle.” This word means “a house,” and that is the very word ancient astronomers (and modern-day astrologers) used to denote those signs through which the sun seemingly passed from one month to the next – twelve in all, completing the earth’s course of one year’s revolution about the sun.

Imagine! God Himself established the principle of the sun having a “house” (or twelve of them) to mark its path through the very heavens in which He drew lines and gave words (names) in order to proclaim His own gracious message of love for sinful man!

This wonderful theme continues in verse five. The heavenly story “is like a BRIDEGROOM coming out of his chamber (the third heaven), and rejoices like a strong man to run its race.” Think of it! The starry heavens tell a story of a bridegroom (Jesus Christ is the bridegroom of His church) who rejoices (“for the joy that was set before Him”) to endure the great hardship of a race. (He took our sins upon Himself so that He could deliver us from eternal death.) The very theme of Christ and his Bride is central to this starry revelation!

Finally, we come to verse six which tells of our Lord’s “coming out” from His home (the third heaven) and his “circuit” to the “other end.” (Or “ends of it” in the King James Version) This refers to both aspects of His first advent on this earth – the great depth of his love and condescension – as well as, the full course of God’s activity throughout the entire history of man.

Can you see the tremendous truth that this passage teaches?

## **PSALM 147**

We have just seen in Psalm 19 that the Bible specifically affirms the testimony of Jesus Christ in the stars. But how do we know that God actually drew the pictures we commonly refer to today as the Zodiac?

We can be certain of one thing – There simply HAD to be only one author. Today archaeologists consistently dig up copies of these charts etched into the stones of many different countries, representing vast separations of both time and space. The mathematical probability that a Greek philosopher sat down one

day and drew forty-eight different pictures in the sky and gave them names that just happened to agree in nearly every detail to a similar chart drawn up by a Chinese monk one thousand years earlier, which just happened to agree with one drawn by an Aztec priest five hundred years before that, which just happened to agree with one from the Hindu culture, which just happened to agree...etc. It is obvious that mathematical probability simply doesn't exist.

One Individual had to be responsible for the original arrangement of the lines on ancient star charts. But still, how do we know that it was God who drew those lines? Is there a verse in the Bible that states this point directly? I believe there is – Psalm 147:4. “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.” (KJV)

The word telleth in this verse is the very same Hebrew word that is translated declares in Psalm 19:1, which we have already learned is translated “to give a full accounting of.” So God does not simply tell HOW MANY stars there are, as this verse might seem to say, He gives a full accounting of the stars.

God is the teacher! And He is using the two ancient methods of imparting knowledge which modern pedagogy has not yet been able to improve upon – the visual discipline and the audible discipline. The Bible uses both many times to teach us the truths of God's revelation. For example, Jesus used many of the ordinary objects, such as the mustard seed, the sower and the seed, the penny, etc. that were part of the daily life of the people to whom He ministered. He used these examples to build truth-teaching parables.

This, in fact, is the very best way to use these principles – simultaneously. This can be seen in a typical classroom. The student SEES the material on the board or in the book while he HEARS the instructions of the teacher. Therefore, it's not surprising to find that God used these two principles, the visual and the audible, to teach these exciting themes to man.

We have just discovered that God drew certain lines, connecting just the right stars to form an instructional figure, for example, a water pot, a charging bull, a king, and a dying goat. We have also seen that He gave certain WORDS (“calleth them by their names”) to these figures and filled these words and pictures with meaning so that they conveyed the intended truth. So we have both of these effective teaching techniques in operation in the star-revelation.

Yet here is the more important consideration about its author. If this is truly a revelation of the Gospel, then by virtue of Romans 1:16 (“It is the power of God unto salvation”) somebody, somewhere should have been saved by viewing it, understanding it, and believing it. Does the Bible tell of such a person? Would you believe it was Abraham?

It's important to note, before going much further, that Abraham was a Chaldean and intimately familiar with ancient astronomy. He may even have been a Magi. Now, look at Genesis 15:5-6 in the King James Version. “And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

This is the account of God bringing Abraham out into the starry night and commanding him to “count” (“tell” in KJV) the stars, if he is able to “number” them. Both of these words are translations of the same Hebrew word *cafar* that is used in Psalm 19:1 and Psalm 147:4, which we have learned means “to give a full accounting of.”

Here we have God saying to Abraham that if he can understand the promise of God as presented in the night skies then he can also rejoice in knowing that the One of whom all that revelation speaks is to be one of his (Abraham’s) descendents. Because Abraham believed God (verse 6), God imputed righteousness to his account. The moment God does that for a sinner is the moment of the sinner’s salvation, for where there was once a bankruptcy of sin, there is now overflowing righteousness. That is salvation!

How did Abraham get saved? The same way every other person has ever been saved – by believing the Gospel. Only the Gospel is “the power of God unto salvation.” (Romans 1:16) Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, was led to God’s mercy by the testimony of the nightly witness, the heavenly signs as given and named by God Himself.

Just so there can be no doubt about this, notice the New Testament counterpart to this Old Testament passage.

*“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.” (Galatians 3:16)*

It is made abundantly clear here that God was telling Abraham that his seed was Jesus Christ, and NOT an innumerable host of descendants, which God did promise in other parts of the Abrahamic Covenant but not here as Paul makes clear. It was the Lord Jesus Christ that was central to every Gospel promise that was ever made in the Bible because only in Him does the love of God and the justice of God meet on behalf of the sinner.

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