

# The Antichrist Chapter 14 BABYLON AND THE ANTICHRIST (Continued)

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## Transcript

The Antichrist

Chapter 14 BABYLON AND THE ANTICHRIST (Continued).

In the last chapter we confined ourselves to the Old Testament, in this and the one that follows we shall treat mainly of Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18, though, of necessity, we shall examine these in the light of Old Testament passages. In the previous chapter, we briefly reviewed the Old Testament evidence which proves there is to be a re-built Babylon, over which the Antichrist shall reign during the Time of the End. Now as both the Old and New Testaments have one and the same Divine Author, it cannot be that the latter should conflict with the former. "If the Old and New Testaments treat of the circumstances which are immediately to precede the Advent of the Lord in glory, the substantive facts of that period must be alike referred to in both. If the Old Testament declares that Babylon and 'the land of Shinar' is to be the focus of influential wickedness at the time of the end, it is impossible that the Revelation, when professedly treating of the same period, should be silent respecting such wickedness, or respecting the place of its concentration. If the Old Testament speaks of an individual of surpassing power who will connect himself with this wickedness, and be the king of Babylon, and glorify himself as God, it is not to be supposed that the Revelation should treat of the same period and be silent respecting such an event. If, therefore, in the Old Testament, the sphere be fixed—the locality named—the individual defined—it is impossible that the Revelation, when detailing the events of the same period, should alter the localities, or change the individuals. There cannot be two sovereign individuals, nor two sovereign cities in the same sphere at the same time. If the mention of the "Land of Shinar", and of Assyria," and of "the king of Babylon," be intended in the Old Testament to render our thoughts fixed and definite, why should similar terms, applied in the Revelation to a period avowedly the same, be less definite?" (B.W. Newton). Of Revelation 17 and 18 it has been well said, "There is, perhaps, no section of the Apocalypse more fraught with difficulty than the predictions concerning Babylon. Enigmatical and inconsistent with each other as, at first sight, they seem to be, we need to give careful attention to every particular, and much patient investigation of other scriptures, if we would penetrate their meaning and possess ourselves of their secret" (Mr. G.H. Pember, M.A.). In prosecuting our present study we cannot do better than borrow again from the language of Mr. Pember, "Nor is the present necessarily brief and imperfect essay written in any spirit of dogmatic certainty that it solves the mystery; but only as the conclusion, so far as light has been already vouchsafed, to one who, having received mercy of the Lord, has been led to much consideration of this

and kindred subjects." An exposition of the Revelation or any part thereof should be the last place for dogmatism. Both at the beginning and close of the book the Holy Spirit expressly states that the Apocalypse is a "prophecy" (Rev. 1:3; 22:19), and prophecy is, admittedly, the most difficult branch of Scripture study. It is true that during the last century God has been pleased to give His people not a little light upon the predictive portions of His Word, nor is the Apocalypse to be excepted. Yet, the more any one reads the literature on the subject, the more should he become convinced that dogmatism here is altogether unseemly. During the last fifteen years the writer has made it a point to read the Revelation through carefully at least three times a year, and during this period he has also gone through over thirty commentaries on the last book of the Bible. A perusal of the varied and conflicting interpretations advanced have taught him two things. First, the wisdom of being cautious in adopting any of the prevailing views; second, the need of patient and direct waiting on God for further light. To these may be added a third, namely, the possibility, yea, the probability, that many of the prophecies of the Revelation are to receive a double, and in some cases, a treble, fulfillment. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." This applies equally to the Prophets as to the Epistles, and it was just as true five hundred years ago as it is today. That being so, the right understanding of the final fulfillment of the prophecies in the Revelation cannot be the only value that book possesses. There must also be that in it which had a pertinent and timely message for the people of God of this dispensation in each generation. There must be that in which strengthened the faith of those saints who read it during the "Dark Ages," and that which enabled them to detect and keep clear from the which opposed to God and His Christ. In other words, its prophecies must have received a gradual and partial fulfillment all through the centuries of the Christian era, though their final fulfillment be yet future. Such is the case with Revelation 17 and 18. Ever since John received the Revelation there has always existed a system which, in its moral features, has corresponded to the Babylon of the 17th chapter. There exists such a system today; there will exist such a system after the Church is raptured to heaven. And there will also come into existence another and final system which will exhaust the scope of this prophecy. The position which the Apocalypse occupies in the Sacred Canon is surely indicative of the character of its contents. The fact that it is placed at the close, at once suggests that it treats of that which concerns the end of things. Moreover, it is taken for granted that the student of this sixty-sixth book of the Bible is already acquainted with the previous sixty-five books. Scripture is self-interpreting, and we may rest assured that whatever appears vague or difficult in the last book of Scripture is due to our ignorance of the meaning of the books preceding, and particularly of the Prophets. In the Apocalypse the various streams of prediction, which may be traced through the Old Testament Scriptures, are seen emptying themselves in the sea of historical accomplishment. Or, to change the figure, here we are given to behold the last act of the great Dispensational Drama, the earlier acts of which were depleted in the writings of the seers of Israel. And yet, as previously intimated, these final scenes have already had a preliminary rehearsal during the course of the Christian centuries. It will thus be seen that we are far from sharing the views of those who limit the prophecies of the Revelation to a single fulfillment. We believe there is much of truth in both the Historical and Futurist interpretations. We are in entire accord with the following words from the pen of our esteemed brother, Mr. F.C. Jennings: "How many of the controversies that have ruled, alas, amongst the Lord's people, have been due to a narrow way of limiting the thoughts of God, and seeking to confine or bend them by our own apprehension of them. How often two, or more, apparently opposing systems of interpretation may really both be correct; the breadth, the length, and height, and depth, of the mind of God, including and going beyond both of them." Let us now come more directly to our present theme. The first time that Babylon is mentioned in the Apocalypse is in Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Now what is

there here to discountenance the natural conclusion that "Babylon" means Babylon? Two or three generations ago, students of prophecy received incalculable help from the simple discovery that when the Holy Spirit spoke of Judea and Jerusalem in the Old Testament Scriptures He meant Judea and Jerusalem, and not England and London; and that when He mentioned Zion He did not refer to the Church. But strange to say, few, if any of these brethren, have applied the same rule to the Apocalypse. Here they are guilty of doing the very thing for which they condemned their forebears in connection with the Old Testament—they have "spiritualized." They have concluded, or rather, they have accepted the conclusions of the Reformers, that Babylon meant Papal Rome, ultimately being refined to signify apostate Christendom. But what is there in Revelation 14:8 which gives any hint that "Babylon" there refers to the Papal system? No; we believe that this scripture means what it says, and that we need not the annals of secular history to help us to understand it. What then? If to regard "Jerusalem" as meaning Jerusalem be a test of intelligence in Old Testament prophecy, shall we be counted a heretic if we understand "Babylon" to mean Babylon, and not Rome or apostate Christendom? The next reference to Babylon is in Revelation 16:18,19: "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty and earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." The remarks just made above apply with equal force to this passage too. Surely it is a literal city which is in view, and which is divided into three parts by a literal earthquake. If it does not mean this then the simple reader might as well turn from the Apocalypse in dismay. More than a hint of the literalness of this great city Babylon is found in the context, were we read of the river Euphrates (Rev. 16:12). This is sufficient for the writer: whether or not it is for the reader, we must leave with him. We come now to Revelation 17, and as soon as we read its contents we are at once struck with the noticeable difference there is between it and the other passages which have just been before us. Here the language is no longer to be understood literally, but symbolically; here the terms are not plain and simple, but occult and mysterious. But God, in His grace, has provided help right to hand. He tells us that here is "mystery" (v. 5). And what is more, He explains most (if not all) of the symbols for us—see vv. 9,12,15,18. With these helps furnished it ought not to be difficult to grasp the general outline. The central figures in Revelation 17 are "the great whore," the "scarlet-colored Beast," and the "ten horns." The Beast is evidently the first Beast of Revelation 13. The "ten horns" are stated to be "ten kings" (Rev. 17:12). Who, then, is figured by "the great Whore"? There are a number of statements made concerning "the great Whore"—"the woman"—"the mother of harlots"—which are of great help toward supplying an answer to this question. First, it is said that she "sitteth upon many waters" (Rev. 17:1), and in Revelation 17:15 these are said to signify "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Second, it is said, "The kings of the earth have committed fornication" with her (Rev. 17:2). Third, she is supported by "a scarlet-colored Beast" (Rev. 17:3), and from what is said of this Beast in Revelation 17:8 it is clear that he is the Antichrist, here viewed at the head of the last world-empire. Fourth, the woman "was arrayed in purple and scarlet color and decked with gold and precious stones" (Rev. 17:4). Fifth, "Upon her forehead was a name written—Mystery: Babylon the great," etc. (Rev. 17:5). Sixth, the woman was "drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs" (Rev. 17:6). Seventh, in the last verse it is said, "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." These seven points give an analyzed summary of what is here told us about this "woman." Now the interpretation which has been most widely accepted is, that the "Whore" of Revelation 17 pictures the Roman Catholic system. Appeal is made to the fact that though she poses as a virgin, yet has she been guilty of the most awful spiritual fornication. Unlike the blessed One who, in His condescension and humiliation, had "not where to

lay His head," Romanism has coveted silver and gold, and has displayed herself in meretricious luxury. She has had illicit intercourse with the blood of saints. Other parallelisms between the woman of Revelation 17 and the Roman Catholic system may be pointed out. What, then, shall we say to these things? The points of correspondence between Revelation 17 and the history of Romanism are too many and too marked to be set down as mere co-incidences. Undoubtedly the Papacy has supplied a fulfillment of the symbolic prophecy found in Revelation 17. And therein has lain its practical value for God's people all through the dark ages. It presented to them a warning too plain to be disregarded. It was the means of keeping the garments of the Waldenses (and many others) unspotted by her filth. It confirmed the faith of Luther and his contemporaries, that they were acting according to the revealed will of God, when they separated themselves from that which was so manifestly opposed to His truth. But, nevertheless, there are other features in this prophecy which do not apply to Romanism, and which compel us to look elsewhere for the complete and final fulfillment. We single out but two of these. In Revelation 17:5 Babylon is termed "the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Is this an accurate description of Romanism? Were there no "harlot" systems before her? Is the Papacy the mother of the "abominations of the earth"? Let scripture be allowed to interpret scripture. In 1 Kings 11:50-7 we read of "Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites...then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that was before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon"! The Papacy had not come into existence when John wrote the Revelation, so that she cannot be held responsible for all the "abominations" which preceded her. Again; in Revelation 17:2 we read of "the great Whore" that "the kings of the earth have committed fornication" with her. Is that applicable in its fullness to Rome? Have the kings of Asia and the kings of Africa committed fornication with the Papacy? It is true that the Italian pontiffs have ruled over a wide territory, yet it is also true that there are many lands which have remained untouched by their religious influence. It is evident from these two points alone that we have to go back to something which long antedates the rise of the Papacy, and to something which has exerted a far wider influence than has any of the popes. What, then, is this something? and where shall we look for it? The answer is not hard to find: the word "Babylon" supplies us with the needed key. Babylon takes us back not merely to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, but to the time of Nimrod. It was in the days of the son of Cush that "Babylon" began. And from the Plain of Shinar has flown that dark stream whose tributaries have reached to every part of the earth. It was then, and there, that idolatry began. In his work on "The Two Babylons" Dr. Hislop has proven conclusively that all the idolatrous systems of the nations had their origin in what was founded by that mighty Rebel, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel (Gen. 10:10). But into this we cannot now enter at length. We refer the reader back to our comments on Nimrod in chapter 13. Babylon was founded in rebellion against God. The very name Nimrod gave to his city, proves him to have been an idolator—the first mentioned in Scripture—for Bab-El signified "the gate of God"; thus he, like his and-type, determined to exalt himself above all that is called God (2 Thess. 2:4). This, then, was the source and origin of all idolatry. Pagan Rome, afterwards Papal Rome, was only one of the polluted streams from this corrupt source—one of the filthy "daughters" of this unclean Mother of Harlots. But to return to Revelation 17. In Revelation 17:5 we read, "And upon her forehead was a name written—mystery: Babylon the great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." We believe that the English translators have misled many by printing (on their own authority) the word "mystery" in large capital letters, thus making it appear that this was a part of "the woman's name. This we are assured is a mistake. That the "mystery" is connected with the "Woman" herself and not with her "name" is clear from Revelation 17:7, where the angel says unto John, "I will tell thee the mystery of the Woman, and of the Beast which carrieth her." The word "mystery" is used in the New Testament in two ways. First, as a secret, unfathomable by man but explained by God: see Matthew

13:11; Romans 16:25, 26; Ephesians 3:3,6 etc. Second, the word "mystery" signifies a sign or symbol. Such is its meaning in Ephesians 5:32, where we are told that a man who is joined to his wife so that the two become "one flesh" is a "great mystery, (that is, a great sign or symbol) of Christ and the Church." So, again, in Revelation 1:20 we read of "the mystery (sign or symbol) of the seven stars," etc. As we have seen, the term "mystery" has two significations in its New Testament usage, and we believe it has a double meaning in Revelation 17:5, where it is connected with the "Woman." It signifies both a symbol and a secret, that is, something not previously revealed. It should also be noted that, in keeping with this, the name given to the Woman is a dual one—"Babylon the great," and "the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Who, then, is symbolized by the Woman with this dual name? Revelation 17:18 tells us, "And the Woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Now to get the force of this it is essential that we should bear in mind that, in the Apocalypse, the words "is" and "are" almost always (in the symbolical sections) signify "represent." Thus, in Revelation 1:20 "the seven stars are the seven churches" means "the seven stars represent the seven churches"; and "the seven candlesticks are the seven churches," signifies, "the seven candlesticks represent the seven churches." So in Revelation 17:9 "the seven heads are (represent) seven mountains"; Revelation 17:12 "the ten horns are (represent) ten kings"; Revelation 17:15 "the waters...are (represent) peoples," etc. So in Revelation 17:18 "the woman which thou sawest is that great city" must mean, "the woman represents that great city." What, then, is signified by the "great city"? In keeping with what we have just said above, namely, that the term "mystery" in Revelation 17:5 has a two-fold significance, and that the woman has a dual name, so we believe "that Great City" has a double force and application. First, it signifies a literal city, which shall yet be built in the Land of Shinar, on the banks of the Euphrates. Proof of this was furnished in our last chapter so that we need not pause here to submit the evidence. Six times (significant number!) is "Babylon" referred to in the Apocalypse, and nowhere is there a hint that the name is not to be understood literally. In the second place, the "great city" (unnamed) signifies an idolatrous system—"mother of harlots" a system of idolatry which originated in the Babylon of Nimrod's day, and a system which is to culminate and terminate in another Babylon in a day soon to come. This we think is clear and on the surface. What, then, is the secret here disclosed, which had hitherto been so closely guarded? In seeking the answer to our last question it is important to note that there is another "Woman" in the Revelation, between whom and this one in chapter 17 there are some striking comparisons and some vivid contrasts. Let us note a few of them. First, in Revelation 12:1 we read of "a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," which symbolically signifies that she occupies a position of authority and rule (cf. Gen. 37:9); so also the Woman of chapter 17 is pictured as "ruling over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18). Second, this Woman of Revelation 12 is a mother, for she gives birth to the Man-child who shall rule all nations (Rev. 17:5); so the Woman of chapter 17 is "the Mother of harlots." Third, in Revelation 12:3 we read of a great red Dragon "having seven heads and ten horns," and he persecutes the Woman (Rev. 12:14); but in striking contrast, the Woman of chapter 17 is seen supported by a scarlet-colored Beast "having seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 17:3). Fourth, in Revelation 19:7 the Woman of chapter 12 is termed the Lamb's Wife Revelation 12:7); whereas the Woman of chapter 17 is the Devil's Whore. Fifth, the Wife of Revelation 19 is "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (Rev. 19:8); but the Whore of chapter 19 is arrayed in purple and scarlet, and has in her hand a golden cup "full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Rev. 19:4). Sixth, the Lamb's Wife is also inseparably connected with a great city, even the holy Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10); so the Whore of Revelation 17 is connected with a great city, even Babylon. Seventh, the chaste Woman shall dwell with the Lamb forever; the Whore shall suffer endless torment in the Lake of Fire. Once we learn who is symbolized by the chaste Woman, we are in the position to identify the corrupt Woman, who

is compared and contrasted with her. As to whom is signified by the former, there is surely little room for doubt—it is the faithful portion of Israel. She is the one who gave birth to the Man-child—i.e. Judah, in contrast from the unfaithful ten tribes, who because of idolatry were, at the time of the Incarnation, in captivity. So in Revelation 19 and 21 there are a number of things which show clearly (to any unprejudiced mind) that the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, is redeemed Israel, and not the Church. For example, in Revelation 19:6,7, when praise bursts forth because the marriage of the Lamb is come, a great multitude cry, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come." "Alleluia (which occurs nowhere in the New Testament but in this chapter) is a peculiarly Hebrew expression, meaning "Praise the Lord." In the second place, the word for "marriage" (gamos) or "wedding-feast" is the same as is used in Matthew 22:2, 3, 8, 11, 12, where, surely, it is Israel that is in view. In the third place, note that we are told "His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). Contrast this with Ephesians 5:26, where we learn that Christ will make the Church ready—see Matthew 23:39 for Israel making herself ready. In the fourth place, in Revelation 19:8 we read, "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." The Church will have been arrayed years before the time contemplated here. In the fifth place, note it is said that "the marriage of the Lamb is come" (Rev. 19:7), just as He is on the point of leaving heaven for earth (Rev. 19:11); but the Church will have been with Him in the Father's house for at least seven years (probably forty years, or more) when that hour strikes. In the sixth place, in Revelation 21:9, 10 the Lamb's Wife is inseparably connected with that great city, the holy Jerusalem, and in the description which follows we are told that on the twelve gates of the city were written "the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev. 21:12)! Surely that is conclusive evidence that it is not the Church which is in view. In the seventh place, in Revelation 21:14 we are told that in the twelve foundations of the City's wall were "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (cf. Matthew 19:28!). Is it thinkable that the name of the apostle Paul would have been omitted if the Church were there symbolically portrayed? If, then, the Chaste Woman of Revelation 12, 19, 21, symbolizes faithful Israel, must not the Corrupt Woman (who is compared and contrasted with the former) represent faithless Israel? But if so, why connect her so intimately with Babylon, the great city? It will help us here to remember that the Chaste Woman of the Apocalypse is also indissolubly united to a city. In Revelation 21:9 we read that one of the seven angels said to John, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's Wife." And immediately following we read, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Thus, though separate, the two are intimately connected. The Bride will dwell in the holy Jerusalem. So here in Revelation 17, though distinct, the Whore is intimately related to the City, Babylon. One of the many proofs related to the Harlot of Revelation 17 is apostate Israel is found in Isaiah 1, where we read, "How is the faithful city become an harlot!" (Isa. 1:21). In the verses which follow it will be seen that the Lord of hosts is addressing Israel, and describing conditions which will prevail in the End-time. After indicting Israel for her sins, the Lord declares, "I will ease Me of Mine adversaries, and avenge Me of Mine enemies." Clearly, this has reference to the Tribulation period. Then the Lord continues, "And I will turn, Mine hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross," etc., and then He adds, "Afterwards thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city." How clear it is then that God calls Israel "an harlot" for her unfaithfulness. For further proofs see Jeremiah 2:20; 3:6,8; Ezekiel 16:15; 20:30; 43:8, 9; Hosea 2:5, etc. We would next call attention to some of the scriptures which prove that there will be Israelites dwelling in Babylon and the land of Assyria at the End-time. In Jeremiah 50:4-7 we read, "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces

thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten," etc. Clearly these verses treat of the closing days of the time of "Jacob's trouble." Immediately following we read, "Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans" (Jer. 50:8). Then, in the next verse, a reason is given, showing the urgency of this call for the faithful Jews in Babylon to come out: "For lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken" (v. 9). Again, in Jeremiah 51:44, the Lord says, "And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall." And then follows the Call for the faithful Jews to separate themselves from the mass of their apostate brethren in Babylon—"My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord." Isaiah 11:11; 27:13; Micah 4:10, all show that Israel will be intimately connected with Babylon in the End-time. It was of incalculable help to students of the past when they discovered that Israel is the key which unlocks prophecy, and that the Nations are referred to only as they affect the fortunes of Jacob's descendants. There were other mighty peoples of old besides the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, but the holy Spirit has passed them by, because their history had no bearing on that of the chosen Nation. The same reason explains why the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, do occupy such a prominent notice in the book of Daniel—they were the enemies into whose hands God delivered His wayward people. These principles have received wide recognition by prophetic students, and therefore it is the more strange that so few have applied them in their study of the final prophetic book. Israel is the key to the Revelation, and the Nations are only mentioned therein as they immediately affect Israel's fortunes. The ultimate design of the Apocalypse is not to take notice of such men as Nero and Charlemagne and Napoleon, nor such systems as Mohammedanism and the Papacy. Nor would so much be said about Babylon unless this "great city" was yet to be the home of apostate Israel. After these preliminary considerations, which though length were necessary, we are now prepared to examine a few of the details supplied by Revelation 17 and 18. Nor can we now do more than offer a bare outline, and even that will require a further chapter on Revelation 18. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Rev. 17:1, 2). The "great whore," in the final accomplishment of this prophecy, describes apostate Israel in the End-time—i.e. Daniel's seventieth week. The figure of an unfaithful woman to represent apostate Israel is a common one in the Scriptures: see Jeremiah 2:20; 3:6; Ezekiel 16:15; 20:30; 43:8,9; Hosea 2:5, etc. She is here termed "the great whore" for two reasons: first, because (as we shall show later) she will, at the end, worship Mammon as she never has in the past; second, because of her idolatrous alliance with the Beast. The apostle is here shown her "judgment." This is in contrast from what we have in Revelation 12, where we learn that the chaste "Woman" will be preserved. That apostate Israel will yet sit "upon many waters" ("peoples," etc., Revelation 17:15), and that the kings of the earth will commit fornication with her, we reserve for consideration in the next chapter. "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored Beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Rev. 17:3 and 4). The Woman seated on the Beast does not signify that she will rule over him, but intimates that he will support her. The ultimate reference here is to the Devil's imitation of the Millennium, when the Jews (even now rapidly coming into prominence) shall no longer be the tail of the Nations, but the head. How

the Devil will bring this about will appear when we examine Revelation 18. As the result of the Beast's support (Rev. 17:3), apostate Israel will be lifted to heights of worldly power and glory (Rev. 17:4). "And upon her forehead was a name written, mystery: Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth" (Rev. 17:5). In a re-built Babylon will culminate the various systems of idolatry which had their source in the first Babylon of Nimrod's day. It is in this city that the most influential Jews will congregate at the Time of the End. From there, Jewish financiers will control the governments of earth. That apostate Israel, in Babylon, should be clothed in "purple and scarlet" (emblems of royalty and earthly glory) before the Kingdom of Messiah is set up, was indeed a "mystery" (secret) disclosed by none of the Prophets, but now made known in the Revelation. "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 a great wonder" (Rev. 17:6, R.V.) The final reference is, again, to apostate Israel in the End-time. The most relentless enemies of the godly Jews will be their own apostate brethren—cf. our notes on Luke 18 in chapter 9. The second half of Luke 18:6, correctly rendered in the R.V., "And when I saw her I wondered with a great wonder," ought to show us that it is not Romanism which is here in view. Why should John, who was himself then suffering from the hatred of Rome (Pagal) wonder at Rome (Papal) being clothed with governmental power and glory, and drunken with the blood of saints? But that the kings of the earth (her worst enemies for three thousand years) should commit fornication with Israel, and that the apostate portion of the Nation should be drunken with the blood of their own brethren according to the flesh, was well calculated to fill him with amazement. "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the Beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 17:7). It should be noted that in the interpretation which follows, far more is said about "the Beast" than about "the Woman." We believe the chief reason for this is because the 18th verse tells us the Woman represents "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth," and the City receives fuller notice in the chapter that follows—Revelation 18. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (Rev. 17:9-11). Here is the mind which hath wisdom (Rev. 17:9): "This repetition of Revelation 13:18 identifies and connects these two chapters. The word rendered "mind" in Revelation 17:9 and 'understanding' in Revelation 13:18 is the same. This 'wisdom' is, to understand that, though a "Beast" is seen in the vision, it is not a wild beast that is meant, but one great final super-human personality; namely, a man energized by satanic power" (Dr. E.W. Bullinger). The 9th verse should end with the word "wisdom": what follows belongs to Revelation 17:10. The R.V., which in this verse follows a number of reliable translations, renders thus: "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings." This at once disposes of the popular interpretation which regards these seven mountains referring to the seven hills on which the city of Rome was built. The Holy Spirit expressly tells us that the seven mountains are (represent) seven kings. Of these seven kings it is said, "five are fallen, and one is (i.e. the sixth existed when John wrote the Apocalypse), and the other (the seventh) is yet to come: he must continue a short space." And then in Revelation 17:11 we read, "And the Beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven, and he goeth into perdition." Upon those verses we cannot do better than give extracts from Mr. Newton's "Thoughts on the Apocalypse." "This passage is evidently intended to direct our thoughts to the various forms of executive government or kingship which have existed, or shall exist in the prophetic earth, until the hour when the sovereignty of the world shall become the sovereignty of the Lord and of His Christ. We might expect to find such a reference in a chapter which professedly treats of him who is to close the history of human government by the

introduction of a new and marvelous form of power—a form new as to its mode of administration and development, yet not unconnected with the past, for it will be constructed upon principles drawn from the experience of preceding ages, and will have the foundations of its greatness laid by the primeval efforts of mankind. He will be the eighth; but he is of (ek) the seven. "The native energy and intrepidity of him who is said to have been a mighty hunter before the Lord—an energy essential to men who were setting in a forlorn and unsubdued earth, surrounded by beasts of the forest and countless other difficulties and dangers, very naturally gave the first form to kingship, and hence its parentage may be said to spring. "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel." The supremacy of Nimrod was not derived from any previously existing system. He neither inherited his power from others, nor did he, like Nebuchadnezzar afterwards, receive it as a gift from God. He earned it for himself, by the force of his own individual character—but it was without God. Great progress was made in the kingdom which he founded in the land of Shinar, in civilization and refinement; for we early read of the godly Babylonish garment, and of the kill and learning of the Chaldees; but their domination was repressed and kept, as it were, in abeyance by the hand of God, until the trial of Israel, His people, had been fully made, that it might be seen whether they would prove themselves worthy of supremacy in the earth. "The form of government in Israel was a theocracy; as was seen in the reigns of David and Solomon, who were types (imperfect types indeed) of Him that is to come. The monarch was independent of and uncontrolled by those whom he governed, but he was dependent upon God, who dwelt in the temple, ever near to be consulted, and whose law was given as the final standard of appeal. He stood between God and the people, not to be their functionary and slave—not to be the expression of their judgments, and the reflection of their will; but as set over them by principles which he himself had received from above. But the possession of power like this, held in companionship with God, required a holiness that was not found in man in the flesh, and therefore it was soon forfeited. Divine sanction, however, has many times since been coveted, and the name of 'the Lord's anointed' assumed. The last great king of the Gentiles, indeed, will do more than this, for he will take the place of Divinity itself, and sit upon the mount of the congregation on the sides of the north, saying he is like the Most High. But all this is unauthorized assumption. "The third form is developed when the Gentile dynasty was formally constituted by God in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. He, like the monarchs of Israel, had absolute sovereignty granted to him—but God was not with him in it. He and his successors received it as delegated power to be exercised according to their own pleasure, though in final responsibility to God. It is not necessary here to pursue the painful history of the Gentiles. It is sufficient to say, as regards the history of power, that the Gentile monarchs from the beginning, not knowing God so as to lean upon Him, and too weak to stand alone; exposed to the jealousy and hatred of those whom they governed—a jealousy not infrequently earned by their own evil, found it necessary to lean upon something inferior to themselves: and thus the character of power has been deteriorated from age to age, until at last the monarchy of these latter days has consented not only to own the people as the basis and source of its power, but has also submitted to be directed in the exercise of that power by given rules prescribed by its subjects. "The native monarchy of Nimrod, the theocracy of Israel, the despotic authority of Nebuchadnezzar, the aristocratic monarchy of Persia, and the military monarchy of Alexander and his successors, had all passed away when John beheld this vision. All these methods had been tried—none had been found to answer even the purposes of man; and now another had arisen, the half military, half popular monarchy of the Caesars,—the iron empire of Rome. 'Five have fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a little space.' "That other (though it cannot yet be said to have come so as to fulfill this verse) (we are rather inclined to believe that the "seventh" is commercialism, that is, the moneyed-interests in control—A.W.P.) and, with one brief exception, the last form that is to be exhibited before the end shall come, and it is under this form that the system of Babylon

is matured. It is obvious that a monarchy, guided not by the people numerically, but by certain classes of the people, and those classes determined by the possession of property, must be the form adapted for the accumulation of wealth, and the growth of commercial power; for it gives (which pure democracy has ever failed to do), the best security for property without unduly fettering the liberty of individual enterprise." For lack of space we are obliged to pass over the intervening verses now, and in closing this chapter we offer a brief word on Revelation 17:18. "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." This verse tells us that the Whore represents a City. This city is named in Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2; 10, 21; and it is surely significant that it is thus named in the Apocalypse six times—the number of man; whereas the new Jerusalem is referred to three times (Rev. 3:12; 21:2; 10) the Divine number. Babylon, must therefore be understood literally, otherwise we should have the anomaly of a figure representing a figure. But from the very fact that we are here told the Woman represents the City, we learn that she is not literal, but figurative. In the next chapter we shall further review Revelation 17 and offer some comments on Revelation 18.

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