

Where Is The Beast? (Part Eight)

More Characteristics of the Woman

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We're going to begin this sermon by turning to a series of scriptures that we have gone through quite a number of times, but I want to touch on them once again. Turn to Ezekiel 23:1-5. I am doing this as a reminder more than anything to hook us into the whole series of sermons on the Harlot of Revelation 17 and 18.

Ezekiel 23:1-5 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother: And they committed whoredom in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah. And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours.

Ezekiel 23:7-8 Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted: with all their idols she defiled herself. Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt: for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her.

Ezekiel 23:11-12 And when her sister Aholibah saw this she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she [Aholah], and in her whoredoms more than her sister in her whoredoms. She doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men.

Ezekiel 23:17-19 And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them. So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister. Yet she multiplied her whoredoms in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.

Here once again God hammers away at Israel's harlotry. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and especially Ezekiel and Hosea use this metaphorical form to clearly illustrate Israel's faithlessness in her relationship with God. This ties directly into Revelation 17 and 18.

Why is this important to this series? Because virtually the entire Bible is devoted to Israel and the Church. *They* are the focus of God's intention to reproduce Himself, beginning with His promises to Abraham, and then His covenant with Abraham. God went so far as to enter into a symbolic marriage with Israel—the physical descendants of Abraham—thus revealing the closeness that *He* considered their relationship. He did that with no other nation.

Even when the time came in God's plan to summon Gentiles into His purpose, the great bulk of all summoned into the Church have been Israelites dwelling among Israelitish people in Israelitish lands. One even becomes a spiritual Jew when one becomes converted.

This procedure of focusing on Israel continues right on through the Bible to the present in which we live. We live in the end-time, and God's concern in Revelation—the ultimate end-time book—does not turn from this pattern. His focus is still on Israel and the Church. His focus is on the physical descendants of Abraham and the Israel of God (the Church), who are almost overwhelmingly physically from physical Israel.

Other parts of the Bible show that Israel has fully earned the title "Babylon the Great," even as she previously earned the titles "Sodom" and "Egypt." The Great Harlot of Revelation 17 and 18 is not a Gentile church, nor a

Gentile nation, because neither a Gentile church nor a Gentile nation has ever entered into a covenant with God. The Gentiles will get their opportunity following Christ's return.

The Gentile world has only done what comes naturally, but Israel rebelled, and played the harlot with the world in defiance of God. She has embraced its way to such an extent that she has outdone them in *their* manner of life, and has become appropriately named "Babylon the Great."

God, in Revelation 17 and Revelation 18, is describing end-time Israel. He is describing all of Israel in close relationship with the Beast, influencing it, but with the two Joseph tribes—America and Britain—as the Woman's strongest portion, and perhaps with America being the one primarily described, because *it* is most influential at the end.

In the two previous sermons we digressed into an important aspect of the identity of the Woman of Revelation 17, for us to *personally* consider as Christ's end-time "house." We picked that up in Hebrews 3. That is what the Bible reveals to be the cause of, and the nature of the conduct that earned Israel the title "The Great Harlot."

In Exodus 24, Israel solemnly entered into the Old Covenant agreement with God. I want to turn to this so that you will have it indelibly impressed into your mind, because it is important to you and me.

Exodus 24:7 And he [Moses] took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said [here comes their vow:], All that the LORD has said *will we do* , and be obedient.

However, in the pressures of daily life, Israel's attitude turned out to be far different from the one she was in whenever she solemnly promised before God as to what she would do. The apostle Paul reports in Hebrews 3 of Israel's " *evil* heart of unbelief." That heart is the fountain, the source, that gave birth to her irrational, erratic and totally unreliable behavior. She could not be trusted to remain firm to her commitment to be faithful to keeping the commandments, and thus God's way of life.

Now had the making of the covenant been a literal marriage between two humans, her conduct would have been as God named it: harlotry. However, this was an agreement between a holy spiritual God and the human nation that He chose. Though she transgresses every commandment in a wide variety of ways collectively, the spiritual sin through which her unfaithfulness is most frequently demonstrated is ***gross idolatry*** . Israel simply serves herself, following the whim of the moment in order that she might have fun.

The word "fun" is not used in the Bible. Instead it uses the word "pleasure." "In order that she might do her ***pleasure*** ." It was whatever ***pleased*** herself. Her lack of belief gives her nature full reign then to exhibit itself in the self-given liberty to follow the lust of her flesh, the lust of her eyes, and the pride of life. She rejected her Husband as her Ruler, because she wanted a king just like the other nations.

Except for the occasional times when Israel had good leadership, Israel conducted its affairs, whether personal, domestic, or international, in the Babylonian manner. Israel, despite its great advantages, became just another kingdom of this world. God though has remained faithful to His agreements and His promises all through the centuries, while she has maintained a hypocritical "*God's people*" stance toward the world, pawning herself off as "***Christian*** ."

With the founding of the Church following Christ's resurrection, the Church then became God's spiritual focus, and having made the New Covenant with God it is now ***our*** charge to be faithful in the face of living, surrounded by "Babylon the Great." God says to us, "Come out of Her, my people." This is literally physically impossible, but we can come out spiritually by being faithful to God in the keeping of His commandments.

We must do what Israel failed to do, because the stakes for us are much, much greater than they ever were for Israel. The New Covenant is a better covenant than Israel made. It contains better promises, enabling us a much better opportunity to be faithful and to grow, but those greater advantages also render us even more responsible than Israel ever was.

There are still a number of marks of Israel's identity as the Harlot of Revelation 17 and 18 that remain to be covered, and this we will do in this sermon. Three sermons ago we briefly touched upon a smattering of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through fulfilling these promises, God moved to make their descendants *great* : great in numbers, great economically, politically, and militarily—even greater than any other nation or group of nations in the history of mankind's period of time on this earth.

It is interesting that historically a very significant step to that end (that is, to making Israel great), was taken at this very time of the year in which I am speaking to you right now. It was at the end of July, and at the beginning of August in 1588 that the Spanish Armada of 125 ships was defeated by a number of factors: very poor weather, the failure of the Duke of Parma and his army to make their appointment to meet the Spanish fleet in Calais, France as they had planned, plus the harassing defense of Queen Elizabeth's British navy which doomed the planned Spanish invasion of Britain.

It was the king of Spain's intent to defeat the Protestant Queen Elizabeth and to restore Catholicism to England. But God had other ideas, and the victory for the Israelitish people altered *entirely* the course of history by being the beginning point of their rise to worldwide dominance. First it was Holland, and then it was France that dominated things; and then Britain, and now America.

Revelation 17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

The elegant clothing, the jewelry and precious metals illustrate her wealth. It is a wealth as amongst nations, not merely a church, combined as one group of people. The Israelitish people—the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—control, all by themselves, around 60% of the wealth of the Earth. That is an astounding figure! Nobody else on earth is in the position to influence, persuade, and guide as Israel is. It is through the misuse of these gifts that Israel was raised to *worldly* greatness.

God gave the wealth, but Israel's misuse of that wealth raised us in *worldly* greatness. The emphasis is on the word "**worldly**." Despite our material greatness, it is also unfortunately *spiritually* great in immorality, *great* in confusion, *great* in deviancy from responsibility, *great* in influence. It is so *great* in its power that only *it* can hold the Beast in check and make *it* (the Beast) do its good bidding until God's time comes.

Now Israel, primarily represented by the Joseph tribes, just recently brushed the world aside. There is no other nation of peoples on earth that fits the characteristics given here in Revelation 17 and 18, but there are yet more clues that have already been given.

Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto you the judgment of the great whore that *sits* upon many waters.

Revelation 17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman *sit* upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Revelation 17:9 And here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman *sits* .

Revelation 17:15 And he said unto me, The waters which you saw where the whore *sits* , are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Everyone of those verses has something in common. They contain the word "*sit* (*s*)." In verse 1 it says she "*sits* upon many waters." In verse 3 she *sits* upon the Beast. In verse 9 she *sits* upon seven mountains, and in verse 15, the waters upon which she *sits* is a description of the Beast. It is defined as "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."

We're going to go back to the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 2:2-3 And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

These two verses identify the Bible symbol of a mountain. A mountain is a nation, symbolically. Hills are the smaller nations. The LORD's house, which is the Kingdom of God, is the *greatest* of all mountains. It is the greatest of all nations at the time that this series of verses is projected forward into—after Christ's return. Therefore, we find the Great Whore of Revelation 17 sitting on many waters, sitting on seven mountains, and she is sitting on the Beast in addition to that.

The term "sit" is one that we have not looked into in order to find the Bible's usage of it, but we're going to do that right now. Go to Proverbs 31. The word "sit" or "sits" appears over 300 times in the scriptures, and most of the time the word merely indicates a posture that contrasts with "to stand." However, there are times when it indicates qualities of far greater importance.

Proverbs 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates when he *sits* among the elders of the land.

This is a common, positive usage of this word "sits." Now we're going to look at a very familiar Psalm.

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor *sits* in the seat of the scornful.

Here we find a *negative* usage of the term. Turn now to Matthew 23, where Jesus used this word.

Matthew 23:1-3 Then spake Jesus to the multitudes, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees *sit* in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not you after their works, for they say, and do not.

Matthew 8:11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall *sit* down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

That is a very telling one. We'll look at one more in the New Testament, in Acts 23, and then I think we can make a clear conclusion here.

Acts 23:3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite you, you whited wall: for *sit* you to judge me after the law, and command me to be smitten contrary to the law?

When we put all these scriptures together, this smattering on usages shows that "sit" indicates a position of prominence, of authority, and influence (for good or bad, depending on the context) great enough to teach, persuade, guide, or *force* another to follow or imitate.

This description in Revelation 17 of the Great Harlot *sitting* —(she's sitting on many waters, she's sitting on the Beast, and she's sitting on seven mountains)—teaches us a couple of things that help to identify her among the nations. Then in Revelation 17:15 this Beast is defined. The waters are defined.

First: Even as a person sits on a horse's back and influences it to go one way, this way, or that way, or to run or to walk, the Great Whore teaches, guides, or *forces* many nations, perhaps worldwide, to do her bidding. In wording things this way, God is saying that whatever it is that we are looking for, this Woman has **GREAT** worldwide influence—so great she can actually hold the *Beast* in check. That's **POWER!** And yet she is *not* the Beast! She is *sitting* on the Beast.

Second: The Beast is described in verse 15 as consisting of peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. In like manner, as it is shown, described,

and illustrated in Revelation 13 as being made up of wild animals—three different wild and powerful animals, it is also described as "many peoples, many tongues." And so it is thus describing the Beast as being a nation, or a group of nations, a great power on earth in which there is great diversity.

This is in contrast to the Woman, because she is never described in such a manner. She is always depicted as one unit. Because of this contrast between the Woman and the Beast, there is the very distinct possibility that God wants us to understand that the Woman in this end-time prophecy is *one people*, as contrasted to the Beast that consists of many diverse *unrelated* people. Now feeding this information then into the present time—into end-time circumstances—God is describing all of Israel as one nation in intimate association with the Beast. It is an association of support, strong influence, and even control.

Now consider—thinking about how things are going on earth—how entwined the nations of Israel are with Europe, if indeed that is where the Beast is going to arise through political, trade, military, and economic agreements. Things like NATO is a good example.

Despite God looking or describing Israel as one people, it is the *Joseph* tribes—America and the United Kingdom in particular, as the history of the last 200 years of this world shows—that are the clearest end-time model for the Woman.

We are going to look back in time once again to prophecies that are given—(in this case back in the books of Amos and Hosea)—how that it was the tribes of Joseph which were the leaders just before Israel fell at that time and went into captivity.

Amos 5:4-6 For thus says the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek you Me, and you shall live: But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought. Seek the LORD, and you shall live: lest he break out like fire in the house of *Joseph*, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Bethel.

Now why single out Joseph, even though the captivity, the destruction that was about to fall was going to fall on the *Ten Northern Tribes* at the hand of the Assyrians? The reason is because "Joseph" is being used here in the same way as "Jerusalem" is used to represent the entire nation of Israel. Ephraim and Manasseh, which make up the tribes of Joseph, were the leading and strongest tribes just before Israel fell, even as they are today. Do you think history doesn't repeat itself? God does this so that we will see the patterns developing.

It is interesting, that at the same time that the book of Amos depicts, Judah was the leading and strongest tribe in the south, even as they are today. They are a pretty strong nation even though they are outnumbered by the Arabs like 100 million to about 500 million people. They are stronger than all those nations that surround them, apparently collectively. That's why the Arabs won't attack them. They tried it three or four times, and every time they get beaten. Who were the leaders back then? The leaders back then in Amos' and Hosea's day were Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah—the same as it is today.

Amos 5:15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of *Joseph* .

It is entirely possible God intends these prophecies for all of Israel, but Joseph is again singled out because it was the leading tribe politically, economically, and militarily. It is interesting, brethren, that at the end-time the bulk of the end-time Church is in Joseph. The United States, Canada, Britain, [South Africa,] Australia, and New Zealand make up Joseph. That's where the *bulk* of the Church is located.

Amos 6:1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named *chief* of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

Amos 6:6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

This phrase in verse 1 says, "which are named chief of the nations." If your Bible has a marginal note, it would help for you to read what the margin says. If your Bible does not have marginal notes, I will tell you what the margin says. It says, "*Notable persons in the **chief** nation.*"

If you want to update that into the end-time, what is the chief nation on earth today? It is Israel. It's *chief* in God's eyes. The other nations of the world, though they may not like it, will grudgingly admit, and might say that the chief nation on earth is America. But America is just part of Joseph. They are, without knowing it, referring to the Joseph tribes of the nation of Israel.

It is very interesting when Amos' statement there in verse 1 is paraphrased into modern language. In verse 1 God is saying that the average, reasonably well-off man on the street [of Israel] is saying, "Look at the other nations! There is *none* greater than we!" A bit of braggadocio by the average Israelite.

Now what is so interesting (if we think of this in terms of the way things are today, because the parallel is there) the pattern has been established—we *ARE* militarily and economically the greatest nation on earth, and the Israelites were bragging about it. I think that the average Israelite on the street today takes pride in the power of the United States and Britain, who, as I mentioned earlier, just brushed the world aside in order to go to war in Iraq, and just overpowered Iraq in what amounted to a matter of just a few weeks.

What is so interesting is that we can look back on what happened to Israel and know that the same basic pattern is going to be followed in this modern time, because this boastful echo was something that their leaders were also saying. The foremost men in Israel were saying this. On the surface, what they were saying—and what the people on the streets were echoing—was probably true, but beneath the surface the cancer of Israel's immorality and the false spirituality was eating away at their vitals, and soon God was going to bring them down despite how powerful He had made them.

Amos is painting a picture of a people who were so self-absorbed, who drank wine in *bowls* . Just overflowing abundance. Wine is always a symbol of wealth, of having the good things in life. Overflowing abundance. So God is painting a picture of a people who were so self-absorbed with having

pleasure, so confident in their power that they feel free to indulge themselves in every pleasure, ignoring the fact that the entire nation is in reality doing something similar to walking on eggshells in every area important to their well-being.

Amos and Hosea were contemporaries during the reign of Uzziah in the south, and Jereboam II in the north, but they were both prophets to Israel in the north. Amos began preaching before Hosea, but Hosea continued on a great number of years after Amos stopped. In fact it has been said, been researched, that Hosea's ministry to Israel continued up until 725 BC. This was only three or four years before Israel fell to the Assyrians.

God was faithful in sending prophets to warn the people and to give them the opportunity to repent. But in Hosea He switches gears a little bit away from what Amos wrote. Amos used the term "Joseph" to represent all of the Ten Tribes. Hosea uses the term "Ephraim" for the same purpose. Hosea used "Ephraim" the same way that Amos used "Joseph. Sometimes it is clear that God means, in either case, *all* Ten Northern Tribes, but sometimes it is more clearly seen in Hosea that He meant Ephraim itself in distinction from the other nine tribes

Hosea 10:11-13 And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loves to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy: break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped iniquity: you have eaten the fruit of lies: because you did trust in your way, in the multitude of your mighty men.

Now here He means all of Israel—a condemnation to the whole Ten Tribes, but He used the name of Ephraim to represent them all.

Revelation 17:16-17 And the ten horns which you saw upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God has put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

During the practical realities of this end-time, in international politics, economics, and military affairs, the Beast may be resentful and unwilling to do as the Woman directs. It undoubtedly will butt and resist as a wild animal would, but until God is ready, it ends up most of the time doing what the Woman wants anyway. The Beast submits to the Woman because the Woman has a power greater in the political, economic, and military areas than does the Beast, and it is a power that the Beast resents and envies and *greatly* desires for it to have for itself.

The religious aspect of Babylon indeed influences the Beast, but there is more influencing the Beast than religion. Look at verse 18.

Revelation 17:18 And the woman which you saw is that great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.

Revelation 18:10-20 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is your judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buys their merchandise anymore: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that your soul lusted after are departed from you, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from you, and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by *her*, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying,

What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping, and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of *her* costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, you heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets: for God has avenged you on her.

Now back in thought to Revelation 17:18. Revelation 17 ends, but Revelation 18 is a continuing description of the **WOMAN**, not the **Beast**. It is a *continuing* description of the *Woman* in Revelation 17—the **GREAT HARLOT!** Revelation 17:18 clearly calls the Woman a **CITY**, not a *church*. Remember, God symbolically uses a city to represent an entire nation. In the end-time, the original Babylon no longer exists as either a city *or* a nation. But for the end-time, God prophesies a Babylon (that He calls "a **great Harlot**") will exist as a **city/nation** that certainly has religious aspects to it, but is not solely a church. He clearly identifies the **Harlot** as a **city/nation**.

Revelation 18 *adds* to the description of a **nation**, not a church, because it describes a **HUGE** worldwide merchandising and manufacturing entity that men *weep* over when it is destroyed. Religious entities don't manufacture and merchandise.

We must understand this fact, because Revelation 18 must coordinate with the identity of the Woman in Revelation 17, and this gives another major reason why the Woman of Revelation 17 cannot be a church. Revelation 18 is describing what **nations** involve themselves in. The Woman of Revelation 17 is clearly identified as a powerful worldwide manufacturing and merchandising entity. She may be religious, but she is far more interested in what produces **power** and influences the world.

Remember, that in I Samuel 8, Israel rejected God and clearly became a nation of this world, and so in Revelation 18 the emphasis is on its financial aspects as it is the merchants, the manufacturers, and the shippers of products that bewail the Harlot's destruction. Why do they bewail it? Because they see **their** wealth going up in destruction. No church is

manufacturing and merchandising, as Revelation 18 describes. So *here* is revealed the major foundation of the Woman's power that enables her to influence so greatly.

It is *economic power* that gives strength to the other worldly powers. We have a saying: "Follow the money!" Money is *power* in this world, and money enables a nation to be extremely influential. So here in Revelation 18 is a pretty good portrayal of *globalization*, and all of the out-sourcing that is now going on in this world through free trade agreements. Babylon is portrayed as a huge worldwide merchandising power that has apparently promoted the spread of manufacturing all over the world in order that she might consume what others have manufactured through their craft.

Revelation 18:17-19 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness [her wealth]! For in one hour is she made desolate.

Revelation 18:9-11 And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is your judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buys their merchandise anymore.

To the political figures, the merchants and the transportation industries weep, because when Babylon falls there is no one to buy, or consume as we would call it today, what they produce from afar. They weep because they are greatly weakened in *their* power, and see *their* hopes beginning to be destroyed along with her.

Like all worldly nations, the Beast too is driven by self-interest, and it is more interested in *these* things than religion. It is also influenced by the power of money that merchandising generates.

Turn with me back to the book of Ezekiel, chapter 28. The subject is, on one hand, the king of Tyre, which was the New York City of its day, but over and above that, the subject is Satan the Devil.

Ezekiel 28:15-17 You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the multitude of your *merchandise* they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you.

Right here we touch bases with the *source* of both the Woman's and the Beast's interest and power. It is *money*. God has permitted, or directed Satan to produce the kind of business that we have on earth that produces the wealth of nations. It is merchandising. It's not what God established in Israel. He established an economy that was based upon agriculture, in which *He* controlled the weather. In that case, God would have regulated the economy of Israel, and not Satan through merchandising.

Now merchandising is not inherently evil, but the way Satan does it, it *is* inherently evil, because he works on men's lust in order to produce the wealth among nations. God would not do so. He would produce wealth through sharing. And so we begin to touch bases with what is driving both the Woman and the Beast. They are competing for power to control. The basis of their economy goes right back to Satan the Devil and merchandising, and the consuming of goods.

Of course the Beast is eventually going to destroy the Woman, and then comes into effect what it says in Revelation 13:4.

Revelation 13:4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast . . .

Remember the merchandising of Revelation 18. Remember the merchandising of Ezekiel 28. It is the *Dragon* who is bringing forth the power of the Beast.

Revelation 13:4 . . . And they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

This is after the Woman goes down the tubes. God is going to pull the power of the Beast together to enable the Beast to throw the Woman off its back, and to burn her with fire. We can see from Revelation 17 and 18 that the Woman already has these powers, and the Beast undoubtedly greatly covets them for itself, and thus it will make war with the Woman (Revelation 17:16-17) in an effort to free it from her domination, and to get these powers for itself. The Beast will succeed.

I will go through something very rapidly here in Revelation 17:1. I don't think that this is a major point, but this description might be intended to be taken to understand that Babylon is located near an ocean because she sits on many waters. That's exactly what John saw whenever he saw the vision, and thus Babylon itself, you see, is identified as a city in Revelation 17:18, and that that city is located near the ocean, and was therefore a seaport city.

Remember that the Babylonians, in a series of emigrations, moved from Babylon to Phoenicia, and then to Rome, Italy. Rome, a seaport city, was once the administrative, economic, and religious continuation of the Babylonish *system* which, as we saw, spread beyond the bounds of Europe. The Israelites carried it everywhere.

Is there any reason why we should not consider New York City as representing Babylon in this prophecy? We understand that it's not at all uncommon for a name/city to represent an entire nation even in news reports today. News commentators commonly say, "Washington says this." "Washington did that," meaning that's where the leadership is, and they are representing the whole United States. The Bible and modern usage is doing

this. Now what does New York City have going for it that might lend itself to this?

New York City has within its doors the location of Wall Street, which *is* the financial capital not only of the United States, but actually of the *entire* world. Are you aware that in the recent past—that is, within the last four to five months—Mayor Bloomberg of New York City has *twice* called New York City "the capital of the world" because of its cultural and financial power, and the fact that the United Nations is located, headquartered, in New York City?

That's not a major point, but it does give us a little bit of insight that there is a possibility there. At least the United States has a city that *might* qualify for that. I wouldn't base anything big on it. It's just that it is interesting.

Turn to Revelation 17:6 and we'll read what this verse says.

Revelation 17:6 And 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 wondered with great admiration.

I have a section here on Revelation 17:6, but this is going to have to wait, God willing, for the next sermon on this, because I feel it is quite interesting, and I could not give it the time. But I will give you the time to think about it. Could this possibly be describing the United States, and Britain, and Norway, and Sweden, and Finland, and France—you see, as Israel—with persecutions in those countries in which *Christians* are *martyred*? So tune in for the next episode, and we will go into this, and into something else that I just began today which I think you will find very interesting about Israel's history as "the Great Harlot."