

Sunday January 11th 2015
From Here To Eternity
Part Thirteen

1). *Re 17:3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 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. 5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

a). Last week we had begun to look at the climactic events that occur leading into the conclusion of Daniel's 70th week, the time of Jacob's trouble, the Tribulation.

b). And in connection with this we had looked at the presentation of 'the woman sitting on a scarlet beast', referred to as the 'great harlot'. And from both the context and the internal evidence from the verses we had looked at we had begun to identify this 'woman', 'the great harlot' as the nation of Israel.

c). There are however three more final pieces of evidence with regards to the harlot's identity that we can add to that which we looked at last week – and this evidence comes right at the very end of Chapter 17 - *Re 17:18 "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."*

d). This is the clearest statement within the Chapter as to the woman's identity – we will remember that the angel had told John - *Re 17:7 ¶ But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her,*
And here in v18 the angel reveals the mystery.

c). To begin with the angel categorically states that the woman 'is that great city', and this city can be readily identified from reference to it back in Chapter 11 - *Re 11:8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

d). The great city is identified as Jerusalem, the place where the 2 witnesses are killed and the place where the Lord was crucified. And once the words 'great city' are used for the first time in this way here in Chapter 11, the

same city must be in view every time this phrase appears beyond that throughout the Revelation. Now we should also note that the city of Jerusalem is used synonymously in scripture for the Jewish people as a whole. In fact the land, the city and the people are so intertwined that reference to one automatically includes the other – *Isa 1:21 ¶ How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.*

La 1:8 Jerusalem has sinned gravely, Therefore she has become vile. All who honored her despise her Because they have seen her nakedness; Yes, she sighs and turns away.

Mt 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

e). Now we will also see in Chapter 11 v8 that Jerusalem is associated with Sodom, synonymous with sexual perversion, and with Egypt, always a type of the world. And then in the next 2 uses of the phrase the 'great city' we find Jerusalem, and therefore the Jewish people, associated with Babylon – *Re 14:8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."*

Re 16:19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

f). To find Jerusalem and by extension the Jewish people now associated with Babylon as well as Sodom and Egypt is perfectly consistent with that pictured here. It was to Babylon that the southern 2 tribes were taken captive in 605BC, beginning the times of the Gentiles. Babylon is out in the world, following the type of Egypt and it was because of the nation's continued transgressions, pictured through the sexual perversions of Sodom that Israel found herself in captivity in the first place - *Jer 22:8 "And many nations will pass by this city; and everyone will say to his neighbor, 'Why has the LORD done so to this great city?' 9 "Then they will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.'"*

g). And this is exactly where Israel finds herself again for the same reasons in Revelation Chapters 17-18 – She is the harlot completely embroiled in the kingdom of the last king of Babylon, scattered amongst the nations, out in the world.

h). And so to see Jerusalem, and therefore the Jewish people, in association with Sodom, Egypt and Babylon in a figurative way as we do here makes perfect sense.

i). Then at the end of the final verse of Revelation Chapter 17 we are told *Re 17:18 "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."*

j). The phrase ‘which reigns over the kings of the earth’ would be better translated, ‘which has kingly or regal authority over the kings of the earth’ – it is a phrase having to do with who has the right to rule over the earth. And there is only one nation who has this right – the nation of Israel – this right being given to them and openly declared in the days of Moses - *Ex 4:22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

k). The declaration is plainly made here that God recognizes Israel as His firstborn son with the rights of rulership that attend that status, not Egypt, nor any of the Gentile nations – and this right to rulership has never been taken from Israel. Now we know that as a result of Israel’s captivity in 605BC that the scepter of rulership was taken from Israel and given to the Gentile nations as the times of the Gentiles began, but despite this Israel’s status as a firstborn son has never changed. The Gentile nations were not and are not firstborn sons and therefore hold the scepter of rulership by default not by right. Israel still retains regal authority, a regal authority that is merely deferred awaiting the nation’s repentance. This is what the angel is drawing our attention to as he tells the mystery of the woman. And this is how we are able to identify her.

l). And this is exactly the picture given to us through the ‘great sign’ in Revelation Chapter 12 - *Re 12:1 ¶ Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland [Stephanos crown] of twelve stars.*

As we have seen in previous studies this whole scene is regal, showing the woman, Israel, in a place of governmental authority, but not yet exercising that authority, hence the stephanos crown of 12 stars. But the great sign is clear Israel is the nation with the right to rule.

m). And then as a final addition to all this we can go back to –

Re 17:6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

And then forward to - *Re 18:24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."*

By comparing scripture with scripture we will see that it is Jerusalem alone, referring to the Jewish people, who are guilty of the shedding of this blood – *Lu 13:33 "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be [lit. it is not possible] that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. 34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!*

And we see exactly the same thing from a slightly different perspective recorded in Matthew's gospel - *Mt 23:34 ¶ "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*

n). The point is that there is only one nation guilty of the shedding of the blood of the prophets, the martyrs of Jesus and all who were slain on the earth as seen in Revelation Chapters 17 and 18 and that is Israel.

o). And it is the shedding of this blood that is a part of the reason for the judgment of Israel. We might remember the words of God to Noah in – *Ge 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.*

Re 19:1 ¶ After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! 2 "For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."

p). And so, all in all, putting together that which we looked at last week and that which we have seen this week, we will know for certain that the 'great harlot', the 'woman' seen sitting on the scarlet beast is the nation of Israel – she can be no other.

2). We will remember that the picture we are given of the great harlot at the beginning of Revelation Chapter 17 depicts Israel at the very pinnacle of her degeneracy - *Da 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;*

a). The making of a covenant with the Antichrist and embroiling themselves within his kingdom, the most corrupt and wicked form of Gentile world power that will ever had existed is reminiscent of the cry on the day of the Lord's crucifixion, but taken to a new level - *Joh 19:15 But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

b). All that remains to be seen now is Israel brought to repentance and Gentile world power utterly destroyed for all time.

3). Just before we go there however, while thinking about Israel's harlotry, I cannot help but be reminded of the warning given to us in the Book of James *Jas 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?*

a). Within the context of how seriously God takes Israel's harlotry and what awaits them in the future because of it, it would be good to remember that our enemy would like nothing better than for us to become enmeshed in the things of this world so that we should experience a similar outcome. And it is because of our relationship with Christ - *2Co 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

That our becoming a friend of the world is seen from God's perspective as adultery, and to engage in such a relationship would make us an enemy of God.

b). Paul speaks of those who do this very thing in - *Php 3:18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly*

things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

And the key to this, not unsurprisingly, is where we set our focus – on earthly things or our citizenship in heaven; because where that focus is will determine our relationship with the world.

c). Rather than be a friend of the world, making us an enemy of God, it would be much more sensible to be a friend of God and have the world hate us, and how we may become a friend of God is clearly set out for us in an earlier Chapter of James - *Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*

And let's remember what the scripture also records concerning Abraham's faith – *Heb 11:10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

d). Abraham had faith to the saving of the soul and then organized his life in accordance with that faith, even to the extent that he was fully prepared to sacrifice Isaac because he knew the absolute certainty of the promises of God - *Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*

e). This same thing is also said by the Lord in a slightly different way – *Joh 15:14 "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

f). This provides us with yet another excellent reason for keeping on the whole armor of God so that we can stand against the wiles of the devil, knowing that he will flaunt the things of this world in front of us – the things which the scriptures describe as ‘the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the pride of life’ - It is sobering to note that the Apostle John ‘marveled’ when he saw the great harlot, so attractive did she appear.

g). Let's remember the certainty of that which God has said –

1Co 6:9 ¶ *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers.....will inherit the kingdom of God.*

h). And also encourage ourselves with the promise - Jas 1:12 *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

4). One last thing to say concerning Israel and the Gentile nations – now we know, even from our study this morning that the Gentile nations presently hold the scepter of rulership of the earth because of Israel's harlotry – the regal authority the Gentiles have then is on loan, so to speak, as we wait for the day of Israel's repentance.

a). But we may not have made the connection between Israel's present condition and position and another facet of that which the Gentile nations have gained through this. Let's look at what we find in Revelation Chapter 18 – Re 18:3 *"For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."..... 9 ¶ "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' 11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 "merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 "and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.....15 "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 'For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'*

b). Simply then, the wealth of the world belongs to Israel – this we would understand to be the double portion of the inheritance that belongs to the firstborn son – in Israel’s case both material blessing and spiritual blessing.

c). But because of the nation’s harlotry Israel’s material blessing, in the same way as her regal authority, has been transferred to the Gentile nations and the spiritual blessings are not available to either.

d). The world then, particularly the western world, has become rich at Israel’s expense – but we will also note from our verses in Chapter 18 that Israel has become wealthy also as a result of her illicit relationships with the Gentile world – she has also become rich then through her involvement with the Gentile nations, not through the blessing of God as it should have been.

e). None of the nations of the earth realize this, nor do they realize that which awaits them in the future – but the scriptures leave us in no doubt.

f). We have no doubt seen on the TV the meetings of the G7 nations, the wealthiest nations in the world, whose financiers and central bankers come together to orchestrate the world’s economy. We will be aware of the Federal Reserve, the Bank of England, the Banque de France etc. – the world’s stock markets and other financial institutions all looking to understand and manipulate the next financial trend – but in reality the end of this is as certain as the end of Gentile world power and is already laid out for us in the pages of the OT - *Ex 12:35 Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. 36 And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.*

g). Not only did God’s firstborn son leave Egypt in the place of regal authority which was to be exercised in the land within the Theocracy, but he also took with him the wealth of Egypt.

h). And in that future day following the conclusion of the Tribulation God will remove His repentant firstborn son from that typified by Egypt once again - *Eze 37:21 "Then say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 "and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23 "They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their*

transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. 24 "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 "Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. 26 "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28 "The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.""

i). And God's firstborn son will return to the land covenanted to Abraham Isaac and Jacob in the place of regal authority at the head of the nations within the Theocracy.

j). And just as when they left the Egypt of the Assyrian Pharaoh, they will take the wealth of the Gentile nations with them - *Isa 60:5 Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you..... 11 Therefore your gates shall be open continually; They shall not be shut day or night, That men may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, And their kings in procession.*

k). And for the Gentile nations that remain on the earth and continue through the Millennial Kingdom this is no bad thing as they will now receive the spiritual blessings through Israel, promised by God to Abraham, that have never yet been theirs and those spiritual blessings are of such magnitude that they cannot be compared with the material wealth they now possess.

l). Let's remember what the scripture says - *Ro 11:12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!*

m). And perhaps within this overall context we will better understand why the scriptures admonish us - *1Ti 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

And - *Mt 6:19 ¶ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where*

thieves do not break in and steal. 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

n). We will continue with this next week, if the Lord is willing.