

REVELATION'S BABYLON THE GREAT WHORE : PART ONE

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

True Worship, A Spiritual Temple, False Shepherds, The Lord's Table, Dangers Of Organized Religion, Apostasy Of Ancient Israel, Destruction Of The Temple, The Great Liberator, Children Of Darkness, Nature Of The Early Church, Persecution And Evangelization, Comprise And Apostasy Of The Church, Spirit-led Interpretations, The Lord's Virgin Bride

Contrary to what the ancient Jews believed, and contrary to what is even believed by many modern-day religionists, our praise and worship is not bound by or attached to a physical place or building. Furthermore, our worship is not limited by time so that it must be performed on a certain day or follow a pre-determined schedule. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, true worship of the Father is in Spirit and in Truth. It is free from any shackles placed upon it by human traditions:

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
(John 4:21-24)

In his first Epistle, the Apostle Peter reiterated what he had learned from the Lord concerning the spiritual nature of our Temple when he wrote the following:

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner..."
(1 Peter 2:4-7)

As the above verses clearly demonstrate, collectively, we the worldwide Body of Believers, form the Lord's Spiritual Temple. Each one of us is a living stone cemented together in Faith and in Love; and Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone, or Foundation Stone, upon which our entire structure rests. You will notice that Peter states that this Chief Cornerstone was disallowed, or rejected by the builders. He is referring to the fact that even though Jesus came to His own first,

that is, to the Jewish spiritual hierarchy of His day, they didn't receive Him, and in fact deemed Him unworthy to be the foundation of their faith. Thus, exactly as John wrote at the beginning of his Gospel, Jesus took His message of Love, Forgiveness and Salvation to those who would gladly hear and receive it; that is, to the common people, and to the Gentiles; to you and I:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"
(John 1:11-12)

"...And the common people heard him gladly." (Mark 12:37b)

"And in his name shall the Gentiles trust." (Matthew 12:21)

While they may not realize it yet, those who place their faith and trust in organized religion, and in the physical structures associated with organized religion, are headed for difficult times. Someday in the near future, the physical religious system may no longer exist. Today there are many forces in the world, both human and spiritual, which are slowly and steadily working towards that end. It may take them time, but they are gradually achieving their goals. Even as I write this, many congregations have already been taken over by false shepherds, priests and pastors who are poisoning their flocks with secular humanist ideas. Such churches are merely hollow shells; they are a facade without the real Spirit of God dwelling within them. They pretend to fulfill the spiritual needs of their congregation; while in reality they only enrich themselves; and leave their flocks hungry and naked. As Jesus said, these are not true shepherds; they are only hirelings:

"But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep." (John 10:12-13)

It is important that the modern Christian learns to feed himself spiritually; or better said, that he learns to be fed directly by the Lord. As the young shepherd David wrote in the twenty-third Psalm, the Lord will not only care for us and provide for us, but He will also meet our spiritual needs by preparing a spiritual banquet before us if we take the time to dwell upon His Word. In the following verse, the word 'want' is derived from the Hebrew word 'chacer' and actually means to be lacking or to be without something:

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters...Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." (Psalms 23:1-2, 5)

As I have pointed out in other articles, it is extremely important that the foundation of the modern Christian's faith be built directly upon the Word of God, and NOT solely upon what he is hearing or being taught in his local church

building or Sunday School class. While this may come as a surprise to some, not everything one hears within the four walls of his church is true and accurate. In fact, some of it is absolutely wrong and purposely meant to pervert his perception of The Truth; or else to totally alienate him from The Truth. Let us not forget the dire warning concerning the Last Days and the Day of the Lord's Coming issued by the Apostle Paul in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;"
(2 Thessalonians 2:3)

Some are falling away from The Truth of the Gospel without even realizing it because it is a slow gradual process. I have told the story before concerning the poor woman who after many years of listening to her pastor tell her that a certain group of Scriptures didn't mean what they said, or that a certain passage no longer applied to our modern day, was left with nothing but the front and back covers of her Bible. The overall message is clear: We should all be very cautious and not just blindly place our faith in organized religion; especially in those priests, pastors, elders and teachers who use very little Scriptures during the mass or service, or in their Bible classes. We should also beware of those who twist the meanings of the Scriptures in order to support their own wayward doctrines. Two thousand years ago, Jesus issued the same warning concerning the teachings of the Scribes and the Pharisees when He said:

"...Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." (Luke 12:1b)

"Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (Matthew 16:12)

Following that same line of thought, the Apostle Peter, in referring to the writings of Paul, also wrote in his second letter regarding those who distorted the meaning of some of Paul's Epistles. In the following verses, the word 'wrest' means to distort or divert to an unnatural or inappropriate use or meaning, to pervert something. It is derived from the Greek word 'strebloo':

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:15-16)

This isn't the only danger of modern organized religion. It is also extremely easy to be led astray by the materialistic worldly spirit which has invaded many churches. In some cases, attending church services is viewed as nothing more than a bothersome necessity to maintain one's social status in the local community. I have been to some churches in the

past which boast of an all-white membership comprised of the successful business and political leaders of the community. In some of these churches, it is easy for one to become mesmerized by the pleasant decor which surrounds him. The plush comfortable pews, the wall-to-wall carpet, the colorful stained-glass windows, the elegant woodwork, the expensive organ, the stereo sound system, etc., appeal to one's physical senses. One is overtaken with a sense of well-being, while his spiritual perception remains dull. While some affluent Christians claim that 'the abundant life' is a Scriptural principle, it is the furthest thing from the truth. I am reminded of the prophecy against the Church at Laodicea in the Book of Revelation:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Revelation 3:15-19)

Just like Christianity today in which some church leaders seem to be more obsessed with building larger and grander buildings to impress their members; and to outdo their religious competitors on the next block, once she had forsaken the one true God, ancient Israel also became involved in building many temples. In fact, based on the information I have presented in my article 'The Fruits Of Disobedience', those temples were undoubtedly dedicated to the false gods of the heathen nations which they had failed to destroy. This failure was a result of direct disobedience to the commandment the Lord had first given to Moses and Joshua. In the eighth chapter of the Book of Hosea, we read the following rebuke from the Lord which confirms this:

"They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off. Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces...For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples..." (Hosea 8:4-6, 14)

In the eighth chapter of the first Book of Samuel, we find the story of how the Israelites hounded the Prophet Samuel to anoint a king over them so they could be just like the heathen nations around them. Even though it wasn't God's perfect will, because of their stubborn insistence, the Lord eventually let them have their way. Since they rejected Him as their one true King, He gave them stubborn king Saul. I discuss this topic in more detail in the article 'The Children Of God And Politics'. Less than one hundred years later, even though the Lord only wanted to dwell in the

temple of their hearts, He also conceded in the days of King Solomon and let them build a Temple of stone and mortar. Of course, the Lord was fully aware of what it would lead to: total abandonment of the true God. Thus, not even four hundred and eighty years had passed since the Egyptian bondage before the Israelites had gone astray:

"And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD." (1 Kings 6:1)

From the moment Saul became king, things began to go wrong. By the end of Solomon's reign, Israel had totally gone astray worshipping many false gods, and building temples and altars to them. It was for this reason that the Lord rent the kingdom from Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and divided it in two; leaving only Judah and Benjamin in the south, with the remaining tribes becoming part of Israel, or Ephraim, to the north. From that point on, even though there were a few good kings, Israel and Judah were constantly at war with each other; and both slid deeper and deeper into apostasy. This is quite evident in the writings of the Old Testament Prophet Isaiah, as well as in the second chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, in the thirty-fourth chapter of the Book of Ezekiel, and in others where the Lord rebukes the spiritual elders of Israel for becoming fat and lazy; and for neglecting the spiritual needs of their flocks. As an example, consider the following verses:

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock...Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them." (Ezekiel 34:1-3, 10)

At the time that King David petitioned the Lord to build a Temple in His honour, he was living in a cedar home while the Ark of the Covenant was still in a tabernacle, or tent. Thus, while David's intentions were good in wanting to build a Temple to house the Ark, as we read in the following verses, this was not what the Lord wanted done. In fact, He questioned David as to why he wanted to build a Temple when the Lord had never required it of him:

"Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an

house of cedar?" (2 Samuel 7:5-7)

It is clear from the above verses that the Lord only wanted to dwell in the midst of the people, that is, in the Spiritual Temple of their hearts. He wanted to be a living God to them; not a dead one bound by time and place in a physical structure. Like other Prophets which had stood in Jerusalem and warned Israel of her whoredoms in worshipping false gods, the young Prophet Jeremiah declared in the seventh chapter of his book:

"Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these." (Jeremiah 7:4)

About two hundred years earlier, the Lord had voiced a similar warning through the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah when He said:

"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Isaiah 66:1-2)

As the previous verses make clear, God is more impressed by those who honour and fear Him, and who obey His Word, than by luxurious edifices built in His honour which house the spiritually dead who walk not in the ways of the Lord. This applies just as much today as it did thousands of years ago. God is more interested in the condition of our hearts than in the place we choose to worship. As King David wrote during a time of great repentance after murdering Uriah the Hittite and committing adultery with his beautiful wife Bath-sheba:

"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Psalms 51:16-17)

Soon after Solomon's Temple was built, its beauty and luxury became a hindrance and a great distraction. The Temple sacrifices and other rituals had already become hollow traditions long before Jesus had even been born. The prayers and supplications of the Temple priests had been reduced to vain repetitions. In short, now that the Jews had their earthly king and a physical Temple, they were content, and became self-satisfied. Before long, they abandoned the one true God and were just going through the motions, just like some churches today. In short, they had become no better than the heathen nations around them. The Scribes and the Pharisees were simply following the letter of the Law, rather than the Spirit. Several hundred years later, Jesus would tell them that they had made the laws of God of none effect by their many traditions:

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth

me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." (Mark 7:6-13)

Following the Prophet Malachi, there was a period of several hundred years during which time prophesying was shunned upon by the Jewish spiritual hierarchy. They simply did not want to be reminded of their waywardness from the Lord. This was in the latter part of the Second Temple Period during the reign of the Maccabees. As is evidenced by such apocryphal works as the Book of Jubilees, written approximately in 100 B.C. by a Pharisee, during this time, greater emphasis was placed upon the written Law and oral tradition which was esteemed as eternal and unchangeable. It is because of this that we have what appears to be a period of silence for several centuries prior to Christ's arrival on Earth. Some say that God was simply tired of speaking to a nation which had hardened its ears and heart to the Truth. Others point to the apocryphal Pseudonymous Writings claiming that, under pressure and threat of persecution and excommunication from the Temple, God's Prophets, while still prophesying, were forced to write under assumed names.

It is a Biblical fact that Jesus was very much against the spirit of commercialism which had corrupted religious worship at the Temple in Jerusalem. I also discuss this in such articles as 'Mondex And The Mark Of The Beast', and in 'Money-Making Bible Hucksters And Mammon'. The Lord was quick to rebuke and expose those who had polluted the House of God turning it into a house of merchandise. He is just as upset about it today as He was two thousand years ago. The following verses clearly reveal His displeasure with such practices:

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matthew 21:12-13)

Jesus was paraphrasing a rebuke He had first spoken by the Spirit through the mouth of the young Prophet Jeremiah over six hundred years before. Just as Jesus stood in the Temple and rebuked the Jewish religious Elders and the merchants, Jeremiah had done the same thing prior to the invasion of Jerusalem by Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, when he said:

"Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 7:11)

In his bid to win the favor of the Jews, Herod the Great had greatly enhanced the Temple at Jerusalem. When His Disciples became awed by the beauty of this symbol of man's pride and

vanity, Jesus was quick to point out their error by telling them what would be its fate:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
(Matthew 24:1-2)

Just as the First Temple had been destroyed after the Old Testament Prophets had warned Israel for years to repent of her idolatry and whoredoms, Jesus' words were also fulfilled some forty years later when Titus, the son of Vespasian and a future emperor of Rome, invaded Jerusalem and totally destroyed the Temple. According to the historical record, many Jews were burned alive when they fled into the Temple for refuge. To retrieve all of the gold which had melted, it is said that the Romans tore the Temple down stone by stone to scrape off the gold which had seeped down between the blocks. With this event, the Lord emphasized in a very graphical way, His rejection of ancient legalistic Judaism; just as they had rejected Him as being the True Foundation Stone of God's Eternal Spiritual Temple. Thus the Second Temple Period came to an abrupt end by the hand of the Roman armies, just as the First Temple Period had met its end by the invading forces of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Considering all of the above, is it any wonder that the Jewish Elders hated Jesus and sought to kill Him when He came preaching spiritual freedom from the Law, and from the oppressive system of the Temple priests? When He first began His public ministry, this is exactly what the Lord said He had come to do, in fulfillment of the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

"And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:17-19)

As John the Baptist had said, Jesus was like a bright Light shining upon the sins of the world. Some accepted that Light, while others rejected it; preferring instead to walk in spiritual darkness; thus condemning themselves. Speaking of John the Baptist's ministry to prepare the way for Jesus, John the Beloved wrote in his Gospel:

"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:" (John 1:7-12)

Later on in the very same Gospel, the Lord is recorded as having said the following regarding those who reject the Truth, Light and Freedom which He offers:

"And this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than Light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the Light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:19-21)

From the Old Testament clear through the New Testament, the False Church has always persecuted the True Church. The legalistic children of Satan have hounded and killed the true Children of Light. In one of His final denouncements of the false spiritual hierarchy at Jerusalem, the Lord ended his fiery discourse by saying the following to the hard-hearted Scribes and Pharisees:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 23:37-39)

As I said earlier, this is exactly what happened some forty years later when their 'glorious' Temple was destroyed. As sad as it is, to this very day, the majority of the flesh Jews continue to reject their one true Saviour. Thank God that some are beginning to see the Light, and are coming to the knowledge of the Truth, due in part to the work of such organizations as the Messianic Jews and the Jews For Jesus. Unfortunately, it may be too little too late; as according to Bible prophecy, Israel is going to have to experience some very difficult times before the majority of the Jews will finally be willing to admit their error, and cry out to the Lord for His mercy and forgiveness for their unbelief. Following Jesus's Death on the Cross, the jealous leaders of the false religious system continued to persecute the true Children of God. Consider the final words of the martyr Stephen as the angry Jewish mob stoned him to death in the seventh chapter of the Book of Acts:

"But Solomon built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth NOT in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up

stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." (Acts 7:47-58)

Stephen's words continue to ring true today just as they did two thousand years ago when he first spoke them. As Jesus so clearly pointed out in the twenty-third chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, the blame falls squarely on the shoulders of the spiritual leaders of Israel; for they are the ones who preach the false doctrines which lead men astray. Jesus had absolutely nothing good to say about the Temple Elders of His day. Time and time again He referred to them as hypocrites, serpents, vipers, blind leaders of the blind, children of Hell, children of the Devil, the spiritually dead and more. Perhaps His strongest rebuke is found in the following words from the Gospel of John:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

In the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, the Lord again exposes the lies and hypocrisy of the false religious system of the Jews. In his letters to the seven churches which were in Asia Minor, John was moved by the Spirit of the Lord to write the following concerning the Body of Believers which was in Smyrna:

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Revelation 2:9)

In the very next chapter, in his letter to the church which was at Philadelphia, John again was led of the Lord to expose the subtle deception behind Judaism:

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." (Revelation 3:9)

As I point out in my two-part article, 'Is God A Racist?', the Apostle Paul, as well as other writers of the Epistles, also shed light on this issue. In his letter to the Disciples at Rome, Paul wrote very clearly concerning the nature of the true Jews:

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

As should be abundantly clear by now, there is a marked distinction between the true Body of Believers, and those who claim to be the church, temple or religion of God. Let me again remind the reader that while I have emphasized the sharp contrast between ancient Judaism and Jesus' own Teachings, the inadequacies of organized religion with its man-made buildings and dry spiritless ceremonies, is not limited to Judaism alone. The primary criteria for belonging to God's true spiritual Church, is that one has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Saviour. Any religion which does not embrace this belief, cannot possibly claim to be the true religion of God. Likewise, any person who does not embrace belief in Jesus Christ, cannot possibly claim to be a Child of God. Contrary to the false belief in the world today, as Jesus made abundantly clear, not everyone is a Child of God. If we were all already Children of God, then obviously there would be no need for us 'to become the sons of God' as is stated in John 1:12 quoted twice earlier.

In like manner, dedicating millions of dollars to the construction of beautiful temples, churches, cathedrals, etc., for the glory and praise of man is not what true religion is about in the least. This is nothing more than a religion of dead works. It is the worship of the creations of man. It is the worship of mammon, or material wealth, as Jesus pointed out in the Gospel of Matthew:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
(Matthew 6:24)

In his first Epistle, the Apostle John also wrote concerning the dangers of being seduced by the pleasures of the world when he said:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
(1 John 2:15-16)

As I explain in my article 'Where Are The First Century Churches?', we can conclude then that the first Churches established by the original Apostles in the Book of Acts were not physical buildings as we see today; but rather the Bodies of Believers who had accepted the Salvation which Jesus Christ alone can give. The Apostles and their early followers were not involved in, and had no interest in building church buildings or temples to house their new converts. The Scriptures make clear that they met privately in small groups in people's homes, as well as in public places; just as Jesus had preached in people's homes, in the streets, and on the hills and mountains of Israel. Please refer to the aforementioned article for more Scriptures concerning this topic.

While it is true that Jesus did preach in the Temple and in the synagogues of His native land, as did His Disciples in the early days of Christianity, this was in order to fulfill

a purpose; and that was to first offer Salvation to the spiritual leadership of Israel. In Acts chapter six, we are told that the testimony of the Early Disciples was so powerful, that even many of the Temple priests had joined their ranks:

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
(Acts 6:7)

The fact that even some of the Temple priests joined the Disciples so outraged the pharisaical keepers of the Law, that a great persecution arose against the Early Church; and they were finally forced to flee from Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus' own commandment issued in the first chapter of the Book of Acts:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

As I explain in such articles as 'Biblical Cafeteria Or The Whole Course?: Part One', this persecution was spearheaded in part by Saul of Tarsus who later became the Apostle Paul. You can read all about his conversion to the young new Christian faith beginning at the end of Acts chapter seven, and continuing through Acts chapter nine. Both the Biblical and the historical record verify that, with this persecution which began at Jerusalem, the Early Disciples eventually travelled as far as Africa, India, Russia, Europe and beyond. Just as the order was given in Acts 1:8 to take the Gospel to all the known world of their day, we find the beginning of its fulfillment by simply reversing the verse reference, and going to Acts 8:1 where we read:

"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.
(Acts 8:1)

While the actual Twelve Apostles remained in Jerusalem, they realized that the only way that they could continue their work there of reaching the thousands of pilgrims who came annually to fulfill their obligations at the Temple, would be by appearing as less of a threat to the Jewish Elders. One way they accomplished this was by reducing their numbers and sending out road teams to evangelize the rest of Israel. One point which is worthy of note, is that when the writers of the Epistles spoke of Deacons and Bishops, they were not referring to an established system of church buildings as is espoused by modern Christianity. These men were Spiritual Elders over the Bodies of Believers established in the towns visited by Paul, Luke, Philip, Peter, Thomas, Barnabas, Silas and others. These Early Believers lived in their homes and congregated in their homes. This is where these Deacons and Bishops ministered to them. Allow me to again refer you to my companion article 'Where Are The First Century Churches?'.
.

Unfortunately, by the middle of the Book of Acts, we discover that a spirit of compromise had already begun to creep into the ranks of the Disciples at Jerusalem. A close reading of the Epistles will reveal that the Elders of the New Faith had already begun to issue warnings concerning the false brethren who had crept in unawares to try to make the new Disciples conform with the laws of Judaism. The Apostle Paul was particularly aware of the evil which was brewing in Jerusalem as is apparent in such verses as the following where he warns his young new converts to beware of the false brethren who were arriving from Jerusalem:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him...For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-14)

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:"
(Galatians 1:6)

"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." (Galatians 2:3-5)

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." (Philippians 3:2)

Despite the best efforts of Paul and others, only several centuries after the initial explosive events at Jerusalem, the Christian Church had already cooled off spiritually. She went from being a Spiritual Kingdom with an interest in men's souls, to being a physical Earthly kingdom drunk on wealth and power with a misguided preoccupation for constructing church buildings. While it may be difficult for some to understand how this could possibly happen, consider what has happened in our current times with modern-day America. Barely two hundred years have gone by since her founding, and already she has gone astray; and has for the most part abandoned the Christian heritage she received from the Founding Fathers; many of whom were God-fearing men. Thus, the Early Church went from storing up rewards in Heaven, to laying up for themselves treasures upon Earth in direct disobedience to Jesus' own commandment:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there

will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21)

While ancient Israel compromised with the pagan nations and peoples around and within her, the Early Christians lost the fire and compromised with the pagan Roman Empire; the very ones who had previously persecuted and slaughtered them in their sports coliseums. This ultimately resulted in the spiritual marriage and whoredom of the Church. Just as Israel had abandoned her true spiritual Husband and King, and prostituted herself with pagan gods and lovers, the Early Church did the same. It was a common practice for the Romans to adopt the gods and customs of the heathen nations they conquered. This is what perverted the Early Church when she compromised with Rome. In truth then, we must honestly ask ourselves: Has modern Christianity become any better than the corrupt religious system of the Jews which first rejected Christ and His Twelve Disciples? While they claim to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, have they too become lost in legalities, meaningless rituals and materialistic worship without the Spirit of God?

If we turn again to the Book of Revelation, we discover that the false religious system of the Endtime is referred to by John as Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth:

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."
(Revelation 17:5-6)

John was quite amazed by this mysterious woman. The idea of Babylon being drunk with the blood of the Saints is again repeated in the final verse of the next chapter where we read:

"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."
(Revelation 18:24)

Exactly who is this Babylon the Great Whore of Revelation? Over the years I have heard a variety of answers to this intriguing question. Within Christian eschatological circles, that is, those who study Endtime prophetic events, there are different schools of thought. These range from those who interpret prophecy in a purely spiritual manner, to those who apply a more physical interpretation. In the middle we have those who understand some prophecies as being spiritual in nature, while others are to be understood and fulfilled in a very literal manner. I would include myself in this middle ground. Having said that, allow me to briefly share with you the four main points of view I have heard since becoming involved in Bible prophecy many years ago:

1. Babylon the Great Whore refers to the ancient city of Babylon which was the capital of the Babylonian Empire. Today, Babylonia is a part of Iraq. As I have discussed in my series 'The Seven Heads', Saddam Hussein is currently excavating and rebuilding this ancient metropolis. In fact,

following the custom of the ancient Babylonian kings, he is having his name and the date imprinted on every stone used in the reconstruction of this once great city. As I also mention in that series, Hussein considers himself to be a direct descendant of King Nebuchadnezzar; thus he views himself as Nebuchadnezzar III.

2. Babylon the Great Whore corresponds to Rome and the Roman Catholic Church. Needless-to-say, while quite offensive to Roman Catholics, this view is quite popular with some Protestant and Baptist denominations. My understanding is that the Jehovah's Witnesses also hold to this view. As I have mentioned in other articles, according to certain interpretations of the Quatrains of French physician and astrologer Nostradamus, there are only to be two more popes in Vatican City. It is said that the final one will betray Catholic believers by compromising with the Beast of the Book of Revelation. Some go as far as to suggest that this final pope will actually be the False Prophet of Revelation chapter thirteen. One verse used by the supporters of this interpretation is the following:

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."
(Revelation 17:9)

The proponents of this interpretation say that the whore sitting on seven mountains represents the city of Rome which is said to sit on seven hills. As you will see from my 'The Seven Heads' series, I hold very different views regarding the proper interpretation of the above verse.

3. Babylon the Great Whore represents the worldwide financial/political system of our day. This is epitomized by the United States of America; and by New York City in particular, which holds the economic reins of the world. This is a view which was quite popular with the Children of God, also known as the Family of Love; an evangelical Christian group which repeatedly made the headlines during the late sixties, and into the seventies and eighties as well. I am not sure if they still exist or not. For those of you old enough to remember, several decades ago, they passed out a tract explicitly called 'America The Whore'. According to the Children of God/Family of Love, America will some day be destroyed by nuclear fire as retribution for the many wars and violent acts she has committed to sustain her lavish lifestyle. While I have no doubt that the Lord will someday judge America for her many sins, I do not agree with all of the doctrines of the Children of God.

4. Babylon the Great Whore is Israel herself, and the city of Jerusalem in particular, which not only persecuted all of the Prophets ever sent to her, but which also murdered the very Son of God when He came to offer the Jews spiritual Salvation. In this sense, all Christ-rejecting Jews can be considered part of Babylon the Great Whore.

It is important to realize that understanding nebulous Biblical prophecies is no easy matter; even for those of us who have been doing it for a number of years. Without the Spirit of God, a good working knowledge of the Scriptures,

at least a basic understanding of ancient history, and the proper resources to cross-reference one verse with another, it is basically an impossible task. Perhaps this is why we have so many different interpretations of these Endtime events. To the hurt of the Christian body, some people tend to write books or articles concerning these topics without really meeting all of these necessary requirements; and thus they end up with an interpretation which is sometimes quite distorted and nowhere near the Truth. As serious students of the Bible, we all need to follow the advice which Paul offered to Timothy:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

I discuss this topic in more detail in my article entitled 'Rightly Dividing The Word Of Truth'. While I see nothing wrong with theorizing and speculating as to what certain verses might mean, the real danger is when we lean to our own understanding instead of trusting in the Lord's Spirit, and end up with shaky interpretations which we then try to promulgate as the absolute Word of Truth. In our quest to decipher these Endtime prophecies, it is wise to take heed to the following counsel found in the Book of Proverbs:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

If there is one thing of which I am sure, it is that the Lord knows His Word; after all, He gave it, and He inspired it. If there is anyone who can lead us down the right path in our understanding of the Scriptures, He is definitely the One to do it; and He will, if we are yielded to Him, and are able to receive what He shows us. To wrecklessly put together an interpretation and then proclaim it as absolute truth above all others is the epitome of self-righteous pride. For this reason, I am very prayerful about how I express my views in my articles. If you are an avid reader of my writings, then you will notice that I am quite liberal in my usage of such words as may, perhaps, maybe, possibly, according to my understanding, it seems to me, in my view, etc. This shows the reader that while I have a lot of faith in what I say, it does not necessarily mean that I am right. After all, I am only human, and thus prone to error. I simply do not believe that anyone has a monopoly on the Truth except for the Lord Himself.

There were times in the past when I wasn't so cautious with my words. I was a bit wreckless due to people and beliefs I was associated with at the time. As a young evangelist, I thought I knew quite a bit, and I was proud of it. I am reminded of a verse from the Book of Proverbs:

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." (Proverbs 10:19)

As I have gotten older, and have dedicated myself to a closer and more personal study of the Scriptures, I have learned how little I really know. I have also learned that

to say something is of the Lord when it might not be, is indeed a grave matter. I take this ministry very seriously, and it is important to me that I am propagating the Truth to the best of my knowledge. It is for this reason that I am constantly updating my articles as the Lord reveals more to me. If He shows me that my previous interpretation wasn't exactly on the mark, I will change it. Unlike some rigid writers who believe their words are written in stone, I do my best to remain flexible and sensitive to the leading of the Lord's Spirit. I don't want to be guilty of leading anyone astray, or causing anyone to stumble or fall away from the Truth. That is the true meaning of the word 'offend' in the following verse. It is from the Greek word 'skandalizo' meaning to put a stumbling block or impediment in someone's way:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6)

To understand the mystery of Babylon the Great Whore, you must first realize that throughout the Scriptures, the Lord refers to the true Body of Believers, spiritual Israel, those who have accepted His Salvation, His Church, as the wife or Bride of Christ. The Bible is literally full of verses from beginning to end which serve to clarify this point. Consider the following words of the prophet Isaiah:

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10)

For those of you familiar with the New Testament teachings of Jesus, the above verse describing a bridegroom and his bride should ring a bell. Jesus was quite familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, so it should come as no surprise that He would incorporate them in His own parables as in the following example:

"Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:8-14)

As can be seen from the above parable, those who are the True Bride of Christ, are they who have received the gift of Eternal Life which Jesus alone freely offers to all men. The

robe or garment His Bride wears is the righteousness we receive when we are washed in the Blood of the Lamb. This righteousness does not come through our own good works, but only through the Sacrifice at Calvary. The following verses help to clarify all of these points:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." (Revelation 19:7-9)

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (Titus 3:5)

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

In the Parable of the Ten Virgins in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus likewise compared His True Church to a multiple virgin bride:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 25:1-13)

The Book of Revelation follows this same pattern and also describes the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed servants of God as being spiritual virgins:

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." (Revelation 14:4)

The above verse will be discussed in more detail later on to make another interesting point concerning the evil influence of Babylon the Great Whore. Even John the Baptist was aware

of the spiritual parallel between Christ and His Church, and the role of the bride and the bridegroom. In the third chapter of the Gospel of John, we find the Baptist saying:

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." (John 3:29)

Following are a few more verses from the Book of Revelation which discuss the Saints being clothed in white robes of righteousness:

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Revelation 6:9-11)

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;" (Revelation 7:9)

Another example of feminine symbolism being used in the Scriptures can be found in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation where we find a woman who is being persecuted by a great Red Dragon. We are told that this vile beast represents Satan himself. As to the identity of the woman, there are various schools of thought concerning her. Some suggest that she represents Mary who bore the child Jesus who was later caught up to Heaven to sit at the Right Hand, of His Father. Others suggest that she symbolizes Israel, or possibly the Early Christian church which was persecuted by both the Jews and the Romans. Finally, there are those who believe she may be a symbol of the Endtime Church which will be persecuted by the forces of the Beast prior to the return of Christ. I will discuss this topic in more detail in a separate article. As I stated earlier, there are many verses throughout the Bible which support this symbolism of God's virgin Bride. For the sake of brevity, I have only shared a few.

With these thoughts in mind, I am going to bring part one of this article to a close. In the second half, I am going to sharpen our focus and further explore the possible identity of Babylon the Great Whore. In addition, I will also be discussing the Seal of God and the Mark of Satan, the Household of God and the Name of God, the persecution of the Lord's children, the unholy marriage, the pagan origins of Israel, the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, the Scriptural connections between Jerusalem and Babylon, the significance of the term Mother of Harlots, the Diaspora, Babylon's evil spawn, spiritual virgins, other possible interpretations of Babylon the Great Whore, and the Heavenly City of God. As

you can see, we still have a lot of territory to cover; so I hope you will join me in part two. As always, I trust that this article has been a blessing and an inspiration to many.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

REVELATION'S BABYLON THE GREAT WHORE : PART TWO

Copyright 1994 - 2006 Endtime Prophecy Net

Last Updated : July 10, 2006

Identity Of Babylon The Great, Seal Of God, The Household Of God, The Name Of God, The Mark Of Satan, Significance Of The 666, Persecution And A Test Of Faith, An Unholy Wedding, The Pagan Origins Of Israel, Ishtar, The Mother Of Harlots And Her Evil Spawn, Spiritual Virgins, More On Rome, Babylon And Baghdad, New York City, The Heavenly New Jerusalem

I concluded part one of this article by presenting several examples of the Lord's faithful virgin Bride. Having established that point as being Scripturally sound, let us now consider the negative aspect of a rebellious Bride who has forsaken her spiritual Husband and gone after other lovers, that is, after other gods. What follows are examples of the many verses found in the Old Testament which depict Israel's waywardness, and her rejection of the one true God. The Lord refers to this as spiritual whoredom, or playing the harlot:

"And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so." (Judges 2:17)

"And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god." (Judges 8:33)

"And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them." (1 Chronicles 5:25)

"Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number." (Jeremiah 2:32)

"They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD." (Jeremiah 3:1)

"The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot." (Jeremiah 3:6)

"And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also." (Jeremiah 3:8)

"My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God." (Hosea 4:12)

While the above verses are strong in content and may be offensive to some, they are nevertheless a clear depiction of a nation and a Bride who has rejected her true spiritual Husband. For an even more graphic picture of the spiritual whoredoms committed by both Jerusalem and Samaria, you might want to read the twenty-third chapter of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. That chapter describes how the spiritual fornication of Israel began in Egypt, and continued all the way to the time of the conquests by both the Assyrians and the Babylonians. What is important to note here is that the Lord considers the rebellion of His Bride to be a very serious matter. When the Prophet Samuel rebuked King Saul and informed him that God had rejected him in the fifteenth chapter of the first Book of Samuel, he compared Saul's stubborn rebellious heart to witchcraft and idolatry:

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

On another occasion, when prophesying against Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria, the Prophet Nahum described the city as being the 'mistress of witchcrafts':

"Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." (Nahum 3:4)

While the above three verses apply to other events in the Bible, they are nevertheless important because they help us to better understand the Lord's attitude concerning the unfaithfulness of His disbelieving rebellious Wife. As far as He is concerned, she is guilty of performing witchcraft. As an interesting side note, the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, both of which were heavily steeped into witchcraft, are located in modern-day Iraq.

To reiterate what I stated earlier, once ancient Israel rejected the Lord as her true King, and went astray in building pagan temples to other gods, she lost the Spirit. When the True Lamb of God arrived in the First Century, the Jewish Elders still wanted to continue with their dead rituals and traditions. Amongst students of eschatology, there is the widely-held belief that possibly in the near future, the Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. This will of course result in the resumption of the continual burnt offering, that is, the evening and the morning oblations as prescribed by Moses. According to the above verses, surely this will be the epitome of blasphemy and self-righteous rebellion. After all, the True Lamb of God has already been sacrificed for the sins of the world once and for all; and

there is no longer any need for animal sacrifices in our modern day. I discuss this topic in more detail in the article 'Jesus Christ: Son Of God, High Priest Of Melchizedek'.

Thus far, I have presented a preponderance of verses to show the difference between God's submissive spiritual Bride, and the nation of Israel which for a long time now has committed spiritual whoredoms by rejecting her true Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, and gone after other gods. I have also shown how she is guilty of murder by not only killing her own Saviour, but also by killing many of the Prophets which the Lord has seen fit to send to her. In the beginning of his prophesying against Jerusalem and the kings of Judah, the Prophet Isaiah wrote:

"How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."
(Isaiah 1:21)

While previous verses I have shared have spoken of the whoredoms of Israel in general, the above verse clearly defines Jerusalem herself as a harlot. Notice that we are also told that she is full of murderers. The significance of these words is much deeper than you may realize. Not only did she kill her Saviour and the Prophets of old, but during the height of their apostasy in the Old Testament, the inhabitants of Jerusalem also sacrificed their young children to the fires of the idol Molech in the Valley of Hinnom, a steep gorge located to the south of Jerusalem. I discuss the Valley of Hinnom in more detail in the article 'Hell And The Lake Of Fire: Part One'. With these thoughts in mind, the following verses from the Book of Ezekiel make a lot more sense:

"Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations ...Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it...Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great."
(Ezekiel 22:2, 24:6, 9)

This idea of being a 'bloody city' is the very same accusation that Jesus levelled against the city of Jerusalem in the Gospel of Matthew. Consider the extremely harsh words He used when He exposed the sins of the Scribes and the Pharisees:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in

your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

(Matthew 23:29-38)

Can there be any doubt as to why the Scribes and Pharisees hated Jesus as much as they did? The Lord very pointedly told them that they were 'the children of them which killed the prophets'. He then said that upon them would come 'all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias...'. In other words, they were guilty of it all; from A to Z, from Abel to Zacharias. Amazing as it may seem, despite the Lord's strong rebuke of these false religionists, do you recall what they said when Pontius Pilate gave them an opportunity to release Jesus? The answer is found in the following verses:

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

(Matthew 27:24-26)

Isn't that absolutely amazing? Only four chapters after Jesus exposed their heinous sin of cold-blooded murder, they shouted 'His blood be on us, and on our children!', thus fulfilling the very things of which He had accused them! If there is one thing we know, it is that Jesus was a burning Light which exposed the darkest corners of men's evil hearts. In the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, the Lord fully explained why He and His Disciples were hated by the Jewish religious leaders:

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." (John 15:18-25)

Through His words and His actions, Jesus completely ripped away the cloak of spiritual darkness under which the Jewish Elders were trying to conceal their wicked deeds. This Truth was symbolized in a physical sense a short time later when the veil of the Temple was torn in half at the time of our Saviour's Death upon the Cross:

"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;" (Matthew 27:51)

As I mentioned earlier, just as Jesus exposed Jerusalem for her hand in slaying the Prophets which had been sent to her, the Apostle John did the very same thing in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Book of Revelation when he exposed the sins of the mysterious city, Babylon the Great Whore:

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." (Revelation 17:6)

"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."
(Revelation 18:24)

The above verses demonstrate a very striking similarity between these two cities. As you will hopefully see by the time you have finished reading this article, this is not simply a matter of coincidence. The Prophet Jeremiah also wrote extensively concerning the spiritual whoredoms of the Lord's once-faithful Bride. Consider the following verses:

"Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown...Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed."
(Jeremiah 2:1-2, 3:3)

These verses are another clue which point to the identity of Babylon the Great of the Book of Revelation. Jeremiah specifically tells us that Jerusalem has a WHORE'S FOREHEAD. Advancing about seven hundred years into the future to about the year 90 A.D., let's look again at what the Apostle John said regarding the whore that sits upon many waters:

"And UPON HER FOREHEAD was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5)

This issue of having a marked forehead is a predominant theme throughout the Bible, so it must be very important. In fact, from studying various Scriptures, we find that there are actually two types of marks which can be placed upon a person. One is a curse, while the other is a mark of blessing and protection. Cain was the first person in the Biblical record to receive such a mark:

"And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." (Genesis 4:15)

As a close reading of Genesis chapter four will reveal, this mark was meant to serve as a curse; but at the same time, it was meant to prevent people from killing Cain. It may be that the Lord simply wanted Cain to suffer for his sins, and to feel remorse, but not to pay with his life. The question then arises: Exactly what was the nature of this mark? In my view, unless this mark was some kind of a physical mark, I don't see how people would have known not to kill him. As such, it seems to me that this mark would have had to have been some kind of a visible mark on his body. Of course, I cannot prove this conclusively, so it remains in the realm of speculation. In the Book of Ezekiel, the Prophet has a vision in which the Lord orders that a mark be placed on the foreheads of those in Jerusalem who are righteous. He then orders that the remaining people be slain:

"And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof, And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house." (Ezekiel 9:4-6)

In the Book of Revelation, we also find the Lord marking His children. In the seventh chapter, just prior to the opening of the seventh seal which contains the Seven Trumpets, we discover one angel of the Lord speaking to four others concerning the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand servants of the Lord. This will be a mark of blessing and protection:

"Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."
(Revelation 7:3-4)

In the fourteenth chapter, we witness this same group of people with the seal of God in their foreheads, standing before the Lamb of God on Mount Zion:

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."
(Revelation 14:1)

Notice that in the previous verse, we are told exactly what is the nature of the Seal of God. It is nothing less than the very Name of God Himself! As the Apostle Paul wrote, by accepting the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we become God's adopted children; and He wants everyone to know it. God

wants everyone to be aware of the fact that we are now a part of His Family and His Household; so He sets His Seal, His very Name, upon our foreheads:

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15)

"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:5)

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," (Ephesians 1:5)

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" (Ephesians 2:19)

If the Lord is going to seal His servants in their foreheads, the next logical question might then be the following: Exactly what is the correct name for the Lord? Based on the following two verses, the Jehovah's Witnesses won't hesitate to tell you that it is Jehovah and no other. They have built a whole legalistic religion around this one name:

"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." (Exodus 6:3)

"That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." (Psalms 83:18)

While this is indeed true, a closer study of the Scriptures will reveal that the Lord is referred to by so many names in the Bible, that it is difficult to know which one might be used to seal His servants. In the above verse, the term 'God Almighty' is derived from the Hebrew 'El Shadday' which is another one of His names. I once saw a list which mentioned all of the various names applied to the Lord in the Bible. It was quite long and included such names as I AM, El, JAH, Eli, LORD, Wonderful, Counsellor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Melchizedek, King of Salem, King of Righteousness, King of Peace, Jesus, Emmanuel, etc. It is even possible that the name used to seal the Lord's servants might be one we have never even heard before! For example, in Revelation chapter nineteen which discusses the Battle of Armageddon, we are told in one place that His name is the Word of God. This is the same name John used in his Gospel. You will notice though that a few verses later, we are also told that His name is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. However, if we go back a few verses before these, we read the following:

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself." (Revelation 19:12)

This verse seems to imply that in spite of all of the names by which we do know the Lord, He may have another one which only He Himself knows. The Jehovah's Witnesses also believe

that Jesus and the Archangel Michael are one and the same person. I have seen these possible links in the Bible myself, and have written about them; yet we still cannot just ignore the above verse. I wonder how the Jehovah Witnesses reconcile their belief with this verse. It must be interesting.

Of course, being the impersonator, the liar, the copycat and the usurper that he is, we are told that in the Endtime, Satan is also going to use this very same technique to mark his children as well. Many people of the world, including quite a few non-Christians, are familiar with the following shocking verses:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."
(Revelation 13:16-18)

This is indeed one sobering thought! A lot of people have procrastinated in accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour for a very long time. In fact, some have done it all of their lives! However, according to the above Scriptures, everyone is going to have to make a decision sooner or later. There will no longer be any neutral ground to stand upon. You will either have to receive the Seal of God by accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, or else you will have to accept the Mark of Satan. God will be done wasting His time with half-hearts and lukewarm people. It will be all or nothing at all. You will either bow down to God in humble submission, or else you will bow down to the satanic Beast and his evil Kingdom of Darkness.

As I have stated in such articles as 'The Seven Heads' and 'Mondex And The Mark Of The Beast', given the descriptive terminology used in the previous verses, it is generally believed that the Mark of the Beast may represent a personal identification code assigned to each person in the form of a bio-chip implant. This code may possibly incorporate a system which utilizes three six-digit numbers. With such a wide range of numbers at their disposal, it would be very easy for The Controllers to 'tag' every single person in the world! However, there are other possible interpretations as well. It is believed that the Bible was written in a concise numerical code so that important words and phrases would not lose their proper meaning or become corrupted with the passage of time due to human error or intentional mischief. As an example of this, based on the individual letters used to write them, Biblical names each add up to a certain numerical value. Thus, what may be implied in Revelation chapter thirteen, is that the numerical value of the actual name of the Beast adds up to the infamous '666'.

One problem with this belief is that ever since John wrote the above verses, people have been using all kinds of crazy methods to try to properly identify the Beast. This is becoming even more of an obsession as we draw closer to the

end of this current millenium when many Christians are expecting the Return of Christ. I have heard such names mentioned as Emperor Nero, Queen Elizabeth II of England, Prince Charles of England, Pope John Paul II, Lord Maitreya, and Tariq Aziz, the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq. According to those who support these views, all of these people have names, titles or some other characteristic which associates them with the evil '666'. Obviously, they cannot all be right. Of course, I also have my personal speculations regarding this issue which I discuss in such articles as 'The Kings Of The North And The South' and 'The Seven Heads'; however, it has nothing to do with the numerical value of a person's name. I encourage you to read these articles and 'Mondex And The Mark Of The Beast' for a more in-depth look at my views concerning this topic.

Let us consider one final question concerning these various marks mentioned in the Bible: If we assume that the mark of Cain was a physical mark, and that the Mark of the Beast will also be a physical mark or implant, is it possible that the Seal of the Saints will follow this same pattern? As I thought on this possibility, what came to my mind is the example found in the Old Testament where the ancient Israelites were required to physically manifest their faith in the God of Israel by painting lamb's blood on their doorposts the night of the first Passover in Egypt:

"And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it...For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:7, 12-13)

Of course, we know that this lamb's blood was a symbol and a foreshadow of the Blood of the true Lamb of God to come Who would shed His innocent Blood for the sins of the world almost two thousand years later. The point I wish to make is that throughout the Bible, the Lord has tested the faith of His people. He has tried them like gold in the fire. When the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, it was not a five-minute affair. They had to have faith that those towering walls of water were not going to come crashing back down upon them. The Lord also tested His own Disciples on a number of occasions to see how far they had advanced in their spiritual growth. After all, He was preparing them for a very important task. Consider the example of when Jesus called Peter out of the boat to walk on top of the choppy waves of the Sea of Galilee:

"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when

Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:25-31)

While we modern Christians may sometimes wonder how the First Disciples could have had such little faith on certain occasions, in spite of the fact that as they were in the presence of the Saviour of the world, we must humbly ask ourselves if we really would have been any different had we been in their shoes. While they may have had their moments of weakness, when their appointed time came, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they became powerful beacons of spiritual Light. The future evangelization of the world rested upon their shoulders, and they didn't fail. The Apostle James clarified the connection between faith and works when he said:

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:26)

Is it possible then that the members of God's Endtime Church will face a similar test of faith by having to receive some kind of a physical Seal from the Lord which will clearly identify them as His children? Such a Mark or Seal would obviously expose us as enemies of the state. Perhaps this Seal is meant to be understood in a purely symbolic sense; however, I believe it is wise to prepare ourselves for the unexpected. Speculation aside, one thing we do know with absolute certainty, is that without the blessing of the Beast's regime, which means accepting his infamous Mark, no one will be able to buy or sell anything, to own property, to hold a job, nothing! A person will be deemed a misfit and a social outcast; and ultimately he will be marked for extermination! In the final years of Satan's earthly rule, God's Endtime Church will be hunted down and slain by the forces of the Beast and his followers.

If you are one who is under the false impression that the Lord's Church will be raptured up to Heaven before this period of persecution known as the Great Tribulation begins, then in addition to the following verses, I encourage you to read some of my other Endtime articles such as 'The Great Tribulation And The Rapture'. The series of verses you are about to read make it very clear that God's children will be the subject of Satan's wrath despite what some erroneous religionists teach and believe:

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;...And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Daniel 7:21, 25)

"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power:

and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people." (Daniel 8:23-24)

"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed." (Daniel 11:33-35)

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matthew 24:15-22)

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Revelation 6:9-11)

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." (Revelation 7:13-15)

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death...And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:10-11, 17)

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds,

and tongues, and nations...And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."
(Revelation 13:7, 15)

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."
(John 15:18-21)

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service...These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:2, 33)

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

It is naive to think that God's people of the Endtime will somehow escape the wrath of the Beast. The above verses clearly contradict such a false notion. As in times past, this persecution may begin in Jerusalem where the Beast will set up his powerbase. As he extends his influence through successful military maneuvers, the persecution will spread. As we saw in part one, ancient Israel forsook her True Husband and married the false gods of the heathen people and nations around her. When the Lord's Prophets tried to warn her of her wickedness, they were persecuted; and some of them were killed. Babylon the Great Whore is also married to the Beast. In the Book of Revelation, John tells us that she will ride the Beast which rises up out of the sea of the world's people, and that she will commit spiritual fornication with it, just as the whores of old had sexual intercourse with wild beasts:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." (Revelation 13:1)

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:...So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:...And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and

tongues." (Revelation 17:1, 3-4, 15)

Because Babylon is married to the Beast, she will also participate in the persecution against God's true Endtime children. The Jewish leadership of the New Testament did the very same thing when they courted the rulers of the Roman Empire and began persecuting the Early Church. Only a few centuries later, the early Christian Church also compromised with the Roman government; and it is estimated that millions have been slain by her since that time. The Inquisition is one good example of this. Thus we see that throughout history, the Lord's children have been persecuted by this unholy union of the religious Whore and the political Beast.

Towards the beginning of this article, I shared a variety of verses which showed a Scriptural link between the bloody sins of Jerusalem, and Babylon the Great Whore. In the following paragraphs I am going to share additional Scriptures, and show even more similarities between the two. As we have already seen, long ago Jerusalem rejected her true God and Saviour; yet even today, Judaism still claims to worship the one true God. This, of course, is in direct contradiction to Jesus' own words in such verses as the following:

"Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." (John 8:19)

"Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:41-44)

"Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." (John 12:44)

It is common sense that if a woman leaves her husband and has sexual intercourse with other lovers, then she cannot possibly say that she still loves or respects her husband. Such a claim would not hold up very well in a court of law. Therefore, if Jerusalem has forsaken the one true God, despite her claims, then she must be worshipping some other god or gods. One point I brought out in 'The Children Of God And Politics', is that the children of Israel did not always worship the one true God. Abram, or Abraham, the father of the Hebrew children, may have been of Babylonian descent. The Biblical record is not very clear on this. While his father, Terah, and his father's family dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, this does not necessarily mean that they were of Chaldean blood:

"And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees...And Terah took Abram his

son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."
(Genesis 11:28, 31)

Thus we see that the ancestors of the Hebrews were from the land of the Chaldees. This land area was located on the Persian Gulf just below ancient Babylonia, or what is today known as Iraq. The Chaldees, or Chaldeans, actually became the rulers of Babylonia. They worshipped other gods, and not the God which later became known as YHWH, Yahweh, Jehovah, or the God of Israel. They were adherents of astrology, witchcraft, and other occult practices. Some people have referred to this as the mystery religion. According to the Book of Genesis, it was after Terah had left Ur and taken his family to Haran, that the Lord first called Abram to forsake his father's house, to forsake his father's religion, and to accept Jehovah as the one true God:

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." (Genesis 12:1-4)

Even after Abraham had left his father's house, he, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob still had problems with their families embracing the pagan gods and idols of the past. I discuss this in more detail in 'The Children Of God And Politics'. If we can prove that Jerusalem, and the Jews in general, remained in this backslidden state by continuing to worship the false gods of their Babylonian forefathers, then we will have an even stronger case to show why the Lord may refer to Jerusalem as spiritual Babylon in the Book of Revelation. Such a connection can indeed be made by studying the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah who prophesied for forty years until the day that Jerusalem was destroyed by the forces of King Nebuchadnezzar. In four different places, the Lord used Jeremiah to rebuke the Israelites for their sin of worshipping the Queen of Heaven. The very first place is in the following verse:

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." (Jeremiah 7:18)

Exactly who is this Queen of Heaven that the children of Israel were worshipping? As I explain in 'The Fruits Of Disobedience', the Queen of Heaven is none other than the Babylonian goddess Ishtar. She was the goddess of love, fertility, and war; and also the consort of Baal. She was also known by other cultures as Astarte, Ashtoreth, and Isis. This fact is confirmed by reading some of the apocryphal writings where the Queen of Heaven is also

mentioned. Now, here is an astounding connection with the Book of Revelation. Notice the interesting numerology here. We just read Jeremiah 7:18. We will now read Revelation 18:7 in which Babylon the Whore gloats about herself:

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a QUEEN, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Revelation 18:7)

This Babylon the Whore is the very same Queen of Heaven mentioned in the previous verse from the Book of Jeremiah! Another interesting point worth noting is that according to one source I read quite some time ago, eighteen is the numerical value assigned to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar. Is it a coincidence that 6×3 or $6 + 6 + 6 = 18$, and that the destruction of this spiritual whore occurs in Revelation chapter eighteen? Is it even possible that there might be a connection with the 666 of the Beast? The fact that they are married to each other seems very likely. Another startling similarity can be found in the way Jeremiah describes the destruction of Jerusalem. The following verse is repeated over and over again throughout his book of prophecy:

"Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle." (Jeremiah 25:10)

Over six hundred years later, the Apostle John described the destruction of Babylon the Great in very much the same manner. Consider the following verses:

"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." (Revelation 18:22-23)

In my view, there is simply no way to dismiss the fact that these two Prophets, who lived hundreds of years apart, used almost the same exact words to describe the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fall of Babylon the Great. Clearly, this was no accident. These prophecies were inspired by one and the same Spirit. As the Apostle Peter wrote:

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

The whoredoms and detailed descriptions of wayward Jerusalem in the books of the Old Testament are identical to those found in the seventeenth and the eighteenth chapters of the Book of Revelation. Considering then that much of the Book of Revelation is shrouded in heavy symbolism, we should not ignore the possibility that Babylon the Great Whore is merely a picture of the spiritual condition of Jerusalem in

the Endtime. The descriptive similarities and the Scriptural connections between the writings of these ancient sages is something which I personally cannot dismiss as being a mere coincidence. In chapter sixteen of the Book of Ezekiel, the Prophet described the soon-coming destruction of Jerusalem at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar in the following manner:

"Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy, And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords, And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more." (Ezekiel 16:35-41)

As I stated earlier, the spilled blood of which Jerusalem was guilty, was not only that of her own Prophets which the Lord had sent to her, but it was also the blood of her own children which were sacrificed in the fires of Molech, as well as to other pagan gods on the high hills of Jerusalem, and throughout Israel. If we turn again to the Book of Revelation, we find similar pronouncements being made against Babylon the Great Whore. As with Jerusalem, she is likewise burned with fire and made desolate and naked:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast...And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."
(Revelation 17:12, 16-18)

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."
(Revelation 18:8)

"For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." (Revelation 19:2)

In the above verses we witness the ten nations who will join forces with the Beast to destroy Babylon the Great Whore with fire. As I state in 'The Seven Heads' and other Endtime articles, given the current developments in the Middle East, I believe that this burning with fire may possibly symbolize a one-hour pre-emptive nuclear strike against Jerusalem by ten Islamic nations led by the Beast towards the end of the Great Tribulation. Contrary to my own beliefs, one school of thought suggests that the burning of Babylon the Great Whore was fulfilled during the latter half of the First Century when the crazed Emperor Nero burned the city of Rome. As I mention in 'The Kings Of The North And South: Part One', in my view, this is a faulty interpretation. My reason for stating this is quite simple: John was clearly writing of a future event at the end of the world, and not of something which had already occurred. The verb tense of the previous verses make that quite evident in my view.

I would also like to call your attention to the reason we are given for why the Lord is going to judge Jerusalem: to avenge 'the blood of his servants at her hand'. This phrase reflects back on everything I said earlier. Jerusalem was not only filled with the innocent blood of her own children who were cold-bloodedly given to the sacrificial fires of Molech and other false gods of the heathen nations, but she was also guilty of slaying the many Prophets the Lord had sent to her in His effort to get her to turn away from her spiritual whoredoms.

Another point of interest concerning John's writings in the Book of Revelation is that he does not refer to Jerusalem as being the only harlot, but rather he calls her the Mother of Harlots. This of course implies that there are others as well, but that she is the worst of the lot. Considering that Jerusalem is not only guilty of killing the Prophets which were sent to her, but also the very Son of God, and His Disciples which followed in His footsteps, Mother of Harlots seems like an appropriate title for her. However, there is another interesting point regarding the fact that she is called by this name; and that is the implication that the other harlots are her evil spawn. How can this be? If we take a brief look at Jewish history, the connection becomes easy to understand. The Diaspora refers to the Jews who were dispersed following the invasion and occupation of Israel by King Nebuchadnezzar; although in reality, the dispersion actually began several hundred years before with the Assyrian invasions. Consider the words of the Prophet Ezekiel:

"And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall lothe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations."
(Ezekiel 6:9)

With the Assyrian, and then the Babylonian invasions which began over seven hundred years before the time of Christ, the Jews began to spread out into other parts of the world.

Initially, this included the Middle East, North Africa, Asia and Europe. However, today they are also found in Russia, North and South America, and many other parts of the globe. As they dispersed, they took their religion and their culture with them, including their talent for making vast sums of money. Some suggest that they also exported their worship of the Babylonian mystery religion. In our modern day, no one can deny that the Jews have become very powerful in both a financial and a political sense. Depending on what you read and who you talk to, it is basically said that they control the world. While the Protocols of the Wise Elders of Zion have been dismissed as an anti-semitic fabrication, there are those who firmly believe that the Jews have just about accomplished exactly what was put forth in the controversial documents.

Within conspiracy circles, one hears and reads of heavy Jewish involvement in such organizations as the Fortune 500, the Illuminati, the Knights Templar, the Bilderberger Group, the Jesuits, the Trilateral Commission, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Freemasons, Skull and Bones, the Jason Society (or Jason Scholars), and other secretive societies. All of these organizations are said to be bent on creating a One World Government, or a New World Order. If these things are true, then the major cities of the world which they control, could in fact be considered offspring of Babylon the Great Whore; thus truly making Jerusalem the Mother of Harlots. Notice that in one of the previous verses I quoted from the prophecies of Ezekiel, it says:

"And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more." (Ezekiel 16:41)

This phrase 'many women' is apparently speaking in a symbolic context. Just as Jerusalem/Babylon is referred to as a harlot or whore, 'many women' may be referring to other cities and nations which have also polluted themselves with the idolatrous worship of false gods. This also helps to better explain a verse I shared earlier regarding the Lord's multiple virgin bride:

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."
(Revelation 14:4)

The implication here is that the one hundred and forty-four thousands servants of the Lord are spiritual virgins who have not been defiled by the things of the world; that is, by the ungodly worship of wealth and the materialistic living offered by the cities, or harlots, of the Earth who have fallen under the evil influence of Babylon the Great Whore. Consider the words of the Apostle Paul in several of his Epistles:

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their

God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:16-18)

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Timothy 2:4)

The Apostle James was quite clear in his condemnation of those who try to maintain a friendship with the world while at the same time claiming to serve the Lord. In the fourth chapter of his Epistle he wrote:

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4)

Here again is another clear example of the symbolism of marital unfaithfulness as it is used throughout the Bible. The people James is addressing are obviously not the spiritual virgins mentioned by John, but rather those who have succumbed to the ways of the world. At the conclusion of his short Epistle, Jude also spoke of remaining undefiled by the things of the world and the sins of the flesh when he wrote:

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 1:20-25)

In part one of this article, I presented four different perspectives concerning the possible identity of Babylon the Great Whore. In light of the wealth of Scriptural evidence I have presented, I am of the view that the city of Jerusalem best qualifies for fulfilling the description and prophecies concerning this Endtime metropolis. If this is indeed the case, then the other cities of the world which she controls through religious, financial and political manipulation, would be considered her offspring; thus truly making her the Mother of Harlots. While this interpretation does seem to be the most plausible to me, before concluding this article, I would like to add a few additional comments regarding the other three perspectives.

Concerning the city of Rome, we know that she was indeed responsible for the martyrdom of literally thousands of the Lord's children during the First Century. As I stated in part one of 'The Kings Of The North And The South', to this day, beneath the streets of modern Rome can be found rows upon rows of the sepulchres of the Saints. While this is

indeed compelling evidence, I have already shown through the Scriptures that both Jesus and John were referring to the Old Testament Prophets who were murdered by their Jewish brethren, and not to those killed due to the Jewish-Roman compromise of the First Century or later. Remember, Jesus very pointedly referred to the Scribes and the Pharisees as the children of those who had slain the Prophets. He was very clear in identifying the guilty party. At the time the Old Testament Prophets were killed, Rome had not even become a dominant power yet.

In like manner, while some eschatologists are quick to recognize the blatant sins and shortcomings of the Roman Catholic church, they fail to recognize that Judaism is even more of a false religion because, while the Jews have openly rejected the Saviour, they still have the audacity to claim that they are the chosen people of God. This is an even greater deception than Roman Catholicism. Unfortunately, even some Christians have fallen for this evil lie. Despite her many sins, distorted doctrines and compromises with the world, at least the Roman Catholic hierarchy does confess faith in Jesus Christ. This is confirmed when I speak with Catholics. On the other hand, show me one devout Jew who accepts Jesus Christ. There is no such thing. The minute they accept Jesus Christ, in a technical sense, they are no longer of the Jewish faith. They are Christian. Thus, while I have also written of the many shortcomings of Roman Catholicism, I consider it the lesser of two evils when compared to Judaism. If I were to rank Rome among the four perspectives I have mentioned in this article, I would say that it falls in second place after Jerusalem.

For those who suggest that the ancient city of Babylon may be the Great Whore referred to by John, I believe that this is also inaccurate. As I pointed out earlier, John was writing primarily about future events, and NOT about the past. The burning of Babylon is an Endtime event; and thus cannot be referring to the burning of Rome by Nero. In addition, the Babylonians did not kill the Prophets of old as is ascribed to Babylon the Great Whore. Based upon the example of Jeremiah, the Prophets were treated with honor and favor by the Babylonians due to the fact that not only did they not resist the occupation, but they also warned the Jewish leadership and people to humbly surrender to King Nebuchadnezzar. The Prophets told them to accept it as a chastisement from the Lord. It was because of this unpopular message that Jeremiah was thrown in prison on more than one occasion by his own Jewish brethren after being accused of being a traitor and a spy. I discuss this in more detail in other articles.

As I stated towards the beginning of this article, Saddam Hussein of Iraq is currently reconstructing the ruins of ancient Babylon. However, what he has done thus far is a far cry from the ancient glories of this once-proud city. Unless my understanding of Endtime events is seriously flawed, I honestly don't believe that there is enough time for Babylon to develop into a 'magnificent' and powerful city of world importance as is described in the Book of Revelation. In fact, unless Iraq is able to pull itself out from under the United Nations sanctions levelled against it for the past

seven years; as well as free itself from the belligerent threat of the American war machine, it is very unlikely that we will see much serious development there any time soon. On the other hand, if events do take a turn for the better, the government of Iraq has already taken steps to increase its sources of revenue following the lifting of the sanctions. Thus, it may yet enjoy prosperity in the years to come.

There is only one other possibility that I see which might connect Babylon the Great Whore to Iraq; and it is indeed a remote one. Just as Babylon was the powerbase of the ancient Babylonian Empire, today that same power rests in the city of Baghdad. This modern city is located on the Tigris River about an hour's drive northeast of the ruins of Babylon. The Tigris River continues on its southerly course where it joins with the Euphrates River to form the Shatt-al-Arab waterway which flows into the Persian Gulf. This waterway and the Persian Gulf are extremely important as through them flows a major portion of the world's oil supply. Exactly how does all of this relate to Babylon the Great Whore? In reading of the destruction of Babylon, we find the following descriptive verses:

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

Here we are given another possible clue to help us to try to identify Babylon the Great Whore. It appears that she is a city which is accessible by ships. In other words, she may be either a riverport, or else a seaport. If there is one thing we know about Arab oil, it is that it has been the black genie of wealth for quite a few Arab nations and shiekdoms. Could it be then that these shipmasters are actually the captains of oil tankers which witness the destruction of Baghdad from afar? To add to the possibility of such a scenario, consider the fact that Baghdad was indeed burned with fire during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War by the government of the United States of America and her allies; and there is a very strong possibility that it will happen again in an even more destructive way in the near future; despite current United Nations attempts to prevent another American military strike.

As I said earlier, I personally view this interpretation as being very weak because Baghdad certainly does not fulfill the primary requirement of being filled with the blood of the ancient Prophets. At the same time, you will probably notice that this interpretation also creates a problem for accepting Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Babylon the Great Whore. After all, Jerusalem is a mountainous city. It is by no means accessible by river-going or seafaring vessels. In light of this fact, the only way I can currently justify my position of accepting Jerusalem as Babylon the Whore, is by stating that, while she is not directly accessible by the captains of ships, through worldwide Jewish financial and

political influences, many shipping companies are indeed controlled by her. It is also worth considering the possibility that boat captains in the Mediterranean Sea might indeed stand afar off and witness the destruction of Jerusalem by nuclear fire. Time will certainly tell.

We are now left with one final possible interpretation of Babylon the Great Whore; and that is that it is represented by New York City. In some respects, this dirty sprawling metropolis is the perfect candidate; while in others it fails miserably. No one can doubt that it is indeed Jewish controlled. Neither can anyone deny that it ranks among the other financial capitals of the world such as Jerusalem, London, Tokyo and Hong Kong. This would definitely fulfill the requirement of the following verse:

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

Another point in her favor is that New York Harbour certainly makes her accessible by ship captains from all over the world. Millions of dollars worth of merchandise flow into and out of New York City every single day! However, beyond these points, according to my understanding, New York City falls flat on her pollution-smearred face as a candidate for Babylon the Great Whore. Again we must consider the primary requisite as described by both Jesus and the Apostle John. New York City did not even exist twenty-five hundred years ago; thus, she cannot possibly be responsible for the death of the Old Testament Prophets, or for the death of the First Century Christians. Furthermore, geographically-speaking, it is my view that New York is completely in the wrong part of the world. As my other Endtime articles make clear, I believe that Babylon the Great Whore may suffer a pre-emptive nuclear strike by ten Arab nations led by the Beast. Unless those Arab nations dramatically increase their current fire power, I don't see New York City being a likely target; unless of course, it is by locally-assembled miniature bombs as in the case of the World Trade Center incident of several years ago.

This article has indeed been long; and we have covered a lot of important areas; however, before bringing it to a close, I think it is important that we 'switch gears' so-to-speak, and briefly discuss the positive future for those who do follow the Lord Jesus Christ. While physical Jerusalem, the symbol of false religion, is going to be destroyed by the Lord's future judgments, this should by no means be viewed as a defeat for the Lord. While this is difficult for even some Christians to understand, particularly those who sympathize with Israel, the truth of the matter is that the Lord is no longer concerned with physical Earthly Jerusalem. Allow me to clarify for those who may jump to erroneous conclusions or misinterpret my words. Jesus is concerned for the souls of the Jews, just as He is concerned for the souls of all men. Peter made this very clear when he wrote the following:

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to

repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

However, inasmuch as Earthly cities and worldly powers are concerned, they mean very little to the Lord. Consider what Jesus said when He was questioned by Pontius Pilate in the Gospel of John:

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36)

In fact, as I have pointed out in other articles, when the Lord returns to set up His Father's Kingdom on Earth, exactly as He taught us to pray, He is going to crush all of these other Earthly kingdoms and powers, including the false kingdom of the Jews and their worldwide financial/political empire. This is precisely what King Nebuchadnezzar and the Prophet Daniel saw in a vision:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Daniel 2:44)

Because the Jews rejected the Lord long ago, by their own choice, He has left them to their fate. In fact, He very pointedly told them that the Kingdom would be taken from them, the supposed Children of the Kingdom, and given to those who truly deserved it because of their faith in Him:

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:11-12)

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them." (Matthew 21:42-45)

Thus we see that the Lord has much greater things prepared for those who love Him. Exactly what might those things be? I believe the following thrilling verses make it quite evident:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."
(1 Corinthians 2:9)

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it

were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3)

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:13-16)

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband...And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God," (Revelation 21:2, 9-10)

Thus we read the beginning of the description of the beautiful city of New Jerusalem descending from Heaven in the final chapters of the Book of Revelation. It will make Emerald City of the Wizard of Oz look like a second-rate imitation. This is what the future holds for those who truly trust in Jesus as their only Lord and Saviour. For a complete picture of this wonderful Heavenly City, please read the final two chapters of the Book of Revelation. It will truly thrill your heart! With these verses I am going to bring this article to a close. As always, I trust that it has been informative, and an inspiration and a blessing in your life. Please keep your eyes on Jesus! It won't be long!

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>