

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

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The Time of the End

Part XXVIII

God's Firstborn Son

And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars...

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

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...

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over [lit., 'which possesses kingly authority over'] the kings of the earth (Ex. 4:22, 23; Rev. 12:1, 3; 17:1, 18).

One of the most pregnant-with-meaning statements in the entire Old Testament — one with far-reaching ramifications extending throughout the remainder of Man's Day and throughout the subsequent Lord's Day — is the statement, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Ex. 4:22).

When God sent Moses back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, this is the statement which God instructed Moses to carry to the Assyrian Pharaoh ruling Egypt. It is a succinct, to-the-point statement which would need *no explanation*.

The Assyrian Pharaoh, though he didn't believe in the one true and living God (Ex. 5:2), would have been expected to understand what God meant by this statement. And the Lord would subsequently show, through Divine power, that this was no idle statement (Ex. chs. 7-11); and the Lord, through the same Divine power, would also subsequently show that the accompanying threat concerning that which would be done if the Pharaoh refused to let His son depart Egypt was no idle threat as well (Ex. 4:23b; 12:29, 30).

The rights belonging to firstborn sons were threefold:

- 1) *Ruler of the household under and for the father (regal rights).*
- 2) *Priest of the family (spiritual rights).*
- 3) *A double portion of all the father's goods (property rights).*

Nations are in view within the scope of Israel's separate and distinct standing as firstborn — "Israel" and "Egypt." And the Pharaoh of Egypt, through God's statement concerning Israel's standing in relation to Egypt, would have been expected to understand that God recognized *the nation of slaves in Egypt as the one possessing national rights as His firstborn son, not Egypt*.

And the manner in which "Egypt" is used in Scripture — depicting *the world* — along with the type-antitype structure of Exodus, it is plain that not only is Egypt in view but that depicted

by the way "Egypt" is used in Scripture is in view as well. That is to say, through God's use of "Egypt" in this respect, *Israel is seen as God's firstborn son in relation to all of the Gentile nations*.

Note how this is clearly seen in the antitype. In the future Assyrian's worldwide kingdom (foreshadowed by the past Assyrian's Egyptian kingdom), Israel will be dispersed throughout the nations of the earth (typified by Israel in Egypt during Moses' day). And Israel's position among the nations as God's firstborn son in that day will be as it has always been throughout the past 3,500 years, ever since the announcement was made during Moses' day — *a separate and distinct position in relation to all the Gentile nations*.

Thus, *Israel* was the entity which God recognized as the one nation among all the nations possessing *the right to hold the sceptre* (rule the household [which, in the national sense in view, would be ruling the nations of the earth under and for the Head of the family, for God]); and, within this rule, *Israel* — the nation in possession of the priestly rights [spiritual rights] in the family of nations — was the nation through whom God had chosen to bless all the other nations in accord with Gen. 12:1-3, verses based on and showing God's outworking of Gen. 9:26, 27.

Pharaoh was to let God's firstborn son go (leave Egypt) that God's son might serve Him in another land (which would be the land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). That is to say, God's son was to be allowed to leave Egypt in order that this son might be established in another land in a *regal capacity*, ruling the nations (which would include Egypt), with the nations, in turn, receiving *spiritual blessings* through the one in possession of the priestly rights of the firstborn.

(Continued on Page 2)

The Time of the End —

(Continued from Page 1)

This is the picture presented at the time of the birth of the nation in Egypt during Moses' day. The Israelites at the beginning of this time — at the beginning of their existence as a national entity — slew the paschal lambs and applied the blood of the lambs as instructed, passed through the Red Sea, received the Law (the Old Covenant) and instructions for building the tabernacle at Sinai, and then marched toward the land in which they were to serve God as His firstborn son.

And, as well, forming a type of events yet future even today, these events during Moses' day point to that time when the announcement seen in Ex. 4:22, 23 will have to do with *the Assyrian* who will rule the world during the coming Tribulation, with the Jewish people scattered among the nations in that day.

And, relative to bringing that stated in Ex. 4:22, 23 into full fruition, these events point to that time when the *One greater than Moses* will appear a second time to the nation (as Moses appeared a second time to the Jewish people in his day), the nation in that day will receive Christ (as they received Moses in the type), and there will then be a rebirth of the nation (as there was a birth of the nation during Moses' day [cf. Isa. 66:8]).

In that day, the Jewish people, *through belief in their long-rejected Saviour and Messiah*, will appropriate the blood of the Lamb which they slew 2,000 years ago. They will then be led out of the nations of the world by their returning Messiah (as the Israelites were led out of Egypt under Moses), be taken into "the wilderness of the people" (possibly Sinai again), and God will then make a New Covenant with His people.

Following this, the Jewish people will be placed in their own land in order to serve God as *His firstborn son*. They will be placed in this land within a theocracy, as the ruling nation on earth, with the Gentile nations of the earth subsequently being blessed through Israel (Ezek. 20:34-44; cf. Jer. 30:1-24; 31:8-10, 31-33; Ezek. 37:21-28).

(The third part of the rights belonging to Israel as God's firstborn son, *the double portion of the Father's goods* [property rights], apparently has to do with both *heavenly* and *earthly* facets of the kingdom. And this part of the rights will be realized during that future time when Israel exercises *the regal and priestly rights of the firstborn*.

Angels rule from the heavens today, but in that coming day, man will rule from the heavens. Christians forming the bride of Christ, along with certain Old Testament saints, will reign with Christ from the heavens, from the new Jerusalem, with power emanating from Christ's throne [cf. Matt. 8:11, 12; Heb. 11:13-16, 39, 40; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21].

At the same time, a converted Israel will be restored to the land. And power will emanate from David's throne, in Jerusalem here on earth, with Christ seated on David's throne [Isa. 9:6, 7; Joel 2:27-32; Luke 1:31-33].

Christ will have a dual reign in this respect — *from His Own throne in the heavens, and from David's throne on earth*. And in that day Israel — *through Abraham's seed, both heavenly and earthly* [cf. Gen. 22:17, 18] — will realize a double portion of all the Father's goods.)

The Foundation for Exodus Set in Genesis

That stated in Ex. 4:22, 23 during Moses' day is part and parcel with that which God had previously told Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3, four hundred thirty years earlier (cf. Gen. 15:13, 14; Ex. 12:40, 41; Gal. 3:17, 18). These two statements are never repeated in so many words in Scripture, though subsequent Scripture is replete with material having to do with both. The latter statement *explains* how God will fulfill the former statement. *Blessings will flow through God's firstborn son, or curses will result from a mistreatment of God's firstborn son*. In a respect, both passages of Scripture form foundational statements, and subsequent Scripture fills in all the details, building on the foundational material.

Note these two statements together in this respect:

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

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written by the editor.*

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

"And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn" (Ex. 4:22, 23).

The statement in Exodus which Moses was to proclaim to the Assyrian Pharaoh ruling Egypt, explaining how God was going to fulfill His previous promise to Abraham in Genesis, need not be repeated to the latter-day Assyrian ruling the world. The statement had already been made to the former Assyrian, who foreshadowed the latter Assyrian. And this statement, along with all that the statement involves, *will continue to stand in that future day exactly as it has stood down through the centuries since Moses' day, apart from any audible repetition of the matter to the Assyrian yet future*.

Thus that which one finds in the Book of Revelation regarding Moses' words to Pharaoh is not a repetition of this statement. Rather, in this book, one finds statements which rest upon and provide commentary for that seen in Ex. 4:22, 23, which draws from and explains how God is going to fulfill His previous words to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3.

God's Firstborn Son in the Book of Revelation

The Jewish people are seen from one vantage point in Revelation chapter

twelve and from another in Revelation chapter seventeen through the first part of chapter nineteen. *Regality* is in view in both passages, which necessitates *sonship* being in view as well. Only sons can rule in God's kingdom (all angels are *sons of God* because of their individual creation), and in the human realm *only firstborn sons can rule*.

However, because of the nature of that being dealt with — childbirth (ch. 12a) and harlotry (chs. 17-19a)—*feminine metaphors* are used for Israel in both passages in the Book of Revelation. *Regality* used in connection with feminine metaphors presents no problem though, for Israel is spoken of in both *masculine* and *feminine* respects in Scripture—*God's firstborn son, and God's adulterous wife* (the adulterous wife whom God has divorced and will one day remarry [following national repentance], immediately before Israel, as God's firstborn son, reigns).

1) Chapter Twelve

In chapter twelve, the Jewish people during the Tribulation are depicted as a woman *clothed* with "the sun," "the moon" *beneath her feet*, and *wearing* "a crown of twelve stars." The picture, using metaphors, is taken from the second of Joseph's two dreams, recorded in Gen. 37:9, with both dreams having to do with *regality*.

In Genesis, the typology has to do with *Christ and Israel*. "Joseph" is seen as a *type of Christ*; and "the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars" point to *different positions of authority within the family*, with the whole house of Israel being covered by all three metaphors. The text clearly states that *Jacob* (the patriarch of the family) is referred to by "the sun," *Rachel* (Joseph's mother, though deceased) is referred to by "the moon," and *the eleven sons of Jacob* (with Joseph absent) are referred to by "the eleven stars" (Gen. 37:9, 10).

Thus, *regality* in relation to both Christ and Israel is in view. Christ is seen reigning over Israel, with the sun, moon, and stars showing a *structured gradation of governmental powers in Israel*. And this structured gradation of governmental powers begins with the highest — "the sun" — having to do with *the patriarch of the family*.

In Rev. 12:1 though, through the use

of this same symbolism, Israel and the nations are in view. "The sun," "the moon," and "the stars" earlier in the book had depicted *governing powers and authorities among Gentile nations* (6:12-17; ref. Part XIV of this series). Now, through the use of this symbolism, *both Israel and the nations* are depicted. Israel is *clothed with the sun, has the moon under her feet, and has a crown of twelve stars on her head*. "Regality" is in view throughout.

The symbolism used of the woman in Rev. 12:1 pictures Israel as *the highest governing authority (clothed with the sun and wearing a crown of twelve stars), with all lesser governing authorities being under Israel (which would be the Gentile nations, depicted by the moon under the feet of the one clothed with the sun and wearing a crown)*.

Thus, the symbolism used places *all Gentile governments [depicted by the moon] in subjection to Israel*. And, as shown by this symbolism, when the woman, Israel, exercises her right to rule (a right shown by both the manner in which she is clothed and the crown on her head), all the nations of the earth will be subjected to Israel's rule (a position shown by the moon beneath the woman's feet).

Israel though cannot occupy this position until the Times of the Gentiles has run its course. And the Times of the Gentiles (that time when the Gentiles hold the sceptre) will not be over until Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation and, following His removal of the Jewish people from the nations of the world, destroys Gentile world power (depicted in Exodus through the removal of the Jewish people from Egypt and the destruction of the Assyrian Pharaoh and his armed forces in the Red Sea [Ex. 14:13-31]).

It is evident from the context that the Times of the Gentiles will still be running its course when Israel is seen in the manner depicted in Rev. 12:1. After an additional comment on the woman in verse two, the central governing Gentile world power under Satan is depicted in verse three, *wearing seven crowns on seven heads*. The Beast (Rev. 13:1ff) will be the seventh head, and he is here seen crowned and in power. This man, foreshadowed by the Assyrian Pharaoh during Moses' day, is seen holding the sceptre at this point in the

book and in the process of fulfilling the type in Exodus.

(The Beast holding the sceptre and Israel not holding the sceptre in Rev. 12:1-3, *though both are seen crowned*, is shown through the use of two different words for "crown" in the Greek text—*stephanos* and *diadema*. A person wearing a *stephanos* would be one with regal rights, though not presently exercising these rights. The realization of these rights could have been *in the past* or they could be *awaiting a future time* [a past realization is seen in Rev. 4:4, 10 where *stephanos* is used for crown (ref. Part VII of this series); and a future realization is seen in Rev. 12:1, where *stephanos* is again used for crown (ref. Part XX of this series)].

A person wearing a crown depicted by the word *diadema*, on the other hand, would be *one presently exercising regal power and authority* — holding the sceptre and seated on a throne. This is the word used for "crown" in verse three, dealing with the Beast and his kingdom under Satan.

Thus, the picture in Rev. 12:1-3 has to do with the Beast holding the sceptre while seated on Satan's throne [Rev. 13:2], with Israel *in waiting* — a position the nation has held throughout the Times of the Gentiles. Israel, God's firstborn son, is *the one possessing the right to rule, though not presently ruling* [cf. Rev. 17:18]; and Israel is *awaiting exactly the same sequence of events seen in the Book of Exodus* — the destruction of Gentile world power and the transfer of power from the Gentiles back to Israel. And, just as these events occurred in the past, in the type, they will occur yet future in the antitype. *The antitype must follow the type in exact detail*. In that coming day, Israel will wear a crown depicted by the word *diadema*, not by the word *stephanos*, as during the present time.

In like manner, faithful Christians have been promised a *stephanos*, for their rule is not present but future. But, the crowns promised faithful Christians during the present time will become *diadems* in that coming day.

In that coming day, when God's firstborn Sons hold the sceptre [Christ, Israel, and the Church following the adoption], only crowns depicted by the word *diadema* will be worn by these ruling Sons.)

The whole of the matter is further depicted in subsequent verses in Revela-

The Time of the End —

(Continued from Page 3)

tion chapter twelve (vv. 7-10). In these verses, two angelic powers are seen fighting in the heavens, from whence both angelic powers rule.

This angelic rule is seen in Dan. 10:12-21, where information concerning these two divisions of angelic powers is given — one ruling from a heavenly sphere through the Gentile nations [vv. 12-20], and the other ruling from a heavenly sphere through Israel [v. 21]. The former consists of *Satan and his angels* in the heavens above the earth; and the latter consists of *Michael and his angels*, also in the heavens, though separate from Satan and his angels. Michael and his angels reside in that part of the heavens where God dwells. Thus, Israel, *not to be reckoned among the nations* [Num. 23:9], is seen possessing a form of government completely separate from that which the Gentile nations possess.

(Note that angels, since time immemorial, have ruled the earth under God, as angels do over provinces elsewhere in the universe [cf. Job. 1:6ff; 2:1ff; Ezek. 28:14]. Satan and his angels rule this one province, the earth, under God today [though in a rebel capacity]; and they will do so until they have been put down and the sceptre changes hands [Dan. 4:17, 25; 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15].

The government at that time will undergo a complete change in relation to the type rulers holding the sceptre. Angels will no longer rule the earth through man [Heb. 2:5]. The government will then be turned over exclusively to Man, to God's three firstborn Sons.

But, during the present day, *angels rule through man*. This is the reason angelic princes are seen occupying positions over the Gentile nations in Dan. 10:12-20 and why an angelic prince [which would include other angels as well, lesser princes] is seen occupying a position over Israel in Dan. 10:21. And this is also the reason these two angelic factions find

themselves engaged in battle in Rev. 12:7-10. *The time will have come for angelic rule over the earth to end*. And with a view to this rule ending in this one province in the kingdom of God, Michael and his angels [the angels ruling through Israel from the heavens, though Israel is not holding the sceptre at this time] fight against, overcome, and cast Satan and his angels [the angels presently ruling through the Gentile nations] out of the heavens onto the earth.

And it is God's firstborn son, introduced as a woman at the beginning of the chapter — the one clothed with the sun, the moon placed under her feet, and a crown [a *stephanos*] of twelve stars resting on her head [again, Israel is seen in both masculine and feminine respects in Scripture] — who will hold the sceptre in that coming day in the stead of the nations. And, unlike the manner in which rulership over the earth exists today, *Israel will hold this sceptre apart from angelic rule, and the nations will be governed apart from angelic rule*.

For additional information on the structure of the earth's government during the present time, refer to Part XXVII of this series. Also, refer to the editor's book, THE MOST HIGH RULETH.)

2) Chapter Seventeen Through the First Part of Chapter Nineteen

In this part of the book, Israel is presented as a *harlot*, in need of cleansing; and in this part of the book, *exactly as the woman giving birth is presented in Rev. 12:1-5*, the harlot woman is presented in a *regal capacity*.

"And the woman [the harlot] which thou sawest is that great city [Jerusalem], which reigneth over [lit., 'which possesses kingly authority over'] the kings of the earth" (17:18).

The reference to "that [or, 'the'] great city" appears nine times in Revelation chapters eleven through eighteen (11:8; 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21). This expression is specifically stated

to be a reference to *Jerusalem* in its first appearance in the book (11:8), with Jerusalem being associated with *Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon* (11:8; 14:8; 16:19; 18:10, 21; cf. Jer. 22:8, 25 [written at the time of the Babylonian captivity]).

"Jerusalem" is often used in Scripture as a reference to *the Jewish people* (e.g., Lam. 1:1-9; Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:33, 34; 19:41, 42). And, if kept within context, the identity of *the harlot woman* in Rev. 17:18 cannot possibly be seen as other than *Israel* (ref. Part XXVI of this series).

And, the association of "that great city" with *Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon* has to do with *the end result of Israel's disobedience, extending over centuries of time*.

"Sodom" is associated with *sexual degeneracy*, which is the main thing in view relative to Israel in chapter seventeen through the first part of chapter nineteen — *harlotry*. "Egypt" calls attention to *the world* where the nation found itself after being removed from her land and transported to "Babylon," which marked the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles.

Thus, all three metaphors together relate a particular facet of Israel's history, providing *the reason that the nation is seen as the great harlot in the kingdom of Antichrist during the Tribulation*.

But, even in the midst of being seen as a *harlot* in the kingdom of Antichrist, Israel is also seen associated with *regality*, exactly as previously seen in chapter twelve. And the overall picture has to do with Israel, after 2,600 years, about to be brought to the place of repentance, about to be cleansed of her harlotry, and about to exercise the rights of the firstborn.

That stated during Abraham's day in Gen. 12:1-3 will be brought to pass through a realization of that which God told Moses to tell the Assyrian Pharaoh in Egypt in Ex. 4:22, 23, immediately after God uses the latter-day Assyrian to bring Israel to the place of repentance.

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