

THAT GREAT CITY

Part III

Possessing Regal Authority Over Kings...

By Arlen L. Chirwood

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18).

The woman in Revelation chapter twelve is *the same woman* seen in chapters seventeen through the first part of nineteen. One woman is *clothed with the sun, in possession of regality* (12); and the other woman, a harlot, is *associated with the world, in possession of regality* as well (17-19a).

Thus, *regality is seen in connection with the woman in both sections*. This is plainly seen in the text in connection with the woman in chapter twelve; and the same thing, from the text itself, will be shown later in this chapter in connection with the woman in chapters seventeen through the first part of nineteen.

As well, these chapters in the Book of Revelation (12, 17, 19a) are *in exact accord with teachings pertaining to Israel's harlotry and regality* as seen in Genesis chapters thirty-seven through forty-five, along with numerous other places in the Old Testament.

With all of this information staring a Bible student in the face, one often wonders how so many people can go astray when it comes to a *correct interpretation of the harlot woman beginning in Revelation chapter seventeen*. Possibly thoughts from what Andrew Jukes had to say over one hundred years ago about the neglect of the study of types by Bible students in his day might apply:

"The real secret of the neglect of the types, I cannot but think may, in part, be traced to this — that they require more spiritual intelligence than many Christians can bring to them."

The Woman Is That Great City

As the Beast is identified in chapter seventeen (vv. 8-14), the woman is identified in this chapter as well. The woman is identified in *a direct and clear statement after a manner which, contextually, no one could possibly question*. The last verse in chapter seventeen provides, *beyond any question whatsoever, in so many words, the identity of the woman*:

"And 'the woman' which thou sawest is *that great city*, which reigneth over [*lit.*, 'which possesses kingly authority over'] the kings of the earth" (v. 18).

The expression "the [or 'that'] great city" is used nine times in chapters eleven through eighteen, with six of these usages seen in chapters seventeen and eighteen. The first usage in 11:8 identifies the city as *Jerusalem*, and the identification of "the great city" in this first usage must be understood the same way throughout the subsequent chapters where this expression appears.

Note how Rev. 11:8 reads:

"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."

Jerusalem, in this verse, is associated with *Sodom* (sexual perversion) and *Egypt* (the world); and the next two appearances of the expression, "the great city" (14:8; 16:19), associates "Jerusalem" with *Babylon* (on the validity or nonvalidity of "the great city" being included in the text of 14:8, refer to the author's pamphlet, "Understanding Revelation," Part II).

Babylon was the place where the southern two tribes were taken captive, beginning about 605 B.C., beginning the Times of the Gentiles.

Over one hundred years earlier (about 722 B.C.), the northern ten tribes had been taken captive by the Assyrians (the world power of that previous day). But between these two times, the Babylonians had conquered the Assyrian kingdom, shifting the center of world power from Assyria to Babylon and, after about 605 B.C., placed all twelve tribes within a Babylonian kingdom.

Babylon is out in the world, typified by *Egypt*; and God allowed the Jewish people to be uprooted from their land and taken captive to Babylon because of their numerous transgressions occurring over centuries of time, *with sexual perversion, associated with Sodom, among sins heading the list* (cf. Jer. 22:8, 9, 25).

And this is exactly where "the woman" finds herself in Revelation chapters seventeen through the opening verses of nineteen — *enmeshed in the kingdom of the last king of Babylon, out in the world* (scattered among the nations), and viewed as a harlot — *exactly as portrayed in previous verses* (11:8; 14:8; 16:19).

Thus, in Rev. 17:18, the harlot, seen throughout these chapters, is *clearly identified as "Jerusalem."* And there is no getting around this clearly stated fact.

("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 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].

The Jewish people, their land, and their capital city are looked upon and referred to in an inseparable sense in Scripture. Thus, in an interpretative respect, Rev. 17:18 would have to read, "And 'the woman' which thou sawest is *Israel*..."")

The Woman Possessing Regal Authority

Then, Rev. 17:18 also presents another means of identification. This verse doesn't stop with the identification of the woman as "that great city." Rather, the verse goes on to provide a second means of identification, which is *in complete keeping* with the first part of the verse.

The verse continues by adding the words, "which reigneth over the kings of the earth." A better translation of these words from the Greek text would be, "which possesses kingly authority over the kings of the earth" (ref. Wuest's *Expanded Translation* — "which possesses [imperial] power over..."), limiting matters in the light of Ex. 4:22, *23 to Israel and/or Jerusalem alone*.

Thus, the woman is identified as *possessing regal authority over the Gentile nations* (17:18b). This identifying statement reflects back upon and

draws from a similar statement about the woman earlier in the book:

“...a woman clothed with the sun [Israel, seen as the central governing authority]...and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (12:1b).

“Twelve” is the number of *governmental perfection*; and this verse from chapter twelve forms part of the contextual foundational material in the book upon which the identity of the woman in 17:18 rests.

The word used for “crown” in the Greek text of Rev. 12:1 is *stephanos*, not *diadema*, indicating that the woman, though possessing regal power and authority, was not exercising that power and authority at the time seen in the text (which is a time yet future, near the middle of the Tribulation, with the woman wearing a *diadem* and exercising regal power and authority following the Tribulation).

An individual presently exercising regal power and authority would wear a crown depicted by the word *diadema*, not a crown depicted by the word *stephanos*. This is seen two verses later (v. 3), where the Greek word *diadema* is used — showing an exercise of *regal power and authority in the kingdom of Antichrist* by the one to whom Satan will one day give “his power, and his seat [‘his throne’], and great authority” (Rev. 13:2).

(Regarding *Israel in possession of regal power and authority over the Gentile nations*, note that which Moses was instructed to make known to the Egyptian Pharaoh when God sent him to deliver the Israelites [an Assyrian ruler in Egypt, typifying the coming Assyrian who will rule the world (cf. Isa. 52:4; Micah 5:5)]. Moses was instructed to say unto Pharaoh, “Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn...” [Ex. 4:22, 23].

“Sonship” implies *rulership*. Only sons can rule in God’s kingdom [past, present, or future], and in the human realm, only *firstborn sons* can rule [only *firstborn sons* find themselves in a position to exercise the rights of primogeniture within a family, with *regality* being one of these rights]. In short, Moses, announcing to Pharaoh that *Israel was God’s son, even His firstborn*, was God’s way of making it known to the ruler over Egypt that *He recognized Israel in the regal capacity implied by sonship, not Egypt*.

And this recognition was made known while Israel was still in Egypt. Israel, following the observance of the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread in Exodus chapters twelve and thirteen, was to be led out of Egypt under Moses.

Then, following certain events occurring while enroute to Kadesh-Barnea — the old covenant given through Moses at Mt. Sinai, the Magna Charta for the kingdom, containing all of the rules and regulations governing the people of God within the kingdom, along with the construction of the Tabernacle, the dwelling place of God among His people within the theocracy — Israel was to enter into and occupy the land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and once the Jewish people had become established in this land, they were to *rule the nations as God’s firstborn son, within a theocracy*.

Again, note the latter part of Rev. 17:18. There is *only one nation* on the face of the earth that this can be referencing — the nation which is *not to be* “reckoned among the nations” [Num. 23:9]. *Only one nation* on the face of the earth possesses a position of *regal authority over the kings of the earth [over all the Gentile nations]*. This nation was identified in Ex. 4:22, 23, immediately prior to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt; and this nation is identified in Rev. 17:18, *after exactly the same fashion* [previously introduced after this fashion in Rev. 12:1], immediately prior to Jesus leading the Israelites out from a worldwide dispersion yet future.

Dating from Moses’ day, Israel has never lost the nation’s standing as *God’s firstborn son*. Israel has been God’s firstborn son since the announcement was made in Ex. 4:22, 23 [cf. Gen. 49:10], remains God’s firstborn son today [though a disobedient son, scattered among the nations], and will one day exercise the rights of the firstborn [following repentance].

This is why, for the past 3,500 years, since the time this announcement was made, that the one who has held the sceptre since prior to the creation of Adam [Satan] has done everything within his power to destroy Israel.

Also, note that Israel is spoken of in both *masculine* and *feminine* respects in Scripture — as a *son*, and as a *woman* [cf. Hosea 2:2; 11:1], with both having regal implications. Only *sons* can rule, and man cannot rule alone. *A man* must rule in conjunction with a *woman*, or a *woman* in conjunction with a *man* — *the man as king and the woman as consort queen*. This is a principle established in the opening chapter of Genesis, *which can never change* [Gen. 1:26-28].

And exactly the same thing, for exactly the same reasons, is seen relative to the bride of Christ. The one who will rule as consort queen with the Son is spoken of in Scripture in both masculine and feminine respects, with both having regal implications [cf. Rom. 8:14, 15, 19; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 5:23-32; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 19:7-10].

The Woman Guilty of Blood

Further, if Scripture is compared with Scripture, *Jerusalem alone* — referring to *the Jewish people* — is guilty of *the blood of the prophets and of all slain upon the earth* (Matt. 23:34-37), which is said of the harlot in Rev. 17:6; 18:24; 19:2. The Jewish people *alone* carry this guilt. *It is not possible* for any other city, nation, or segment of society to be looked upon in this manner. This fact is *clearly stated* in Luke 13:33:

“...it cannot be [lit., ‘...it is not possible’] that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.”

And it is clear from the subsequent verse (v. 34) that “Jerusalem” is used in verse thirty-three referring to *the entire nation — the Jewish people* — exactly as it is used in Rev. 17:18.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee...”

Thus, according to Scripture, *Israel alone* can be considered guilty of blood in this respect. And in keeping with this thought, Christ died in the capital of Jewry at the hands of the Jews (Matt. 16:21; Acts 2:23, 36; Rev. 11:8); and the Apostle Paul, as well, was prepared to die in Jerusalem at the hands of the Jews, “for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:11-13).

Thus, Scripture is *quite clear* on the identity of *the harlot* in Rev. 17:1-19:6.

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