**The Beast and the Woman**

**From *The Time of the End***

**A Study about the Book of Revelation**

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**Chapter Twenty-seven**

The Beast and the Woman

*Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me*, *saying to me*, “*Come*, *I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters*,

*with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication*, *and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication*.

*So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness*. *And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of names of blasphemy*, *having seven heads and ten horns.*

*The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls*, *having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication*.

*And on her forehead a name was written*: *MYSTERY*, *BABYLON THE GREAT*, *THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH*.

*I saw the woman*, *drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*. *And when I saw her*, *I marveled with great amazement* [great wonder].  (**Revelation 17:1-6**).

Revelation chapters **seventeen** through the first part of chapter **twenty** provides a climactic sequence of events that 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 upon 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* (chapters **17-19a**).  This is the subject matter seen in this climactic part of the book immediately before the destruction of Gentile world power (chapter **19b**) and the ushering in of the Messianic Era (chapter **20a**).

The “*beast*” and the “*woman*” are both used in *metaphorical* senses.  And that which is being referenced by 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 chapter **seventeen** through the first part of chapter **nineteen** as well.

Then, the matter is *further connected with the Old Testament Scriptures* by 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 which is referred to as a “mystery” awaited additional revelation, which is 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 which was 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 (**Revelation 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 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., **Genesis 10**, **11** [Nimrod in chapter **10**; Abraham in chapter **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 (**Isaiah 50:1**; **Jeremiah 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. **Genesis** **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 the faithful city has become an harlot*! (**Isaiah 1:21a**)

But you have played the harlot with many lovers . . .

*You have had a harlot*’*s forehead*; *you refuse to be ashamed*. (**Jeremiah 3:1b**, **3b**; cf. vv. **6-14**)

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

You also played the harlot with the Assyrians . . .

*Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader* [Canaan, KJV] . . . . (**Ezekiel 16:2**, **28a**, **29a**)

*Then the Babylonians came to her*, *into the bed of love*, *and they defiled her with their immorality* . . .

*She revealed her harlotry and uncovered her nakedness* . . . . (**Ezekiel 23:17a**, **18a**;cf. vv. **35-37**)

*Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers*, a*nd no one shall deliver her from My 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 harlot*” in these chapters is other than *Israel*, then a major subject 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 whom you saw is that great city that reigns over* [lit., that 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 **Revelation 11:8** reads:

*And their dead bodies* [the two witnesses] *will 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, typified by *Sodom*, heading the list of sins (cf. **Jeremiah 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 is portrayed in previous verses* (**11:8**; **14:8**; **16:19**).

Thus, according to **Revelation 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. **Isaiah 1:21**, **26**; **Lamentations 1:7**, **8**; **Ezekiel 14:11-13**; **16:2**; **Matthew 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*, **Revelation 17:18** would have to read, “And ‘the woman’ whom you saw is *Israel* . . . .”)

**3)  The Woman Possessing Regal Authority**

Then, **Revelation 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, “*that reigns over* *the kings of the earth*.”  A better translation of these words would be, “that possesses kingly authority over the kings of the earth” (reference Wuest’s *Expanded Translation —* “which possesses [imperial] power over…”), limiting matters in the light of **Exodus 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 on her head* [the woman’s head, Israel’s head] *a garland* [literally: “crown,”] *of twelve stars*. (**Revelation 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 “*garland*” [literally: “*crown*”] in the Greek text of **Revelation 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*, *his throne*, *and great authority*” (**Revelation 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. **Isaiah 52:4**; **Micah 5:5**)].  Moses was instructed to say to Pharaoh, “*Thus says the Lord*, *Israel is My son*, *My firstborn . . . .*” [**Exodus 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 in route 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 **Revelation 17:18**.  There is *only one nation* on the face of the earth that this can be referencing — the nation that *is not to be* “*reckoned among the nations*” [**Numbers 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 **Exodus** **4:22**, **23**, immediately prior to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt; and this nation is identified in **Revelation 17:18**, *after exactly the same fashion* [previously introduced after this fashion in **Revelation 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 **Exodus 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 scepter since prior to the 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* [**Genesis 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. **Romans 8:14**, **15**, **19**; **Galatians** **4:5**; **Ephesians 5:23-32**; **Hebrews 12:23**; **Revelation 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* (**Matthew 23:34-37**), which is said of the harlot in **Revelation 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 should perish outside 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 **Revelation 17:18**.

*O Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem*, *the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her*! (**Luke 13:34a**)

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 (**Matthew 16:21**; **Acts 2:23**, **36**; **Revelation 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*” (**Isaiah 1:18**; cf. vv. **21-26**; **Psalm 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. **Revelation 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 that 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* (**Revelation** **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 (**Revelation** **17:4**; **18:16**).

During the Times of the Gentiles (over 2,600 years), *the nations have held the scepter and have become wealthy at the expense of Israel* (**Revelation** **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 [**Revelation** **17:16**, **17**; **18:8ff**]), it will all be over for the nations.  *The Times of the Gentiles will end*, *the scepter will change hands*, *and the wealth of the Gentiles will be given to Israel* (**Isaiah 60:5**, **11** [the word “forces,” KJV, should be translated “wealth”; ref. NASB, NIV]; cf. **Exodus 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 (**Revelation** **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 that will be theirs through restored Israel will far exceed anything that they will have possessed throughout the Times of the Gentiles* (cf. **Isaiah 65:19**; **Zechariah 8:20-23**).