

# THE BEAST AND THE WOMAN

## PART II

THE END OF ISRAEL'S HARLOTRY, SEEN IN REV. 17-19A

By Arlen L. Chitwood

"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).

Note the buildup in the Book of Revelation to that section beginning in chapter seventeen and extending through the opening verses of chapter nineteen. 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 the opening verses of nineteen *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 disper-

sion 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).

Revelation chapter seventeen through the first part of chapter nineteen has 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; 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).

(Note that judgments during and immediately following the Tribulation, though directed toward the nations — with Israel scattered among the nations and enmeshed within the kingdom of the Beast — *will have Israel primarily in view* [cf. Rev. 16:5-7, 12-16].

Judgments befalling the earth-dwellers will reach their most intense state during the trumpet and vial judgments, with certain previous judgments undoubtedly continuing when the seven trumpets sound and the seven vials of wrath are poured out. And immediately prior to this time, the Jewish people, *left without a choice*, will have turned to and called 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 during the Millennium.

The matter is brought to an end at the conclusion of chapter eighteen and the beginning of

chapter nineteen (18:20-19:3), the festivities surrounding the marriage of the Lamb follow (19:7-10), and Christ then returns with His angels to deal with Israel and to destroy Gentile world power (19:11ff; cf. Matt. 23:38, 39; 24:29-31). 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-19a].

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].

["The harlot" is burned with *fire* (17:16; 18:8, 9, 18, 21), and *the smoke* of her burning rises up "forever and ever" (19:3). This is simply the way Scripture describes Israel's harlotry brought to an end, with the results lasting throughout the ensuing endless ages].

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 through the first part of chapter nineteen 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 the first part of nineteen to end. Again, these chapters cover "the time of Jacob's trouble" and the time immediately following (following Christ's return but preceding the beginning of His millennial reign).

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 with 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 out to the Gentile nations 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, not only will the wealth of the Gentiles belong to Israel [Isa. 60:5, 11 (translate "forces," KJV, as *wealth*); cf. Gen. 30:25-27, 43; 31:1-3], but *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*.)

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