

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

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The Time of the End

Part XXVI

The Beast and the Woman

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.'

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 ['great wonder'] (Rev. 17:1-6).

Revelation chapters seventeen through the first part of chapter twenty provides a climactic sequence of events which is seen time after time in the

Old Testament. And this corresponding parallel can only be expected, for the structure of later revelation must *always* be in complete keeping with the structure of earlier revelation. Later revelation must *always* be completely in line with and rest on the foundation set forth in earlier revelation.

This climax, seen in both Testaments, has to do with: 1) the realization of God's purpose for driving the Jewish people out among the nations over 2,600 years ago, 2) the destruction of Gentile world power, and 3) the ushering in of the long-awaited Messianic Era.

Through the judgments and different events brought to pass during the Tribulation, seen in Revelation chapters six through sixteen, everything is set in place for these climactic events to occur. Then, beginning in chapter seventeen and continuing into the first part of chapter twenty, numerous details are given concerning these climactic events.

Most of this closing section of the Book of Revelation, leading into the Messianic Era, is taken up with detailed information pertaining to *the Beast, his kingdom, and a harlot woman occupying a central place in this kingdom* (chs. 17-19a). This is the subject matter seen in this climactic part of the book immediately before the destruction of Gentile world power (ch. 19b) and the ushering in of the Messianic Era (ch. 20a).

"The Beast" and "the woman" are both used in *metaphorical* senses. And that being referenced through the use of both metaphors is *made clear* in the numerous Old Testament passages dealing with the subject, in earlier parts of the Book of Revelation, and in chap-

ter seventeen through the first part of chapter nineteen as well.

Then, the matter is *further connected with the Old Testament Scriptures* through the use of the word, "mystery." Both *the Beast* and *the woman* are referred to by this word (17:5, 7).

("A mystery" in the New Testament refers to *something made known in the Old Testament but not fully opened up and revealed in the Old Testament*. Rather, the opening up and complete unveiling of that referred to as "a mystery" awaited additional revelation, seen in the New Testament.

One Testament is to be understood in the light of the other — the Old in the light of the New, and the New in the light of the Old.)

Thus, not only must material in these chapters in the Book of Revelation be in complete keeping with *the manner in which this is set forth in the Old Testament* but this material must also be seen as *a climactic opening up and unveiling of that previously presented in the Old Testament*. These chapters in the closing part of the Book of Revelation, leading into the Messianic Era, *remove any remaining wraps* and present the Beast and the harlot woman *in full exposure* for all to behold.

The Complete Panoramic Picture

The Beast — the name used in the Book of Revelation for the man of sin, the Antichrist (Rev. 13:1ff; 17:8-14) — is presented a number of different ways throughout a large section of Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments. Revelation concerning this man begins with Nimrod, the first king of Babylon, in Genesis chapter ten; and it concludes with the last king of Babylon in

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the chapters under discussion in the Book of Revelation, chapters seventeen through twenty.

However, throughout Scripture, revelation concerning the Beast is *never* solely about this man alone. Revelation concerning the Beast is *always* seen in conjunction with revelation concerning Abraham and his lineage through Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons, *the nation of Israel*. This is the manner in which revelation about the Beast begins in Genesis, continues throughout the Old Testament, continues into the New Testament, and concludes in the Book of Revelation. When the Beast appears in Scripture, *Israel appears someplace in the text or context as well* (e.g., Gen. 10, 11 [Nimrod in ch. 10, Abraham in ch. 11]; the Books of Exodus, Esther, and Daniel).

The preceding is *an axiom* in Biblical studies surrounding the Beast, which cannot be ignored. Thus, when an individual arrives at Revelation chapter seventeen and sees *the Beast and a harlot woman* extensively dealt with together at the close of Man's Day — knowing that both are referred to as a "mystery," and knowing that the Beast *never* appears in Old Testament Scripture apart from Israel — *only one thing concerning the identity of the woman could possibly be uppermost in one's mind*.

1) The Harlot in Both Testaments

In Old Testament history, because of the Jewish people's continued disobedience over centuries of time, God uprooted His people from their land and drove them out among the nations. And the major part of this disobedience was *harlotry*, which caused God to eventually divorce Israel (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8; Hosea 2:2).

Israel, the wife of Jehovah, was having illicit relations — forbidden national relationships — with the surrounding Gentile nations. And when Israel's cup of iniquity became full (cf. Gen. 15:16), God divorced Israel, uprooted His people from their land, and drove them out among the nations in order to effect repentance through persecution at the hands of the harlot's lovers.

Revelation chapter seventeen through the first part of chapter nineteen presents, in detail, the end of the matter. Israel, in these chapters, is seen *at the height of her degeneracy — enmeshed in and having illicit relations with the most corrupt form of Gentile world power known to man throughout his 6,000-year history*. And it is within this setting, as Gentile persecution reaches heights heretofore unknown, that *Israel is brought to the place of repentance and is cleansed of her harlotry*.

The preceding though, as will be shown, is far from the only means of identifying the harlot woman. Attention has been called to this means of identification first in order to show *the unity of all Scripture surrounding revelation concerning the Beast and Israel, from an introduction in Genesis to a conclusion in the Book of Revelation*.

First, note a number of Old Testament references having to do with Israel's harlotry:

"How is the faithful city become a 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 into 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).

Chapter seventeen through the first part of chapter nineteen in the Book of Revelation has to do with *Israel's harlotry seen at its apex and then brought to an end*. And this is *the only place* in the book where this is dealt with.

If "the great whore" in these chapters is other than *Israel*, then a major subject

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of Old Testament prophecy relating to Israel *is not even dealt with in the Book of Revelation*.

Apart from understanding that the "woman" represents *Israel*, the final seven years of the Jewish dispensation is brought to a close in the Book of Revelation *without this book even dealing with the main purpose for these seven years*.

Apart from seeing Israel with the Beast in these chapters, that which could only be uppermost in God's mind concerning Israel during the Tribulation — *bringing His people, who have played the harlot over centuries of time, to the place of repentance — is not even mentioned in the book*.

But, as previously stated, the preceding is just one way in which the woman can be identified. As will be shown, this chapter goes on to state, *in so many words*, that "the woman" is *Israel*. Then, other internal proofs are provided in the chapter concerning the same thing.

2) The Woman Is That Great City

As the Beast is identified in chapter seventeen (vv. 8-14), the woman is identified in this chapter as well. The last verse in chapter seventeen provides, *beyond any question whatsoever*, the identity of the woman:

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

The expression "the [or 'this,' 'that'] great city" is used nine times in chapters eleven through eighteen, with six of these usages seen in chapters seventeen and eighteen. The first usage in 11:8 identifies the city as *Jerusalem*, and the identification of "the great city" in this

first usage must be understood the same way throughout the subsequent chapters where this expression appears.

Note how Rev. 11:8 reads:

“And their dead bodies [the two witnesses] shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

Jerusalem, in this verse, is associated with *Sodom* (sexual perversion) and *Egypt* (the world); and the next two appearances of the expression, “the great city” (14:8; 16:19), associates “Jerusalem” with *Babylon*.

Babylon was the place where the southern two tribes were taken captive, beginning about 605 B.C., beginning the Times of the Gentiles. Babylon is out in the world, typified by *Egypt*; and God allowed the Jewish people to be uprooted from their land and taken captive to Babylon because of their transgression over centuries of time, with sexual perversion, associated with *Sodom*, heading the list of sins (cf. Jer. 22:8, 9, 25).

And this is exactly where “the woman” finds herself in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen — *enmeshed in the kingdom of the last king of Babylon, out in the world (scattered among the nations), and viewed as a harlot — exactly as portrayed in previous verses* (11:8; 14:8; 16:19).

Thus, according to Rev. 17:18, the harlot, seen throughout these chapters, is identified as “Jerusalem.” *And there is no getting around this clearly stated fact.*

(“Jerusalem” is used a number of times in Scripture as simply another way of referring to the Jewish people. Even “the land of Israel” is used this same way in Scripture [cf. Isa. 1:21, 26; Lam. 1:7, 8; Ezek. 14:11-13; 16:2; Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:33; 19:41].

The Jewish people, their land, and their capital city are looked upon and referred to in an inseparable sense in Scripture. Thus, in an interpretative respect, Rev. 17:18 would have to read, “And ‘the woman’ which thou sawest is Israel...”)

3) The Woman Possessing Regal Authority

Then, Rev. 17:18 also presents another means of identification. This verse doesn’t stop with the identification of the woman as “that great city.” Rather, the verse goes on to provide a second means of identification, which

is *in complete keeping* with the first part of the verse.

The verse continues by adding the words, “which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” A better translation of these words would be, “which possesses 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*.

Thus, the woman is identified as *possessing regal authority over the Gentile nations* (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 [the woman’s head, Israel’s 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, with the woman wearing a *diadem* and exercising regal power and authority following 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).

(Regarding *Israel in possession of regal authority over the Gentile nations*, 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 observance of the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread in Exodus chapters twelve and thirteen, 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*.

Again, 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, for the past 3,500 years, since the time this announcement was made, the one who has held the sceptre since prior to the

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creation of Adam [Satan] has done everything within his power to destroy Israel.

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].)

4) The Woman Guilty of Blood

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. 17:6; 18:24; 19:2. 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 in Jerusalem at the hands of the Jews, “for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:11-13).

The Harlot Cleansed, the Kingdom of the Beast Destroyed

There is only *one possible way* that a person could expect the Tribulation to draw to a close and end in the Book of Revelation. And that would be *exactly the same way it is seen drawing to a close and ending in the Old Testament*. Whether in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, in the end time, Israel is seen enmeshed within and committing harlotry with the most corrupt form of Gentile world power man will ever know. This is then followed by Israel’s repentance, the nation being cleansed of her harlotry, the destruction of Gentile world power, and the ushering in of the Messianic Kingdom.

Though the nation will have paid a *heavy price, one beyond human comprehension*, Israel’s 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; Ps. 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, 3).

The heavy price paid by Israel over centuries of time has been both to her detriment and the detriment of the nations. Israel has been removed from her land, scattered among the nations, and suffered immeasurably at the hands of

the Gentiles. And, at the same time, the nations have suffered as well, *having been cut off from the spiritual blessings which could have been theirs through Israel*.

But, though the nations throughout this time have found themselves *separated from spiritual blessings*, they have, at the same time, found themselves in a *position of power* and *involved with materialism, becoming wealthy* (18:3, 9-19). And Israel, having left her spiritual heritage and found herself scattered among the nations, has become inseparably involved with the world’s *materialism and wealth* as well (17:4; 18:16).

During the Times of the Gentiles (over 2,600 years), *the nations have held the sceptre and have become wealthy at the expense of Israel* (17:2; 18:19b). And, as long as the Times of the Gentiles continues, *the nations will continue to hold power and accumulate this wealth at Israel’s expense*.

But once Israel is brought to the place of repentance, followed by Israel’s harlotry being done away with (burned with fire [17:16, 17; 18:8ff]), it will all be over for the nations. *The Times of the Gentiles will end, the sceptre will change hands, and the wealth of the Gentiles will be given to Israel* (Isa. 60:5, 11 [the word “forces,” KJV, should be translated “wealth”; ref. NASB, NIV]; cf. Ex. 12:35, 36).

The preceding is what a large part of Revelation chapter eighteen is about. Note particularly the latter part of the chapter beginning with verse nine. The nations will have become *rich*, and these nations will be *quite distraught* when all of this is suddenly taken from them (18:9, 18, 19).

Gentile headship will be over, their wealth will be gone, but they will find that they will possess something far greater. *Spiritual blessings/spiritual wealth which will be theirs through restored Israel will far exceed anything which they will have possessed throughout the Times of the Gentiles* (cf. Isa. 65:19; Zech. 8:20-23).

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