

THE WOMAN IN REVELATION 12, 17-19

NOT TWO SEPARATE WOMEN, BUT THE SAME WOMAN

“And there appeared a great wonder [‘sign’] in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars...

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days” (Rev. 12:1, 6).

“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 ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over [*lit.*, ‘which possesses kingly authority over’] the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:1-3, 16-18).

Revelation 6:1-19:21, a section comprising most of the Book of Revelation, *has to do with events surrounding Israel and the nations — events which will shortly occur on the earth, lasting slightly over seven years.*

Events during and immediately following these seven years — *having to do with events immediately preceding Christ's return* (events during the seven years, during the Tribulation) *and with events immediately following Christ's return* (events immediately following the Tribulation but preceding the Millennium, evidently during a 75-day period [Dan. 12:11-13]) — *will bring matters to completion during Man's 6,000-year Day, ushering in the Lord's 1,000-year Day.*

These events, bringing Man's Day to a close, had previously been seen throughout Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets; and these events dealt centrally with *a woman, Israel, the wife of Jehovah, who was given regal authority over the nations within a theocracy* (Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6), with this woman seen to have later departed from her exalted position, *becoming involved in a forbidden, adulterous relationship with the nations* (Isa. 1:21; Jer. 3:1-11).

The Old Testament is replete with information pertaining to God dealing with this harlot woman, over centuries and millenniums of time, with a view to *the woman ultimately being cleansed of her harlotry and then realizing the regal position to which she had been called* (Isa. 1:25-2:4; Jer. 3:12-25).

Then, in complete conformity with the preceding, the Book of Revelation — dealing with events during and immediately beyond the last seven years of Man's Day, *events toward which all Scripture regarding Israel and the nations move (whether O.T. or N.T.)* — this closing book of Scripture could only be seen dealing extensively with *the same woman previously seen throughout the Old Testament.*

No other central subject could possibly be in view and remain in line with that previously set forth time and time again throughout the Old Testament.

And, in complete conformity with the preceding, this woman in Revelation — exactly as set forth in the Old Testament, for *it can only be the same woman* — could only be one possessing a *God-given regal authority over the nations*, though one not presently exercising that authority, but, instead, *estranged from God and involved in harlotry, with cleansing ultimately occurring.*

And the former part of the preceding is *exactly* what is seen in chapter twelve (also in ch. 17), and the latter part of the preceding is *exactly* what is seen beginning in chapter seventeen and continuing through the first part of chapter nineteen.

Placing the information in these four chapters together after this fashion is, for it can only be, *in complete conformity to any and all things in the Old Testament having to do with this same subject matter.*

The Woman in Revelation 12:1-17

The woman in chapter twelve is identified several different ways.

One way is seen in the opening verse, *through ascribing to the woman regality in relation to the nations* (exactly as seen of Israel in the O.T. at the time of the nation's inception [Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6]).

Another way is seen through *the woman giving birth to the man-child* (the 144,000 Jewish evangelists in chs. 7, 14, *who will proclaim "the gospel of the kingdom" to the nations worldwide during the last half of the Tribulation* [Matt. 24:13, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:1-7]).

And a third way is seen through *the woman fleeing into the wilderness in the middle of the Tribulation, shortly after giving birth to the man-child* (in complete keeping with that seen happening to Israel at this time in the three synoptic gospels [Matt. 24:15ff; Mark 13:14ff; Luke 21:20ff]).

Metaphors are used extensively throughout Scripture, which is one of the ways God has structured His Word, and Revelation chapter twelve is filled with this type language.

Note the three central personages — *the woman, the dragon, and the man-child*. "The woman" is not a literal woman, but is used referring to *Israel*; "the dragon" is not a literal dragon, but is used referring to *Satan*; and "the man-child" is not a literal man, but is used referring to *the 144,000*.

("The man-child" is identified far more often than not as *Christ* by expositors, but such an identification can only be seen as erroneous by the use of metaphors throughout. Aside from that, textually, the man-child is seen brought forth during the Tribulation, just before the middle, following Satan being cast out of heaven but before the Jews in the land flee into the wilderness.)

Then note the use of heavenly bodies — *the sun, moon, and stars* — in this same metaphorical respect. The manner in which the woman appears in verse one — *clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head* — forms an allusion back to Joseph's second dream in Gen. 37:9, 10, depicting *regality* in both Genesis and Revelation.

The sun, moon, and stars are used in this same metaphorical respect both places. In Genesis, they are used relative to Joseph ruling over his family; in Revelation, they are used relative to the woman, Israel, ruling over the nations (*possessing regal authority over the nations at this time, with a view to occupying that position yet future*).

Regality, as seen in the preceding, is a position which Israel has not only held since the inception of the nation during Moses' day, 3,500 years ago, but will always hold. And the Book of Revelation — dealing with over three millenniums of Israeli history brought to fruition, in complete conformity with that previously seen in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets — *takes the matter on into that coming day when Israel ascends the throne and rules the nations*.

“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [without a change of mind, irrevocable]” (Rom. 11:29).

God will not, He cannot, change His mind concerning the reason that He called Israel into existence — something which will be worked out and realized in the immediate future, for we are almost at the end of Man's Day.

In line with the preceding, Bible teachers who deal with the Book of Revelation today, with few exceptions, correctly identify “the woman” in chapter twelve as *Israel*.

However, exactly the opposite is true when it comes to the identity of the woman in Rev. 17:1-19:6. Almost without exception, not a single one of these same Bible teachers will identify “the woman” in these chapters as *Israel*. In fact, there is often an overt aversion to this type identification among these individuals, usually attempting to identify “the woman” as *the Church of Rome, or as some other type false religious system in the end time*.

But, suppose we stay in line with Rom. 3:4, which, contex-

tually, is about Israel — “yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” — and see what Scripture has to say instead!

The Woman in Revelation 17:1-19:6

The woman reappearing in chapter seventeen is, as back in chapter twelve, identified several different ways. And, in one respect, *this identity is made even clearer when the woman reappears in this chapter.*

Scripture does something in chapter seventeen concerning the identity of the woman which is not seen in chapter twelve. In Rev. 17:18, the woman is clearly identified by *name* — “And the woman which thou sawest is...” Then, the verse goes on to connect this woman with *the same regal authority seen back in chapter twelve.* The verse in this respect states, “which reigneth over [lit., ‘which possesses kingly authority over’] the kings of the earth.”

The woman is first clearly identified in a direct statement: “The woman which thou sawest is *that great city...*” (v. 18a). “That great city” is used nine times in chapters eleven through eighteen; and the first usage identifies the city as “Jerusalem” (11:8), with “Jerusalem,” seen inseparably related to its people in Scripture and often used as a synonym for *the Jewish people*, for *Israel* (cf. Isa. 1:21; Lam. 1:7-9; Matt. 23:37-39; Luke 13:33-35).

In short, in the light of related Scripture, Rev. 17:18 should be understood as, “The woman which thou sawest is *Israel.*” And the remainder of the verse — “the one possessing kingly authority over the kings of the earth” — further substantiates this identity, for this statement, completely in line with Rev. 12:1, *could not possibly be used of anyone on the earth at this time other than Israel.*

Then note another connection from chapter twelve, seen earlier in that stated about the woman in chapter seventeen. In chapter twelve, the woman flees into “the wilderness” in the middle of the Tribulation (vv. 6, 14).

(For more information on the preceding, refer to Chapters II, III, “That Great City” & “That Mighty City, Burning,” in the author’s book, MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN.)

A Place in the Wilderness

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation [the Tribulation] be overpast.

For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity...” (Isa. 26:20, 21a).

“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17).

“When ye therefore see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains” (Matt. 24:15, 16; cf. Luke 21:20, 21).

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days...

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent” (Rev. 12:5, 6, 13, 14).

The preceding Scriptures — from four different books, two from the Old Testament (Isaiah and Jonah) and two from the New Testament (Matthew and Revelation) — are the main verses one would normally go to when dealing with that which will happen to the Jews in the land of Israel (presently about 6,000,000) when events surrounding the man of sin, the Beast, breaking his seven-year covenant with Israel begin to occur.

The Scriptures, or That Often Taught?

First, it is important to understand that the Jewish people are not back in the land in fulfillment of any type Old Testament restoration promises. That is, they are not back in the land through any type fulfillment of promises pertaining to God regathering His people back to the land.

(The preceding would be contrary to much present popular thought in Christian circles. Most Christians today, seeking to deal with and understand things about Israel and the nations in the Middle East — many aligning themselves after some fashion with what is often called “Christian Zionism” — see the establishment of the Jewish nation May 14, 1948 and the continuous migration of Jews back to the land since that time as *God restoring His people to the land in accordance with His numerous promises in the O.T. to one day do so* [Ezek. 39:25-29; Amos 9:11-15].

And many of these see a gradual reclamation of parts of the land, mainly for agricultural purposes, as *God also restoring the land as well, again, in accordance with His promises to do so* [Lev. 26:42; II Chron. 7:14].

A number of other Bible students though would somewhat draw back from the all-inclusiveness of the preceding — because of the Jewish people’s present unbelieving and unrepentant state — and *see God restoring His people to their land only in accordance with certain, particular O.T. promises to do so. They would see God restoring His people in accordance with a handful of promises which they look upon as a restoration of the people in unbelief, to then be dealt with by God in or near the land [e.g., in Petra] relative to their salvation, with the Messianic Era in view [e.g., sections such as Isa. 11:11, 12; Ezek. 20:33-38; 22:17-22; 36:22-28; Zeph. 2:1-3 are those usually referenced].*

Thus, one might say that there are two groups within the one larger group. Both though are making the same basic mistake, *for THERE ARE NO SCRIPTURES having to do with God restoring any of the Jewish people prior to the time of Christ’s return. Both groups take different Scriptures having to do with events surrounding Israel occurring either shortly before or following Christ’s return and seek to apply them to events occurring since May 14, 1948.*

[The verses previously cited, used by those seeing God regathering a segment of the Jewish people in unbelief, are actually verses pertaining to *God dealing with the Jewish people either during*

or following the Tribulation, though mainly with activities following the Tribulation, having to do with a fulfillment of the things depicted by the seven Jewish festivals in Lev. 23.

These verses, in this respect, have to do mainly with the national conversion and cleansing of the Jewish people, among other related things, at the time of Christ's return. And these things *will occur following Man's Day, at the beginning of the Lord's Day*].

All of this misunderstanding, misrepresentation of Scripture — resulting in an erroneous teaching of Scripture — could have been prevented had these individuals paid attention to the O.T. types, the Jewish festivals, and the plain reading of Scripture in the light of that revealed by the Prophets concerning the matter. But all has seemingly been thrown to the winds, with the result in the matter where we are today.

The heavens remain *closed* relative to God's dealings with the Jewish people today, and they will not again open until He has concluded His dealings with the Church during the present dispensation and has removed the Church.

[Note, for example, the typology of Jacob and Laban, when the heavens remained *closed* from Gen. 28:15 to Gen. 31:3, *during the entire time of Jacob's exile* — extending to a time when he had acquired all of Laban's wealth (*cf.* Isa. 60:1-12). *ONLY THEN* did God speak to Jacob relative to a return to his land].

Thus, with the heavens *closed*, the return of Jews back to the land since the establishment of the nation in the late '40s can, of course, have *NOTHING* to do with any type restoration of the people in accordance with any of the O.T. Prophets. God simply is *NOT* dealing with [speaking to] Israel in such a respect today, *which His having a part in any type restoration would necessitate*.

Rather, the present migration of Jews to the land has to do with *God allowing* the Jewish people to rise up and seek to emancipate themselves — apart from their Messiah, in their present unbelieving and unrepentant state — and re-enter an "empty, swept, and garnished" house. And God has allowed this to occur in order to bring about end-time events relative to Israel and the nations [Matt. 12:43-45; 23:37-39].

But, seeking to relate all of this to any type O.T. prophecies concerning God speaking to Israel at a time when the heavens are closed is an entirely different matter. *It hasn't happened and it's not happening for the simple reason that, from a Biblical standpoint, IT CAN'T HAPPEN!*

[For additional information on the preceding, note the author's pamphlets, "70 years, 490 Years" (Parts I-III), where this overall matter is dealt with and numerous other related pamphlets, articles, and chapters in books are referenced].)

Now, dealing with the subject of the Jewish people being uprooted from their land and fleeing into "the wilderness" in the middle of the Tribulation, when the man of sin turns against them (*i.e.*, the Jews presently in the land, some 6,000,000 today), why has so much time been spent on the way a large segment of Christendom looks upon that which has been happening since 1948?

The answer is *because of a major way that these individuals, on both sides of the issue, view Scriptures pertaining to the woman fleeing into the wilderness, along with the reason why they view them this way.*

These individuals see the Jewish people presently in the land — not necessarily all of those in the land, but large numbers — forming some type remnant that will flee to a designated place in or near the land (*e.g.*, in Petra), there be protected from harm, be furnished with the necessities of life, and be dealt with by God during the last half of the Tribulation.

And they, in a respect, find themselves somewhat forced into this position, for they see God having brought the Jewish people back into the land in order to deal with them, after a particular fashion, *in or near the land rather than out among the nations.*

Then, beyond that, as previously stated, some see the present returning Jews as a people who can never again be uprooted from their land.

Scenarios concerning any of the preceding though are built on previous error and are as far removed from that which Scripture has to say about the matter as the previous error — *i.e.*, their prior position concerning God speaking to the Jewish people today, when the heavens are closed, restoring them to their land (whether in unbelief, or in any other fashion).

And since the preceding is what so many Bible teachers believe and teach, and what so many Christians are confronted with by these numerous Bible teachers today, it has all been laid out before presenting the simple truth of the matter.

(Before proceeding, note *the impossibility* of any of the preceding in God's warnings and promises set forth in the two sections of the Appendix at the end of this article. And this is not even to mention the house left desolate, until...; nor is it to mention the numerous O.T. types pertaining to the subject.

God will always do two inseparable things. *God will ALWAYS act in complete accordance with His Word; and He will NEVER act contrary to His Word.*)

So, What Does Scripture Say?

The matter regarding Israel fleeing into the wilderness, where they will flee — *i.e.*, the location of “the wilderness” — is quite plainly stated in Scripture. And one wonders how anyone could ever miss it, though the reason so many miss it is obvious.

When the manner in which God has structured Old Testament history is ignored (which is highly typical), leaving one ignoring a large section of God's Word, one reason is provided. How God uses metaphors, which in this case are ignored as well, another reason is provided. Then there is the matter of comparing Scripture with Scripture, which, in this case, is also ignored.

Thus, without using the means which God has provided in His Word, what can one expect but the error which has resulted?!

The truth of the matter is all very simple. Take the type in Jonah, the reference in Matthew, the reference in Revelation, compare Scripture with Scripture, bring in other related Scriptures, keep in mind how God uses metaphors, and *Scripture sets forth the whole of the matter for you.*

In the middle of the Tribulation the Jewish people in the land are said to flee into “the wilderness” in Rev. 12:6, 14. The word “wilderness” is a translation of the Greek word *eremos*, and “wilderness” is a good translation. The word is used in the New Testament referring to desolate places both in and out of the land of Israel (John 1:23; 3:14).

And, aside from the two usages of the word in Revelation chapter twelve, it is used only one other time in this book, referring to *the same regal woman, though now seen as a harlot, out among the Gentile nations* (Rev. 17:3; *cf.* 12:1ff; 17:1, 15, 18).

The scene presented in Rev. 17:1ff is clearly that of *Israel following the nation's flight into the wilderness back in chapter twelve — now out among the nations, in the kingdom of the Beast.*

And both Matthew and Jonah present *exactly the same picture, seen from different perspectives.*

In Matthew, instead of “the wilderness” it is “the mountains,” with “a mountain” used in Scripture to metaphorically signify a kingdom (cf. Isa. 2:1-5; Matt. 16:28-7:5). And with “mountains” (plural) in view, the text can only point to *the Gentile nations.*

And this is perfectly in line with Jonah, typifying Israel, being swallowed by the great fish and there protected by God. The fish was in *the sea*, with “the sea” used as a metaphor for *the Gentile nations* (cf. Dan. 7:2, 3; Matt. 13:1; Rev. 13:1).

And, as *Jonah*, so *Israel — in the sea, out among the nations, in the place which God had originally prepared for Israel, where He will protect and care for the nation.*

Thus, *Scripture is quite clear.* In the middle of the Tribulation when the Beast breaks his covenant with Israel, *the Jews in the land will be driven back out among the nations, where God had originally driven them in order to deal with them relative to repentance.*

They will be driven back out where the remainder of world-Jewry resides — some 7,000,000 to 8,000,000 more Jews, and there God will deal with all of them together — the complete nation, in the kingdom of the Beast.

And it is here, *out among the nations, in the diaspora*, that God will bring His people *through the fire, providing for and protecting them, as seen in Rev. 12:14* — not necessarily as individuals, for over 9,000,000 (by today's count) will perish — but as a nation. For the nation, with God residing in the nation's midst, *where He has always been*, cannot perish, else God Himself would have to perish as well (cf. Ex. 3:1-7; Dan. 3:19-27).

Appendix

God's Warning Concerning Disobedience, Unrepentance

“But if ye will not harken unto me [which is what Israel has done over millenniums of time], and will not do all these commandments...

I will also do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven times more for your sins...

And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins...

And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins...

And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste...

And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity, in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them" (Lev. 26:14, 16-18, 21, 27, 28, 32, 33, 39).

God's Promise Concerning Repentance, Obedience

"If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me;

And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

THEN will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land" (Lev. 26:40-42).