

**Articles and Sermons :: A.L. Chitwood, The Time of Jacob's Trouble**

A.L. Chitwood, The Time of Jacob's Trouble - posted by somar79126 (), on: 2005/1/11 12:37

FOREWORD

The Old Testament presents the complete history of Israel, from the nation's call through Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) to that future day when the Jewish people will be brought into a full realization of their calling (Isa. 53:1ff; 54:1ff). Through the course of this revealed history, because of continual disobedience extending over centuries of time, God eventually uprooted the Jewish people from their land and drove them out among the Gentile nations. God's purpose for dealing with His people after this fashion was to effect repentance through Gentile persecution, resulting in both the nation of Israel and the Gentile nations ultimately realizing that stated in Gen.12:3:

"...in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Revelation chapters six through nineteen have to do with the final seven years of God's dealings with a disobedient people scattered among the nations in the preceding respect. These chapters provide numerous details concerning a sequence of events surrounding Israel and the nations during and at the end of the final seven years of the 6,000 years comprising Man's Day (during and at the end of Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week), anticipating the 1,000-year Lord's Day to follow.

Gentile persecution will reach an apex during these final seven years under the reign of the one to whom Satan will give "his power, and his seat, and great authority"; and Israel in that coming day, left with no place to turn other than to the God of their fathers, will be brought to the place of repentance, with Gentile world power destroyed at the end of this period.

This climax seen in the Book of Revelation is the identical climax seen in the Old Testament account, previously revealed through "Moses, and all the prophets" (cf. Luke 24:25-27). The structure of the latter must be the same as the structure of the former. Later revelation must be completely in line with and rest upon former revelation.

Thus, the Book of Revelation couldn't possibly be structured after any fashion other than that previously seen in the Old Testament. The only logical and possible way one could expect Revelation chapters six through nineteen to end, preceding events seen in chapter twenty (events as they pertain to the 1,000-year Messianic Era), would be the same way matters surrounding Israel and the nations are brought to a conclusion in the Old Testament, preceding the same events seen in Revelation chapter twenty -- Israel's harlotry being done away with, Gentile world power destroyed, and the Messianic Era then ushered in.

Bringing all of these things to light and reaching this climax, chapters six through sixteen form foundational material and build into the climax seen in chapters seventeen through twenty. Then, chapters seventeen and eighteen deal with Israel's harlotry being done away with, chapter nineteen deals with the subsequent destruction of Gentile world power, and chapter twenty deals with the ushering in of the long-awaited Messianic Era.

The Book of Revelation, in the preceding respect, is simply a detailed reiteration of numerous events in the Old Testament bearing on the subject. The book consists simply of closing and final commentary on that previously opened up and revealed in the Old Testament.

Interpretation in the Book of Revelation must come from Scripture itself. Scripture must be compared with Scripture, under the leadership of the indwelling Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-13). One must begin with that revealed elsewhere in the Book of Revelation and then move back into other New Testament as well as Old Testament Scripture. There is no other way to come into a proper understanding of this book or any of the various things dealt with throughout the book.

Introduction

The identity of both the political power and the harlot in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen is more often than not associated with "Rome" -- viewing matters as "a revived Roman Empire" forming the political power, and "the Roman Catholic Church" forming a religious power within the political. However, neither identification is correct.

The Church has never really departed from ideology coming out of the Reformation concerning Revelation chapters seven and eight. Almost five hundred years ago the Reformers generally saw everything as "Roman" in these two chapters -- a Roman political power and a Roman Catholic religious power, often viewing the Pope as the Antichrist. And, aside from viewing the Papacy in this manner (though some Christians still do today), this whole interpretative ideology has remained essentially unchanged since the time of the Reformation.

Suffice it to say, ideology associating either the political power or the harlot with "Rome" was wrong at the time of the Reformation, and it remains just as wrong today. In short, that part of Christendom following either or both parts of this interpretation has been wrong for almost five hundred years concerning that taught in these two chapters in the Book of Revelation.

The Book of Revelation, as any other part of Scripture, must be understood and interpreted in the light of Scripture. Material in the book must be understood and interpreted contextually, and the whole of the book rests upon that previously revealed in the Old Testament.

Seeking to identify the political power as a revived Roman Empire has absolutely no basis in Scripture. The Book of Daniel is usually referenced, but the Book of Daniel identifies this final form of Gentile world power as other than Roman.

And seeking to associate the harlot with the Church of Rome has absolutely no basis in these two chapters, or elsewhere in the book, or in other Scripture. In fact, the Book of Revelation clearly identifies the harlot, and this identification is completely in line with and rests upon that previously revealed in the Old Testament.

Re: A.L. Chitwood, The Time of Jacob's Trouble - posted by somar79126 (), on: 2005/1/11 12:37

1

The Final Seven Years

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

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

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

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

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

Revelation chapters six through eighteen reveal events which will occur during the coming seven-year Tribulation, "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). This will be the time when the final seven years of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy will be fulfilled (Dan. 9:24-27), completing a prophecy which began to be fulfilled about 2,450 years ago but was interrupted seven years short of completion almost 2,000 years ago, at the time of Christ's crucifixion. In this respect, the Tribulation period comprises the fulfillment of the last seven years of the previous dispensation.

Israel and the Nations

Events during this time will revolve around Israel and the nations, with Israel occupying center-stage. This will be the prophesied time of the manifestation of God's wrath upon the earth-dwellers at the end of Man's Day. And the Jewish people during this time, scattered among the nations and the central focus of God's wrath, will be brought into such dire straits that, to effect deliverance, they will be left without a choice other than to turn to and call upon the God of their fathers (as seen in the type in the Book of Exodus, preceding the deliverance under Moses).

God will use the judgments of the Tribulation (chs. 6-18) -- judgments which will reach a severity unparalleled in man's history (cf. Matt. 24:21, 22) -- to bring Israel to the place of repentance. Then Gentile world power will be destroyed (ch. 19 b), with Israel subsequently occupying the position for which the nation was brought into existence (ch. 20a).

All of the judgments during the Tribulation are seen occurring within the scope of that contained in the seven-sealed scroll. That's why a search is seen in chapter five for an individual worthy to break the seals of the scroll alone, with nothing stated in this chapter about the subsequently revealed judgments under the seven trumpets and seven vials (seen in chs. 8-11, 15, 16). The reason for this is evident from revelation provided later in the book.

The seven trumpet judgments lie within the seventh seal, and the seven vial judgments lie within the seventh trumpet (8:1, 2; 11:15; 15:1ff). In this respect, all of the trumpet and vial judgments lie within the seventh seal, making all of the judgments seen within the seals, trumpets, and vials lie within the scope of that seen in the seven-sealed scroll.

This is also why a terminus can be seen when the seventh trumpet is blown (10:7; 11:15), for the seventh trumpet contains the seven vials, which bring matters surrounding these judgments to an end (16:17). Thus, once the seventh seal is broken, the door is opened for all of the remaining judgments to occur.

Also, note something about the layout of chapters six through eighteen in this book. That seen in these chapters forms a chronology of events, but this chronology is interrupted numerous times throughout the book in order that additional, explanatory data can be supplied. And this explanatory data, forming commentary material, drops back and covers events which occur during the same time already covered by the preceding material.

This form of revelation is something seen throughout Scripture. A complete, chronological sequence of events is given. Then Scripture drops back and provides additional, explanatory data, or other material about to be further developed in subsequent chapters.

To illustrate, note Revelation chapter twelve in this respect. Verses one through six cover the complete sequence of events. Then the remaining verses in the chapter drop back and form commentary material for the sequence of events already covered in the first six verses.

The whole of that seen in chapters six through eighteen is laid out in this manner. For example, the breaking of the first six seals in chapter six covers time during most of the Tribulation. But chapter seven drops back in time, providing commentary material as it relates to Israel and the nations during the time when these six seals are being broken. And, through doing this, chapter seven begins setting the stage for the impartation of different types of commentary material surrounding Israel and the nations, with earlier material forming a foundation for later material. In this particular instance, 144,000 Jews, removed from the nation, are introduced; and later revelation surrounding the 144,000 in the book (chs. 11, 12, 14) builds on the former.

Understanding how the book is structured is particularly important for correctly understanding chapters eleven through fourteen, along with chapters seventeen and eighteen. Then bear in mind that Israel and the nations are in view -- Israel first, then the nations (cf. Jer. 25:15-18; Ezek. 5:5). And though Israel will be the primary focus of God's wrath during the time beginning in Revelation chapter six, judgment will befall the Gentile nations as well. Not only will the Jewish people find themselves scattered among the nations at this time but also the object of an increasing anti-Semitism at the hands of these nations, resulting in God acting accordingly (cf. Gen. 12:3; Zech. 1:14, 15).

Overview of Chapters Six through Eighteen

The general overview of Revelation chapters six through eighteen, detailing events which will occur during "the time of Jacob's trouble," would be:

Chapter Six: The first six seals are broken (depicting judgments extending throughout most of the Tribulation, leaving the trumpet and vial judgments to occur during time near the end of the Tribulation (probably within about the last year), when conditions will become as seen in Matt. 24:21, 22 (cf. Rev. 6:12-17; 16:17-21).

Chapter Seven: One hundred and forty-four thousand Jews, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes, are sealed -- an introduction to God's evangelists of the Tribulation, who will proclaim the message seen in Matt. 24:14 -- with the apparent results of their ministry seen in the latter part of the chapter. This chapter provides commentary material on particular events which occur during the time covered by the breaking of the first six seals in the previous chapter, which would c

over time during most of the Tribulation. It is evident from subsequent revelation that the 144,000 in this chapter are saved and set apart during the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation, with their ministry occurring during the last three and one-half years.

Chapters Eight, Nine: The first six trumpets are blown, depicting judgments apparently occurring near the end of the Tribulation (note again that the previous breaking of the first six seals appears to carry matters to a time near the end of the Tribulation).

Chapter Ten: An announcement is made concerning the blowing of the seventh trumpet, which is seen producing an end to all of the judgments connected with the seven-sealed scroll. And, as previously stated, matters can be presented in this manner because the seventh trumpet contains the seven vial judgments (note v. 7).

Chapter Eleven: This is the first of a number of chapters (chs. 11-14, 17, 18) which drop back and cover events occurring, at times, throughout the entire seven years. And chapter eleven is one of the chapters which drops back to the beginning of the Tribulation and covers specific events occurring throughout this period. The ministry of the two witnesses occurs in this chapter, along with the city of Jerusalem being trodden under foot by the Gentiles for the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation (cf. Dan. 9:26; Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20-24; II Thess. 2:3ff; Rev. 11:2, 3).

It appears evident that the ministry of the two witnesses occurs during the first half of the Tribulation, for several reasons: 1) Their ministry appears to be centered in Israel, particularly in Jerusalem. Jerusalem though will be destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation, with the Jews in Jerusalem and the land of Israel either being killed, escaping to a place of safety specially prepared by God for them, or being sold as slaves throughout the Gentile world (cf. Joel 3:6; Zech. 13:8, 9; Matt. 24:21, 22; Luke 21:20-24; Rev. 12:13-17). The status of the Jews in Israel, their capital city, and their land during the last half of the Tribulation would result in conditions of a nature rendering it quite unlikely that the ministry of these two witnesses could occur during this time. And 2) it seems evident from comparing Rev. 11:13 and Rev. 12:17 that the 144,000 previously introduced in chapter seven will hear the message from the two witnesses (or perhaps from individuals saved as a result of their ministry) during the first half of the Tribulation, resulting in their being saved and set apart during this time.

At the end of their ministry, the two witnesses will be slain; and their "dead bodies" will be allowed to lie, unburied, "in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (v. 8). Then, "after three days and an half" (apparently marking off a day for each year of their previous ministry), breath will re-enter their bodies, they will stand "upon their feet," great fear will fall upon those seeing them, and they will ascend "to heaven in a cloud" (vv. 9-12).

This chapter also records "the voice of the seventh angel," introduced in the previous chapter (10:7). And, for reasons already given, the end of the matter is pictured again, pointing this time to the goal toward which everything in the book moves -- the kingdom of this world (under Satan and his angels) becoming the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (under Christ and His co-heirs).

Chapter Twelve: More commentary is provided in this chapter. But one can't begin at this point in the book. The previously provided commentary material has to be understood first in order to properly understand this chapter. And, in like manner, revelation in this chapter, along with revelation in previous chapters, is necessary in order to properly understand revelation in subsequent chapters. This is simply the manner in which the book has been laid out and structured.

This chapter, as all of the book and the Bible as a whole, is rich in metaphors. Three metaphors are used to depict individuals or groups of individuals -- a woman, a dragon, and a man child. And all three are identified in the chapter.

Note something which Scripture doesn't do. It doesn't provide revelation of this nature (metaphors) and then leave the interpretation to man. Rather, Scripture is its own interpreter, not only when using metaphors but at all times.

"The woman" can only be identified as Israel (from that stated about her in the chapter), "the dragon" is identified as Satan (v. 9), and "the man child" can only be identified as "the remnant of her seed" (v. 17) -- the 144,000 previously introduced and about to be dealt with again (ch. 14).

Note that the woman gives birth to the man child very near the middle of the Tribulation. This birth will occur following that time when Satan and his angels have been cast out of their place in heaven, following that time when all seven heads of the Beast have been crowned (which shows the timing of this event to be near the middle of the Tribulation), but before

e Jerusalem is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation and the Jews then find themselves subjected to the Beast's wrath (vv. 3, 4).

(In the preceding respect, the gestation period for childbirth as it relates to the woman and man child is seen covering at least most of the first half of the Tribulation, paralleling the ministry of the two witnesses. Individuals comprising the man child will evidently be saved at different times throughout this period, progressively continuing to add to the total until the number is complete -- 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The child, prior to birth, will grow in this manner and ultimately become fully developed near the middle of the Tribulation, with the woman then experiencing "birth pangs" and bringing forth the man child.)

Chapter Thirteen: Commentary is provided in this chapter for the Beast (and his false prophet), who has already been introduced in the preceding chapter. "The Beast" arises out of the sea, referring to the Gentile nations; and "the false prophet" arises out of the earth, referring to the land of Israel (vv. 1, 11). According to Daniel, the Beast will arise from within the boundaries of the northern part of the Babylonian kingdom as it was divided following Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. (Dan. 8:8, 9). This territory today would cover parts of northern Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. This man will be a Gentile ruler coming out of this part of the world, and his false prophet will apparently be a Jew coming out of the land of Israel.

Chapter Fourteen: This chapter provides additional commentary material on the 144,000 in order to explain previous revelation. The 144,000, previously seen removed from the earth (12:5), are seen in heaven in this chapter (vv. 1ff). Thus, it is evident that they will have to be sent back to the earth to carry out their ministry, which will occur during the last half of the Tribulation (cf. Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10).

They will be removed from Satan's jurisdiction either at the time of or shortly after their birth (Satan will have previously been cast out of heaven and will no longer have access to this realm). Then, at a later time, they will have to be sent back to the earth, allowing them proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles for the last three and one-half years of the Tribulation.

(This would have its parallel in Christ being taken to Egypt shortly following His birth, out of Herod's jurisdiction. Then He was later brought back to the land of Israel to subsequently proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to Israel for three and one-half years.)

The 144,000 will form a first fruit of the nation (v. 4; "first fruit" is singular in the Gk. text). Israel was called into existence to be God's witness to the nations, to carry God's message to the Gentiles throughout the earth (Isa. 43:1-10). However, the Jewish people refused. They went the way of Jonah and eventually, because of their disobedience, found themselves in the same place Jonah found himself because of disobedience -- in the sea, i.e., scattered among the same nations to which they were supposed to have carried God's message, in the place of death, to be raised on the third day.

The 144,000, who will carry the message of the one true and living God to the Gentiles worldwide during the last half of the Tribulation will form a first fruit of the nation with respect to the nation's calling. Then the entire nation will form the main harvest and occupy a position of this nature during the Messianic Era, following the Jewish people having been brought to the place of repentance at the end of the Tribulation.

Of particular interest is the statement introducing the identity of the 144,000 in verse four, along with that stated in verse six through eight.

In the introductory statement, the 144,000 are said to not be "defiled with women" (v. 4a). That is, the 144,000, though out of the nation of Israel, will no longer be seen associated with the nation's defilement -- a defilement shown numerous places in the Old Testament to be harlotry (e.g., Isa. 1:4-7, 21); and the nation's harlotry is about to be brought into full view in the Book of Revelation.

A first fruit of the nation will have been saved, and cleansing will have occurred (something awaiting the remainder of the nation); and, with this cleansing, they will find themselves referred to as "virgins," in sharp contrast to the way in which the nation as a whole will still be viewed.

Then there is the mention of good news to be proclaimed worldwide, in connection with judgment (vv. 6, 7), which, contextually, would appear to be an allusion to the ministry of the 144,000 (though an angel is seen proclaiming the message, which would be in complete keeping with the way angels appear throughout the book -- having a part in announcements

, carrying out certain activities, etc.). And this is immediately followed by attention once again being called to "that great city" (the wording in the Greek text is always the same and can be translated either way).

The opening reference to "the great city" in 11:8, identifying the city as Jerusalem (a name used in Scripture to refer to both a city and the Jewish people, discussed later in this article), associates the city with two places, with "Sodom" and "Egypt." This reference -- showing sexual immorality of a very degrading nature (seen in Sodom), occurring in the world where the woman from chapter twelve, Israel, resides (typified by Egypt) -- would be setting the stage for that about to be revealed concerning the city, or the Jewish people. Then 14:8 and 16:19 form the necessary additional information to finish setting the stage for that about to be revealed (in chs. 17, 18), metaphorically associating "that great city" with a city in another geographical location, with Babylon.

(That "Babylon" is used as a metaphor when referencing "that great city" in 14:8 and 16:19 appears evident from the way similar metaphors are used when "the great city" is introduced in 11:8, along with the extensive use of other metaphors in the book. And this will be shown to be the correct way to view matters through Scriptures dealing with "that great city," called "Babylon," in chapters seventeen and eighteen.)

That is to say, the context on both sides of 14:8 and 16:19 will show, beyond question, that "Babylon" is used in these verses as a metaphor, in exactly the same sense that "Sodom" and "Egypt" are used as metaphors in 11:8 -- referencing a particular facet of defilement associated with Jerusalem.)

With this addition, sufficient detail has been given -- based on numerous Old Testament references -- for a proper understanding of that about to be presented in chapters seventeen and eighteen (though the judgments depicted by the pouring out of the seven vials precede the revelation in these two chapters). All of this previous revelation is brought together in chapters seventeen and eighteen, where "that great city" is seen as "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" (17:5, 18).

(Note Peter's reference at the end of his first epistle to having written this epistle from "Babylon". Expositors often associate "Babylon" in this verse with Rome; others believe that Peter was referencing the literal city of Babylon. But it is quite unlikely that Peter ever traveled to either city. Peter was the apostle called to conduct his ministry among the Jews, and the center of his ministry in this respect would be Jerusalem.)

If Peter was using a metaphor, which appears far more likely than not, comparing Scripture with Scripture would limit the association of this metaphor to only one city -- not Rome, but Jerusalem.)

Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen: Chapter fifteen introduces the vial judgments, and chapter sixteen provides details concerning the pouring out of all seven vials, which can only occur very near the end of the seven years; and these vial judgments bring all of the judgments seen within the scope of the seven-sealed scroll to an end (vv. 17-21).

(Throughout Scripture God is seen using numbers to reveal specific truths, with the whole of Scripture established on a numeric structure, a septenary structure, at the beginning. Different numbers carry particular meanings. And, in this respect, in Revelation chapters six through sixteen, there are three sets of sevens comprising all of the judgments seen in the seven-sealed scroll -- seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials.)

"Three" is the number of divine perfection, and "seven" is a complete number, used throughout Scripture as God's number. Thus, all of these judgments together show Divine perfection within God's complete judgment upon the earth-dwellers during "the time of Jacob's trouble" -- judgments covering time during Daniel's Seventieth Week, designed to bring Israel to the place of repentance, resulting in an end to and destruction of Gentile world power.)

Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen: These two chapters deal with a woman and a scarlet colored Beast (v. 3). "The woman" is associated with Babylon, referred to through the use of the word "mystery" (vv. 5, 7), called "The Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth" (v. 5), and was previously introduced through different means in chapters eleven, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen. And "the Beast" (also referred to through the use of the word "mystery") is associated with "the seven heads" and "the ten horns," and was previously introduced different ways in chapters twelve through sixteen. "The Beast" is then identified in verses eight through fourteen, and "the woman" is identified in verses fifteen through eighteen.

(A "mystery" in the New Testament is usually defined as something previously hidden but now revealed. This definition though should not be thought of along the lines of something not found in previous revelation, for there is nothing in the

New Testament that does not have its roots somewhere in the Old Testament. Rather, a "mystery," in reality, pertains to something previously made known but not opened up to one's understanding until a later point in time.

The revealing of a mystery requires Divine action. That is, the Spirit takes something in the Scriptures which cannot be understood in and of itself and, through Divine leadership, opens the matter to an individual's understanding.)

"These are 'mysteries' because men by nature and by their own abilities are unable to discover and to know them. It must 'be given' to a man 'to know' them. This Divine giving is done by means of revelation..."

— R. C. H. Lenski

Re: - posted by somar79126 (), on: 2005/1/11 12:38

2

The End of Israel's Harlotry

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 ...

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:6, 18).

The woman is mentioned first in the introductory material (vv. 1-7), but the order is reversed in the identification. The Beast is identified first, and the woman is then identified. And, as the identity of the Beast is contingent on previous revelation in the book, so must it be with the identity of the woman. One must reference that which has already been revealed (which would include not only the preceding chapters in the Book of Revelation but revelation preceding this book as well, particularly that seen in the Old Testament). And, interpreting chapters seventeen and eighteen in this manner (which is the only Biblical way to properly interpret them), both the woman and the Beast can be easily identified, leaving no question concerning the proper identity of either one.

The Woman and the Beast

"The Beast" is identified as the ruler of a ten-kingdom federation of nations during the Tribulation (v. 12). The reference to his being the eighth but of the seven (vv. 8-11) is apparently a reference to this man coming into power as the seventh head, receiving the deadly wound by the sword, and then being healed (previously stated in 13:3, 14) -- becoming the eighth in this manner, but still of the seven.

In verse nine, "the seven heads" are said to be seven mountains. And, in Scripture, "a mountain" is often used in a metaphorical sense referring to a kingdom (e.g., Isa. 2:1-4; Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; Matt. 17:1ff), which is what verse ten goes on to say.

These "seven mountains," used in a metaphorical sense, in this particular instance refer to seven kings of a kingdom (or kingdoms). Verse nine should literally read, "And they are seven kings" These verses form a description of the kingdom of the Beast, "on which the woman sitteth."

The thought of the woman residing within the kingdom of the beast is identical to and in complete keeping with the woman residing in the midst of the nations in verses one and fifteen. Residing in the midst of one would really be part and parcel to residing in the midst of the other, for the kingdom of the beast in that coming day will encompass all nations (cf. vv. 1, 7, 9, 15).

"The woman" is then identified. And, in the light of the way that the woman is depicted in relation to both the nations and the kingdom of the Beast (residing in their midst), the thought in verse seven of the Beast carrying the woman must, contextually, be understood in a similar sense -- the Beast bearing the woman in the sense of the woman being identified with the Beast (cf. John 19:15; note the way that this same word in the Greek text is used in Luke 14:27 and John 16:12).

The identity of the woman is given following a sequence of events which brings the reader to at least the middle of the Tribulation, when the Beast has come into power as world ruler and turns on the woman (all seven heads crowned), seeking to destroy her from off the face of the earth (v. 16; cf. 12:13-16). And God, at this time, will allow that depicted in this chapter to occur in order to bring about the destruction of the harlot, though this destruction will be at the hands of the B

east (v. 17). That is to say, God will use the most corrupt form of Gentile world power this world will ever know to ultimately bring to pass His plans and purposes surrounding the woman.

Then, in verse eighteen, the woman is identified beyond question, through two different means:

The woman is first said to be "that great city." And comparing Scripture with Scripture, allowing Scripture to interpret itself, the identity of "that great city" has to be understood in the light of the way in which it has already been given in the book. As previously stated, it appears evident and can be shown contextually that "Babylon" is used as a metaphor in both 14:8 and 16:19 when referencing "that great city," which was previously associated with two similar metaphors ("Sodom" and "Egypt") and identified as Jerusalem. In this respect, solely from a contextual standpoint, the reference to "that great city" in 17:18 can be understood only one way -- as a reference to Jerusalem, previously identified with "Sodom," "Egypt," and "Babylon."

But this verse doesn't stop with the identification of the woman with "that great city." Rather, the verse goes on to provide a second means of identification, pinning matters of identification down beyond any possible question. The verse continues by adding the words, "which reigneth over the kings of the earth." A better translation of these words would be, "the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth" (ref. Wuest's Expanded Translation -- "which possesses power over..."), limiting matters in the light of Ex. 4:22, 23 to Israel and/or Jerusalem alone.

And, with this addition, Scripture in this verse has, so to speak, validated the identity of the woman in the mouth of two witnesses -- something required within the Mosaic Economy (cf. Num. 35:30; Deut. 19:15).

(Regarding the latter mode of identification, note that which Moses was instructed to make known to the Egyptian Pharaoh when God sent him to deliver the Israelites. Moses was instructed to say unto Pharaoh, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn...".)

"Sonship" implies rulership. Only sons can rule in God's kingdom (past, present, or future), and in the human realm, only firstborn sons can rule. In short, Moses, announcing to Pharaoh that Israel was God's Son, even His firstborn, was an announcement to Pharaoh that God recognized Israel in the regal capacity implied by sonship, not Egypt.

And this recognition was made known while Israel was still in Egypt. Israel, following the events in Exodus chapter twelve, was to be led out of Egypt under Moses. Then, following certain events occurring while enroute to Kadesh-Barnea, Israel was to enter into and occupy the land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and once the Jewish people had become established in this land, they were to rule the nations as God's firstborn son, within a theocracy.

Now, note the latter part of Rev. 17:18. There is only one nation on the face of the earth that this can be referencing -- the nation which is not to be reckoned among the nations. Only one nation on the face of the earth possesses a position of regal authority over the kings of the earth. This nation was identified in Ex. 4:22, 23, immediately prior to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt; and this nation is identified in Rev. 17:18, after exactly the same fashion, immediately prior to Jesus leading the Israelites out from a worldwide dispersion yet future.

Dating from Moses' day, Israel has never lost the nation's standing as God's firstborn son. Israel has been God's firstborn son since the announcement was made in Ex. 4:22, 23, remains God's firstborn son today, and will one day exercise the rights of the firstborn. This is why the one who has held the sceptre since prior to the creation of Adam has done everything within his power to destroy Israel since this announcement was made almost 3,500 years ago.

Also, note that Israel is spoken of in both masculine and feminine respects in Scripture -- as a son, and as a woman, with both having regal implications. Only sons can rule, and man cannot rule alone. A man must rule in conjunction with a woman, or a woman in conjunction with a man -- the man as king and the woman as consort queen. This is a principle established in the opening chapter of Genesis, which can never change.

And exactly the same thing, for exactly the same reasons, is seen relative to the bride of Christ. The one who will rule as consort queen with the Son is spoken of in Scripture in both masculine and feminine respects, with both having regal implications.)

In Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen, the woman is identified with and spoken of as a city ("And 'the woman' which thou sawest is that great city"). This has caused problems for some within our Western way of thinking. But note that the same thing is done in Rev. 21:9, 10 relative to Christ's bride and the new Jerusalem ("Come hither and I will she

w thee 'the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the spirit...and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem...").

That is, in these sections of Scripture, "Israel," the wife of Jehovah, is identified with and spoken of synonymously with the earthly Jerusalem; and "the bride of Christ" is identified with and spoken of synonymously with the heavenly Jerusalem.

Thus, in the preceding respect, in Revelation chapters eleven through eighteen, the name "Jerusalem" is used more than one way. It is used referring to a literal city (11:2, 8), and it is also used referring to the Jewish people (e.g., "the woman," "the great whore," and "the mother of harlots" in chs. 17, 18), referencing the central place in the nation's own land (17:1, 5, 18; 18:10, 16ff; cf. Jer. 44:13; Lam. 1:7, 8, 17; Matt. 23:37).

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

"...it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

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

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

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

Then, as previously seen, the woman in chapters seventeen and eighteen is also identified as "the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth" (17:18b). This identifying statement reflects back upon and draws from a similar statement about the woman earlier in the book: "...and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (12:1b). "Twelve" is the number of governmental perfection; and this verse from chapter twelve forms part of the contextual foundational material in the book upon which the identity of the woman in 17:18 rests.

The word used for "crown" in the Greek text of Rev. 12:1 is *stephanos*, not *diadema*, indicating that the woman, though possessing regal power and authority, was not exercising that power and authority at the time seen in the text (which is a time yet future, near the middle of the Tribulation). An individual presently exercising regal power and authority would wear a crown depicted by the word *diadema*, not a crown depicted by the word *stephanos*. This is seen two verses later (v. 3), where the Greek word *diadema* is used -- showing an exercise of regal power and authority in the kingdom of Antichrist by the one to whom Satan will one day give "his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev. 13:2).

(Ref. the author's book, JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, Ch. XII, pp. 186-190, for a discussion of the use of *stephanos* and *diadema* in the preceding respect.)

Israel's Harlotry

An Apex, Then an End

Note the buildup in the Book of Revelation to chapters seventeen and eighteen. All the way through (from ch. 6ff) it has been Israel and the nations, with the government ultimately centered in the kingdom of the Beast and Israel residing in the midst of both the government and the nations. Israel must be viewed in this central respect relative to everything occurring, for this is "the time of Jacob's trouble," the fulfillment of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy. Events throughout Revelation chapters six through eighteen must be understood, first and foremost, in the light of God's dealings with Israel. Everything else is secondary, though somehow connected with God's dealings with the Jewish people during this time.

This is the grand climax of God's purpose for having allowed the Assyrians to come down about 722 B.C. and take the northern ten tribes into captivity and the Babylonians to come over about 605 B.C. and take the southern two tribes into captivity. God allowed what is called the Diaspora (the dispersion of His people among the Gentiles) because of continui-

g Israeli disobedience extending over centuries of time. When Israel's cup of iniquity had become full (cf. Gen. 15:16; Num. 14:22, 23), God uprooted and scattered His people in this manner to effect repentance, also taking centuries of time (and continuing today), in order that the Jewish people would ultimately occupy the position for which they were called into existence almost 3,500 years ago.

And this grand climax ends with Israel occupying a very similar position to that seen in John 19:15, immediately preceding Christ's crucifixion -- "We have no king but Caesar." Israel, viewed as "the great whore" -- associated more with "Sodom," "Egypt," and "Babylon" than with Jerusalem -- will be enmeshed in the kingdom of the Beast in a similar respect to that seen among the Jewish people and Rome almost 2,000 years ago.

Note a number of Old Testament references having to do with Israel's harlotry:

"How is the faithful city become an harlot!" (Isa. 1:21a).

"Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers...

Thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed" (Jer. 3:1b, 3b; cf. vv. 6-14).

"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.

Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians...

Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan..." (Ezek. 16:2, 28a, 29a).

"And the Babylonians came to her in the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom...

So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness..." (Ezek. 23:17a, 18a; cf. vv. 35-37).

"And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand" (Hosea 2:10; cf. vv. 2ff).

Chapters seventeen and eighteen in the Book of Revelation have to do with Israel's harlotry seen at its apex and then brought to an end. Israel's principle lover in that day will be the most corrupt Gentile power this world will have ever known. And Israel, through subsequent persecution at the hands of her lover (a genocidal persecution, which will begin in the middle of the Tribulation when the Beast breaks his covenant with Israel), will ultimately be brought to the place of repentance. Then, following repentance, Israel's harlotry will be done away with (Rev. 18:21-19:3; cf. Isa. 1:21-26; Hosea 2:13-23).

Though the nation will have paid a heavy price, one beyond comprehension, her harlotry will be a thing of the past. Israel's sins will have been "as scarlet," "red like crimson"; but, with these sins having been completely removed -- "as far as the east is from the west" -- where scarlet and crimson once existed, conditions will then be "as white as snow," "as wool" (Isa. 1:18; cf. vv. 21-26; Psa. 103:12-22). And a cleansed nation in that day will realize the rights of the firstborn, fulfilling the purpose for the nation's existence (cf. Rev. 17:16, 17; 18:8-21; 19:2).

(Note that judgments during the Tribulation -- seen particularly in the vial judgments -- will be directed primarily toward Israel, with Israel scattered among the nations and enmeshed within the kingdom of the Beast. Judgments befalling the earth-dwellers will reach their most intense state during the vial judgments, with certain previous judgments under the seas and trumpets possibly continuing when the vials of wrath are poured out. And it will be during this time that the Jewish people, left without a choice, will turn to and call upon the God of their fathers for deliverance.)

Following Israel's salvation and cleansing, those comprising the nation in that day, as the 144,000 previously comprising a first fruit of the nation, will then be looked upon in the same manner as the 144,000, as "virgins." And the nation, as the 144,000 during the Tribulation, will then, in complete obedience, carry God's message to the ends of the earth.

The matter is brought to an end at the conclusion of chapter eighteen (18:20-19:3), the festivities surrounding the marriage of the Lamb follow (19:7-10), and Christ then returns with His angels to destroy Gentile world power (19:11ff). Man's Day will then be over, and the Lord's Day will begin on earth, with God's firstborn Sons -- Christ, Israel, and the Church (following the adoption) -- occupying their proper positions on and over the earth.

(The identifying expression, "that great city," appears nine times in chapters eleven through eighteen, pointing to "Jerusalem," revealing some facet of Israel's harlotry. These nine references are used in a progressive manner in these chapters and carry the reader from an introduction to Israel's harlotry, to a time showing Israel's harlotry at its apex during the closing years of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy, to a time revealing the end of Israel's harlotry.

Thus, "that great city," is used nine times in these chapters of the book referring to Jerusalem -- the city identified through the way in which the expression is first used in the book. Then, though probably not genuine, this expression can be found a tenth time in the book in the KJV rendering of 21:10, referring to the new Jerusalem. Note that the Book of Revelation refers to both Jerusalem below and Jerusalem above, along with the people associated with each city. However, there is little manuscript support for referring to the new Jerusalem as "that great city" in 21:10, with more recent English translations not including these words.

One thing though bears repeating -- something which must be kept in mind -- about the destruction of "that great city" seen in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen. Though there will be a destruction of the literal city of Jerusalem in the middle of the Tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem seen in these two chapters of the book is not that destruction. Rather, the destruction seen in these two chapters is the destruction of the harlot, though not the destruction of the Jewish people *per se*. This is a destruction revealing the end of Israel's harlotry.

Failing to see and understand the way in which the name "Jerusalem" is used in Scripture is where people have gone wrong over the years. They have sought to see a literal city destroyed in these two chapters, failing to not only recognize that Jerusalem is being referenced but also failing to recognize that the Jewish people rather than the literal city are in view. And, again, the fact that these two chapters deal with the Jewish people in this respect is plainly stated in 17:18 -- "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city..."

The matter couldn't be stated any plainer than seen in this closing verse of the seventeenth chapter. Beginning with the introductory verse to "the great city" in Rev. 11:8, Rev. 17:18 forms a concluding verse for this complete section. And, relative to identification, this concluding verse spells matters out in no uncertain terms.

Then, as previously shown, this woman is also revealed to be "the one having kingly authority over the kings of the earth", identifying the woman a second time through another means in this concluding verse. And, relative to identification, this again spells matters out in no uncertain terms.

Then, as also previously shown, this woman is guilty of shedding "the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" -- a statement which can pertain to Israel alone, identifying the woman yet again at the end of the succeeding chapter. And, relative to identification, this again spells matters out in no uncertain terms.)

With respect to Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen as a whole, "the time of Jacob's trouble" is seen drawing to a close in the Book of Revelation in the only natural way which could be expected -- with the destruction of the harlot, with an end wrought to Israel's harlotry in order that God's purpose for calling the nation into existence might be realized.

There could really be no other way for one to expect chapters six through eighteen to end. Again, these chapters cover "the time of Jacob's trouble," and the end seen in these chapters is the end toward which all previous revelation surrounding Israel's disobedience and resulting dispersion among the nations moves; and, as previously noted, it moves in this direction and ends at this revealed goal immediately prior to Christ's return, the destruction of Gentile world power, and the Messianic Era being ushered in (chs. 19b, 20a).

(Revelation chapter eighteen, concluding matters, dwells somewhat at length on an interchange of worldly wealth between Israel and the Gentile nations, resulting from Israel's harlotry, as the Jewish people found themselves dwelling among and forming forbidden alliances with the nations. The Jewish people, through this means, became rich in worldly goods at the expense of the Gentiles; and the Gentiles in turn, through this same means, became rich in worldly goods at the expense of the Jews. And, to the detriment of both Israel and the nations, great spiritual blessings which were to flow through Israel to the Gentiles were withheld.

But all of this interchange of worldly wealth will end with the destruction of the harlot, which will be followed by the destruction of Gentile world power. Then true wealth -- the blessings which God has reserved for Israel and the nations -- will subsequently flow out through Israel to the nations after Israel has been cleansed of her harlotry and occupies her rightful, God-ordained place at the head of the nations.)

Re: - posted by somar79126 (), on: 2005/1/11 12:39

3

The End of Gentile World Power

And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth...

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:9, 18).

Attempts to interpret Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen usually center around Rome and different variations of what is called "a revived Roman Empire" -- interpretative ideology remaining essentially unchanged since the Reformation almost five hundred years ago. Within this ideology, "that great city" in Rev. 17:18 is erroneously identified as Rome; and probably more often than not "the woman" dwelling on the seven mountains (v. 9) is erroneously identified as the Catholic Church headquartered in Rome, a city historically built on seven hills.

A New Beginning

An interpretation of this nature, associating that seen in these chapters with Rome, is derived through one means alone -- through reading secular history into Biblical prophecy, while, at the same time, ignoring both that stated in the text and context of the prophecy. Revelation 17:9 is not dealing with a city built on seven hills. There is no reference whatsoever in this verse to a geographical location of this nature. The corrected text, under stood in the light of the context, makes this very clear. Nor could that stated in verses such as 18:20, 24 be said of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church could not be charged with "the blood of prophets, and of saints, and all that were slain upon the earth." As previously shown, that could be and is said of the Jewish people alone. Scripture is very clear on this matter as well.

Israel alone can be looked upon as "The Mother of Harlots," shedding blood in the previous respect. Through actions surrounding her disobedience as the wife of Jehovah -- forsaking her calling and forming forbidden alliances with the nations, refusing to be a people separate from the nations -- Israel ultimately found herself in a position which, in all respects, was diametrically opposed to the position which the nation had been called to occupy (Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 7:1ff).

Israel ultimately found herself scattered among and in subjection to the very nations which she had been called to rule over and be separate from; Israel ultimately found herself at the tail rather than at the head of the nations; Israel, rather than being the wife of Jehovah within a theocracy, ultimately found herself in a place separated from the theocracy (actually, within Satan's kingdom, among the nations through whom Satan ruled); in a national respect, the wife of Jehovah found herself having forbidden relationships with the Gentile nations (something which had begun to occur long before her dispersion among these nations); and Israel, in this place, ultimately found herself viewed as "The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth," as she resided among various Gentile lovers, aligning herself with these nations in a manner completely contrary to God's revealed will (Lev. 26; Deut. 28; cf. Ezek. 16:28-39; 23:1-35; Hosea 2:5-13).

(The Catholic Church, at the very most, could be considered no more than a daughter , with the shed blood, in the final analysis, being credited to the mother .)

Rome is brought into the picture through viewing what is referred to as a revived Roman Empire. And the thought of a revived Roman Empire comes mainly from a misinterpretation of parts of the Book of Daniel. The fourth part of Daniel's image is viewed as Roman (the legs are attributed to Rome in history, and the feet are attributed to Rome yet future, in revived form). However, Daniel identifies all four parts of the image, and the fourth part is identified by Daniel as other than Roman.

Note in the Book of Daniel how matters are handled concerning the identification of the third and fourth "great beasts" in chapters seven and eight (another picture of that seen in the image from ch. 2). Beginning with the third beast, matters move, without a break, from the kingdom of Babylon under Alexander the Great (and a division of his kingdom among his four generals following his death) into the kingdom of Babylon under the Beast. There is no Roman kingdom lying between these two parts of this Babylonian kingdom (depicted by the third and fourth parts of the image seen standing in Babylon in ch. 2). Rome has no part in this kingdom as it is depicted in Daniel's prophecy.

Seeing Rome in this image, or among the "four great beasts," can only be done one way. It can only be done the same

way Rome is seen in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen -- through reading secular history into Biblical prophecy. And, without a Roman Empire in the Book of Daniel, one can't have a revived Roman Empire in the Book of Revelation, for the latter is contingent on the former.

(Nor can the thought of a revived Roman Empire be derived from Dan. 9:26, as many attempt to do, seeking to connect the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem with a destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D. Rather, this text can only refer to a destruction of Jerusalem within the scope of time covered by the prophecy. Events seen in the prophecy cannot occur outside this time-frame. And, accordingly, since the destruction of Jerusalem in this prophecy didn't occur during the first four hundred and eighty-three years, it must be viewed as an event which will occur during the last seven years.

Refer to the subsequent part of this article, Comments on Daniel Chapters Two, Seven, and Nine, for additional information pertaining to Daniel's image, the four wild beasts, and the prince that shall come.)

An exact wording of the text, the context, and comparing Scripture with Scripture are everything in correct Biblical interpretation. As has been shown, the Book of Daniel identifies all four parts of the image, and the fourth part is identified as other than Roman; and, in like manner, as has been shown, the Book of Revelation identifies the harlot, and the harlot is identified as other than Roman as well.

Comments on Daniel Chapters Two, Seven, and Nine

The most widely held position among students of the Word concerning Daniel's image in Daniel chapter two (or the "four great beasts" in Daniel chapter seven) views the four parts of the image (or the "four great beasts") as representing 1) Babylon, 2) Media-Persia, 3) Greece, and 4) Rome. This would be the position set forth in the Scofield Reference Bible footnotes for example, a position followed by most commentators.

1) Daniel Chapters Two and Seven

The only part of the prophecy really in question would be the fourth part of the image (ch. 2), or the fourth "great beast" (ch. 7). Daniel identifies the first three beasts (and, correspondingly, the first three parts of the image) as particular Gentile nations forming world kingdoms whose governmental rule had been established in Babylon (the first by conquering the Assyrian Empire, and the latter two by conquering Babylon itself), and this part of the prophecy has been fulfilled and is a matter of history.

But should the fourth part of the image (or the fourth beast) be identified as Rome? There are two main reasons why people interpret the prophecy after this fashion: 1) Rome was the next world power following Greece; and 2) the words, "and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary," in Dan. 9:26, are usually associated with a Roman destruction in history (by Titus in 70 A.D.) and a Roman prince in prophecy (the Beast of Rev. 13, Antichrist). In this respect, both the historical and prophetic aspects, as they are said to relate to Rome, are connected with the fourth part of the image (or the fourth beast).

Greece was the third kingdom (represented by the belly and thighs of brass on the image); and the fourth kingdom (represented by the legs of iron, and in its final form by the feet part of iron and part of clay) would, from history, seem to be Rome -- the next world power following Greece -- with the final form of the image looked upon as a revived Roman Empire. This interpretation would appear to be substantiated by Dan. 9:26. In this verse, as previously shown, "the prince that shall come," would be Antichrist; and "the people of the prince," who would one day destroy the city of Jerusalem, are looked upon as a reference to the Romans destroying Jerusalem in 70 A.D. under Titus. Thus, Antichrist is said to be a latter-day Roman prince who will rule a revived Roman Empire.

In other words, all of Daniel's image except the feet would have a historical fulfillment. The legs would represent the Roman Empire in history, and the feet would represent the revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation. And the same would hold true for the corresponding description set forth by the "four great beasts" in Daniel chapter seven. The first three beasts would have a historical fulfillment, and the fourth would have a fulfillment in both history and prophecy. The fourth beast would represent the Roman Empire in both history and prophecy, corresponding to the legs and feet of the image.

Is the preceding though the way Scripture sets forth the fourth and final part of this Babylonian kingdom? Or is this an attempt to interpret Biblical prophecy through using events in secular history rather than interpreting prophecy by comparing Scripture with Scripture? The answer is easy to ascertain if one remains solely within that which Daniel (and related Sc

riptide) reveals about the whole matter.

Note first of all that Daniel's image is seen standing in Babylon (2:31). This image has to do with a Babylonian kingdom from beginning to end. "The head of gold" has to do with the kingdom of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and any immediate successors prior to the conquest of the kingdom by Gentile power(s) represented by the breast and arms of silver (2:37, 38). "The breast and arms of silver" have to do with the Medes and the Persians coming in and conquering the preceding kingdom (2:39; 5:28, 31). And "the belly and thighs of brass" have to do with the Grecians coming in and conquering the kingdom ruled by the Medes and the Persians (2:39; 8:6, 7, 20, 21; 10:20).

The mechanics of the preceding, of course, form the interpretation held in common by almost anyone reading Daniel. This is simply what the record in Daniel states, along with secular history.

But note something often overlooked about the preceding: This kingdom is Babylonian throughout. The powers represented by the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and the belly and thighs of brass all reigned from Babylon. For example, when the Medes and the Persians came in and took the kingdom in 538 B.C., they reigned from Babylon and were still there when Alexander the Great came over in 330 B.C., 208 years later. Then, when Alexander the Great took the kingdom, he also reigned from Babylon. In other words, the image is not seen lying down, with the head of gold in Babylon, the breast and arms of silver in Media and Persia, and the belly and thighs of brass in Greece. That's not the picture at all. The image is seen standing in Babylon. It is Babylonian in its entirety.

(Note that "Babylon" in history was a city-state, which, from Biblical prophecy, will apparently exist once again when the final form of Daniel's image appears. In this respect, Babylon is used in Scripture referring to both the city and the state, which included other cities; cf. Jer. 51:29-32, 42,43.)

The fact that the image in Daniel chapter two is Babylonian in its entirety is one place where those who view a Roman Empire next in the prophecy go astray. Rome had nothing to do with a reign from Babylon in history. The capital of the Roman Empire was Rome, not Babylon. And Rome is not Babylon, regardless of the attempts by some individuals to see certain things moved from Babylon to Rome in time past, seeking to align and identify Rome with Babylon in this respect.

If there were such a thing as a revived Roman Empire though, there could possibly be room for the final form of the Roman Empire to be connected with Babylon, for Babylon, back on the Euphrates, will be the capital of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation. But such will not be the case.

Those viewing Rome as representing the fourth part of the image try to press secular history into Biblical prophecy at a point where it seems to possibly fit, but really doesn't. Then they further complicate the matter by a misinterpretation of Dan. 9:26.

But the most interesting thing about the whole matter -- the central thing which voids all thought of Rome having a part in the prophecy -- is the fact that Daniel identifies all four parts of the image, and he identifies the fourth part as being other than the Roman Empire. Daniel, in his identity, has Antichrist coming into power immediately following a four-way division of the kingdom after Alexander the Great's death. The kingdom under Antichrist follows the Greco-Babylonian kingdom and is represented by the legs of iron, and in its final form by the feet part of iron and part of clay.

(No break in time is seen in the Book of Daniel between powers represented by the third and fourth parts of the image, similar to no break in time being subsequently seen in the book between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks in Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy. However, it is evident from both Biblical and secular history that a break in time exists at these respective points in both prophecies, though no break in time precedes these in either prophecy.)

This break though between the third and fourth parts of the image doesn't lead to and end with Rome. Rather, it leads to and ends with the kingdom of Antichrist.)

The first part of the image is identified in Dan. 2:37, 38. Then, following this, the remaining three parts of the image are presented, though not identified at this point in the book. Then, note the prominence given to the fourth part -- two verses cover the first part (vv. 37, 38), one verse the next two parts (v. 39), but six verses are devoted to the final form, along with its destruction (vv. 40-45). And such prominence relative to the fourth part is true elsewhere in Daniel as well (see chs. 7, 8, 11). Why would such prominence be given to Rome and not to nations associated with the first three parts of the image? It's not! Rather, it's the kingdom of Babylon under its last king (Antichrist) which occupies the forefront in the Book of Daniel.

The identities of the other three parts of the image, beginning with the breast and arms of silver, are given in the vision of the "four great beasts," and the interpretation of this vision is given in chapters seven and eight. The "four great beasts" are said to represent four kingdoms (four sequential kingdoms forming the one Babylonian kingdom), and beginning with the second beast, the last three are identified in chapter eight.

For the identity of the second, compare verses three and four with verse twenty (cf. Dan. 5:28, 31); for the identity of the third, compare verses five through eight with verses twenty-one and twenty-two; and for the identity of the fourth, compare verses nine through fourteen with verses twenty-three through twenty-six. Note that the identity of the second is Media and Persia (a dual kingdom, corresponding to the breast and arms of silver on the image), the identity of the third is Greece (corresponding to the belly and thighs of brass), and the identity of the fourth is the kingdom under Antichrist (corresponding to the legs of iron and the feet part of iron and part of clay).

Where is Rome? Rome is not in the prophecy!

Following Alexander the Great's death, the kingdom was divided among his four generals (vv. 8, 22), and the vision then goes immediately into the days of Antichrist yet future (the "little horn" in v. 9 is not Antiochus Epiphanes, but Antichrist).

So, what happened? The kingdom under Alexander the Great's four generals gradually faded from view. And though the prophecy in Daniel chapter eight covers this division of the kingdom following Alexander the Great's death (8:8b), it does not cover events during the reign of these four generals following this division. Rather, following this division of the kingdom, Daniel's prophecy in chapter eight goes immediately into the power represented by the fourth part of the image (or the power represented by the fourth beast), i.e., into the days of Antichrist (vv. 9ff).

(The same prophetic scene is repeated in Dan. 11:3, 4, 21ff, providing additional details. And whether the verses lying between the division of Alexander the Great's kingdom in this section and the appearance of Antichrist -- i.e., vv. 5-20 -- are looked upon as depicting events during the years following Alexander the Great's death or depicting events during the several years immediately preceding Antichrist's rise to power is immaterial insofar as the matter at hand is concerned. Exactly the same thing is seen in chapter eleven as was previously seen in chapter eight. The kingdom seen following the four-way division of Alexander the Great's kingdom is the same in both chapters -- that of Antichrist, not Rome.)

About two hundred and eighty years following Alexander the Great's death (about 40 B.C.), Rome appeared on the scene as the succeeding world power, but not as a world power fulfilling any part of Daniel's prophecy surrounding the kingdom of Babylon. This prophecy will not again continue to be fulfilled until Antichrist appears during Daniel's Seventieth Week. Then, and only then, will the fourth part of the image from Daniel chapter two and the fourth beast in Daniel chapter seven come into existence.

2) Daniel Chapter Nine

Now, what about "the people of the prince that shall come" in Dan. 9:26? Does that not refer to a destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and to the Romans being Antichrist's people in history? Not at all.

First note the expression, "the people of the prince that shall come," and compare this with a similar expression in Dan. 7:27 -- "the people of the saints of the most High," who will one day take the kingdom (v. 18).

Note in verse eighteen that the ones who will one day take the kingdom are said to be "the saints of the most High," and in verse twenty-seven they are said to be "the people of the saints of the most High." The expression, "the people of the saints of the most High" in verse twenty-seven, is, contextually, a reference to the saints themselves from verse eighteen.

And this same type expression in Dan. 9:26 should be understood the same way that interpretation has already been established in the previous chapter of the book. "The people of the prince" in Dan. 9:26, contextually, has to be understood as a reference to the prince himself (and possibly also including those ruling with him). Failure to recognize the book's own built-in interpretation for Dan. 9:26 has resulted in confusion.

The destruction of Jerusalem in Dan. 9:26 is not a reference to the destruction which occurred in 70 A.D. but rather a reference to a future destruction under Antichrist in the middle of the Tribulation. This is the same destruction referred to in

Luke 21:20-24 (cf. Rev. 11:2). Also note that Matt. 24:15ff and Luke 21:20ff parallel one another, depicting events in and around Jerusalem beginning in the middle of the Tribulation. Matthew's gospel centers around one aspect of the matter (the rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem), and Luke's gospel centers around another aspect of the matter (the city of Jerusalem itself).

The destruction in Dan. 9:26 must occur within the framework of time covered by the Seventy Weeks. This destruction has to do with events occurring in connection with Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy-Weeks and can only occur during time covered by this prophecy, and contextually it occurs in connection with Antichrist breaking his covenant with Israel in verse twenty-seven (cf. Dan. 11:22-32; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 6:3, 4).

3) "The End of the Days" (Dan. 12:13)

Where this man's actions will lead is outlined in detail in both the Books of Daniel and Revelation, along with a number of other books and numerous sections of Scripture. This is the man whom God, in the final analysis, will use to bring His plans and purposes surrounding Israel to pass. Despite this man's goals, aims, ambitions, and aspirations -- as he exercises power and great authority from Satan's throne itself (Rev. 13:2) -- God, in His sovereign control of all things, will use this man to both bring Israel to the place of repentance and bring Gentile world power to the place of destruction. This will be followed by God's judgment falling upon this man, on the basis of the unchangeable principles set forth in Gen. 12:3.

Then, God's firstborn Sons -- Christ, Israel, and the Church (following the adoption) -- will occupy their proper places on and over the earth during the ensuing Messianic Era.