

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

**With a Particular Emphasis
on the Woman and the Beast
in Revelation Chapters 17, 18**

Arlen L. Chitwood

**The Time of
Jacob's Trouble**

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it” (Jer. 30:7).

Cover Photograph: Coastal Plain, French Morocco, 1955

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By the Same Author —

THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE
HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES
THE MOST HIGH RULETH
RUN TO WIN
SO GREAT SALVATION
SALVATION OF THE SOUL
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES
IN THE LORD'S DAY
FOCUS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
LET US GO ON
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS
GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS
JUDE
RUTH
ESTHER

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FOREWORD

The Old Testament presents the complete history of Israel, from the nation's call through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) to that future day when the Jewish people will be brought into a full realization of their calling (Isa. 53:1ff; 54:1ff). Through the course of this revealed history, because of *continual disobedience* extending over centuries of time, God eventually uprooted the Jewish people from their land and drove them out among the Gentile nations. God's purpose for dealing with His people after this fashion was *to effect repentance through Gentile persecution, resulting in both the nation of Israel and the Gentile nations ultimately realizing that stated in Gen. 12:3:*

“...in thee [Abraham and his seed through Isaac and Jacob] shall all families of the earth [individuals comprising all the surrounding Gentile nations (*cf.* Gen. 18:18)] be blessed.”

Revelation chapters six through nineteen have to do with the final seven years of God's dealings with a disobedient people scattered among the nations in the preceding respect. These chapters provide numerous details concerning a sequence of events surrounding Israel and the nations during and at the end of the final seven years of the 6,000 years comprising Man's Day (during and at the end of Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week), anticipating the 1,000-year Lord's Day to follow.

Gentile persecution will reach an apex during these final seven years under the reign of the one to whom Satan will give “his power, and his seat [‘his throne’], and great authority”; and Israel in that coming day, left with no place to turn other than to the God of their fathers, will be brought *to the place of repentance, with Gentile world*

power destroyed at the end of this period.

This climax seen in the Book of Revelation is the identical climax seen in the Old Testament account, previously revealed through "Moses, and all the prophets" (*cf.* Luke 24:25-27). The structure of the latter must be the same as the structure of the former. Later revelation must be completely in line with and rest upon former revelation.

Thus, the Book of Revelation couldn't possibly be structured after any fashion other than that previously seen in the Old Testament. The only logical and possible way one could expect Revelation chapters six through nineteen to end, preceding events seen in chapter twenty (events as they pertain to the 1,000-year Messianic Era), would be *the same way* matters surrounding Israel and the nations are brought to a conclusion in the Old Testament, preceding the same events seen in Revelation chapter twenty — Israel's harlotry being done away with, Gentile world power destroyed, and the Messianic Era then ushered in.

Bringing all of these things to light and reaching this climax, chapters six through sixteen form foundational material and build into the climax seen in chapters seventeen through twenty. Then, chapters seventeen and eighteen deal with *Israel's harlotry being done away with*, chapter nineteen deals with *the subsequent destruction of Gentile world power*, and chapter twenty deals with *the ushering in of the long-awaited Messianic Era*.

The Book of Revelation, in the preceding respect, is simply a detailed reiteration of numerous events in the Old Testament bearing on the subject. The book consists simply of closing and final commentary on that previously opened up and revealed in the Old Testament.

Interpretation in the Book of Revelation *must* come from Scripture itself. *Scripture must be compared with Scripture, under the leadership of the indwelling Spirit* (I Cor. 2:9-13). One *must* begin with that revealed elsewhere in the Book of Revelation and then move back into other New Testament as well as Old Testament Scripture. There is *no other way* to come into a proper understanding of this book or any of the various things dealt with throughout the book.

1

The Final Seven Years

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (Rev. 17:1-5).

Revelation chapters six through eighteen reveal events which will occur during the coming seven-year Tribulation, “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). This will be the time when the final seven years of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy will be fulfilled (Dan. 9:24-27), completing a prophecy which began to be fulfilled

about 2,450 years ago but was interrupted seven years short of completion almost 2,000 years ago, at the time of Christ's crucifixion. In this respect, the Tribulation period comprises the fulfillment of the last seven years of the previous dispensation.

ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS

Events during this time will revolve around *Israel and the nations*, with Israel occupying center-stage. This will be the prophesied time of the manifestation of God's wrath upon the earth-dwellers at the end of Man's Day. And the Jewish people during this time, scattered among the nations and *the central focus of God's wrath*, will be brought into such *dire straits* that, to effect deliverance, they will be left without a choice other than to turn to and call upon the God of their fathers (as seen in the type in the Book of Exodus, preceding the deliverance under Moses [Ex. 1:8-3:10]).

God will use the judgments of the Tribulation (chs. 6-18) — judgments which will reach a severity unparalleled in man's history (*cf.* Matt. 24:21, 22) — to bring Israel to the place of repentance. Then Gentile world power will be destroyed (ch. 19b), with Israel subsequently occupying the position for which the nation was brought into existence (ch. 20a).

All of the judgments during the Tribulation are seen occurring within the scope of that contained in the seven-sealed scroll. That's why a search is seen in chapter five for an individual worthy to break the seals of *the scroll alone*, with nothing stated in this chapter about the subsequently revealed judgments under the seven trumpets and seven vials (seen in chs. 8-11, 15, 16). The reason for this is evident from revelation provided later in the book.

The seven trumpet judgments lie within the seventh seal, and the seven vial judgments lie within the seventh trumpet (8:1, 2; 11:15; 15:1ff). In this respect, all of the trumpet and vial judgments lie within the seventh seal, making all of the judgments seen within the seals, trumpets, and vials lie within the scope of that seen in the seven-sealed scroll.

This is also why a terminus can be seen when the seventh trumpet is blown (10:7; 11:15), for the seventh trumpet contains the seven vials, which bring matters surrounding these judgments to an end (16:17). Thus, once the seventh seal is broken, the door is opened for all of the remaining judgments to occur.

Also, note something about the layout of chapters six through eighteen in this book. That seen in these chapters forms a chronology of events, but this chronology is interrupted numerous times throughout the book in order that additional, explanatory data can be supplied. And this explanatory data, forming commentary material, drops back and covers events which occur during *the same time* already covered by the preceding material.

This form of revelation is something seen throughout Scripture. A complete, chronological sequence of events is given. Then Scripture drops back and provides additional, explanatory data, or other material about to be further developed in subsequent chapters.

To illustrate, note Revelation chapter twelve in this respect. Verses one through six cover the complete sequence of events. Then the remaining verses in the chapter drop back and form commentary material for the sequence of events already covered in the first six verses.

The whole of that seen in chapters six through eighteen is laid out in this manner. For example, the breaking of the first six seals in chapter six covers time during most of the Tribulation. But chapter seven drops back in time, providing commentary material as it relates to Israel and the nations during the time when these six seals are being broken. And, through doing this, chapter seven begins setting the stage for the impartation of different types of commentary material surrounding Israel and the nations, with earlier material forming a foundation for later material. In this particular instance, 144,000 Jews, removed from the nation, are introduced; and later revelation surrounding the 144,000 in the book (chs. 11, 12, 14) builds on the former.

Understanding how the book is structured is particularly important for correctly understanding chapters eleven through fourteen, along with chapters seventeen and eighteen. Then bear

in mind that *Israel and the nations* are in view — *Israel first, then the nations* (cf. Jer. 25:15-18; Ezek. 5:5). And though Israel will be the *primary focus* of God's wrath during the time beginning in Revelation chapter six, judgment will befall the Gentile nations as well. Not only will the Jewish people find themselves scattered among the nations at this time but also the object of an increasing anti-Semitism at the hands of these nations, *resulting in God acting accordingly* (cf. Gen. 12:3; Zech. 1:14, 15).

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS SIX THROUGH EIGHTEEN

The general overview of Revelation chapters six through eighteen, detailing events which will occur during “the time of Jacob's trouble,” would be:

Chapter Six: The first six seals are broken (depicting judgments extending throughout most of the Tribulation, leaving the trumpet and vial judgments to occur during time near the end of the Tribulation (probably within about the last year), when conditions will become as seen in Matt. 24:21, 22 (cf. Rev. 6:12-17; 16:17-21).

Chapter Seven: One hundred and forty-four thousand Jews, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes, are sealed — *an introduction to God's evangel of the Tribulation, who will proclaim the message seen in Matt. 24:14* — with the apparent results of their ministry seen in the latter part of the chapter. This chapter provides commentary material on particular events which occur during the time covered by the breaking of the first six seals in the previous chapter, which would cover *time during most of the Tribulation*. It is evident from subsequent revelation that the 144,000 in this chapter are saved and set apart during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation, with their ministry occurring during the last three and one-half years.

Chapters Eight, Nine: The first six trumpets are blown, depicting judgments apparently occurring near the end of the Tribulation (note again that the previous breaking of the first six seals appears to carry matters to a time near the end of the Tribulation).

Chapter Ten: An announcement is made concerning the blowing of the seventh trumpet, which is seen producing an end to all of the judgments connected with the seven-sealed scroll. And, as previously stated, matters can be presented in this manner because the seventh trumpet contains the seven vial judgments (note v. 7).

Chapter Eleven: This is the first of a number of chapters (chs. 11-14, 17, 18) which drop back and cover events occurring, at times, throughout the entire seven years. And chapter eleven is one of the chapters which drops back to the beginning of the Tribulation and covers specific events occurring throughout this period. The ministry of the two witnesses occurs in this chapter, along with the city of Jerusalem being trodden under foot by the Gentiles for the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation (*cf.* Dan. 9:26; Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20-24; II Thess. 2:3ff; Rev. 11:2, 3).

It appears evident that the ministry of the two witnesses occurs during the first half of the Tribulation, for several reasons: 1) Their ministry appears to be centered in Israel, particularly in Jerusalem. Jerusalem though will be destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation, with the Jews in Jerusalem and the land of Israel either being killed, escaping to a place of safety specially prepared by God for them, or being sold as slaves throughout the Gentile world (*cf.* Joel 3:6; Zech. 13:8, 9; Matt. 24:21, 22; Luke 21:20-24; Rev. 12:13-17). The status of the Jews in Israel, their capital city, and their land during the last half of the Tribulation would result in conditions of a nature rendering it quite unlikely that the ministry of these two witnesses could occur during this time. And 2) it seems evident from comparing Rev. 11:13 and Rev. 12:17 that the 144,000 previously introduced in chapter seven will hear the message from the two witnesses (or perhaps from individuals saved as a result of their ministry) during the first half of the Tribulation, resulting in their being saved and set apart during this time.

At the end of their ministry, the two witnesses will be slain; and their "dead bodies" will be allowed to lie, unburied, "in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt,

where also our Lord was crucified” (v. 8). Then, “after three days and an half” (apparently marking off a day for each year of their previous ministry), *breath* will re-enter their bodies, they will *stand* “upon their feet,” *great fear* will fall upon those seeing them, and *they will ascend* “to heaven in a cloud” (vv. 9-12).

This chapter also records “the voice of the seventh angel,” introduced in the previous chapter (10:7). And, for reasons already given, the end of the matter is pictured again, pointing this time to *the goal* toward which everything in the book moves — *the kingdom of this world (under Satan and his angels) becoming the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (under Christ and His co-heirs)*.

Chapter Twelve: More commentary is provided in this chapter. But one can't begin at this point in the book. The previously provided commentary material has to be understood first in order to properly understand this chapter. And, in like manner, revelation in this chapter, along with revelation in previous chapters, is necessary in order to properly understand revelation in subsequent chapters. This is simply the manner in which the book has been laid out and structured.

This chapter, as all of the book and the Bible as a whole, is rich in metaphors. Three metaphors are used to depict individuals or groups of individuals — *a woman, a dragon, and a man child*. And all three are identified in the chapter.

Note something which Scripture doesn't do. It *doesn't* provide revelation of this nature (metaphors) and then leave the interpretation to man. Rather, *Scripture is its own interpreter, not only when using metaphors but at all times*.

“The woman” can only be identified as *Israel* (from that stated about her in the chapter), “the dragon” is identified as *Satan* (v. 9), and “the man child” can only be identified as “*the remnant of her seed*” (v. 17) — the 144,000 previously introduced and about to be dealt with again (ch. 14).

Note that the woman gives birth to the man child *very near the middle of the Tribulation*. This birth will occur *following* that time when Satan and his angels have been cast out of their place in heaven, *following* that time when all seven heads of the Beast have

been crowned (which shows the timing of this event to be near the middle of the Tribulation), but *before* Jerusalem is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation and the Jews then find themselves subjected to the Beast's wrath (vv. 3, 4).

(In the preceding respect, the gestation period for childbirth as it relates to the woman and man child is seen covering at least most of the first half of the Tribulation, paralleling the ministry of the two witnesses. Individuals comprising the man child will evidently be saved at different times throughout this period, progressively continuing to add to the total until the number is complete — 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The child, prior to birth, will grow in this manner and ultimately become fully developed near the middle of the Tribulation [all 144,000 finally saved], with the woman then experiencing “birth pangs” and bringing forth the man child [cf. Matt. 24:8-14; Mark 13:8-10, NASB].)

Chapter Thirteen: Commentary is provided in this chapter for the Beast (and his false prophet), who has already been introduced in the preceding chapter. “The Beast” arises out of *the sea*, referring to *the Gentile nations*; and “the false prophet” arises out of *the earth* [or, *the land* (as opposed to “the sea”)], referring to *the land of Israel* (vv. 1, 11). According to Daniel, the Beast will arise from within the boundaries of the northern part of the Babylonian kingdom as it was divided following Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. (Dan. 8:8, 9). This territory today would cover parts of northern Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. This man will be a Gentile ruler coming out of this part of the world, and his false prophet will apparently be a Jew coming out of the land of Israel.

Chapter Fourteen: This chapter provides additional commentary material on the 144,000 in order to explain previous revelation. The 144,000, previously seen removed from the earth (12:5), are seen in heaven in this chapter (vv. 1ff). Thus, it is evident that they will have to be sent back to the earth to carry out their ministry, which will occur during the last half of the Tribulation (cf. Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10).

They will be removed from Satan's jurisdiction either at the time

of or shortly after their birth (Satan will have previously been cast out of heaven and will no longer have access to this realm [12:4, 7-10]). Then, at a later time, they will have to be sent back to the earth, allowing them to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles for the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

(This would have its parallel in Christ being taken to Egypt shortly following His birth, out of Herod's jurisdiction. Then He was later brought back to the land of Israel to subsequently proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to Israel for three and one-half years.)

The 144,000 will form *a first fruit of the nation* (v. 4; "first fruit" is singular in the Gk. text). Israel was called into existence to be God's witness to the nations, to carry God's message to the Gentiles throughout the earth (Isa. 43:1-10). However, the Jewish people refused. They went the way of Jonah and eventually, because of their disobedience, found themselves in the same place Jonah found himself because of disobedience — in the sea, *i.e.*, scattered among the same nations to which they were supposed to have carried God's message, in the place of death, to be raised on the third day.

The 144,000, who will carry the message of the one true and living God to the Gentiles worldwide during the last half of the Tribulation will form *a first fruit of the nation* with respect to the nation's calling. Then *the entire nation will form the main harvest* and occupy a position of this nature during the Messianic Era, following the Jewish people having been brought to the place of repentance at the end of the Tribulation.

Of particular interest is the statement introducing the identity of the 144,000 in verse four, along with that stated in verses six through eight.

In the introductory statement, the 144,000 are said to not be "defiled with women" (v. 4a). That is, the 144,000, though out of the nation of Israel, will no longer be seen associated with the nation's defilement — a defilement shown numerous places in the Old Testament to be *harlotry* (*e.g.*, Isa. 1:4-7, 21); and the nation's harlotry is about to be brought into full view in the Book of

Revelation.

A first fruit of the nation will have been saved, and *cleansing* will have occurred (something awaiting the remainder of the nation); and, with this *cleansing*, they will find themselves referred to as “virgins,” in sharp contrast to the way in which the nation as a whole will still be viewed.

Then there is the mention of *good news to be proclaimed worldwide, in connection with judgment* (vv. 6, 7), which, contextually, would appear to be an allusion to the ministry of the 144,000 (though an angel is seen proclaiming the message, which would be in complete keeping with the way angels appear throughout the book — having a part in announcements, carrying out certain activities, etc.). And this is immediately followed by attention once again being called to “that great city [or, ‘the great city’]” (the wording in the Greek text is always the same and can be translated either way).

The opening reference to “the great city” in 11:8, identifying the city as *Jerusalem* (a name used in Scripture to refer to both a *city* and *the Jewish people*, discussed later in this article), associates the city with two places, with “Sodom” and “Egypt.” This reference — *showing sexual immorality of a very degrading nature* (seen in Sodom), *occurring in the world where the woman from chapter twelve, Israel, resides* (typified by Egypt) — would be setting the stage for that about to be revealed concerning the city, or the Jewish people. Then 14:8 and 16:19 form the necessary additional information to finish setting the stage for that about to be revealed (in chs. 17, 18), *metaphorically* associating “that great city” with a city in another geographical location, with *Babylon*.

(That “Babylon” is used as a *metaphor* when referencing “that great city” in 14:8 and 16:19 appears evident from the way similar metaphors are used when “the great city” is introduced in 11:8 [*cf.* Isa. 1:9, 10], along with the extensive use of other metaphors in the book. And this will be shown to be the correct way to view matters through Scriptures dealing with “that great city,” called “Babylon,” in chapters seventeen and eighteen.

That is to say, the context on both sides of 14:8 and 16:19 will show,

beyond question, that “Babylon” is used in these verses as a *metaphor*, in exactly the same sense that “Sodom” and “Egypt” are used as metaphors in 11:8 — referencing a particular facet of defilement associated with *Jerusalem*.)

Then note the sequence of events in the latter part of chapter fourteen, comparing this section of Scripture with the same sequence of events seen in chapters seventeen through nineteen.

“The great city,” previously introduced in chapter eleven and identified as *Jerusalem* (v. 8) appears a second time in the book in chapter fourteen, but is now associated with *Babylon and harlotry*. And this is accompanied by a reference to *the kingdom of the Beast* (Antichrist) and its destruction at the time of Christ’s return (vv. 8-20).

Exactly the same thing is seen again in chapters seventeen through nineteen. A more detailed exposition of “that great city” is accompanied by a more detailed exposition of *the kingdom of the Beast* (chs. 17, 18), followed its destruction (ch. 19b).

With all this as background material, sufficient detail has been given — based on numerous Old Testament references — for a proper understanding of that about to be presented in chapters seventeen and eighteen (though the judgments depicted by the pouring out of the seven vials precede the revelation in these two chapters). All previous revelation bearing on the subject forms the foundation for that seen in these two chapters, where “that great city” is seen as “Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” (17:5, 18).

(Note Peter’s reference at the end of his first epistle to having written this epistle from “Babylon” [5:13]. Expositors often associate “Babylon” in this verse with *Rome*; others believe that Peter was referencing the literal city of *Babylon*. But it is quite unlikely that Peter ever traveled to either city. Peter was the apostle called to conduct his ministry among the Jews [Gal. 2:7], and the center of his ministry in this respect would be *Jerusalem*.)

If Peter was using a *metaphor*, which appears far more likely than not, comparing Scripture with Scripture would limit the association of this metaphor to *only one city* — not Rome, but *Jerusalem*.)

Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen: Chapter fifteen introduces the vial judgments, and chapter sixteen provides details concerning the pouring out of all seven vials, which can only occur very near the end of the seven years; and these vial judgments bring all of the judgments seen within the scope of the seven-sealed scroll to an end (16:17-21).

(Throughout Scripture God is seen using *numbers* to reveal specific truths, with the whole of Scripture established on a *numeric structure*, a *septenary structure*, at the beginning [Gen. 1:1-2:3]. Different numbers carry particular meanings. And, in this respect, in Revelation chapters six through sixteen, there are *three sets of sevens* comprising all of the judgments seen in the seven-sealed scroll — seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials.

“Three” is *the number of divine perfection*, and “seven” is *a complete number*, used throughout Scripture as *God’s number*. Thus, all of these judgments together show *Divine perfection within God’s complete judgment upon the earth-dwellers during “the time of Jacob’s trouble”* — judgments covering time during Daniel’s Seventieth Week, *designed to bring Israel to the place of repentance, resulting in an end to and destruction of Gentile world power.*)

Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen: These two chapters deal with *a woman and a scarlet colored Beast* (17:3). “The woman” is associated with *Babylon*, referred to through the use of the word “mystery” (vv. 5, 7), called “The Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth” (v. 5), and was previously introduced through different means in chapters eleven, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen. And “the Beast” (also referred to through the use of the word “mystery” [v. 7]) is associated with “the seven heads” and “the ten horns,” and was previously introduced different ways in chapters twelve through sixteen. “The Beast” is then identified in verses eight through fourteen, and “the woman” is identified in verses fifteen through eighteen.

(A “mystery [Gk. *musterion*, meaning, ‘a hidden thing,’ ‘a secret’]” in the New Testament is usually defined as *something previously hidden but now revealed* [cf. Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:4, 5]. This definition though

should not be thought of along the lines of something not found in previous revelation, for there is nothing in the New Testament that does not have its roots somewhere in the Old Testament. Rather, a “mystery,” in reality, pertains to *something previously made known [e.g., seen in the types] but not opened up [or fully opened up] to one's understanding until a later point in time.*

The revealing of a mystery requires Divine action [e.g., Christ, in time past, opened His disciples' understanding by explaining previously revealed revelation surrounding mysteries (cf. Matt. 13:10, 11; Eph. 3:2, 3); and the indwelling Spirit, today, leads individuals “into all truth” surrounding mysteries (cf. John 16:13-15; I Cor. 13:2)]. That is, the Spirit takes something in the Scriptures which cannot be understood [or fully understood] in and of itself and, through Divine leadership [using additional revelation which casts light on the earlier revelation (today, comparing Scripture with Scripture under the leadership of the indwelling Spirit)], opens the matter to an individual's understanding.)

“These are ‘mysteries’ [a reference to ‘the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens’ in Matt. 13] because men by nature and by their own abilities are unable to discover and to know them. It must ‘be given’ to a man ‘to know’ them. This Divine giving is done by means of revelation...”

— R. C. H. Lenski

2

The End of Israel's Harlotry

And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration [with great wonder]...

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:6, 18).

The woman is mentioned first in the introductory material (vv. 1-7), but the order is reversed in the identification. The Beast is identified first, and the woman is then identified. And, as the identity of the Beast is contingent on previous revelation in the book, so must it be with the identity of the woman. One must reference *that which has already been revealed* (which would include not only the preceding chapters in the Book of Revelation but revelation preceding this book as well, particularly that seen in the Old Testament). And, interpreting chapters seventeen and eighteen in this manner (which is *the only Biblical way* to properly interpret them), both the woman and the Beast can be easily identified, leaving no question concerning the proper identity of either one.

THE WOMAN AND THE BEAST

“The Beast” is identified as *the ruler of a ten-kingdom federation of nations during the Tribulation* (v. 12). The reference to his being

the eighth but of the seven (vv. 8-11) is apparently a reference to this man coming into power as the seventh head, receiving the deadly wound by the sword, and then being healed (previously stated in 13:3, 14) — becoming the eighth in this manner, but still of the seven.

In verse nine, “the seven heads” are said to be *seven mountains*. And, in Scripture, “a mountain” is often used in a metaphorical sense referring to a *kingdom* (e.g., Isa. 2:1-4; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; Matt. 17:1ff), which is what verse ten goes on to say.

These “seven mountains,” used in a metaphorical sense, in this particular instance refer to *seven kings of a kingdom (or kingdoms)*. Verse nine should literally read, “And they [the seven mountains previously mentioned] are seven kings...” These verses form a description of the kingdom of the Beast, “on which the woman sitteth [or, ‘where the woman resides’].”

The thought of the woman residing within the kingdom of the beast is identical to and in complete keeping with the woman residing in the midst of the nations in verses one and fifteen. Residing *in the midst of one* would really be part and parcel to residing *in the midst of the other*, for the kingdom of the beast in that coming day will encompass *all nations* (cf. vv. 1, 7, 9, 15).

“The woman” is then identified. And, in the light of the way that the woman is depicted in relation to both the nations and the kingdom of the Beast (residing in their midst), the thought in verse seven of the Beast carrying the woman must, contextually, be understood in a similar sense — *the Beast bearing the woman* in the sense of *the woman being identified with the Beast* (cf. John 19:15; note the way that this same word in the Greek text is used in Luke 14:27 and John 16:12 [translated, “bear”]).

The identity of the woman is given following a sequence of events which brings the reader to at least the middle of the Tribulation, when the Beast has come into power as world ruler and turns on the woman (all seven heads crowned [cf. 12:3; 17:7]), *seeking to destroy her from off the face of the earth* (v. 16; cf. 12:13-16). And God, at this time, will allow that depicted in this chapter to occur in order to bring about *the destruction of the harlot*, though this destruction will be at the hands of the Beast (v. 17). That is to

say, *God will use the most corrupt form of Gentile world power this world will ever know to ultimately bring to pass His plans and purposes surrounding the woman.*

Then, in verse eighteen, the woman is identified beyond question, through *two different means*:

The woman is first said to be “that great city.” And comparing Scripture with Scripture, allowing Scripture to interpret itself, the identity of “that great city” has to be understood in the light of the way in which it has already been given in the book. As previously stated, it appears evident and can be shown contextually that “Babylon” is used as a *metaphor* in both 14:8 and 16:19 when referencing “that great city,” which was previously associated with two similar *metaphors* (“Sodom” and “Egypt”) and identified as *Jerusalem*. In this respect, *solely from a contextual standpoint*, the reference to “that great city” in 17:18 can be understood *only one way* — as a reference to *Jerusalem*, previously identified with “Sodom,” “Egypt,” and “Babylon.”

But this verse doesn't stop with the identification of the woman with “that great city.” Rather, the verse goes on to provide a second means of identification, pinning matters of identification down *beyond any possible question*. The verse continues by adding the words, “which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” A better translation of these words would be, “the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth” (*ref. Wuest's Expanded Translation* — “which possesses [imperial] power over...”), limiting matters in the light of Ex. 4:22, 23 *to Israel and/or Jerusalem alone*.

And, with this addition, Scripture in this verse has, so to speak, validated the identity of the woman *in the mouth of two witnesses* — something required within the Mosaic Economy (*cf. Num. 35:30; Deut. 19:15*).

(Regarding the latter mode of identification, note that which Moses was instructed to make known to the Egyptian Pharaoh when God sent him to deliver the Israelites [an Assyrian ruler in Egypt, typifying the Coming Assyrian who will rule the world (*cf. Isa. 52:4; Micah 5:5*)]. Moses was instructed to say unto Pharaoh, “*Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn...*” [Ex. 4:22, 23].

“Sonship” implies *rulership*. Only *sons* can rule in God’s kingdom (past, present, or future), and in the human realm, only *firstborn sons* can rule [only firstborn sons find themselves in a position to exercise the rights of primogeniture within a family, with *regality* being one of these rights]. In short, Moses, announcing to Pharaoh that *Israel was God’s Son, even His firstborn*, was an announcement to Pharaoh *that God recognized Israel in the regal capacity implied by sonship, not Egypt*.

And this recognition was made known while Israel was still in Egypt. Israel, following the events in Exodus chapter twelve, was to be led out of Egypt under Moses. Then, following certain events occurring while enroute to Kadesh-Barnea, Israel was to enter into and occupy the land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and once the Jewish people had become established in this land, they were *to rule the nations as God’s firstborn son, within a theocracy*.

Now, note the latter part of Rev. 17:18. There is *only one nation* on the face of the earth that this can be referencing — the nation which is not to be reckoned among the nations [Num. 23:9]. *Only one nation* on the face of the earth possesses a position of *regal authority over the kings of the earth [over all the Gentile nations]*. This nation was identified in Ex. 4:22, 23, immediately prior to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt; and this nation is identified in Rev. 17:18, *after exactly the same fashion* [previously introduced after this fashion in Rev. 12:1], immediately prior to Jesus leading the Israelites out from a worldwide dispersion yet future.

Dating from Moses’ day, Israel has never lost the nation’s standing as *God’s firstborn son*. Israel has been God’s firstborn son since the announcement was made in Ex. 4:22, 23, remains God’s firstborn son today [though a disobedient son, scattered among the nations], and will one day exercise the rights of the firstborn [following repentance]. *This is why the one who has held the sceptre since prior to the creation of Adam [Satan] has done everything within his power to destroy Israel since this announcement was made almost 3,500 years ago*.

Also, note that Israel is spoken of in both *masculine* and *feminine* respects in Scripture — as a *son*, and as a *woman* [cf. Hosea 2:2; 11:1], with both having *regal* implications. Only *sons* can rule, and man cannot rule alone. *A man* must rule in conjunction with a *woman*, or a *woman* in conjunction with a *man* — *the man as king* and *the woman as consort queen*. This is a principle established in the opening chapter of Genesis, *which can never change* [Gen. 1:26-28].

And *exactly the same thing*, for exactly the same reasons, is seen relative to *the bride of Christ*. The one who will rule as consort queen with the Son is spoken of in Scripture in both *masculine* and *feminine* respects, with both having *regal* implications [*cf.* Rom. 8:14, 15, 19; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 5:23-32; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 19:7-10].)

In Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen, *the woman* is identified with and spoken of as *a city* (“And ‘the woman’ which thou sawest *is that great city...*” [17:18a]). This has caused problems for some within our Western way of thinking. But note that the same thing is done in Rev. 21:9, 10 relative to Christ’s bride and the new Jerusalem (“Come hither and I will shew thee ‘the bride, the Lamb’s wife.’ And he carried me away in the spirit...and shewed me *that great city, the holy Jerusalem...*”).

That is, in these sections of Scripture, “Israel,” the wife of Jehovah, is identified with and spoken of synonymously with *the earthly Jerusalem*; and “the bride of Christ” is identified with and spoken of synonymously with *the heavenly Jerusalem*.

Thus, in the preceding respect, in Revelation chapters eleven through eighteen, the name “Jerusalem” is used *more than one way*. It is used referring to *a literal city* (11:2, 8), and it is also used referring to *the Jewish people* (e.g., “the woman,” “the great whore,” and “the mother of harlots” in chs. 17, 18), referencing the central place in the nation’s own land (17:1, 5, 18; 18:10, 16ff; *cf.* Jer. 44:13; Lam. 1:7, 8, 17; Matt. 23:37).

Further, if Scripture is compared with Scripture, *Jerusalem alone* — referring to *the Jewish people* — is guilty of *the blood of the prophets and of all slain upon the earth* (Matt. 23:34-37), which is said of the harlot in Rev. 18:24. The Jewish people *alone* carry this guilt. *It is not possible* for any other city, nation, or segment of society to be looked upon in this manner. This fact is *clearly stated* in Luke 13:33:

“...it cannot be [*lit.*, ‘...it is not possible’] that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.”

And it is clear from the subsequent verse (v. 34) that “Jerusalem” is used in verse thirty-three referring to *the entire nation* — *the Jewish people* — exactly as it is used in Rev. 17:18.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee...”

Thus, according to Scripture, *Israel alone* can be considered guilty of blood in this respect. And in keeping with this thought, Christ died in the capital of Jewry at the hands of the Jews (Matt. 16:21; Acts 2:23, 36; Rev. 11:8); and the Apostle Paul, as well, was prepared to die at Jerusalem at the hands of the Jews (Acts 21:11-13).

Then, as previously seen, the woman in chapters seventeen and eighteen is also identified as “the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth” (17:18b). This identifying statement reflects back upon and draws from a similar statement about the woman earlier in the book: “...and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (12:1b). “Twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection*; and this verse from chapter twelve forms part of the contextual foundational material in the book upon which the identity of the woman in 17:18 rests.

The word used for “crown” in the Greek text of Rev. 12:1 is *stephanos*, not *diadema*, indicating that the woman, though possessing regal power and authority, was not exercising that power and authority at the time seen in the text (which is a time yet future, near the middle of the Tribulation). An individual presently exercising regal power and authority would wear a crown depicted by the word *diadema*, not a crown depicted by the word *stephanos*. This is seen two verses later (v. 3), where the Greek word *diadema* is used — showing an exercise of *regal power and authority in the kingdom of Antichrist* by the one to whom Satan will one day give “his power, and his seat [‘his throne’], and great authority” (Rev. 13:2).

(*Ref.* the author’s book, JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, Ch. XII, pp. 186-190, for a discussion of the use of *stephanos* and *diadema* in the preceding respect. Also refer to the “Appendix” of this book for additional information on Rev. 12:1; 17:18.)

ISRAEL’S HARLOTRY AN APEX, THEN AN END

Note the buildup in the Book of Revelation to chapters seven-

teen and eighteen. All the way through (from ch. 6ff) it has been *Israel and the nations*, with the government ultimately centered in the kingdom of the Beast and Israel residing in the midst of both the government and the nations. *Israel must be viewed in this central respect relative to everything occurring*, for this is “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” the fulfillment of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy. Events throughout Revelation chapters six through eighteen *must be understood, first and foremost, in the light of God’s dealings with Israel*. Everything else is secondary, though somehow connected with God’s dealings with the Jewish people during this time.

This is the grand climax of God’s purpose for having allowed the Assyrians to come down about 722 B.C. and take the northern ten tribes into captivity and the Babylonians to come over about 605 B.C. and take the southern two tribes into captivity. God allowed what is called *the Diaspora* (the dispersion of His people among the Gentiles) *because of continuing Israeli disobedience extending over centuries of time*. When Israel’s cup of iniquity had become *full* (cf. Gen. 15:16; Num. 14:22, 23), God uprooted and scattered His people in this manner *to effect repentance*, also taking centuries of time (and continuing today), in order that the Jewish people would ultimately *occupy the position for which they were called into existence almost 3,500 years ago*.

And this grand climax ends with Israel occupying a very similar position to that seen in John 19:15, immediately preceding Christ’s crucifixion — “We have no king but Caesar.” Israel, viewed as “*the great whore*” — associated more with “Sodom,” “Egypt,” and “Babylon” than with *Jerusalem* — will be enmeshed in the kingdom of the Beast in a similar respect to that seen among the Jewish people and Rome almost 2,000 years ago.

Note a number of Old Testament references having to do with Israel’s harlotry:

“How is the faithful city become an harlot!” (Isa. 1:21a).

“Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers...

Thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed” (Jer. 3:1b, 3b; cf. vv. 6-14).

“Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.

Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians...

Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan...” (Ezek. 16:2, 28a, 29a).

“And the Babylonians came to her in the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom...

So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness...” (Ezek. 23:17a, 18a; cf. vv. 35-37).

“And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand” (Hosea 2:10; cf. vv. 2ff).

Chapters seventeen and eighteen in the Book of Revelation have to do with *Israel's harlotry seen at its apex and then brought to an end*. Israel's principle lover in that day will be the most corrupt Gentile power this world will have ever known. And Israel, through subsequent persecution at the hands of her lover (a genocidal persecution, which will begin in the middle of the Tribulation when the Beast breaks his covenant with Israel), will ultimately be brought to the place of repentance. Then, following repentance, *Israel's harlotry will be done away with* (Rev. 18:21-19:3; cf. Isa. 1:21-26; Hosea 2:13-23).

Though the nation will have paid a *heavy price, one beyond comprehension*, her harlotry will be a thing of the past. Israel's sins will have been “as scarlet,” “red like crimson”; but, with these sins having been completely removed — “as far as the east is from the west” — where *scarlet* and *crimson* once existed, conditions will then be “as white as snow,” “as wool” (Isa. 1:18; cf. vv. 21-26; Psa. 103:12-22). And a *cleansed nation* in that day will realize the rights of the firstborn, fulfilling the purpose for the nation's existence (cf. Rev. 17:16, 17; 18:8-21; 19:2).

(Note that judgments during the Tribulation — seen particularly in the vial judgments — will be directed *primarily toward Israel* [cf. Rev. 16:5-7, 12-16], with Israel scattered among the nations and enmeshed within the kingdom of the Beast. Judgments befalling the earth-dwellers will reach their most intense state during the vial judgments, with certain previous judgments under the seals and trumpets possibly

continuing when the vials of wrath are poured out. And it will be during this time that the Jewish people, *left without a choice*, will turn to and call upon the God of their fathers for deliverance.)

Following Israel's salvation and cleansing, those comprising the nation in that day, as the 144,000 previously comprising a first fruit of the nation, will then be looked upon in the same manner as the 144,000, as "virgins." And the nation, as the 144,000 during the Tribulation, will then, in complete obedience, carry God's message to the ends of the earth.

The matter is brought to an end at the conclusion of chapter eighteen (18:20-19:3), the festivities surrounding the marriage of the Lamb follow (19:7-10), and Christ then returns with His angels to destroy Gentile world power (19:11ff). Man's Day will then be over, and the Lord's Day will begin on earth, with God's firstborn Sons — *Christ, Israel, and the Church* (following the adoption) — occupying their proper positions on and over the earth.

(The identifying expression, "that great city [or, 'the great city']," appears nine times in chapters eleven through eighteen, pointing to "Jerusalem," revealing *some facet of Israel's harlotry*. These nine references are used in a progressive manner in these chapters and carry the reader from *an introduction to Israel's harlotry* [11:8], to *a time showing Israel's harlotry at its apex* during the closing years of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy [ch. 17a], to *a time revealing the end of Israel's harlotry* [chs. 17b, 18].

Thus, "that great city [or, 'the great city']," is used nine times in these chapters of the book referring to *Jerusalem* — the city identified through the way in which the expression is *first used* in the book. Then, though probably not genuine, this expression can be found a tenth time in the book in the KJV rendering of 21:10, referring to *the new Jerusalem*. Note that the Book of Revelation refers to both *Jerusalem below and Jerusalem above, along with the people associated with each city* [the wife of Jehovah (the Jewish people, associated with Jerusalem below), and the bride of Christ (Christians, associated with Jerusalem above)]. However, there is little manuscript support for referring to *the new Jerusalem* as "that great city" in 21:10, with more recent English translations [e.g., NASB, NIV] not including these words.

One thing though bears repeating — something which *must* be kept in mind — about the destruction of “that great city” seen in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen. Though there will be a destruction of the literal city of Jerusalem in the middle of the Tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem seen in these two chapters of the book *is not that destruction*. Rather, the destruction seen in these two chapters is *the destruction of the harlot*, though not the destruction of the Jewish people per se [an impossibility (cf. Jer. 31:35-37)]. This is a destruction revealing *the end of Israel's harlotry* — the destruction of “the great whore” [*i.e.*, Israel, following the destruction of the harlot, will exist as a nation apart from any association with harlotry].

Failing to see and understand the way in which the name “Jerusalem” is used in Scripture is where people have gone wrong over the years. They have sought to see a literal city destroyed in these two chapters, failing to not only recognize that *Jerusalem* is being referenced but also failing to recognize that *the Jewish people* rather than the literal city are in view. And, again, the fact that these two chapters deal with the Jewish people in this respect is *plainly stated* in 17:18 — “And the woman [the harlot, residing among the nations (vv. 1, 15)] which thou sawest *is that great city...*”

The matter couldn't be stated any plainer than seen in this closing verse of the seventeenth chapter. Beginning with the introductory verse to “the great city” in Rev. 11:8, Rev. 17:18 forms a concluding verse for this complete section. And, relative to identification, this concluding verse *spells matters out in no uncertain terms*.

Then, as previously shown, this woman is also revealed to be “the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth” [v. 18b], identifying the woman a second time through another means in this concluding verse [cf. Ex. 4:22, 23]. And, relative to identification, this again *spells matters out in no uncertain terms*.

Then, as also previously shown, this woman is guilty of shedding “the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” [18:24] — a statement which can pertain *to Israel alone* [cf. Matt. 23:34-37; Luke 13:33, 34], identifying the woman yet again at the end of the succeeding chapter. And, relative to identification, this again *spells matters out in no uncertain terms*.)

With respect to Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen as a whole, “the time of Jacob's trouble” is seen drawing to a close in

the Book of Revelation *in the only natural way which could be expected* — with the destruction of the harlot, with an end wrought to Israel's harlotry in order that God's purpose for calling the nation into existence might be realized.

There could really be *no other way* for one to expect chapters six through eighteen to end. Again, these chapters cover "the time of Jacob's trouble," and the end seen in these chapters is the end toward which all previous revelation surrounding Israel's disobedience and resulting dispersion among the nations moves; and, as previously noted, it moves in this direction and ends at this revealed goal immediately prior to Christ's return, the destruction of Gentile world power, and the Messianic Era being ushered in (chs. 19b, 20a).

(Revelation chapter eighteen, concluding matters, dwells somewhat at length on *an interchange of worldly wealth between Israel and the Gentile nations* [apparently having occurred over centuries of time], resulting from Israel's harlotry, as the Jewish people found themselves dwelling among and forming forbidden alliances with the nations [vv. 3, 9-16]. The Jewish people, through this means, *became rich in worldly goods* at the expense of the Gentiles; and the Gentiles in turn, through this same means, *became rich in worldly goods* at the expense of the Jews. And, to *the detriment* of both Israel and the nations, *great spiritual blessings which were to flow through Israel to the Gentiles were withheld*.

But all of this interchange of worldly wealth will end with *the destruction of the harlot*, which will be followed by *the destruction of Gentile world power* [18:17-21; 19:2, 3, 11-21]. Then *true wealth — the blessings which God has reserved for Israel and the nations* — will subsequently flow out through Israel to the nations *after Israel has been cleansed of her harlotry and occupies her rightful, God-ordained place at the head of the nations*.

Refer to the "Appendix" for additional information pertaining to merchandising by Israel and the Gentile nations during the Tribulation. See particularly "The Visions of Zechariah," pp. 39ff, and "Trade and Commerce," pp 49ff.)

3

The End of Gentile World Power

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth...

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:9, 18).

Attempts to interpret Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen usually center around Rome and different variations of what is called “a revived Roman Empire” — interpretative ideology remaining essentially unchanged since the Reformation almost five hundred years ago. Within this ideology, “that great city” in Rev. 17:18 is erroneously identified as *Rome*; and probably more often than not “the woman” dwelling on the seven mountains (v. 9) is erroneously identified as *the Catholic Church* headquartered in Rome, a city historically built on seven hills.

A NEW BEGINNING

An interpretation of this nature, associating that seen in these chapters with Rome, is derived through one means alone — through reading secular history into Biblical prophecy, while, at the same time, ignoring both that stated in the text and context of the prophecy. Revelation 17:9 is *not* dealing with a city built on seven hills. There is no reference whatsoever in this verse to a geographical location of this nature. The corrected text, under-

stood in the light of the context, makes this *very clear*. Nor could that stated in verses such as 18:20, 24 be said of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church could not be charged with “the blood of prophets, and of saints, and all that were slain upon the earth.” As previously shown, that could be and is said of *the Jewish people alone*. Scripture is *very clear* on this matter as well.

Israel alone can be looked upon as “The Mother of Harlots,” shedding blood in the previous respect. Through actions surrounding her disobedience as *the wife of Jehovah* — forsaking her calling and forming forbidden alliances with the nations, refusing to be a people separate from the nations — Israel ultimately found herself in a position which, in all respects, was diametrically opposed to the position which the nation had been called to occupy (Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 7:1ff).

Israel ultimately found herself scattered among and in subjection to the very nations which she had been called to rule over and be separate from; Israel ultimately found herself at the tail rather than at the head of the nations; Israel, rather than being the wife of Jehovah within a theocracy, ultimately found herself in a place separated from the theocracy (actually, within Satan’s kingdom, among the nations through whom Satan ruled [cf. Dan. 10:13-21]); in a national respect, the wife of Jehovah found herself having forbidden relationships with the Gentile nations (something which had begun to occur long before her dispersion among these nations); and Israel, in this place, ultimately found herself viewed as “The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth,” *as she resided among various Gentile lovers, aligning herself with these nations in a manner completely contrary to God’s revealed will* (Lev. 26; Deut. 28; cf. Ezek. 16:28-39; 23:1-35; Hosea 2:5-13).

(The Catholic Church, *at the very most*, could be considered no more than a daughter [18:7], with the shed blood, in the final analysis, being credited to the mother [though even considering Rome to be a daughter would be an incorrect way to view matters surrounding these two chapters, for, principally, nations are being dealt with (cf. 17:1, 2, 15), not religious organizations].)

Rome is brought into the picture through viewing what is

referred to as a revived Roman Empire. And the thought of a revived Roman Empire comes mainly from a misinterpretation of parts of the Book of Daniel. The fourth part of Daniel's image is viewed as Roman (the legs are attributed to Rome in history, and the feet are attributed to Rome yet future, in revived form). However, Daniel identifies all four parts of the image, and the fourth part is identified by Daniel as other than Roman.

Note in the Book of Daniel how matters are handled concerning the identification of the third and fourth "great beasts" in chapters seven and eight (another picture of that seen in the image from ch. 2). Beginning with the third beast, matters move, without a break, from the kingdom of Babylon under Alexander the Great (and a division of his kingdom among his four generals following his death) into the kingdom of Babylon under the Beast. There is no Roman kingdom lying between these two parts of this Babylonian kingdom (depicted by the third and fourth parts of the image seen standing in Babylon in ch. 2). Rome has no part in this kingdom as it is depicted in Daniel's prophecy.

Seeing Rome in this image, or among the "four great beasts," can only be done one way. It can only be done the same way Rome is seen in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen — through reading secular history into Biblical prophecy. And, without a Roman Empire in the Book of Daniel, one can't have a revived Roman Empire in the Book of Revelation, for the latter is contingent on the former.

(Nor can the thought of a revived Roman Empire be derived from Dan. 9:26, as many attempt to do, seeking to connect the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem with a destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D. Rather, this text can only refer to a destruction of Jerusalem within the scope of *time covered by the prophecy*. Events seen in the prophecy cannot occur outside this time-frame [e.g., the reference to *Messiah* being "cut off" would have had to refer to events at the end of the four hundred and eighty-third year, before God stopped marking time in the prophecy]. And, accordingly, since the destruction of Jerusalem in this prophecy didn't occur during the first four hundred and eighty-three years, it must be viewed as an event which will occur during the last seven years.

Refer to the subsequent part of this article, *Comments on Daniel*

Chapters Two, Seven, and Nine, for additional information pertaining to Daniel's image [Dan. 2], the four wild beasts [Dan. 7], and the prince that shall come [Dan. 9].)

An exact wording of the text, the context, and comparing Scripture with Scripture are *everything* in correct Biblical interpretation. As has been shown, the Book of Daniel identifies all four parts of the image, and the fourth part is identified as other than Roman; and, in like manner, as has been shown, the Book of Revelation identifies the harlot, and the harlot is identified as other than Roman as well.

COMMENTS ON DANIEL CHAPTERS TWO, SEVEN, AND NINE

The most widely held position among students of the Word concerning Daniel's image in Daniel chapter two (or the "four great beasts" in Daniel chapter seven) views the four parts of the image (or the "four great beasts") as representing 1) Babylon, 2) Media-Persia, 3) Greece, and 4) Rome. This would be the position set forth in the Scofield Reference Bible footnotes for example, a position followed by most commentators.

1) DANIEL CHAPTERS TWO AND SEVEN

The only part of the prophecy really in question would be the fourth part of the image (ch. 2), or the fourth "great beast" (ch. 7). Daniel identifies the first three beasts (and, correspondingly, the first three parts of the image) as particular Gentile nations forming world kingdoms whose governmental rule had been established in Babylon (the first by conquering the Assyrian Empire, and the latter two by conquering Babylon itself), and this part of the prophecy has been fulfilled and is a matter of history.

But should the fourth part of the image (or the fourth beast) be identified as Rome? There are two main reasons why people interpret the prophecy after this fashion: 1) Rome was the next world power following Greece; and 2) the words, "and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary," in Dan. 9:26, are usually associated with a Roman

destruction in history (by Titus in 70 A.D.) and a Roman prince in prophecy (the Beast of Rev. 13, Antichrist). In this respect, both the historical and prophetic aspects, as they are said to relate to Rome, are connected with the fourth part of the image (or the fourth beast).

Greece was the third kingdom (represented by the belly and thighs of brass on the image); and the fourth kingdom (represented by the legs of iron, and in its final form by the feet part of iron and part of clay) would, from history, seem to be Rome — the next world power following Greece — with the final form of the image looked upon as a revived Roman Empire. This interpretation would appear to be substantiated by Dan. 9:26. In this verse, as previously shown, “the prince that shall come,” would be Antichrist; and “the people of the prince [understood as ‘his people’],” who would one day destroy the city of Jerusalem, are looked upon as a reference to the Romans destroying Jerusalem in 70 A.D under Titus. Thus, Antichrist is said to be a latter-day Roman prince who will rule a revived Roman Empire.

In other words, all of Daniel’s image except the feet would have a historical fulfillment. The legs would represent the Roman Empire in history, and the feet would represent the revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation. And the same would hold true for the corresponding description set forth by the “four great beasts” in Daniel chapter seven. The first three beasts would have a historical fulfillment, and the fourth would have a fulfillment in both history and prophecy. The fourth beast would represent the Roman Empire in both history and prophecy, corresponding to the legs and feet of the image.

Is the preceding though the way Scripture sets forth the fourth and final part of this Babylonian kingdom? Or is this an attempt to interpret Biblical prophecy through using events in secular history rather than interpreting prophecy by comparing Scripture with Scripture? The answer is easy to ascertain if one remains solely within that which Daniel (and related Scripture) reveals about the whole matter.

Note first of all that Daniel’s image is seen standing in Babylon (2:31). This image has to do with a Babylonian kingdom from

beginning to end. “The head of gold” has to do with *the kingdom of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and any immediate successors prior to the conquest of the kingdom by Gentile power(s) represented by the breast and arms of silver* (2:37, 38). “The breast and arms of silver” have to do with *the Medes and the Persians coming in and conquering the preceding kingdom* (2:39; 5:28, 31). And “the belly and thighs of brass” have to do with *the Grecians coming in and conquering the kingdom ruled by the Medes and the Persians* (2:39; 8:6, 7, 20, 21; 10:20).

The mechanics of the preceding, of course, form the interpretation held in common by almost anyone reading Daniel. This is simply what the record in Daniel states, along with secular history.

But note something often overlooked about the preceding: This kingdom is *Babylonian* throughout. The powers represented by the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and the belly and thighs of brass all reigned from Babylon. For example, when the Medes and the Persians came in and took the kingdom in 538 B.C., they reigned from Babylon and were still there when Alexander the Great came over in 330 B.C., 208 years later. Then, when Alexander the Great took the kingdom, he also reigned from Babylon. In other words, the image is not seen lying down, with the head of gold in Babylon, the breast and arms of silver in Media and Persia, and the belly and thighs of brass in Greece. That’s not the picture at all. The image is seen standing in Babylon. It is Babylonian in its entirety.

(Note that “Babylon” in history was a *city-state*, which, from Biblical prophecy, will apparently exist once again when the final form of Daniel’s image appears [*i.e.*, Babylon existing as a city-state yet future as well]. In this respect, *Babylon* is used in Scripture referring to *both the city and the state*, which included [and apparently will include] other cities; cf. Jer. 51:29-32, 42,43.)

The fact that the image in Daniel chapter two is Babylonian in its entirety is one place where those who view a Roman Empire next in the prophecy go astray. Rome had nothing to do with a reign from Babylon in history. The capital of the Roman Empire was Rome, not Babylon. And Rome is not Babylon, regardless of

the attempts by some individuals to see certain things moved from Babylon to Rome in time past, seeking to align and identify Rome with Babylon in this respect.

If there were such a thing as a revived Roman Empire though, there could possibly be room for the final form of the Roman Empire to be connected with Babylon, for Babylon, back on the Euphrates, will be the capital of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation. But such will not be the case.

Those viewing Rome as representing the fourth part of the image try to press secular history into Biblical prophecy at a point where it seems to possibly fit, but really doesn't. Then they further complicate the matter by a misinterpretation of Dan. 9:26.

But the most interesting thing about the whole matter — the central thing which voids all thought of Rome having a part in the prophecy — is the fact that *Daniel identifies all four parts of the image*, and he identifies the fourth part as being other than the Roman Empire. Daniel, in his identity, has Antichrist coming into power immediately following a four-way division of the kingdom after Alexander the Great's death. The kingdom under Antichrist follows the Greco-Babylonian kingdom and is represented by the legs of iron, and in its final form by the feet part of iron and part of clay.

(*No break in time* is seen in the Book of Daniel between powers represented by the third and fourth parts of the image, similar to *no break in time* being subsequently seen in the book between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks in Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy. However, it is evident from both Biblical and secular history that a *break in time* exists at these respective points in both prophecies, though *no break in time* precedes these in either prophecy.

This break though between the third and fourth parts of the image doesn't lead to and end with Rome. Rather, it leads to and ends with the kingdom of Antichrist.)

The first part of the image is identified in Dan. 2:37, 38. Then, following this, the remaining three parts of the image are presented, though not identified at this point in the book. Then, note

the prominence given to the fourth part — two verses cover the first part (vv. 37, 38), one verse the next two parts (v. 39), but six verses are devoted to the final form, along with its destruction (vv. 40-45). And such prominence relative to the fourth part is true elsewhere in Daniel as well (see chs. 7, 8, 11). Why would such prominence be given to Rome and not to nations associated with the first three parts of the image? It's not! Rather, it's the kingdom of Babylon under its last king (Antichrist) which occupies the forefront in the Book of Daniel.

The identities of the other three parts of the image, beginning with the breast and arms of silver, are given in the vision of the “four great beasts,” and the interpretation of this vision is given in chapters seven and eight. The “four great beasts” are said to represent *four kingdoms* (four sequential kingdoms forming *the one Babylonian kingdom* [7:17; cf. v. 23]), and beginning with the second beast, the last three are identified in chapter eight.

For the identity of *the second*, compare verses three and four with verse twenty (cf. Dan. 5:28, 31); for the identity of *the third*, compare verses five through eight with verses twenty-one and twenty-two; and for the identity of *the fourth*, compare verses nine through fourteen with verses twenty-three through twenty-six. Note that the identity of the second is *Media and Persia* (a dual kingdom, corresponding to the breast and arms of silver on the image), the identity of the third is *Greece* (corresponding to the belly and thighs of brass), and the identity of the fourth is *the kingdom under Antichrist* (corresponding to the legs of iron and the feet part of iron and part of clay).

Where is Rome? Rome is not in the prophecy!

Following Alexander the Great's death, the kingdom was divided among his four generals (vv. 8, 22), and the vision then goes immediately into the days of Antichrist yet future (the “little horn” in v. 9 is not Antiochus Epiphanes, but Antichrist [see parallel verses, vv. 23-26]).

So, what happened? The kingdom under Alexander the Great's four generals gradually faded from view. And though the prophecy in Daniel chapter eight covers this division of the kingdom following Alexander the Great's death (8:8b), it does not

cover events during the reign of these four generals following this division. Rather, following this division of the kingdom, Daniel's prophecy in chapter eight goes immediately into the power represented by the fourth part of the image (or the power represented by the fourth beast), *i.e.*, into the days of Antichrist (vv. 9ff).

(The same prophetic scene is repeated in Dan. 11:3, 4, 21ff, providing additional details. And whether the verses lying between the division of Alexander the Great's kingdom in this section [v. 4] and the appearance of Antichrist [v. 21] — *i.e.*, vv. 5-20 — are looked upon as depicting events during the years following Alexander the Great's death or depicting events during the several years immediately preceding Antichrist's rise to power is immaterial insofar as the matter at hand is concerned. Exactly the same thing is seen in chapter eleven as was previously seen in chapter eight. The kingdom seen following the four-way division of Alexander the Great's kingdom is *the same* in both chapters — that of Antichrist, not Rome [cf. 8:8, 9, 21-23; 11:4, 21].)

About two hundred and eighty years following Alexander the Great's death (about 40 B.C.), Rome appeared on the scene as the succeeding world power, but not as a world power fulfilling any part of Daniel's prophecy surrounding the kingdom of Babylon. This prophecy will not again continue to be fulfilled until Antichrist appears during Daniel's Seventieth Week. Then, and only then, will the fourth part of the image from Daniel chapter two and the fourth beast in Daniel chapter seven come into existence.

2) DANIEL CHAPTER NINE

Now, what about "the people of the prince that shall come" in Dan. 9:26? Does that not refer to a destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and to the Romans being Antichrist's people in history? Not at all.

First note the expression, "the people of the prince that shall come," and compare this with a similar expression in Dan. 7:27 — "the people of the saints of the most High [*lit.* 'the high places' (also pl. in the Heb. text in vv. 18, 22, 25b)]," who will one day take the kingdom (v. 18).

Note in verse eighteen that the ones who will one day take the

kingdom are said to be “the saints of the most High [‘the high places’],” and in verse twenty-seven they are said to be “the people of the saints of the most High [‘the high places’].” The expression, “the people of the saints of the most High [‘the high places’]” in verse twenty-seven, is, contextually, a reference to *the saints themselves* from verse eighteen.

And this same type expression in Dan. 9:26 should be understood the same way that interpretation has already been established in the previous chapter of the book. “The people of the prince” in Dan. 9:26, contextually, has to be understood as a reference to *the prince himself (and possibly also including those ruling with him)*. Failure to recognize the book’s own built in interpretation for Dan. 9:26 has resulted in confusion.

The destruction of Jerusalem in Dan. 9:26 is not a reference to the destruction which occurred in 70 A.D. but rather a reference to a future destruction under Antichrist in the middle of the Tribulation. This is the same destruction referred to in Luke 21:20-24 (*cf.* Rev. 11:2). Also note that Matt. 24:15ff and Luke 21:20ff parallel one another, depicting events in and around Jerusalem beginning in the middle of the Tribulation. Matthew’s gospel centers around one aspect of the matter (the rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem), and Luke’s gospel centers around another aspect of the matter (the city of Jerusalem itself).

The destruction in Dan. 9:26 must occur within the framework of time covered by the Seventy Weeks. This destruction has to do with events occurring in connection with Daniel’s prophecy of the Seventy-Weeks and can only occur during time covered by this prophecy, and contextually it occurs in connection with Antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel in verse twenty-seven (*cf.* Dan. 11:22-32; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 6:3, 4).

3) “THE END OF THE DAYS” (DAN. 12:13)

Where this man’s actions will lead is outlined in detail in both the Books of Daniel and Revelation, along with a number of other books and numerous sections of Scripture. This is the man whom God, in the final analysis, will use to bring *His plans and purposes surrounding Israel* to pass. Despite this man’s goals, aims, ambi-

tions, and aspirations — as he exercises power and great authority from Satan's throne itself (Rev. 13:2) — God, *in His sovereign control of all things*, will use this man to both bring Israel to the place of repentance and bring Gentile world power to the place of destruction. This will be followed by God's judgment falling upon this man, on the basis of the unchangeable principles set forth in Gen. 12:3.

Then, God's firstborn Sons — *Christ, Israel, and the Church* (following the adoption) — will occupy their proper places on and over the earth during the ensuing Messianic Era.

Appendix

Jerusalem and Babylon, O.T., N.T.

To see “Babylon” used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem* in the Book of Revelation, one could only expect to find a prior Jerusalem-Babylon association in the Old Testament, for there is nothing in the New Testament that does not have its roots somewhere in the Old Testament. The New is simply an opening up and unveiling of that previously brought into existence and dealt with in the Old.

A relationship of this nature between the two Testaments can be seen in the opening verse of the last book of Scripture, the Book of Revelation, stating at the outset the nature of the book’s contents:

“The Revelation [Gk. *Apokalupsis* (‘a revealing’ in the sense of ‘an uncovering,’ ‘an unveiling,’ ‘a laying bare’)] of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it [‘communicated it,’ ‘made it known’] by his angel unto his servant John” (1:1).

The entirety of the Old Testament is about *the person and work of Jesus Christ* (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39-47). And the New Testament, continuing from the Old, must be viewed in exactly the same light. The New is an opening up and unveiling of the Old; and the Book of Revelation, forming the capstone to all previous revelation (both the Old and New Testaments), *completes the unveiling*. The Book of Revelation, by its own introductory statement — an introductory statement peculiar to this book alone —

forms the one book in Scripture which brings *all previous revelation to its proper climax.*

Thus, not only should a Jerusalem-Babylon association be found in the Old Testament, one which would allow "Babylon" to be used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem*, but an association of this nature should also exist as it pertains to the numerous other things dealt with throughout Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen as well (*e.g.*, the Beast in ch. 17, and the trade and commerce in ch. 18). And this is exactly what one finds when going back to the Old Testament and comparing Scripture with Scripture. There is nothing in the Book of Revelation that does not have its roots in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Note that "Babylon" in Revelation chapter seventeen is referred to as not just "Babylon," but as "a mystery, [which is] Babylon..." (v. 5, NASB), and the word "mystery" is used again in verse seven of both "the woman" and "the beast."

A *mystery* in the New Testament does not have to do with something completely new, something not dealt with at all or unknown in the Old Testament. Rather, a *mystery* in the New Testament has to do with an opening up and an unveiling of something previously introduced and dealt with in the Old Testament. A *mystery* has to do with additional revelation, commentary, on that already seen in the Old Testament, allowing the Old Testament revelation to be fully opened up and revealed (*ref.* pp. 11, 12 of this book).

And the preceding is exactly what is in view through referring to "the woman" and "the beast" by the use of the word *mystery*. This alone would tell a person that foundational material for both can, and *must*, be found in the Old Testament.

Dealing with *Babylon*, *Jerusalem*, and *the Beast* in the Book of Revelation, one would naturally turn to the Book of Daniel. Though *Babylon*, *Jerusalem*, and *the Beast* are first mentioned early in Genesis (3:15; 10:10; 14:18), Daniel is the book which deals with the whole of the matter in relation to the beginning, progression, and end of the Times of the Gentiles. The kingdom of Babylon is brought into full view in this book, Daniel deals with Israel and the nations in relation to this Babylonian kingdom, and Daniel places

a particular emphasis on details surrounding the latter days — details having to do with Babylon's end-time ruler, the Beast, exactly as seen in the Book of Revelation.

The complete period of the Times of the Gentiles is depicted through two main means in the Book of Daniel — through a four-part image in chapter two (revealed through a dream) and through four great beasts in chapter seven (revealed through a vision). That depicted by the image in chapter two is *Babylonian* in its entirety (from the head of gold to the feet part of iron and part of clay), as is that depicted by the great beasts in chapter seven (from the lion to the dreadful, terrible, and exceedingly strong beast). The image and great beasts present *exactly the same picture*, though from two different perspectives.

That seen through the image and the great beasts centers around and sets forth *Gentile world rule during the Times of the Gentiles, from its beginning to its end, as this period relates to Babylon*. The Times of the Gentiles began in Babylon, and this period of time will end in Babylon.

God used the first king of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar [the first king during time covered by the image, or great beasts]) to complete the removal of the Jewish people from the land — because of their prior, continued disobedience, extending over centuries of time — resulting in an end to the Old Testament theocracy. And God will use the last king of Babylon (Antichrist) to complete *the reason* for the removal of His people under the first king of Babylon — *to effect repentance, resulting in a reestablishment of the theocracy at a future time*.

The former theocracy was established under the old covenant, and the latter theocracy will be established under a new covenant (*cf.* Ex. 19:5, 6; Jer. 31:31-33).

THE VISIONS OF ZECHARIAH

With these things in mind, note the eight visions in the first six chapters of Zechariah, for these visions deal with *exactly the same thing* seen in both the Books of Daniel and Revelation, though from a different perspective yet. These are visions revealed to and

recorded by Zechariah following the return of a remnant from the Babylonian captivity. And it is within these visions that possibly the best Old Testament basis for an association of "Jerusalem" with *Babylon*, as seen in the Book of Revelation, can be found.

1) UNDERSTANDING THE VISIONS

These eight visions are introduced by the Lord's statement surrounding Israel's past disobedience, the result of this disobedience, the call for repentance, and that which will result following Israel's repentance (1:1-6). *Disobedience* resulted in the Times of the Gentiles, and *repentance* would ultimately be effected through Gentile persecution during this period.

Then, the visions begin immediately following this, with verse seven, and continue uninterrupted until part way through chapter six of the book.

These visions have to be understood in the light of the manner in which they are introduced. They have to be understood in the light of Israel's past disobedience, which has resulted in the Times of the Gentiles; and they have to be understood in the light of the reason for the Times of the Gentiles — Israel not only reaping the consequences of her actions, but ultimately bringing the nation to the place of repentance — and that which will occur once God's purpose for this period is realized. The visions, understood contextually, *must* be looked upon as having to do with *Israel and the nations during and at the end of the Times of the Gentiles*.

Though God drove His people out among the nations, to effect repentance, the principles set forth in Gen. 12:3 remain. God will use *Gentile persecution* to bring about repentance, but He will also subsequently *judge the Gentiles* because of this persecution.

Summarily, these visions bridge the centuries of time between the first and last kings of Babylon. They have to do with different facets of Israeli persecution at the hands of the Gentiles, with the principles set forth in Gen. 12:3 ultimately being worked out and realized. They have to do with Israel ultimately being brought to the place of repentance, the Times of the Gentiles being brought to an end, and Gentile persecution of Israel being fully dealt with.

Only then will Israel occupy her proper place at the head of the

nations in a restored theocracy, with the nations being blessed through Israel.

That, in short, is how the eight visions in Zechariah must be understood. *Each* presents a different facet of the matter, and *all of the visions together* form a composite picture of that which God revealed concerning Israel and the nations through Zechariah.

Then, immediately after the last vision (6:1-8, dealing with the destruction of Gentile world power), Zechariah calls attention to the crowning of *Joshua, the high priest*, with reference then made to “the man whose name is The BRANCH,” which is followed by a reference to the building of the temple (6:11-13).

The name “Joshua” (Heb. *Jehoshua*) is an Anglicized form of the Hebrew name for “Jesus” (Gk. *Iesous*). The Septuagint (Gk. translation of the O.T.) uses *Iesous* in Zech. 6:11, and this is the reason that the KJV translators erroneously translated *Iesous* as “Jesus” instead of “Joshua” in Heb. 4:8. They are the same name, whether *Jehoshua* in Hebrew or *Iesous* in Greek. And the name, “The BRANCH,” in Zech. 6:12 is a Messianic title applied to Christ elsewhere in the Old Testament (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8).

Thus, note that which is in view immediately following the visions in Zechariah, immediately following the Times of the Gentiles, when Israel occupies her proper place at the head of the nations, in a restored theocracy. Events surrounding the crowning of Joshua (at the termination of the visions), the high priest during Zechariah’s day, foreshadow future events surrounding the crowning of Jesus (at the termination of that set forth in the visions), Who will then be the great King-Priest. And the building of the temple following the restoration of a remnant during Zechariah’s day foreshadows the building of the millennial temple by Messiah Himself, following Israel’s restoration, in that future day.

2) THE WOMAN IN THE EPHAH

Now, with all that in mind, note the seventh of the eight visions — a woman seated in the midst of an ephah (5:5-11) — immediately before the vision having to do with the destruction of Gentile world power (6:1-8). This vision of the woman seated in the ephah has a direct bearing upon a proper understanding and interpretation of

Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen, paralleling, in a number of instances, that seen in these two chapters. The destruction of Gentile world power then follows in both Zechariah's visions and that revealed to John in the Book of Revelation. And the crowning of Joshua and the reference to "The BRANCH" building the temple foreshadow and have to do with that which follows in the Book of Revelation — Christ appearing as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (ch. 19b), with events then occurring both preparatory to and during His millennial reign (ch. 20a).

Thus, there is a parallel between the seventh and eighth visions and that which immediately follows in Zechariah *with* that seen in Revelation chapters seventeen through the first part of chapter twenty. Both sections of Scripture deal with *exactly the same thing*, from two different perspectives — Israel and the nations during the Times of the Gentiles, Israel brought to the place of repentance through Gentile persecution, Gentile world power destroyed, and the Messianic Kingdom ushered in.

And similar parallels can be seen between a number of other things in Zechariah's first six visions and other parts of the book of Revelation as well.

"Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth.

And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth.

And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.

Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?

And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base" (Zech. 5:5-11).

There are numerous metaphors throughout Zechariah's visions, and the vision of the woman in the ephah is no different. Metaphors are used for practically everything in this vision, including "an house in the land of Shinar." However, metaphors, as used in these visions, or elsewhere in Scripture, do not lend themselves to fanciful interpretation. Metaphors found anyplace in Scripture are to be understood and explained contextually and/or through comparing Scripture with Scripture.

For example, *three women* are in view in this vision — *one* in the ephah, and *two* who transport the ephah (with a woman inside). Since the manner in which the visions are introduced at the beginning of Zechariah has to do with *Israel and the nations*, ascertaining who these three women represent is quite simple, for "a woman" is sometimes used in Scripture, in a metaphorical way, to represent a *nation* (Isa. 47:1-7; 62:1-5; Rev. 12:1; 17:3ff).

Remaining with *the subject matter of the visions and the metaphorical use of women elsewhere in Scripture*, the "woman" in the ephah can only represent *Israel*, with the "two women" who transport the ephah representing *Gentile nations*. The woman in the ephah is removed from one land and transported to another. Though the matter has its roots in history, where exactly the same thing occurred, the vision must be understood mainly relative to *the end times*, for the destruction of Gentile world power follows in the next and last vision. That is to say, the same thing occurred through the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, bringing about the Times of the Gentiles following the Babylonian captivity; and the same thing will occur yet future, bringing a close to the Times of the Gentiles.

During the end times, the Babylonian kingdom of the man of sin will encompass all the Gentile nations; and "the land of Shinar," used in a metaphorical sense (in keeping with all the other metaphors used in the vision), would refer, not to one tract of land in the Mesopotamian Valley but to *the origin (the land of Shinar)* of a Babylonian kingdom which will then exist worldwide.

Thus, since the woman is moved to "the land of Shinar," the only place *from* which the woman could possibly be moved would be *the land of Israel*, for any other part of the earth would be within the scope of the metaphorical use of "the land of Shinar."

This occurred in history when the Jews were transported to the actual land of Shinar by the first king of Babylon (the first king as seen in Daniel's image), and this will occur yet future, once again, when the Jewish people are uprooted from their land and scattered throughout a Babylonian kingdom which will then exist worldwide. This disbursement of the Jewish people throughout the Gentile world, both past and future, is exactly what is seen in Rev. 17:1, 15 — the woman, referred to as “the great whore” both here and in numerous Old Testament passages, seated in the midst of the nations, scattered throughout Antichrist's kingdom.

The woman in the ephah is described by the word “wickedness [or, ‘unrighteousness’]” (v. 8), which would be in perfect keeping with her harlotry as she courts other lovers among the nations, particularly as she continues to court the Gentile nations in the final form of the kingdom of Babylon.

The “ephah” was the largest measure for dry goods used by the Jews, though of Egyptian origin. And the “ephah,” when used in a symbolic sense, would invariably be thought of as referring to *trade or commerce*. This was simply the manner in which the “ephah” was used, allowing it to be a natural emblem for *merchandising*.

The woman seated in the midst of the ephah, in this respect, would point to one characteristic of the Jewish people after being removed from their land — transformed from a nation primarily involved in *agriculture* to a nation primary involved in *merchandising*. Note that *merchandising* is a main realm in which the woman is seen involved throughout a large section of Revelation chapter eighteen (vv. 3, 9-23).

The vision of the woman seated in the midst of the ephah though could refer to something else as well. As previously pointed out, the “ephah” was the largest of the measures used by the Jews for dry goods, though of Egyptian origin. “Egypt” is used in Scripture to typify or symbolize *the world outside the land of Israel, the Gentile nations*. And, in this respect, the woman seated in the midst of the ephah could very well also call attention to *the full measure of Israel's sin of harlotry, as she finds herself seated in the midst of the Gentile nations (seated in the largest of measures, one of Gentile origin) in the kingdom of Antichrist*.

The woman in the vision sought to escape from the ephah (*ref. v. 8, NASB, NIV*), probably realizing the fate about to befall her should she remain in the ephah. But she was prevented from escaping, and she was cast back into the ephah and kept inside by a lead covering placed over the top, weighing a talent. The woman was to realize her own inevitable fate, in the midst of the ephah in the land of Shinar, *i.e.*, in the midst of commercialism, among the nations, in the kingdom of Antichrist. This is where the harlot is to be destroyed, as seen in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen.

A talent of lead placed over the opening of the ephah kept the woman inside. A “talent” was *the largest weight* used among the Jewish people, and “lead” was *one of the heaviest of metals*. Such a covering showed that there was no escape from *that which must occur*, for *her sins* had “reached unto heaven,” and God had “remembered her iniquities” (Rev. 18:5).

The heaviest of weights (a talent of lead) was placed over the opening of the largest of measures (the ephah) to keep the woman (Israel) inside the ephah, *for a purpose* — to be transported from her land to a place among the nations. Two women (which could only represent other nations, Gentile nations), with stork-like wings (the stork, an unclean bird [Lev. 11:13, 19; Deut. 14:12, 18]), lifted the ephah up from the land of Israel and transported it out among the nations. And there, among her Gentile lovers, the woman, Israel, was to be established and dealt with by God *in relation to the magnitude of her sin, with a view to repentance*.

(The vision of the ephah could only span the centuries of time covering the entire Times of the Gentiles as seen in Daniel’s image or the four great beasts, though with a particular emphasis upon *the latter days*.)

Note, according to Zechariah’s vision of the woman in the ephah, that which must ultimately occur relative to the remnant of Jews presently in the land of Israel, over 5,000,000 strong today. It is exactly the same thing seen in the Book of Jonah and elsewhere in Scripture. The Jews presently in the land must be cast from the ship into the sea (a place typifying “death” and “the Gentiles.” They must be removed from their land and driven back out among the Gentile nations once again.

God drove His people out among the nations to deal with them there relative to repentance, and that is exactly where He will deal with them at the end of Man's Day. If for no other reason than this, the Jewish people presently in the land *must* be uprooted and be driven back out among the nations. That is not only the place where God has decreed that He will deal with them but that is also the place from whence God will regather them when He brings them back into the land following repentance.)

The Jewish people were carried away into Babylon by the first king of Babylon, which marked the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles. This was also the beginning of the Jewish association with Babylon. And most of the Jews carried away never left Babylon at the end of the seventy years to return to their land (Jer. 25:11, 12; cf. II Chron. 36:20, 21; Dan. 9:1, 2). In this respect, as long as Babylon remained in existence, the association of the Jewish people with Babylon could only have continued.

In the latter days, when the final form of Daniel's image appears — the final form of the kingdom of Babylon — Israel will be left without a choice other than to see the nation's harlotry brought into full bloom within the kingdom of Antichrist. The things seen in the vision of the ephah will be brought to pass during the days of the last king of Babylon, with Israel enmeshed in the final form of this Babylonian kingdom to the extent that the nation is spoken of in synonymous terms with *Babylon* in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen.

This is the Old Testament connection which allows "Babylon" to be used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem* — a reference used more directly for *the people of the city, the Jewish people*. In the Book of Revelation (in Scripture, the people of Jerusalem are, at times, referred to by the name of their city [cf. Psa. 122:6; Jer. 44:13; Lam. 1:7, 8, 17; Matt. 23:37; Rev. 21:9, 10; also *ref. p. 17* of this book]).

"If the *woman* in the ephah is to enjoy the wealth and luxury which are hers, she must court the favor of the kings of the earth, commit spiritual fornication with them, and intoxicate them with 'the wine of her fornication' (Rev. 17:2); for only by her worldly compromising position astride the scarlet-colored beast can she as a base harlot be 'arrayed in purple, and scarlet color, and be ornamented with gold and

precious stones and pearls' (Rev. 17:4). Moreover, the woman not only makes her illicit lovers drunk 'with the wine of her fornication,' but even more horribly she herself is 'drunk with the blood of the saints [of the Old Testament] and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus [New Testament saints]'" (Rev. 17:6).

—Merrill Unger, "ZECHARIAH, Prophet of Messiah's Glory"

THE WOMAN IN REVELATION 12, 17, 18

"The woman," "the great harlot," in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen is seen with an identifying name written on her forehead, which is *a mystery*: "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth" (17:1-5, NASB). *Two things* about this identifying name will let the reader know that John, as moved by the Spirit, is referencing *something previously dealt with in the Old Testament Scriptures*:

- 1) The fact that the woman is referred to as *a mystery* (referring to a matter previously dealt with in the O.T. but now about to be opened up and fully revealed).
- 2) The fact that the woman is seen occupying this prominent place in the Book of Revelation (for there is nothing in N.T. revelation which does not have its roots someplace in O.T. revelation).

Then, not only has the woman been previously dealt with in the Old Testament, but material leading into these two chapters in the Book of Revelation deal with and introduce the woman as well. In short, these two chapters in the Book of Revelation form a climax to that dealt with in the Old Testament (actually, numerous places in numerous Old Testament books) and in chapters in the Book of Revelation leading up to these two chapters (particularly chs. 11-16).

Note that *Jerusalem* is called "the great city" in Rev. 11:8, and *the woman* is referred to in exactly the same manner in Rev. 17:18. Again, note that the people of Jerusalem are, at times, referred to by the name of their city, which is exactly what is in view in the latter reference; and knowing this is *a major key* to properly understanding Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen.

Then, “a woman” is introduced in Rev. 12:1, who can only be seen, as in Zechariah, as a metaphorical way of referring to *Israel*. This identity can be ascertained through two means — 1) her dress, and 2) that which is stated about her.

She is described as “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars,” which is an allusion to the second of Joseph’s two dreams in Gen. 37:5-10. Joseph’s dreams had to do with *regality* (vv. 7-10), which is exactly what is seen in Rev. 12:1, introducing the woman in chapters seventeen and eighteen, where *regality* is again seen.

There are two words used for “crown” in the Greek New Testament — *stephanos* and *diadema* — and both words are used in the opening three verses of Revelation chapter twelve. *Stephanos* is used of the crown upon the head of the woman (v. 1), and *diadema* (pl. *diademata*) is used of the crowns upon the seven heads of the serpent (v. 3). Both words are used in a *regal* sense, but only the latter (*diadema*) is used of one actually seated on the throne.

That is, a *stephanos* upon the head of the woman shows that she is not seated upon the throne at this time, though she is about to occupy that position; and “diadems” upon the seven heads of the dragon (identified as Satan [v. 9]) depict the kingdom of Antichrist, under Satan, as it will exist during the Tribulation. The fact that the Greek word *diadema* is used of all seven heads shows that, at this time, the seventh head (Antichrist) will be reigning (cf. Rev. 13:1ff; 17:7-13).

Those in the kingdom of Antichrist, under Satan, are seen *presently reigning* at the time of the events in Rev. 12:1ff, and the woman (depicting Israel) is seen as *one about to reign*.

Then, note how the introduction of “the great city [Jerusalem]” in Rev. 11:8 and the introduction of the woman in Rev. 12:1 (wearing a crown, but not yet reigning) form commentary to introduce the woman in Rev. 17:18 — a woman already dealt with extensively throughout most of the Old Testament:

“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city [11:8, referring in 17:18 to the people of the city], which reigneth over the kings of the earth [*lit.*, ‘the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth’].”

And both of the preceding verses (12:1; 17:18), referring to the same woman, using a metaphor for a nation, could be referencing only one nation — *Israel*. *Israel alone*, of all the nations, is the one nation which God recognizes as *His firstborn son* (Ex. 4:22, 23), *the only nation* in possession of the rights of primogeniture and, thus, *the only nation* in a position to hold the sceptre (*cf.* Rom. 9:4).

Then another means seen in Revelation chapter twelve which identifies the woman with Israel is that which happens to her immediately following the birth of the man child, occurring near the middle of the Tribulation. Shortly afterwards, in the middle of the Tribulation, the woman flees into a specially prepared place in the wilderness (vv. 6, 13-16), exactly as revealed elsewhere of the Jews in the land at this time in Matt. 24:15-22.

A remnant will escape to a specially prepared place and there be protected by God. The remainder will either be slain or driven back out among the nations. And Jerusalem will then be trodden down of the Gentiles for the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation (*cf.* Zech. 14:2; Luke 21:20-24; Rev. 11:2).

TRADE, COMMERCE

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies...

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come.

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and fine linen..." (Rev. 18:1-3, 9-12a).

Trade and commerce are brought into full view in Revelation chapter eighteen, in the kingdom of the Beast. And two things stand out in this respect: 1) The woman (Israel) is seen heavily involved, worldwide; and 2) the Gentile nations, along with and at the expense of Israel, are seen becoming rich through this Jewish involvement.

And this is something which *must* be looked upon as having a prior Old Testament connection as well. That is, the matter *must* first be seen in the Old Testament, with the Book of Revelation in the New simply drawing from the Old and unveiling the end of the matter.

There are at least two main places where this can be clearly seen in the Old Testament. One is in Jeremiah, and the other is in Ezekiel.

1) *JEREMIAH 25:10, 11*

Note that which is stated about Israel and the land of Israel in this passage in Jeremiah:

"Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations [Israel, along with other surrounding nations, judged with Israel (v. 9)] shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years."

Then note that which is stated about the woman in Rev. 18:22, 23:

"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found anymore in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Exactly the same thing is stated about Israel in both Jer. 25:10 and Rev. 18:22, 23.

In the Book of Jeremiah, the statement has to do with Israel in relation to the land of Israel *at the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles*. Israel had been removed from her own land and transported into the land of Shinar, from a theocracy into the world kingdom of Babylon. And in the land of Babylon the Jewish people could no longer experience the things enumerated in Jer. 25:10 *in their own land*.

Then, in the Book of Revelation, the whole of that seen in Jeremiah is turned around *at the end of the Times of the Gentiles, over 2,600 years later*. In this book the same statement has to do with Israel in relation to the Gentile lands where the nation had been dispersed *throughout the Times of the Gentiles*. And the picture in the Book of Revelation, reversing the matter, has to do with Israel about to be removed from these Gentile lands and transported back to her own land, with the theocracy restored to Israel.

Once restored to the land, Israel would no longer experience the things stated in both Jer. 25:10 and Rev. 18:22, 23 *in Gentile lands*, for God will have removed the nation from these lands. Then, at that time, God will *restore these things to her, in her own land, in connection with the restoration of the theocracy*.

2) EZEKIEL 25-28

Ezekiel chapters twenty-five through twenty-eight, as Jer. 25:10, 11, has its setting in the Babylonian captivity of the Jewish people. And this section in Ezekiel has to do with Tyre, a Phoenician city on the eastern Mediterranean Sea, which was a center for trade and commerce.

It was because of Nebuchadnezzar's previous actions toward Israel (transporting the remaining southern two tribes [Judah and Benjamin] into captivity) that the king of Tyre could realize profit. With Israel in captivity, removed from her own land, the King of Tyre, among other things, could now move freely through Israel's land, utilizing trade routes.

The king of Tyre would have cause to rejoice over that which had befallen Israel, for the whole of the matter was to his benefit. And this is the picture seen in Ezek. 25:3; 26:2. In each reference,

the king of Tyre is seen looking at that which had befallen Israel and her land and saying “Aha,” rejoicing in this manner because of that which he would now be able to do. And God is seen pronouncing judgment upon the king of Tyre because of his attitude and actions (26:3, 17-21; 27:32-36).

Then, following the matter on through into chapter twenty-eight, the king of Tyre is dealt with in a different way yet, though in perfect keeping with that previously stated about him. In Ezek. 28:12-19, Scripture moves from dealing with the king of Tyre to dealing with Satan. God uses the attitude and actions of one (the king of Tyre) to depict and move into revelation surrounding the attitude and actions of the other (Satan). The former, in this respect, is seen as part and parcel with the latter.

Satan is identified (vv. 12b-16a), and his judgment is pronounced (vv. 16b-19). In a respect, God's dealings with Satan at this point in the book follow an identical pattern to the manner in which He had previously dealt with the king of Tyre.

And the latter is a reference to moving things to the end of the Times of the Gentiles, when there will no longer an “Aha” from a Gentile ruler relative to that which had befallen Israel. Rather, at that time, the “Aha” will be replaced with an “Alas, alas” (Rev. 18:10, 19) because of that which God will be in the process of doing — *reversing the whole of the matter relative to Israel and the Gentile nations*.

The end-time world ruler, who, in the light of Ezek. 28:12-19, might be thought of as the last king of Tyre, will be an individual spoken of in somewhat synonymous terms with those which God had previously used relating to the king of Tyre in Ezekiel's prophecy, at the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles. This is the man identified in a synonymous sense with Satan (as was the king of Tyre in Ezekiel), to whom Satan will give “his power, his seat [‘throne’], and great authority” (Rev. 12:3; 13:2b). And it will be at the termination of this man's rule that the judgments seen in Ezek. 28:16b-19 will be carried out.

After this occurs, the Jews will no longer sit in the centers of commerce and wealth in major cities in Gentile lands, with the Gentiles becoming rich at their expense. Rather, in that coming

day, *the whole of the matter will be reversed*. The Jews will be restored to their own land, within a restored theocracy, and the wealth of the Gentiles, among other things, will belong to Israel.

Note how this is worded in Isa. 60:5b, 11-15:

“...because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces [*lit.*, ‘the wealth’] of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces [*lit.*, ‘the wealth’] of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

The sons also of them that afflict thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.”

According to Scripture, these are the things *about to* come to pass on this earth as they relate to Israel and the Gentile nations.

God is about *to complete His purpose for the Times of the Gentiles*. Israel is about to pass through *her greatest time of suffering* at the hands of the Gentiles. And, *through this means, God will not only use the greatest Gentile power the world will have ever known to bring Israel to the place of repentance, but God will then destroy this Gentile power, bringing the Times of the Gentiles to an end.*

The harlot will be *burned* with “fire,” and “the smoke of her burning” will ascend up “forever and ever” (Rev. 17:16; 18:8, 9, 18; 19:1-3). This is a figurative and metaphorical way of dealing with not only *the end of Israel’s harlotry* but also with the fact that conditions created by this termination *will last forever* — *i.e.*, throughout not only the millennium but all the ages which are to follow.

Then, following the end of Israel's harlotry, throughout the ensuing millennium and all of the following ages, *a different type smoke as it pertains to Israel* will ascend into the heavens — *a smoke which will be well-pleasing to God*. This is seen in the typology of Gen. 25:1ff, where Abraham remarries, following that foreshadowed by the events of previous chapters:

Chapter 22: Abraham offering his son foreshadows the Father offering His Son 2,000 years later.

Chapter 23: The death of Sarah foreshadows the setting aside of Israel following the Father offering His Son.

Chapter 24: Following events seen in the preceding two chapters, Abraham's servant searching for and procuring a bride for his master's son in another land foreshadows the Spirit in the world today searching for and procuring a bride for God's Son.

Chapter 25: Then, after the servant had procured and removed the bride, Abraham remarried. He married *Keturah*, who, unlike Sarah, was not barren but was very fruitful.

This foreshadows that which will occur following the end of the present work of the Spirit. After the Spirit has procured and removed the bride, God will restore Israel. There will be a marriage "in Cana of Galilee," on the seventh day (the seventh 1,000-year period, the Messianic Era), as seen in the first sign in John's gospel (*cf.* John 1:29, 35, 43; 2:1ff).

The name "Keturah" in Gen. 25:1 means *incense*. It is a proper name formed from a word which means *incense* and is a form of the word used numerous times in the Old Testament for *incense* (*e.g.*, Ex. 30:1, 7-9; Lev. 16:12, 13; Ezek. 8:11). After Israel has been restored, the smoke associated with the destruction of the harlot will be replaced by *an entirely different type smoke, foreshadowed by Abraham's remarriage in Gen. 25:1*. In that day Israel will be as "sweet incense" unto the Lord (*cf.* Rev. 8:4), ascending up "forever and ever."

At that time, *a restored nation in a restored land will be placed at the head of all the Gentile nations, in a restored theocracy. And the nations of the earth will, in that day, be blessed through Israel.*

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee"
(Psa. 122:6).

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The identity of both *the political power* and *the harlot* in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen is more often than not associated with “Rome” — viewing matters as “a revived Roman Empire” forming *the political power*, and “the Roman Catholic Church” forming *a religious power* within the political. However, neither identification is correct.

The Church has never really departed from ideology coming out of the Reformation concerning Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen. Almost five hundred years ago the Reformers generally saw everything as “Roman” in these two chapters — *a Roman political power* and *a Roman Catholic religious power*, often viewing the Pope as the Antichrist. And, aside from viewing the Papacy in this manner (though some Christians still do today), this whole interpretive ideology has remained essentially unchanged since the time of the Reformation.

Suffice it to say, ideology associating either *the political power* or *the harlot* with “Rome” was wrong at the time of the Reformation, and it remains just as wrong today. In short, that part of Christendom following either or both parts of this interpretation has been wrong for almost five hundred years concerning that taught in these two chapters in the Book of Revelation.

The Book of Revelation, as any other part of Scripture, *must be understood and interpreted in the light of Scripture*. Material in this book *must be understood and interpreted contextually*, and the whole of the book rests upon *that previously revealed in the Old Testament*.

Seeking to identify the political power as a revived Roman Empire has *absolutely no basis* in Scripture. The Book of Daniel is usually referenced, but the Book of Daniel identifies this final form of Gentile world power as other than Roman.

And seeking to associate the harlot with the Church of Rome has *absolutely no basis* in these two chapters, or elsewhere in the book, or in other Scripture. In fact, the Book of Revelation clearly identifies the harlot, and this identification is completely in line with and rests upon that previously revealed in the Old Testament.
