

Where Is the Beast? (Part 11)

Israel and the Woman

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 27-Dec-03; Tape #644

I hope you understand in a major way that the sermons I gave during the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as the one I gave two weeks ago, were directly connected to "Where Is The Beast?" series. In them I spoke of the subtle influences of the world that we live in that we have to deal with on a daily basis.

Most of the sermons in this series have been spent identifying where modern "spiritual" Babylon is, using the evidence given in the Bible, and by applying that evidence to world conditions today in order to see that there is only one equal on earth that evidence applies to, and that is the Israelitish people.

I am going to continue on with the Babylon series with this sermon and take what might seem as a step backward in order to show more conclusively that the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is indeed shown in the Bible to be a *nation* existing in the end-time.

As we begin this sermon, I want you to go back to Genesis 49, and I just want to read three verses here without a lot of comment at this time.

Genesis 49:1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

Verse 1 gives the general subject of the entire chapter: "that which shall befall you [the children of Israel] in the last days." We will pick up on one of them in verse 16—the tribe of Dan.

Genesis 49:16-17 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that bites the horse heels so that his rider shall fall backward.

There are times where there are legitimate double applications of biblical prophecies. Here is a major way in which biblical nations are identified in the end-time. These descriptions are researched into, looking for geographical and historical evidence that has accumulated during the centuries of their characteristics.

The Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is clearly described in Revelation and elsewhere. Just as Israel is identified by markers (like the one we just read), so is the Babylon of 17 and 18 identified by markers that we will find in the Bible or in secular history. We are going to be looking though primarily for biblical matches—things that coincide with, agree with, and describe the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18.

We are going to go to the book of Amos and read something there that is basic and fundamental to identifying the people of Israel in the last days. Verse 2 of Amos 3 is the statement that is so important.

Amos 3:1-2 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only [Israel] have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Amos 3:2 is a statement of Israel's relationship with God. This statement of this relationship is very important to Babylon's end-time identification. Only Israel, of all the nations that have been on earth for all time, has been coupled with God in a binding covenant—the one that we know of as "the Old Covenant." Israel alone, of all nations, has rightly earned the title "the Great Whore," because she alone, of all nations, came to know God, because He revealed Himself to her.

In the biblical sense, a whore is a woman unfaithful to a covenant, or to revealed standards of moral behavior. Israel alone, of all nations, had God's way of life *directly* revealed to her. No other nation in the history of mankind entered into a covenant with Him, vowing that all that He said she would do; and thus she alone, of all nations, was unfaithful to their union, because God did not marry anybody else. It was Israel with whom God entered that union. God provides many evidences of that unfaithfulness, and how He dealt with it in the prophetic and historical books.

Those things we went through in a great deal of detail in other sermons, but the biblical fact, when combined with the external evidence of history, points to end-time Israel. We *live* in Israel, and we are commanded to come *out* of Babylon; thus our concern regarding the identification of Babylon.

There have been a number of times in this series that I have used the term "system" in reference to Babylon. I have done it as recently as the Feast sermons, because it *is* a system; but it is also a nation. It is both. The system reaches in to its most influential expression in end-time Israel.

If one researches Protestant commentaries, one will find that these commentaries almost always certainly refer to Babylon as being a system. Some Evangelical Protestant organizations focus a considerable amount of attention to this in biblical prophecy, but most of those organizations are very weak in several areas of understanding. The most glaring important weakness is in the identity of end-time Israel.

They are almost unanimous in saying that Israel is limited to Jews, and thus their interpretation of prophecy is slanted toward that tiny New Jersey-sized nation of less than ten million people in the Middle East. They overlook almost entirely the time of the scattering of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, that they were two distinct nations, each having its own land, and each having its own government.

The Ten-tribed nation of Israel was in the north, with its capital in Samaria, and was dominated

by the Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. The Two-tribed nation of Judah and Benjamin was in the south, with its capital city in Jerusalem, and was thereafter called the Jews. This is very easily clearly shown in II Kings 16 through chapter 18. Those two chapters make the two-nation picture very clear.

Both nations also had the priestly tribe Levi amongst them. The tribe of Levi was never given land to support themselves, and thus the Levites were scattered through both nations. When God's time came in the 8th century BC, He raised up and sent the Assyrian nation to conquer the northern ten tribes. The Israelites were thus taken into captivity and became assimilated amongst their conquerors, and they migrated with them as they moved through the centuries of time. They never returned to be re-united with the Jews. History, combined with biblical evidence, places them in northern and northwest Europe, and also in the colonies that those Anglo-Saxon people established in other parts of the world.

God dealt with Israel—the Ten Tribed nation—somewhat differently from what He did with the Jews. At the end of the 7th century BC, He sent the Babylonian nation to conquer and take the Jews into captivity. However, seventy years later, because of prophecies involving the coming Messiah who was prophesied to come out of Judah, a remnant of Jews returned to Judea, re-establishing themselves as a nation.

Two thousand six hundred years later—at the time of the end—we find Israelitish people scattered all over the world, and a small number of Jews back in the ancestral homeland that God originally gave to *all* of the tribes of Israel. But now a question: What happened to Babylon? The reason I ask this is because in Revelation 17 and 18 Babylon suddenly appears on the scene again, and in those two chapters it is addressed as a real nation and city, and not merely a system, that dominates earth culturally worldwide. This is in some ways so obvious that some of the world's biblical commentators identify Babylon as either the Roman Empire or the Catholic Church.

Now both the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church are real entities, not just mythical spiritual systems. But there are some who still cling to idea that the Great Whore is merely a system—a religious system. Hopefully this sermon will help clarify that the Babylon of these chapters is indeed a nation of this world.

We will read John 5:17-18—you will probably wonder at first what these verses have to do with this subject.

John 5:17-18 But Jesus answered them, My Father works hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

The emphasis for this sermon is on the fact that God is working. He is working out His purpose. "My Father works hitherto." The word "hitherto" indicates that He is *always* working. As far back as Jesus could look in time, God has been working toward the accomplishment of His purpose, and as far as Jesus could look into the future, God would keep right on working,

because He is a Creator. He has projects in mind that He has designed and is planning to produce. He is going to pull this off despite the fact that even in earth there may have been 40, 50, 60 billion people whose lives He has dealt with over time. Jesus said, "My Father is working:"—past, present, future.

One of the ways to accomplish identification of nations is through the principle of duality. The proper understanding of this principle reveals to us, and thus guides and encourages us that God's purpose is still on track. Even though we cannot see Him, God's word just gives us encouragement that He is working at bringing to pass what He is going to accomplish. If we believe it, and if we trust it, and we choose to follow Him as a result of that, it can give us comfort and keep us alert to the nearness of Christ's return.

If one is careful one can legitimately take a verse, or several verses, from a section of scripture and show that their application is not only to the time period directly addressed by the author in context and in real time, but they are also *paralleling* what is also happening in *our* time as well, and thus the prophecy served its purpose when it was originally uttered.

Especially important to us is that God from the beginning intended that the prophecy serve us in our day as well, and thus it has dual application, both to them in their day, and to us, the end-time descendants of the people to whom the original prophecy was given. This is possible through understanding that God's recordings of history of His relationship with mankind, (and more importantly His prophecies of His purpose and plan) encompass thousands of years of time, and that He is ever moving forward toward the accomplishment of His goal that He has set for Himself.

That last phrase—"the accomplishment of *His* goal that He has set for *Himself*" —is what is important. God is working, and He is going to prove Himself to mankind, and glorify Himself in the process of accomplishing the development and salvation of His spiritual children.

Revealing those ends is one of the purposes of prophecy. God is manifesting His love, wisdom, and power to us through these prophecies. We can see and understand because He has given us the ability to comprehend their application in our time. This is accomplished by evaluating what is happening in the world around us as compared to what happened anciently.

These prophecies set goals and inspire hope, and thus motivation for His children to live by faith when they are alive, and during the long periods of time the plan encompasses. The prophecies overwhelmingly encompass the past, present, and future of the Israelitish people, and the church. The other nations remain only as they come in contact with Israel.

We are going to start looking at the number of prophecies we can use as an example. Let us go all the way back to the book of Genesis, chapter 3, verse 14. This took place after Adam and Eve's sin, and God is handing out the punishments here.

Genesis 3:14-19 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because you have done this you are cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed: it shall bruise your head,

and you shall bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you shall bring forth children: and your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you. And unto Adam he said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you: and you shall eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you are, and unto dust shall you return.

I want you to think about this. Some aspects of this prophecy began to be fulfilled almost immediately; however, there is a huge time-gap built right into the prophecy. The prophecy's main feature—the revelation of the coming Messiah and of *His* work of dealing the death blow to Satan—to the Serpent's work—did not come to pass until 4,000 years later. Thus the prophecy had dual application: one part for them almost immediately, and then the most exceedingly important part 4,000 years later. In this case, it is history recorded in the Bible that shows the prophecy's duality.

I gave myself a note, which is in reference to Genesis 49. I want you to go back there. As I mentioned before, verse 1 says, "in the last days." One thing that we need to be careful of here is that we are not to be misled by this phrase, thinking that it is the *only* time (that is, the *end-time*) that this applies. Now it most certainly *does* apply primarily to us today, but it also had clear application to *other* times in Israel's history as well.

Throughout Israel's history, again as recorded in the Bible and in secular sources, the characteristics of each family, as expressed by Jacob, played dominant roles in the peoples' interactions with each other. For example there is Judah.

Genesis 49:9-10 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, you are gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre [a symbol of kingly values] shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

This happened (prophecies were given) just before Jacob died. When was this prophecy in verse 10 fulfilled? It began to be fulfilled when Saul became king, well over 500 years after Jacob uttered the prophecy; but it has not been completely fulfilled yet, because the real object of that prophecy is the Messiah. Now you see what I mean by duality.

There can be multiple fulfillments within any given prophecy depending upon when God, who is doing the work, decides that a portion of it is going to be fulfilled. Our responsibility as interpreters is to try to determine the following: Has it been fulfilled? If so, when? Has it remained unfulfilled? Does it apply in the future? If the prophecy remains unfulfilled, we have to

try to determine whether it applies to the future.

So here we have one that applied in the past, but it has not been completely fulfilled yet. This is why I said earlier there are times that one can legitimately choose a verse, or several verses out of a prophecy, and show that the prophecy applied way back then, but that it also applies in our day, or in the future. This is dual application of the same prophecy.

My Study Bible has an interesting comment regarding "in the last days." It says: " *'In the last days'* " introduces the whole prophecy and function as an important way in the Old Testament. It refers to Israel's future in dual perspective—the period of their occupation of Canaan, the time of the coming of the Messiah, and sometimes the expressions refers to Israel at the end of the Great Tribulation. Sometimes they say to the present church age in its entirety or at its conclusion."

By their interpretation they see at least five different ways that this prophecy can apply. This is why I say one has to be careful. But interpreting prophecy this way is legitimate as long as we do not go beyond what God intended. We have to be very careful and honest.

So throughout Israel's history, as recorded in both the Bible and secular sources, the characteristics of each of the families of Israel, as expressed by Jacob, played dominant roles in the peoples' interactions with each other.

Earlier I read verses 16 and 17. Did the tribe of Dan leave trail markers wherever they wandered? They did. They left their name all over, especially in Europe. They placed their name there. It was almost the same as saying "Kilroy was here," for those of you who are older and understand that. But we look at it and we can say, "Dan was here!" "The tribes of Israel passed through here." And Dan, truthful to the prophecy, left his name just like a serpent leaves a trail in the dust, showing where he has come from, and where he has gone.

Have the Joseph tribes dominated Israel economically, militarily, and colonized other portions of the world? That is what the prophecies said they would do. Of course you know that they did. What this does is show that there is flexibility to God's prophecies that one can use accurately if one is careful not to go beyond what is intended, and by not twisting what the scriptures say.

Isaiah 7:13 is another one that is pretty obvious. Isaiah is having a conference with Ahaz the king.

Isaiah 7:13-17 And he [Isaiah] said, Hear you now, O house of David [represented by Ahaz]: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that you abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. The LORD shall bring upon you, and upon your people, and upon your father's house, days that have not come from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

How do we know that this prophecy has dual application? Well, because the Bible itself confirms it directly in the New Testament. We have Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:22-23 Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Thus the prophecy given Ahaz by Isaiah had application within a few years. We know that it was a few years because, "Butter and honey shall he eat." This is just beyond the child being weaned. So within a few years of Isaiah uttering that prophecy to Ahaz, it began to be fulfilled in Ahaz's time, and then there was a jump of about 700 years—actually over 700 years—from Isaiah, until Mary conceived Jesus in her womb as a virgin. So the prophecy applied to both, but was 700 plus years apart. Dual application.

We will look at another one. This is a little bit more vague, but still think it is fairly clear. It probably will leave us guessing a little bit. It will not leave us guessing as to the fact that it is dual, because it is indeed dual.

Micah 3:9-12 Hear this, I pray you, you heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. [There is the basis for what God is about to say. These are bad people.] They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, [taking bribes], and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? None evil can come upon us. [Boy, were they thinking wrong! There is going to be utter desolation here.] Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

Micah 4:1-4 *BUT*. . . in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into

pruninghooks: nations shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken it.

Right where it says, "But in the last days," the gap begins, and right there begins Micah's version of the peaceful scene that also appears in Isaiah 2: 1-4. Micah was a contemporary with Isaiah during the period of the kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, over 700 years before Christ. In Micah 3: 9, he appears to prophesy the impending destruction of Judah, and within the space of *one* verse (the last verse of chapter 3, and the first verse of chapter 4), he jumps in time to a period that is yet ahead of us! It has not yet been fulfilled. When did Micah live? About 750 years before Christ. Is prophecy dual, or what? The answer is, yes it is *if* it provides us with good clear evidence like that one does.

The term "last days" is a clue to the possibility, ?(and it gives us permission to seriously consider it at the very least), ?the prophecy of destruction and its causes may also parallel our time as well. That is another possibility, but we have to be cautious.

This next one is a little bit different.

Ezekiel 16:44-46 Behold, every one that uses proverbs shall use this proverb against you, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter. [We say today, "Like father, like son." "Like mother, like daughter."] You are your mother's daughter, ?[He is speaking to Judah, but he is actually speaking specifically to Jerusalem.] ?that lothes her husband and her children: and you are the sister of your sisters, which lothed their husbands and their children: your mother was an Hittite, and your father an Amorite. And your elder sister is Samaria [Israel to the north], she and her daughters that dwell at your left hand: and your younger sister that dwells at your right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.

That is really a good recommendation for this family: "Jerusalem, your sister is Sodom!" Everybody knows what Sodom is! Now what is He describing here? He is describing parallel behavior. Everybody knows what God did to Sodom, and God is saying to Jerusalem, "*You are just as bad as Sodom ever was! That is your sister to the south. And to the north is your sister Samaria. You are just as bad as they were, and you know what happened to them. They are gone! I wiped them out!*" Verse 47 is classic, though. He says:

Ezekiel 16:47-49 Yet have you not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: [This is a question.] but, as if that were a very little thing, you were corrupted more than they in all your ways. [He is saying, "Jerusalem, you are worse than they are."] As I live, says the Lord GOD, Sodom your sister has not done, she nor her

daughters, as you have done, you and your daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

What we are looking at here are parallels. We need to consider this in terms of duality. In this case it is not directly in a prophecy, but yet it is connected because of this parallelism. What is Babylon called in Revelation 17 and 18? A whore. That is the kind of behavior we are reading of here. We are looking at whorish behavior. If you know anything what the entire chapter of Ezekiel 16 is talking about, this is the chapter in which God, over and over and over again, accuses Israel of fornication. It is talking about whorish behavior.

So at this point in God's interrelation concerning Judah and Jerusalem, He is showing parallel behavior of Judah with Samaria to the north, and with Sodom to the south. Verse 47 is very clear regarding parallel conduct. I am going to read that first phrase to you as it appears in a modern Bible. I said this was classic. This is from the *Revised English Bible*. "Did you not behave as they did, and commit the same abomination?" Now verse 49 is parallel relationships, and what it is doing is declaring that they are *sisters under the skin*, as we would say today. Why? Because their behavior was similar.

We are going to go all the way back to the book of Revelation to make a connection here.

Revelation 11:8 And their [the Two Witnesses] dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Is there any doubt about whom He is talking? So what do we have? In the book of Ezekiel God compares Jerusalem's conduct in relationship with Sodom and Samaria. Those are two you do not want to be compared to, but He did it to them. Then, in duality, in the book of Revelation 11, leading up to Revelation 17 and 18, He again brings the parallel back into view by showing that the city Jerusalem is still behaving just like Sodom at the end-time, by *His* definition, by *His* standard.

Their modern end-time behavior is like Sodom and Egypt. Jerusalem thus represents all of Israel in the same way that Washington, D.C. represents all of the United States and that London represents all of England. Jerusalem's spiritual source is revealed [as] the same source as Sodom had, and as the same source as Egypt had. And so that source is most definitely not the God of the Bible, despite what Israelites might say with their mouth, calling themselves Christians.

Here is another very interesting one:

Jeremiah 50:1-6 The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet, Declare you among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is

broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there comes up a nation against her which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days, and in that time, says the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. My people have been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.

Verse 1 here begins a two-long-chapter prophecy of judgment against Babylon. Babylon was the dominant world power in Jeremiah's day 600 years before Christ. I personally have never applied this prophecy to modern Israel until, as I was preparing this sermon, I noticed verses 4 through 6 and clearly saw that it is placed in the time that is just ahead of us.

Verses 4 through 6 have not yet occurred. Not yet! We are talking about a prophecy that was made at least 2600 years ago. This begins to open up a new avenue of thought. Because verses 4 through 6 *definitely* have not yet occurred, is it possible that the whole rest of the two chapters are actually describing a way God is going to destroy *end-time* Babylon? We will look at these two verses.

Jeremiah 50:4 In those days, and in that time, says the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah *together*,
...

That has not happened yet. Israel and Judah are separate nations. He is now prophesying of a time that is in connection with the destruction of Babylon in which Judah and Israel are going to turn to God as *one* nation. They are going to come together—"going and weeping." They are going to be repentant.

Jeremiah 50:4-5 ?going and weeping: They shall go, and seek the LORD their God. [They are not doing that now.] They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, ?[They will be coming, repentant, asking some *true* spiritual leadership to show them the way to go.] ? saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant [the *New Covenant*] that shall not be forgotten.

They recognize that the Old Covenant has been broken. Notice God's response in verse 6. He is looking backwards on verses 4 and 5 as having occurred at the time that verse 6 takes place.

Jeremiah 50:6 My people have been lost sheep.

Israel is even called "the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Israel does not know who they are! When this prophecy was uttered they knew who they were, but in the intervening centuries they have forgotten who they are! They do not know they are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jeremiah 50:6 Their shepherds [their leaders—governmental, religious, whatever] have caused them to go astray. They have turned them away on the mountains: [A mountain is a symbol of a large nation.] They have gone from mountain to hill, ?[from large nations to small nations. God is describing the wanderings of the children of Israel as they went first to Assyria, and then began the long trek over the centuries up into north-western Europe.] ?They have forgotten their restingplace. [He is saying they have forgotten where they came from. The restingplace is Canaan.]

Now there is a prophecy that is clearly dual in application. Like I said, it begins to make one wonder whether the whole 50th and 51st chapters of Jeremiah actually apply to the destruction of modern Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18. It is clearly appointed in verses 4 through 6 that it is Israel He has in mind. Is Israel the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18? I think that Israel is.

Revelation 13, 17 and 18 clearly establish the fact that there is a Beast *and* a Babylon at the end-time. Now even as the Beast is literally an amalgamation of many nations with a strong persecuting religious component to it, so also is Babylon a literal nation with a somewhat*different* religious cultural component to it. Even as the term "Beast" shows the spirit of that group of anti-God nations, in like manner the term "Babylon" reveals the source of the spirit and prideful rebellious underpinnings of that nation in like manner as Sodom and Egypt, which were used to illustrate Revelation 11: 8.

Again, remember what God said about Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16, that Sodom's problem was pride, that Sodom's problem was an overweening abundance of prosperity. Look around. Who in the world today does that fit? It fits the Israelitish people hand-in-glove.

Revelation 17 and 18 describe the end-time Babylon, and it has resurfaced, not merely as a religious organization, and not merely a system, but as a literal city and nation involved in massive worldwide craftsmanship, manufacturing, and commerce. It is a **BLOCKBUSTER** political and economic powerhouse exercising worldwide influence that businessmen weep over when it is destroyed. They weep over its destruction because they feel its loss is a loss to them even though they are not literally a part, having only done business with it.

If indeed we are in the prophesied end-time (and I believe that we are), the only nation on earth today that fits this description as both an economic powerhouse and a Great Harlot (because of the broken relationship with God) is Israel, led by the Joseph tribes—Ephraim and Manasseh. Israel is still Israel, but it embodies the spirit of Babylon at the end-time.

I want you to turn with me back to Ezekiel once again, but this time to Ezekiel 28. What I want you to notice is the way, the manner, in which this description, prophecy, or whatever, is written by God. It is really interesting.

Ezekiel 28:1-5 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus says the Lord GOD; Because your heart is lifted up, and you have said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet you are a man, and not God, though you set your heart as the heart of God: Behold, you are wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from you: With your wisdom and with your understanding you have gotten you riches, and have gotten gold and silver into your treasures: By your great wisdom and by your traffic [meaning commerce, trading, merchandising] have you increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches.

Ezekiel 28:12-17 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the *king* of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus says the Lord GOD: You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created. You are the anointed cherub that covers: and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 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 [commerce, trade] 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.

I am only interested in this chapter because of the style, the manner, in which it is written. It is very similar to the way Jeremiah 50 is written; however, Ezekiel 28 is more easily discerned. Ezekiel 28 clearly begins as addressed to the human prince of Tyre. However, with barely a break for a breath of air, it begins in verse 12 addressing the spiritual *king* of Tyre: Satan. Thus, from verses 12 through 19, the text is woven together so that some things are said that could easily apply to either of them.

We do not normally think of Satan as involved in commerce. That is what human beings do. This is what I mean about it being parallel [to] the human king and the spiritual king. Jeremiah 50 most directly addresses ancient Babylon in concern with modern end-time Israel. It jumps from

ancient time to modern time in a hair's breath, making one wonder whether much of what God has said regarding ancient Babylon are *also* clues regarding His judgment against modern end-time Revelation 17 and 18 Babylon. If this is so, then what we have here is a very interesting ramification. I am not going to push this any further, because what we already have is very interesting in its duality.

When I was at the Feast in Jefferson City this last year I was given a copy of a paper that originally came from the Internet. My copy has no indication on it who the original author is. I would like to share with you just a small portion of what this person said. In five fairly long articles the author gives his proofs as to why he believes that America is Babylon. Notice that I said "America." I have been saying in my sermons "Israel." I think I am right. I think he is wrong in terms of making it that precise.

In these fairly long 5 papers, he gives his proofs, but I honestly think that most of his proofs are incorrectly applied. Some of them I believe I think you would find down-right wild. He, in fact, believes that virtually every reference in the Bible to Babylon is a reference to America. However, his fourth article I found quite interesting because he listed ~~what~~ *the* said are 99 scriptural proofs that the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 is a literal nation.

I found many of them marginal, to say the least, but I also found that some of them are helpful because they are fairly obvious from the things that we have already gone into. They are also fairly obvious because we have seen with our own eyes and heard with our own ears, and experienced some of them in our own lives.

What I am going to give you are not necessarily biblical proofs, but they are pretty strong anecdotal evidence that buttresses what the scriptures are saying.

I am going to pick out a particular word from the following verses:

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 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Revelation 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

I want to draw your attention to the word "great," because whatever Babylon is, it is *great*, even by God's description. It is GREAT! It is not insignificant. It is not operating under the cover of some *greater* organization. It is GREAT in its own right. "Great" means, "large, immense, prodigious, massive, considerable, extraordinary," depending on the context in which it is used. All by itself the Great Whore is *powerful* and influential. It is a *MAJOR* player on the world

scene.

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

Notice "*great*," and yet so great it reigns over the *kings* of the earth, as though it is *greater* than all the kings that could be assembled against it. Babylon the Great Whore's political influence is worldwide. She can be perceived as the fountain source of an attempt to produce a world government. Her influence is so great that all nations *bend* to her will, for . . .

Revelation 18:3 All nations have *drunk* of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her [in order to get along with her], and the merchants [not just the kings, but the business men] of the earth are grown rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

What will a businessman do in order to make money? We have got to think about those things. They submit to *her* in order to do business with *her*. They pay the price, and they get rich with her. This also gives indication that the Great Whore is the economic nerve-center of world trade. Notice that it is first the kings of the earth that bewail her destruction, and then the businessmen follow suit.

Now brethren, can you imagine both the kings of the earth and hard-headed businessmen bewailing the destruction of a *church*? That is ridiculous! They are bewailing something that involves the loss of their power and wealth, thus placing them in grave danger of overwhelming loss. You have got to look at this like a hard-headed political leader and a hard-headed businessman doing some business with somebody that they fear, and yet respect, and bow to her will. Think of that, brethren, in terms of the power of the Israelitish people. Put all 12 nations together and you have a powerhouse that nobody on earth can match, and that everybody kowtows to.

You can go to Revelation 18: 3, 7, 19, and 23 and see how clear the inferences and direct statements are regarding how wealthy she is; and not only of Babylon herself, but all those who become wealthy by trading with her. Brethren, Israel has been largely responsible for making Germany, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and now China wealthy through trade. We have done it through consuming what they produce, because we have the economic power to buy what they make.

Revelation 17: 1 and Revelation 18: 17-19 say that "she sits"—meaning she rules, she exercises her authority, and operates or is located "upon many waters." We cannot exclude the dual possibilities here of waters representing both peoples and literal waters.

Please recall that this is a description of *end-time* Babylon. The ancient city of Babylon sat astride the Euphrates River, but the nation itself was essentially land-locked. However, by the way of contrast, every nation of modern Israel except for Switzerland sits on an ocean and has a multitude of deep-water seaports. End-time Babylon has a multitude of sea gates all over the

world. Israel is graced by great rivers and many fresh water lakes.

What all this is showing is political, military, economic, and geographic dominance. It is especially dominant in world trade so much so that Revelation 18: 23 shows that its merchants are called "the great men of the earth."

We are going to go back to Jeremiah 50: 23 and read a very interesting statement there.

Jeremiah 50: 23 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!

In that prophecy there God calls Babylon a hammer. Now how does that apply to modern Israel? It is very interesting. This is a nickname, an epithet, that Babylon is the hammer. In the Bible a hammer is figuratively used to symbolize "that which affects change." A literal hammer affects change by what it is used for, or against. It can be used for good or bad. It is used to forge metal, to drive pegs and nails, and to change the shape of stone. Sculpturally, brethren, that is what Revelation 17 and 18 is all about.

Modern Babylon—Israel—is a nation of tremendous cultural influence, using its economic, military, and political power to affect change in other nations according to its desire. Brethren, is that not what the United States is doing in Iraq right now? The United States is trying to change that nation into a democratic nation. *We are the HAMMER of the world!* We changed Germany and Japan away from what they were headed toward, and what they had produced, to becoming something that is more like *we* are. Israel is the hammer of the modern world.

Deuteronomy 33:13 And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that couches beneath.

Deuteronomy 33:17 His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall *push* the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

Brethren, if that is not what Israel is doing, I would like to know who it is. Babylon/Israel at the end-time is the hammer of the world, pushing people where she wants them to go.

I want you to notice especially Revelation 18: 22.

Revelation 18:22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in you; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in you: and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in you.

Take note of the terms harpers, musicians, pipers and trumpeters. Modern Babylon [Israel] is a huge exporter of music. Evelyn and I saw part of a television special of the Beatle Paul

McCartney in concert in Russia this past year. It was the first visit in Russia by any of the Beatles ever. The concert was held in Red Square. That huge square was wall-to-wall people, most who stood throughout the entire several hours of the concert, singing along in *English* with the performers. The Russians knew the songs in English, and there was an incredible demonstration of the power of Israelitish celebrity.

There must have been somewhere close to 50 to 100 thousand people jammed in there, standing for three or four hours to see the Beatle, Paul McCartney. However, I think that the music imagery in reality represents the much broader subject of entertainment, including films and professional athletics. Professional Israelitish football, soccer, basketball, baseball, and golf are invading the entertainment realm of the nations worldwide.

We can add to this Revelation 18:2 where it talks about the demonism. Modern end-time Babylon, like ancient Babylon, is deep into the occult and spiritism, both in terms of worshipping demons, in terms of religion, and seeking their guidance, even in terms of national affairs by very high-ranking political figures.

It has been published here in the United States of, let us say, President Eisenhower consulting astrologers during World War II regarding such things as the timing of the Normandy Invasion. Also well published were the accounts of Mrs. Nancy Reagan consulting astrologers, and then advising her husband, the president. If it was done most assuredly by them, it is most assuredly being done elsewhere in government.

Brethren, there is much more that shows that Israel is modern Babylon—the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18. I believe that "Mystery Babylon" stands revealed as the Israelitish people who are right now riding the peak of their materially glorious, but idolatrous immoral, *power*—temporarily holding the Beast from rising, and keeping it in check. But soon she is to be cut down and burned with fire in preparation for meeting the true God and learning of her identity.