**Mystery of the Woman**

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**Chapter 1**

**Mystery, Babylon the Great**

**The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth**

**And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:**

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

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

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

**And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH** (Rev. 17:1-5).

The Book of Revelation is where many expositors and Bible students commit mayhem in Biblical interpretation, and that is especially true beginning with chapter seventeen and continuing through the first six verses of chapter nineteen.

These are chapters where interpretation, for the most part, has remained unchanged over the years, with expositors seemingly being unable to break away from an erroneous view which has been held by individuals in one form or another for at least the last five hundred years, since the time of the Reformation.

Among those expositors viewing the book in some semblance of the correct manner — referred to as “futurist,” understanding events in the book, particularly in chs. 6-19, *as future and having to do with events during Daniel’s unfulfilled seventieth week* — almost all, when coming to chapter seventeen, seem to forget what the book is about and *begin dealing with material completely foreign to the subject matter of the book.*

And this *foreign subject matter*, more often than not, is the Church of Rome (or this Church as the center into which numerous false religions will be drawn in that future day). Individuals seek to understand and present “the harlot” in these chapters in this manner.

Then, if the preceding manner of mishandling Rev. 17:1ff wasn’t enough in and of itself — *i.e.*, attempting to see God dealing with the Roman Catholic Church during “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7), the seven-year Tribulation — there is still more.

The “harlot” in Rev. 17:1-19:6 is *clearly identified in these chapters in several unmistakable ways (as other than the Roman Catholic Church)*, *in complete keeping with the subject matter being dealt with in this section of the book* (chs. 6-19).

Christians will be removed from the earth and dealt with at the end of the present dispensation, prior to “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (chs. 1-3). And it is *completely outside the scope of anything taught in Scripture* to attempt to see God dealing with anyone or any group of individuals associated with Christianity (either true Christianity or a so-called false Church) during the Tribulation.

Misguided interpretation of the book of the preceding nature (which is not really interpretation at all) results in two things:

1. People are misled, causing them to believe that which is “not according to this Word” (Isa. 8:20).
2. Proclaimed error at any point in Scripture invariably closes the door to a correct understanding of the passage being dealt with, which, many times will close the door to correctly understanding related passages of Scripture as well.

Thus, mishandling Scripture after this fashion is *a serious matter.* The end result can and often does have far-reaching ramifications, moving far beyond one passage dealt with in an erroneous manner.

Again, beginning with Rev. 6:1, this book is dealing with “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” not the time of the Church’s trouble (either the true Church or a so-called false Church).

God, at this time, will have completed His dealings with the Church during Man’s Day. And beginning with Revelation chapter six, God is seen turning back to Israel and completing His dealings with the Jewish people during the last seven years of Man’s Day, fulfilling events which will occur during the final week of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy (along with the nations to be dealt with through Israel at this time, with the Messianic Era to follow).

**Subject and Structure of the Book**

Note *the subject matter* of the Book of Revelation and *how the book has been structured*, given in the opening verse of the book.

“*The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and *signified it* by his angel unto his servant John.”

Then, with these things in view, *the time element* — “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” beginning in chapter six — can be dealt with and understood within its proper context and the manner in which the material has been put together in this book.

The first five chapters of the book deal with events which will occur immediately preceding “the time of Jacob’s trouble” — the Church removed and dealt with at Christ’s judgment seat (chs. 1-3), the twenty-four elders cast their crowns before God’s throne (ch. 4), and the search for One worthy to break the seals of the seven-sealed scroll (ch. 5).

And, beginning with chapter six and continuing through the first six verses of chapter nineteen, events are dealt with which will occur during or immediately beyond “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” a time when the seven seals of the scroll are broken — *a period dealt with time after time throughout Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets.*

*1) Subject*

The word “Revelation” in the opening verse of this book is a translation of the Greek word *apokalupsis,* which means to “disclose,” “reveal,” “uncover.” And this word, along with its verb form (*apokalupto*), are together used forty-five times in the New Testament in passages such as Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3, 5; I Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13.

The Book of Revelation, the *Apokalupsis,* the “Apocalypse,” is about *a disclosure, an uncovering, an unveiling* of that which the Father had previously given to and would accomplish through His Son (*cf.* John 3:34, 35; 5:20-22; 7:16; 8:28). And that which the Father had previously given to and would accomplish through His Son is seen in both Old and New Testament Scripture as “all things” (*cf.* Gen. 24:36; 25:5; John 16:15; Col. 1:16-18; Heb. 1:2-13).

Then, more directly, in the words of the book itself, that being made known pertains to *a revelation of the Son Himself.* This book is an opening up of that which relates *all that the Father has given to and would accomplish through His Son, revealed through a revelation of the Son Himself.*

And the revelation of the Son, according to this opening verse, is going to be accomplished through a specific, revealed means — through revealing “things which must shortly [Gk., *tachos,* ‘quickly,’ ‘speedily’] come to pass.” That is to say, once this revelation of the Son begins through an unfolding of future events, the revelation will occur in a quick or speedy fashion — actually over time covering little more than seven years.

(On the translation of *tachos* in the opening verse as “quickly” or “speedily,” refer to a cognate word, *tachu,* used seven times in this book, translated “quickly” each time [2:5, 16; 3:11; 11:14; 22:7, 12, 20].)

According to John 1:1, 14, the incarnation was simply the Word (the Old Testament Scriptures) becoming flesh. There is *the written Word* (which is living [Heb. 4:12]), and there is *the living Word* (which is the written Word, inseparably connected with the Father, made flesh).

The Book of Revelation is thus an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures *through a Person, through the Word which became flesh.* And any thought of an opening up of the Old Testament Scriptures extending to and including an opening up of the New Testament Scriptures as well could only be *completely out of place*, for there is nothing in the New that cannot be found, after some fashion, in the Old. If there were, there could not be *the necessary corresponding completeness* between the written Word and the living Word at a time before the New Testament even began to be penned.

The New Testament, *at any point, of necessity,* can only have to do with revelation which can be seen as having an Old Testament base. Revelation in the New Testament *must* bear the same inseparable connection with the Word made flesh as revelation in the Old Testament bears.

Thus, the existence of the Word made flesh *preceding* the existence of the New Testament clearly relates the truth of the matter concerning the content of the New Testament. The New can only be *an opening up and revealing of that previously seen in the Old.* To state or think otherwise is to connect the Word made flesh with one Testament and disconnect Him from the other — *an impossibility.*

In short, *the Old Testament is complete in and of itself;*  the Word made flesh incorporates *this same completeness,* and the New Testament adds *nothing per se* to this completeness. Any supposed subsequent addition would be impossible, for *this would be adding to that which God had already deemed complete through the incarnation, the Word made flesh.*

The preceding is why Christ, shortly after His resurrection, began at “Moses and all the prophets” (an expression covering the whole of the O.T.) when He appeared to and began *making Himself known* to two disciples traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31).

The living Word, using the written Word, began putting together different facets of *a word picture pertaining to Himself.*  And He could have gone to *any part of the Old Testament* to accomplish the matter, for *the whole of the Old Testament* was/is about Him.

Through this means, those being addressed would be able to see one (the word picture) alongside the other (the Word made flesh). And, comparing the two, they would be able to come into an understanding of not only *the identity of the One in their midst* but an understanding of *that which had occurred in Jerusalem during the past several days as well.*

This is the manner in which God has put matters together in His Word, making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to man. And this is why the Son — God manifest in the flesh, the Word made flesh — undertook matters after exactly the same fashion when making Himself, His plans, and His purposes known to two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection.

Then, the same thing is seen when He appeared to ten of the eleven remaining disciples (with Thomas absent) in Jerusalem a short time later (Luke 24:36-45; John 20:19-29).

And this is the manner in which the Book of Revelation *must* be studied. Since it is an unveiling of the living Word, it is equally an unveiling of the inseparable Old Testament Scriptures, which, throughout, have to do with both of God’s firstborn Sons — Christ and Israel (Ex. 4:22, 23; Heb. 1:6), with one Son seen inseparable from the other Son (*cf.* Ex. 12:1ff [John 4:22; Acts 4:12]; Jonah 1:17 [Matt. 12:39, 40]; Hosea 11:1 [Matt. 2:15]).

Then, another person is seen throughout the Old Testament as well — *the Beast*, introduced in Gen. 3:15 and dealt with throughout Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. And he, accordingly, is seen and dealt with extensively in Revelation chapters six through twenty.

Thus, understanding the Book of Revelation after the preceding fashion is *the* *only way a person can come into a proper and correct understanding of the various things opened up and revealed in this book*, *which, of course, would be equally true of any other portion of Scripture.*

*2) Structure*

The word “signified” in the opening verse of this book is a translation of the Greek word *semaino,* which is the verb form of the word for “sign” (*semeion*). The Apostle John introduced, opened up, and developed matters in his gospel account through *signs.* And in the Book of Revelation, matters are introduced, opened up, and developed *in a similar manner.*

God, throughout His revelation to man, shows an affinity for the use of *types, numbers, signs,* and *metaphors* to make Himself, His plans, and His purposes known. And this must be recognized, else man will find himself failing to go beyond the simple letter of Scripture (*cf.* II Cor. 3:6-4:6).

Man, for example, will find himself understanding *Biblical history* but failing to understand the God-designed *typical significance* of that history. Or if *numbers, signs,* or *metaphors* are used — which they often are — he will fail to understand the God-designed significance of these as well.

At the very outset, God makes it clear that the Book of Revelation has been structured in *a particular manner,* closely related to the manner in which John was led by the Spirit to structure his gospel.

The Gospel of John was built around eight signs which Jesus had previously performed during His earthly ministry, and these signs were recorded and directed to the Jewish people during the time of the reoffer of the kingdom to Israel (which occurred between 33 A.D. and about 62 A.D.).

And the Book of Revelation — dealing largely with the Jewish people once again (*exclusively,* along with God’s dealings with the nations through Israel, in chs. 6-19, covering time and events during and immediately following Daniel’s Seventieth Week) — uses the verb form of the word for “sign” at the very outset in order to reveal the manner in which this book has been structured.

To understand how the word *semaino,* translated “signified,” is used introducing the Book of Revelation, note how John uses this same word three times in his gospel, in John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19. The context leading into each verse provides *an illustrative statement which allows that stated in the verse to be understood.*

Note the first of these three usages, within context:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

This he said, signifying [from *semaino*] what death he should die” (vv. 32, 33).

Aside from Rev. 1:1 and the three verses in John’s gospel, the only other usages of the word *semaino* in the New Testament are in Acts 11:28; 25:27. And the same thought is set forth through the use of the word in these two passages, though the illustrative statement is inferred in the first usage.

Thus, “signified,” a translation of *semaino,* has to do with making something known through *a manner which carries the reader from a somewhat indirect means to a direct means, using an illustrative statement as a means of explaining a matter.* And this is seen accomplished in the Book of Revelation centrally through the use of numerous *numbers* and *metaphors,* though *other illustrative means* are used as well.

In the preceding respect, all illustrative means of this nature in the book are, they would have to be, *in line with the meaning of the word semaino and the manner in which this word is used elsewhere in the New Testament.*

**“Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots…”**

Note that the identification of the “harlot” in Rev. 17:1ff with “Babylon” is associated with the word *mystery* (*ref.* the Foreword in this book). And, as well, the identification of “the beast,” the last king of Babylon, is also associated with this word — “the mystery of the woman, and of the beast” (v. 7b).

*1) A Mystery*

The word, “mystery,” is not part of the harlot’s name — such as *mystical*, etc. Rather, the word, “mystery,” states something about the harlot, aiding in the identification of the harlot.

“A mystery” in the New Testament does not have to do with something completely new, something not dealt with at all or unknown in the Old Testament (a common misconception which is often taught concerning the meaning of the word). This, of course, couldn’t be true, for, as previously seen, there is nothing in the New that cannot be found after some form in the Old.

Rather, “a mystery” in the New Testament has to do with *an opening up and an unveiling of something previously introduced and dealt with in the Old Testament.* “A mystery” has to do with *additional revelation, commentary, on that already seen in the Old Testament, allowing the Old Testament revelation to be fully opened up and revealed* (*e.g.*, note that *a full revelation of the Son* in the Book of Revelation allows the “mystery of God” [Rev. 10:7] to be correspondingly fully opened up as well, for Christ is God manifested in the flesh).

And the preceding is exactly what is in view through referring to “the woman” and “the beast” by the use of the word *mystery.* There is an opening up, an unveiling of that previously revealed concerning the woman and the Beast, which, of course, would necessitate prior revelation on the subject.

This alone would tell a person that *foundational material for both can, and must, be found in the Old Testament, for, again, there is nothing in the New that does not have its roots someplace in the Old.*

And, as previously seen, a relationship of this nature between the two Testaments can be seen in the opening verse of the last book of Scripture, the Book of Revelation, stating at the outset the nature of the book’s contents.

The entirety of the Old Testament is about *the person and work of Jesus Christ* (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39-47). And the New Testament, continuing from the Old — with “the Word” (the Old Testament Scriptures) *becoming* “flesh” (John 1:1, 2, 14) — must be viewed *in exactly the same light.*

The New is an opening up and unveiling of the Old; and the Book of Revelation, forming the capstone to all previous revelation (both the Old and New Testaments), *completes the unveiling.* The Book of Revelation, by its own introductory statement — an introductory statement peculiar to this book alone — forms the one book in Scripture which brings *all previous revelation to its proper climax.*

*2) Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots*

Thus, “the harlot”being inseparably identified with *Babylon* is not something which suddenly appears in chapter seventeen, apart from prior revelation — revelation which would allow one to know *who is being referenced and why an identification of this nature is being used.*

The word “mystery” alone would tell a person that *prior revelation exists, allowing the referenced identification to be easily understood.*

Most of the prior revelation is in the Old Testament, but some can be found in the immediately preceding chapters of the Book of Revelation. And, even without these immediately preceding chapters — knowing that these are central entities dealt with during “the time of Jacob’s trouble” — plain common sense would seemingly tell any individual with a good grasp of the Old Testament Scriptures what and who is being dealt with, *for that seen throughout Rev. 17:1-19:6 is a major subject of Old Testament Scripture.*

Metaphors and other forms of figurative language are used extensively in these chapters, not only relative to “the harlot” and “the beast,” but numerous other places as well (*e.g.*, the descriptive destruction of the harlot, “with fire,” the harlot referred to as “that great city, Babylon,” or the “great riches” enjoyed by the nations at the harlot’s expense). And the use of metaphors or other forms of figurative language is seen throughout the book, in line with “signified [*semaino*]” in the opening verse of the book.

And, with the preceding in mind, relative to the inseparable association of the harlot with Babylon along with the harlot’s identification, note three previous verses — Rev. 11:8; 14:8; 16:19.

*In the first verse* (11:8), where the first of nine references in the book to “the [or, ‘that’] great city” is found, this city is associated with both *Sodom* and *Egypt* and is identified as “Jerusalem”:

“And their dead bodies [the two witnesses] shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

*In the second verse* (14:8), where the second reference to “that great city” is found in the book, the destruction of the harlot is seen (detailed more fully in chs. 17-19a); and the harlot, previously associated with *Sodom*, *Egypt*, and *Jerusalem* (through an identification with “the great city”), is here associated with Babylon:

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

(The inclusion of “that great city” in this verse is often questioned on the basis of manuscript evidence. But the question, in reality, is mute. Note Rev. 16:19; 18:10, 21, where no manuscript variance exists, with “Babylon” referred to as *that great city* in all three verses.)

*In the third verse* (16:19), where the third reference to “the great city” is found in the book, the end of the harlot is seen again. But in this verse, additional explanatory material is given. “The great city…Babylon” (*cf.* 18:10) is seen separate from “the cities of the nations.” And, with “the great city” having previously been identified as *Jerusalem* (metaphorically, also with *Sodom*, *Egypt*, and *Babylon*), a separation from the nations, as seen in this verse, could only be expected (*cf.* Num. 23:9; Deut. 14:2):

“And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.”

(The identification of “the great city” [or, ‘that great city’ (same structure in the Greek text throughout)] with *Jerusalem* is dealt with more fully and after a different fashion in Chapter II of this book.

Note also that “Jerusalem” is used a number of times in Scripture as simply another way of referring to *the Jewish people.* Even “the land of Israel” is used this same way at times in Scripture [*cf.* Isa. 1:21, 26; Lam. 1:7, 8; Ezek. 14:11-13; 16:2; Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:33; 19:41].)

Thus, to see “Babylon” used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem — i.e., referring to the Jewish people —* in the Book of Revelation, one could only expect to find *a prior Jerusalem-Babylon association in the Old Testament*, for, again, *there is nothing in the New Testament that does not have its roots somewhere in the Old Testament.*

In this respect, not only should a Jerusalem-Babylon association be found in the Old Testament, one which would allow “Babylon” to be used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem*, but an association of this nature should also exist as it pertains to the numerous other things dealt with throughout Revelation chapters seventeen through the first part of nineteen as well. And this is exactly what one finds when going back to the Old Testament, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Note again that “Babylon” in Revelation chapter seventeen is referred to as not just “Babylon,” but as “a mystery, [which is] Babylon…” (v. 5, NASB), and, as also previously seen, the word “mystery” is used of “the beast” as well (v. 7).

(Note how the preceding would negatively reflect on the false teaching that “the harlot” in Rev. 17-19a is a reference to *the Roman Catholic Church.*

“The harlot” is *a mystery, necessitating that the harlot be found in the Old Testament.* And to carry such a teaching pertaining to the harlot and the Roman Catholic Church through to its logical conclusion, *this Church, of necessity, would have to be found in the Old Testament, which, of course, it isn’t.*)

Dealing with *Babylon, Jerusalem,* and *the Beast* in the Book of Revelation, one would naturally turn to the Book of Daniel. Though Babylon, Jerusalem, and the Beast are first mentioned early in Genesis (3:15; 10:10; 14:18), Daniel is the book which deals with the whole of the matter in relation to the beginning, progression, and end of the Times of the Gentiles.

The kingdom of Babylon is brought into full view in this book, Daniel deals with Israel and the nations in relation to this Babylonian kingdom, and Daniel places a particular emphasis on details pertaining to the latter days — details having to do with Babylon’s end-time ruler, the Beast, exactly as seen in the Book of Revelation (though this man had previously been introduced in different ways and places in the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis, then quite extensively in Exodus).

The complete period of the Times of the Gentiles is depicted through two main means in the Book of Daniel — through a four-part great image in chapter two (revealed through a dream) and through four great beasts in chapter seven (revealed through a vision). That depicted by the great image in chapter two is *Babylonian* in its entirety (from the head of gold to the feet part of iron and part of clay), as is that depicted by the four great beasts in chapter seven (from the lion to the dreadful, terrible, and exceedingly strong beast). The great image and great beasts present *exactly the same picture*, though from two different perspectives.

That seen through the great image and the great beasts centers around and sets forth *Gentile world rule during the Times of the Gentiles, from its beginning to its end, as this period relates to Babylon.* The Times of the Gentiles began in Babylon, and this period of time will end in Babylon.

God used the first king of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar [the first king during time covered by the great image, or the great beasts]) to complete the removal of the Jewish people from their land — because of their prior, continued disobedience, extending over centuries of time — resulting in an end to the Old Testament theocracy.

And God will use the last king of Babylon (Antichrist) to complete *the reason* for the removal of His people under the first king of Babylon — *to effect repentance, resulting in a reestablishment of the theocracy at a future time.*

The former theocracy was established under the old covenant, and the latter theocracy will be established under a new covenant (*cf.* Ex. 19:5, 6; Jer. 31:31-33).

**The Visions of Zechariah**

With these things in mind, note the eight visions in the first six chapters of Zechariah, for these visions deal with *exactly the same thing* seen in both the Books of Daniel and Revelation, though from a different perspective yet. These are visions revealed to and recorded by Zechariah following the return of a remnant from the Babylonian captivity. And it is within these visions that possibly the best Old Testament basis for an association of “Jerusalem” with *Babylon*, as seen in the Book of Revelation, can be found.

*1) Understanding the Visions*

These eight visions are introduced by the Lord’s statement surrounding *Israel’s past disobedience*, *the result of this disobedience*, *the call for repentance*, and *that which will result following Israel’s repentance* (1:1-6).

*Disobedience* resulted in the Times of the Gentiles, and *repentance* would ultimately be effected through Gentile persecution during this period.

Then, following the six introductory verses, the eight visions begin with verse seven and continue uninterrupted until part way through chapter six of the book.

These visions have to be understood *in the light of the manner in which they are introduced.* They have to be understood *in the light of Israel’s past disobedience, which has resulted in the Times of the Gentiles*; and they have to be understood *in the light of the reason for the Times of the Gentiles* — *Israel not only reaping the consequences of her actions, but ultimately bringing the nation to the place of repentance — and that which will occur once God’s purpose for this period is realized.*

The visions, understood contextually, *must be looked upon as having to do with Israel and the nations during and at the end of the Times of the Gentiles.*

(Note that one of the laws of the harvest has to do with the fact that a person *not only reaps what he sows but he always reaps more than he sows.* Israel has “sown the wind” [violating God’s covenant through centuries of disobedience, including harlotry], and they will, resultingly, “reap the whirlwind” [Hosea 8:7; *cf.* vv. 1, 8-14].

Thus, with Israel occupying center-stage, this law of the harvest would reflect upon the reason for the intensity of the judgments and related activity seen during the Tribulation [*cf.* Matt. 24:14].)

Though God drove His people out among the nations, to effect repentance, the principles set forth in Gen. 12:3 remain. God will not only use *Gentile persecution* to bring about repentance but He will also subsequently *judge the Gentiles* because of this persecution.

Summarily, *these visions bridge the centuries of time between the first and last kings of Babylon.*  They have to do with different facets of Israeli persecution at the hands of the Gentiles, with the principles set forth in Gen. 12:3 ultimately being worked out and realized. They have to do with Israel ultimately being brought to the place of repentance, the Times of the Gentiles being brought to an end, and Gentile persecution of Israel being fully dealt with.

Only then will Israel occupy her proper place at the head of the nations in a restored theocracy, with the nations being blessed through Israel.

That, in short, is how the eight visions in Zechariah must be understood. *Each* presents a different facet of the matter, and *all of the visions together* form a composite picture of that which God revealed concerning Israel and the nations through Zechariah.

Then, immediately after the last vision (6:1-8, dealing with the destruction of Gentile world power), Zechariah calls attention to the crowning of *Joshua, the high priest*, with reference then made to “the man whose name is The BRANCH,” which is followed by a reference to the building of the Temple (6:11-13).

The name “Joshua” (Heb., *Jehoshua*) is an Anglicized form of the Hebrew name for “Jesus” (Gk., *Iesous*). The Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) uses *Iesous* in Zech. 6:11, and this is the reason that the KJV translators erroneously translated *Iesous* as “Jesus” instead of “Joshua” in Acts 7:45 and Heb. 4:8. They are the same name, whether *Jehoshua* in Hebrew or *Iesous* in Greek. And the name, “The BRANCH,” in Zech. 6:12 is a Messianic title applied to Christ elsewhere in the Old Testament (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8).

Thus, note that which is in view immediately following the visions in Zechariah, immediately following the Times of the Gentiles, when Israel occupies her proper place at the head of the nations, in a restored theocracy.

Events surrounding *the crowning of Joshua* (at the termination of the visions), the high priest during Zechariah’s day, foreshadow future events surrounding the crowning of Jesus (at the termination of that set forth in the visions), Who will then be the great King-Priest.

And *the building of the Temple* following the restoration of a remnant during Zechariah’s day foreshadows the building of the millennial Temple by Messiah Himself, in that future day following Israel’s restoration.

*2) The Woman in the Ephah*

Now, with all that in mind, note the seventh of the eight visions — a woman seated in the midst of an ephah (5:5-11) — immediately before the vision having to do with the destruction of Gentile world power (6:1-8). This vision of the woman seated in the ephah has a direct bearing upon a proper understanding and interpretation of Revelation chapter seventeen through the opening six verses of chapter nineteen, paralleling, in a number of instances, that seen in these three chapters.

The destruction of Gentile world power then follows in both Zechariah’s visions and that revealed to John in the Book of Revelation. And the crowning of Joshua and the reference to “The BRANCH” building the Temple foreshadow and have to do with that which follows in the Book of Revelation — Christ appearing as “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (ch. 19b), with certain events then occurring both preparatory to and during His millennial reign (ch. 20a).

Thus, there is a parallel between the seventh and eighth visions and that which immediately follows in Zechariah *with* that seen in Revelation chapter seventeen through the opening six verses of chapter nineteen. Both sections of Scripture deal with *exactly the same thing*, from two different perspectives. They deal with Israel and the nations during the Times of the Gentiles, Israel brought to the place of repentance through Gentile persecution, Gentile world power destroyed, and the Messianic Kingdom ushered in.

And similar parallels can be seen between a number of other things in Zechariah’s first six visions and other parts of the book of Revelation as well.

“Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth.

And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth.

And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.

And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.

Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah?

And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base” (Zech. 5:5-11).

There are numerous metaphors throughout Zechariah’s visions, and the vision of the woman in the ephah is no different. Metaphors are used for practically everything in this vision, including “an house in the land of Shinar.”

However, metaphors, as used in these visions, or elsewhere in Scripture, do not lend themselves to fanciful interpretation. Scripture uses metaphors after a consistent fashion (*e.g.*, “a mountain” always has to do with *a kingdom*, “the sea” always has to do with *the Gentiles or the place of death*, “a fig tree” always has to do with *Israel or showing a connection with Israel*, etc.).

Metaphors found anyplace in Scripture are to be understood and explained contextually and/or through comparing Scripture with Scripture, in accordance with how Scripture deals with the metaphors being used.

For example, *three women* are in view in this vision — *one* in the ephah, and *two* who transport the ephah (with a woman inside). Since the manner in which the visions are introduced at the beginning of Zechariah has to do with *Israel and the nations*, ascertaining who these three women represent is quite simple, for “a woman” is sometimes used in Scripture, in a metaphorical way, to represent a nation (Isa. 47:1-7; 62:1-5; Rev. 12:1; 17:3ff).

Remaining with *the subject matter of the visions and the metaphorical use of women elsewhere in Scripture*, the “woman” in the ephah can only represent *Israel*, with the “two women” who transport the ephah representing *Gentile nations.* The woman in the ephah is removed from one land and transported to another.

And though the matter has its roots in history, where exactly the same thing occurred, the vision must be understood relative to *the end times*, for the destruction of Gentile world power follows in the next and last vision.

That is to say, the same thing occurred through the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, bringing about the Times of the Gentiles following the Babylonian captivity; and the same thing will occur yet future, bringing a close to the Times of the Gentiles.

During the end times, the Babylonian kingdom of the man of sin will encompass all the Gentile nations; and “the land of Shinar,” used in a metaphorical sense (in keeping with all the other metaphors used in the vision), would refer, not to one tract of land in the Mesopotamian Valley but to *the origin (the land of Shinar)* of a Babylonian kingdom which will then exist worldwide.

Thus, since the woman is moved to “the land of Shinar,” the only place *from* which the woman could possibly be moved would be *the land of Israel*, for any other part of the earth would be within the scope of the metaphorical use of “the land of Shinar” at this future time.

As previously stated, this occurred in history when the Jews were transported to the actual land of Shinar by the first king of Babylon (the first king as seen in Daniel’s image), and this will occur yet future, once again, when the Jewish people are uprooted from their land and scattered throughout a Babylonian kingdom which will then exist worldwide (though evidently with a Middle Eastern capital). This disbursement of the Jewish people throughout the Gentile world, both past and future, is exactly what is seen in Rev. 17:1, 15 — the woman, referred to as “the great whore” both here and in numerous Old Testament passages, seated in the midst of the nations, scattered throughout Antichrist’s kingdom (*cf.* Isa. 1:21-24; Jer. 3:1-14; Ezek. 16:26-39; Hosea 2:1ff).

The woman in the ephah is described by the word “wickedness [or, ‘unrighteousness’]” (v. 8), which would be in perfect keeping with her harlotry as she courts other lovers among the nations, particularly as she continues to court the Gentile nations in the final form of the kingdom of Babylon.

The “ephah” was the largest measure for dry goods used by the Jews, though of Egyptian origin. And the “ephah,” when used in a symbolic sense, would invariably be thought of as referring to *trade or commerce.* This was simply the manner in which the “ephah” was used, allowing it to be a natural emblem for *merchandising.*

The woman seated in the midst of the ephah, in this respect, would point to one characteristic of the Jewish people after being removed from their land — transformed from a nation primarily involved in *agriculture* to a nation primarily involved in *merchandising.* Note that *merchandising* is a main realm in which the woman is seen involved throughout a large section of Revelation chapter eighteen (vv. 3, 9-23).

The vision of the woman seated in the midst of the ephah though could refer to something else as well. As previously pointed out, the “ephah” was the largest of the measures used by the Jews for dry goods, though of Egyptian origin. “Egypt” is used in Scripture to typify or symbolize *the world outside the land of Israel*, *the Gentile nations.* And, in this respect, the woman seated in the midst of the ephah could very well also call attention to *the full measure of Israel’s sin of harlotry, as she finds herself seated in the midst of the Gentile nations (seated in the largest of measures, one of Gentile origin) in the kingdom of Antichrist.*

The woman in the vision sought to escape from the ephah (*ref.* v. 8, NASB, NIV), probably realizing the fate about to befall her should she remain in the ephah. But she was prevented from escaping, and she was cast back into the ephah and kept inside by a lead covering placed over the top, weighing a talent. The woman was to realize *her own inevitable fate, in the midst of the ephah in the land of Shinar*, *i.e.*, *in the midst of commercialism, among the nations, in the kingdom of Antichrist.*

*This is where the harlot would be destroyed*, as seen in Revelation chapters seventeen through the first part of nineteen.

A talent of lead placed over the opening of the ephah kept the woman inside. A “talent” was *the largest weight used among the Jewish people*, and “lead” was *one of the heaviest of metals.* Such a covering showed that *there was no escape from that which must occur, for her sins had “reached unto heaven,” and God had “remembered her iniquities”* (Rev. 18:5).

The heaviest of weights (a talent of lead) was placed over the opening of the largest of measures (the ephah) to keep the woman (Israel) inside the ephah, *for a purpose* — to be transported from her land to a place among the nations.

Two women (which could only represent other nations, Gentile nations), with stork-like wings (the stork, an unclean bird [Lev. 11:13, 19; Deut. 14:12, 18]), lifted the ephah up from the land of Israel and transported it out among the nations (to that foreshadowed by the land of Shinar in that coming day).

*And there, among her Gentile lovers, the woman, Israel, was to be established and dealt with by God in relation to the magnitude of her sin, with a view to repentance.*

(The vision of the ephah could only span the centuries of time covering the entire Times of the Gentiles [some twenty-six centuries] as seen in Daniel’s great image or the four great beasts, though with a particular emphasis upon *the latter days.*

With Israel and the magnitude of her sin over centuries of time in view, note again the laws of the harvest relative to sowing and reaping.

Note, according to Zechariah’s vision of the woman in the ephah, that which must ultimately occur relative to the remnant of Jews presently in the land of Israel — approximately 6,000,000 today. It is exactly the same thing seen in the Book of Jonah and elsewhere in Scripture. The Jews presently in the land must be cast from the ship into the sea [a place typifying “death” and “the Gentiles”].

They must be removed from their land and driven back out among the Gentile nations once again. And *among the nations* [*in the sea*] the Jewish people will be viewed as *dead* [as Lazarus in the seventh sign in John’s gospel, John chapter eleven], awaiting God’s breath to bring about *life* [Ezek. 37:1-14]. Then, and only then [after life has been restored], can they be removed from the sea, from the nations.

God drove His people out among the nations to deal with them there relative to *repentance*, and that is exactly where He will deal with them at the end of Man’s Day. If for no other reason than this, the Jewish people presently in the land *must* be uprooted and driven back out among the nations.

That is not only the place where God has decreed that He will deal with them but that is also the place from whence God will regather them when He brings them back into the land, *following repentance, belief, and the restoration of life.*)

The Jewish people were carried away into Babylon by the first king of Babylon, which marked the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles. This was also the beginning of the Jewish association with Babylon. And most of the Jews carried away never left Babylon at the end of the seventy years to return to their land (Jer. 25:11, 12; *cf.* II Chron. 36:20, 21; Dan. 9:1, 2).  *They had found a home in Babylon.* In this respect, *as long as Babylon remained in existence, the association of the Jewish people with Babylon could only have continued.*

In the latter days, when the final form of Daniel’s image appears — the final form of the kingdom of Babylon — *Israel will be left without a choice other than to see the nation’s harlotry brought into full bloom within the kingdom of Antichrist.* The things seen in the vision of the ephah will be brought to pass during the days of the last king of Babylon, with “Israel” enmeshed in the final form of this Babylonian kingdom to the extent that *the nation is spoken of in synonymous terms* with “Babylon” in Revelation chapter seventeen through the opening verses of chapter nineteen.

These are the things forming the Old Testament connection which allow “Babylon” to be used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem* in the Book of Revelation — as previously seen, a reference used more directly for *the people of the city, the Jewish people* (*cf.* Ps. 122:6; Jer. 44:13; Lam. 1:7, 8, 17; Matt. 23:37; Rev. 21:9, 10).