

Sunday January 18th 2015
From Here To Eternity
Part Fourteen

1). Re 18:1 ¶ *After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 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."*

a). We have seen in past weeks how Israel, from the days of Moses, has been recognized by God as His firstborn son with the right to rulership over the earth and the double portion of the inheritance which belong to the firstborn – and we had seen last week how this is also inclusive of all the wealth presently held by the Gentile nations – *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.*

b). We also know that because of Israel's harlotry through entering into illicit relationships with the Gentile nations rather than ruling over them, that Israel's right to rulership has temporarily been given to the Gentiles and that the wealth of the world that also belongs to Israel has been temporarily given to the Gentile nations as well awaiting the day of Israel's restoration.

c). A fact often overlooked by the church at large and misunderstood in most instances is that there is only one nation on the earth that has a God – the nation of Israel - *Ex 3:15 Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'*

d). No one has ever had access to God except through the nation of Israel, which is exactly what we would see from our own experience – we have come to God through a Jewish Messiah, who reveals Himself to us through the writings of Jewish hands - *Ro 3:1 ¶ What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.*

No scripture has ever been penned by a Gentile.

e). And all that God has promised us with respect to the age to come we have access to through our positional standing in the Jewish Christ – *Ga 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

f). And we should also realize that God's dealings with the Gentile nations is always with respect to Israel.

2). Not only this, but within the present system of rulership Israel remains separate from all other nations - *Nu 23:9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, And from the hills I behold him; There! A people dwelling alone, Not reckoning itself among the nations.*

a). Every nation on the earth is presided over by a 'prince', a fallen angel, within the kingdom of Satan, but not Israel – Israel is not ruled by a fallen angel but by an angelic prince who did not rebel with Satan and the separation between these 2 groups can be clearly seen in the Book of Daniel –

Da 10:20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

And also in the Book of the Revelation - *Re 12:7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,*

b). This is another facet of the reason for Israel's persecution over the centuries.

c). And as we look at this we can again understand the seriousness of Israel's national involvement with the Gentile nations.

d). Now we will also recall that those 'in Christ' are described as a new nation – *Mt 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

e). But this 'nation' is a spiritual nation, a nation that has its citizenship in heaven and maybe best understood by the use of the phrase 'people group'. It is not a nation upon the earth as are the others and is not presided over by an angel. In fact it is a nation in waiting so to speak that owes its allegiance to and is ruled over by the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who in that future Day will be King, and as such this nation is not a part of and is not to have involvement with the present system of rulership - *2Ti 2:4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*

This is the very detail that we see laid out for us through the foundational type of David and Saul.

f). This being said though we will remember the parable of the mustard seed from the Matthew 13 parables that pictures the 'Church', the recipient of the Word of the Kingdom, growing unnaturally to become a tree -

Mt 13:31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

And we will remember as we read these verses that a 'tree' in scripture is used as a symbol for a national power [something that can be seen in the oldest parable in the Bible in Judges Chapter 9]. The church then, in a general sense, has allowed itself to become the very national power within the Gentile nations of the earth that it was never supposed to be - Hence its unnatural growth and its provision of a home for the 'birds of the air'.

g). From the days of the conversion of Constantine the Great when church and state became one, forming the Holy Roman Empire, through to today with the Church of England and the nation status of the Vatican, to name but 2, this circumstance continues to exist.

h). And as we consider this we may well ask ourselves the question, 'Is the involvement of the 'Church' at large with the present system of rulership any different from Israel's harlotry past, present and future?' The answer of course is self-evident and may provide us with additional insight into the Lord's words to the Church in Ephesus recorded in - *Re 2:4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

i). Because of this situation which exists within the church at large we can more readily understand the admonitions and the warnings that scripture provides for us as individuals concerning becoming involved with the Gentile world in the kingdom of Satan - This is exactly what we saw in James Chapter

4 last week and the very thing we have seen in past weeks in – *Ro 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

And it is the subject of the prayer of the Lord recorded in – *Joh 17:15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 ¶ "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 ¶ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;*

j). Now there is one very important difference that we need to note between Israel's involvement with the nations of the world and that of the Church; and this difference is with respect to the nature of repentance. For Israel their harlotry must be repented of nationally – the entire nation as an entity must be brought to that place. But not so with the Church – individuals within the Church should repent of their involvement with the present world system, yes, but there is no requirement for the Church, as a whole, to come to that place for God's plans and purposes to be fulfilled.

k). But Israel's national repentance is a different matter entirely – without it God will not act.

3). The verses we began with this morning out of Revelation Chapter 18 picture Israel being brought to the point of national repentance – we have seen in previous weeks these verses from Chapter 17 with respect to the great harlot, who we now know to be Israel - *Re 17:15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16 "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17 "For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.*

a). V15 shows Israel scattered amongst the nations, the place she has been sent by the Lord to bring about her repentance – and in v16 we see the 10 horns, a picture of the Antichrist's one world kingdom hating the harlot.

b). And we see as a result of this hatred this kingdom will, 'make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire' – all of which pictures the judgment of God through the persecution enacted by this kingdom – the

same kingdom with which Israel played the harlot through entering into covenant relationship with at the beginning point of the Tribulation –
Eze 23:9 "Therefore I have delivered her Into the hand of her lovers, Into the hand of the Assyrians, For whom she lusted. 10 They uncovered her nakedness, Took away her sons and daughters, And slew her with the sword; She became a byword among women, For they had executed judgment on her.

c). Then as we look at v17 from Revelation 17 we see that this is all orchestrated by God in order to fulfill His purpose – which within the short term here is for Israel to cry out to the God of their fathers' in repentance.

d). If we go back to the foundational type for this seen in the Exodus this is what we find - *Ex 3:7 ¶ And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 "So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 "Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."*

e). What we see then is that the Lord hears the cry of His people brought about through their sorrows and oppression at the hands of the Egyptians and sends a deliverer, Moses, to bring them out of Egypt to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to fulfill their role as a firstborn son.

f). Now, to go back to where we were a short time ago – let's please note that the sending of a deliverer is contingent upon, 'the cry of the children of Israel' – the cry of the nation as a whole. We see then that in order for God to act the nation must cry out in repentance first. Without that cry God will do nothing.

g). With this in mind this is what we find in Revelation Chapter 19 –
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." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" 5 ¶ Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our

God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

h). That which we see here at the beginning of Chapter 19 comes 'after these things' – and 'these things' are the events, some of which we have seen this morning, which take place in Chapters 17 and 18 - *Re 18:21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.*

i). Chapters 17 and 18 then detail those climactic events which bring Israel as a nation to the place of repentance, crying out to the God of their fathers' just as we had seen in Exodus – And this repentant cry is pictured for us in Chapter 19 v3 – 'Her smoke rises up forever and ever' – The rising smoke is an allusion to the smoke, the sweet smelling aroma, of the burnt offering for sin from the law of Moses – the 'Keturah'.

j). And again, just as we had seen in Exodus, in response to this repentant cry God will send a deliverer, the One greater than Moses – *Re 19:11 ¶ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

4). At the beginning of v11 we see 'heaven opened' in order for the Rider on the white horse, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, to ride forth, to the earth, with the armies in heaven, to deliver Israel and to conclude His dealings with the Gentile nations.

a). Now there are several references to 'heaven' or 'the heavens' being opened in the NT and each occasion has a unique connection to rulership – but there are 2 of these references, the one here in Revelation Chapter 19 and

one in Acts Chapter 7 at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, that parallel one another in a way that it would be helpful for us to look at.

b). *Ac 7:51 ¶ "You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. 52 "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 "who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." 54 ¶ When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"*

We will remember that Stephen, 'being full of the Holy Spirit', had presented an incredible message to Israel's religious leaders, the council and the high priest, in which he dealt with the central parts of 2000 years of Jewish history drawing their attention to that which had taken place in the past and then climaxed through the crucifixion of their Messiah – he showed them that the Jewish people, especially the religious leaders, had always persecuted and killed the prophets God had sent to them. And now in a climactic act they had done the same to God's own Son, the One who was born King of the Jews.

c). This message is given very early on in the re-offer of the Kingdom to Israel by the Church and is seen to bring the nation once again, through its religious leaders, to a climactic point of decision. Stephen had focused his message on the written word as it pertained to the living Word and so powerful was this message that at its conclusion the heavens were opened, and the Son of Man is seen standing at God's right hand.

d). Because of what we know, even from that which we have studied this morning, the scene that we witness here is self-explanatory.

e). This amazing message had brought Israel's religious leaders to a decisive, defining moment, presenting them with only 2 choices – either they could receive the message and cry out to God in repentance at which point the standing Christ would return through the opened heaven, establish His Kingdom and bring the promised blessings to Israel and the Gentile nations – or, they could reject the message thereby causing the Son of Man to sit down again at the Father's right hand, causing the heavens to be closed, producing the direst of consequences for Israel and the Gentile nations. This is just how important this moment is.

f). *Ac 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

They reject the message and in that fleeting moment of time they decide the course of human history for the next 2000 years. Everything that has happened in the world from that moment on has been a result of that decision.

g). Not the least of which is our presence here in pursuit of the Kingdom – we will note from Acts 7:58 that it is at the moment of the rejection of the reoffered Kingdom that a man named Saul is introduced – the man we know as Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

h). In that day then recorded in Acts Chapter 7 Christ's return to the earth to establish His Kingdom was contingent upon Israel's national repentance. That repentance never came and with respect to Christ's return to the earth the heavens have remained closed ever since. And Christ has continued to sit at the Father's right hand.

i). However, as we have seen, the day is coming when through the intensity of God's Judgment Israel will cry out in repentance, God will hear from heaven - *2Ch 7:14 "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

The heavens will be opened and Christ will return to the earth to establish His Kingdom.

5). Let's go back to Revelation Chapter 19 for a moment and look at another event that is recorded there - *Re 19:6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

a). There is a scene of jubilation in heaven because of Israel's repentant cry and there is such rejoicing because this is the one event necessary to bring about the fulfillment of God's purpose for the ages – once this has happened God will complete all that He has promised.

b). And it is interesting to note that it is because of Israel's cry that the festivities in connection with the marriage of the Son to His Bride take place.

But we must be sure to note that these are festivities only, this is not the marriage – the marriage we will recall, from the type in the Book of Ruth, takes place automatically upon the completion of the redemption of the inheritance. And at this point, when the marriage festivities take place, the inheritance is not yet fully redeemed – but so certain is the completion of this redemption that celebrations surrounding the marriage that will come from it can take place.

c). And as we have seen it is following these festivities in heaven that the heavens open and Christ with Moses and Elijah and the armies of heaven return to the earth.

d). Their return to the earth though comes prior to the end of the Tribulation and prior to the completion of the redemption of the inheritance and precedes the establishment of the Kingdom by at least 75 days.

e). However, through the description given of Christ as He rides forth – *Re 19:12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns [diademas]. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.*

We may know for certain that the Kingdom has been given into His hand by God the Father - *Re 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

Christ is now King and is returning to take that which is rightfully His – the crowns He is seen wearing cannot be those worn by Satan and his angels as these are still to be taken from them and must therefore be the same crowns cast down by the 24 elders, crowns that have to do with the rulership of the earth – crowns that on the heads of the elders were stephanos, but now on the head of Christ have become diadema.

f). We will though have to continue with this next time – if the Lord is willing.