

PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE

PART 7

"FROM HARLOTRY TO PURITY"

HOSEA 6:1-3... "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for HE HATH torn, AND HE WILL heal us; HE HATH smitten, AND HE WILL bind us up. AFTER TWO DAYS HE WILL REVIVE US: IN THE THIRD DAY HE WILL RAISE US UP, AND WE WILL LIVE IN HIS SIGHT. THEN SHALL WE KNOW, IF WE FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD: His going forth is as THE MORNING; and He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

What a glorious hour this is to live in! And what wondrous promises these are to give us hope! Though the night is far spent, THE DAY IS AT HAND... and the "hour of our visitation" is nearer than we may have believed! We who are of the Day must look beyond the darkness, beyond the gloominess and despair of this present world (both within and without us), and see that all the hardships and afflictions we have borne, all the disciplines and tribulations we have endured, all the troubled waters we have passed through, and all the threatening valleys and mountains we have passed over (many times, without understanding them), have merely brought us to this great and wondrous time of prophetic fulfillment. Though much of our journey has been in the darkness of night, THE DAY IS NOW DAWNING, AND THE DAYSTAR IS ARISING IN OUR HEARTS (II Peter 2:19); He is illuminating the unbounded expanses of our inheritance! Our lives, as well as the lives of all those who have gone on before us in Christ have been carefully and meticulously adapted by God to fit into His glorious SCHEME OF THE AGES. He has made a way in the wilderness for us, and is presently driving every unwanted "inhabitant" out of our "land". Our journey has certainly not been without weariness or pain, sacrifice or discipline; but one thing we can find comfort in is that Light is coming up over the "horizon". Praise God, THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ARISING, WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS (Mal. 4:2)!

Not only has God so marvelously worked all things after the counsel of His own will in the lives of us as individuals, but every age has had it's special addendum to history; it's own peculiar events and details, both the planned and the permitted, which serve as a preparatory platform for the following generations. Beautiful to behold is how God has taken not only the positive events in history, but also the negative, to bring us to this present point in time... with every condition perfectly aligned to satisfy His predetermined intentions. Let it be known that THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES IN LIFE; NOTHING THAT ESCAPES HIS ATTENTION. Before it ever comes to pass, God in His omniscience has already taken it into consideration. Oftentimes we question how certain things could ever have a place in God's agenda; and the answer is found in knowing that EVERY ACTION HAS IT'S REACTION; and EVERY OPERATION HAS IT'S OUTCOME. Some things have been specifically designed by God to come

forth at a particular stage in life, while others have been the result of the will of man, merely allowed by God; some things have come as great trials of faith, that obstacles might be turned into opportunities, and stumblingblocks into steppingstones, while others were obvious and intentional chastisements for fleshly failures. But understand that regardless of the reason, it is NOT THE FORM OF ACTION God has been so concerned about; rather, THE REACTION; NOT THE MEANS, BUT THE END! When once our reaction has reflected a level of maturity, and a responsible attitude toward our circumstances; when once our will has been brought into absolute submission and alignment to His Will, and we are totally abandoned to His Divine Providence, then He raises us up into a new dimension of life in His Spirit! And beloved, this is exactly what His operation in our lives is all about! His main interest is to inwardly perfect His Bride in spirit, soul, and body, that we might reign with Him throughout the coming ages!

Throughout our present series, we have observed how God has used the interaction of both positive and negative, the good and the bad, the pleasant and the painful, to purge and purify His people. An Old Testament type of this is found in the book of Esther, chapter 2. As the fair young virgins were preparing to go before King Ahasuerus, they were given "things for purification"; six months with the bitter oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, along with other things for their refinement (verse 12). This year-long treatment was to condition them, to enhance their beauty, to enrich and glorify their countenance for when they were brought into the king's presence. Is this not classic of the way the Spirit deals with us? By blending sweet encounters with the bitter, He is thoroughly purifying our hearts "in the beauties of holiness" for that great day of presentation. When He has performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem (Isa. 10:12), and we have yielded to His intense and rigorous processings, His wisdom will be manifestly declared by THE FINISHED PRODUCT! He will justify the means by the end, when once He unveils His undefiled one in radiant splendor, for the entire creation to behold!

NOW, BACK TO PATMOS

Initially, we started our studies from Hosea as an examination of God's divine principles of purification, and the disciplines of the Spirit. We have considered some of the ways and means God employs in delivering us from our harlotrous hearts of independence, to the developing of a pure, singular, and virginal relationship with Him. This led us to John's unique vision from Patmos, looking for patterns dealing with this very process.

Revelation is a book of symbolism, as is stated from the outset of the writing: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and HE SENT AND SIGNIFIED IT by His angel unto His servant John..." (verse 1). The word SIGNIFIED (Gr. # 4591) means, "TO GIVE A SIGN, to indicate; to make plain, manifest, or make known". It speaks of making a matter clear by employing signs or symbols, or by using word-pictures. Therefore, this revelation was SIGN-ified to John, conveyed through the aid of symbolic images and language given by the Spirit (there are those who would say that we are overly spiritualizing John's message; but seeing how everything that John beheld was while he

was "in the Spirit", we ought to be more concerned about those who would tend to over-literalize it's contents)!

Not only is it a book of symbols, but it is also a book of contrasts. It reveals (among other things):

TWO MEN --- the first man Adam, & the last man Christ; TWO MYSTERIES --- of God, & of iniquity; TWO KINGDOMS "the kingdoms of this world" (namely, of darkness), & the "Kingdom of our Lord & His Christ"; TWO KINGS --- Jesus, "King of Kings", & Abaddon (Apollyon), "king of the abyss"; TWO TYPES OF "CREATURES" (or, creaturely natures)--- the "living creatures" seen in the midst of the Throne in heaven, & the "beasts" which rise out of the earth & sea; TWO "BRANDS", OR IDENTIFYING "MARKS" --- the seal of God, & the mark of the beast; TWO OPENINGS --- a door into the heavenlies, & a key into the bottomless pit; TWO SEATS OF POWER --- the "Throne of God", & "the seat of the beast"; TWO HOUSES --- the temple of God, & the "synagogue of Satan"; TWO CITIES --- "Babylon the great", & "New Jerusalem"; TWO RIVERS --- the River of Life, which "proceeds out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb", & the flood (Gr. "river") of death, which goes forth "from the mouth of the Dragon"; TWO WATERS --- "the sea of glass, mingled with fire", & the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone". And finally, it reveals TWO WOMEN --- one is a "great whore", the other is a glorious virgin!

That these two WOMEN are contrasting and opposites by nature should be apparent to even the most casual of readers. But to understand the mystery meanings of either requires a revelation by the Spirit! Of the one it is written, "COME HITHER; I will shew thee the judgment of THE GREAT WHORE that sitteth upon many waters" (17:1). And of the other we read, "COME HITHER, I will shew thee THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE" (Rev. 21:9). For John to see either, he had to get "carried away" in the Spirit (17:3; 21:10). (Have you ever been accused of that)? During the course of the vision, both women are seen to be in the wilderness (12:6,14; 17:3). What does the wilderness speak of? The place of provings and testings, of trials and temptations (Deut. 8:2-3; Lk. 4:1-14). It is apparent that both women are put to the test; both women are faced with "the hour of temptation, which comes upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (3:10). But the final conclusion reveals that ONLY ONE COMES OUT! One is exalted to a place of great honor and authority; the other is brought to shame, embarrassment, and utter destruction!

Before we go any farther, it should be pointed out that these two "WOMEN" revealed before John's wondering eyes represent "corporate" women. By this, we mean that they are to be seen as TWO DISTINCT WOMEN... but made up of many "members" (or separate individuals). RESPECTIVELY, EACH WOMAN IS THE EMBODIMENT OF MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS AGES AND WALKS OF LIFE, BUT EACH HAVING A COMMON AND PREDOMINANT NATURE! Their "bodily" members are not connected or joined together in any particular time or place... for they are united IN SPIRIT (whichever spirit primarily governs them). This is their common bond, their associated point of contact, their link with one another! Thus these women

span from generation to generation, their characters spread throughout the earth, and are presently mixed together as "wheat and tares in the same field". Up until now, their true identities have not been known by their national, political, or social position in the world; nor even by their religious affiliation; but rather, BY DISCERNING THE CONDITION OF THEIR HEART! Therefore, in a wider and more proper sense, these "women" are more than just the people which constitute their bodily "members"; they are expressive of TWO DISTINCT AND DIVERSE SPIRITUAL STATES; they portray two differing realms of standing with Christ. One personifies TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS (that is, "right-standing" in Christ), the other SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (which is merely an ASSUMED acceptance or standing)! One is seen to have "the glory of God" (21:11); the other is noted as "glorifying herself" (18:7). They refer to both THE STATE, as well as THOSE WHO OCCUPY THE STATE (and as there is an out-working of this STATE, it produces an ECONOMY, or system of government)! Through the ages, these women have been "growing up together" unto maturity, and expanding in the earth (but believe me, God is about to draw the line of demarcation; the time of Harvest is nigh at hand)!

One similarity between them is that both are MOTHERS; it is their "children", however, that makes the difference. In the Whore's forehead it is written, "MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH (17:5). She is responsible for producing the manifold expressions of harlotry (found both in the religious and the secular realms), the "offspring" of independency, illegitimacy and iniquity in the earth! Her "daughters" can be seen in every segment of society; among the myriads of governments, agencies, organizations, institutions, and religious denominations (this includes many of the so-called "non-denominational" ministries, as well). Anything you see in this world, be it religious, social, political, or economic, that is not dependent upon the Spirit of God to establish and sustain it, anything that can independently operate without fresh impetus, inspiration, and blessing of the Spirit bears her identifying "birthmark"! Contrarily, we read, "Jerusalem which is above is free, WHICH IS THE MOTHER OF US ALL" (Gal. 4:26). She has virginally "birthed" every true manifestation of the "Seed of God" into the earth (by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost), whether it be in the form of individuals, gifts, movements, or whatever. (True, the Seed may have been born IN a "stable", and laid IN a "manger" (that is, in "beastly" surroundings); but we understand that initially, it had to come THROUGH the "Virgin"! Either directly, or by way of intercessory prayer, She is the source which God uses to deliver the unadulterated expressions of His Life into this world)!

It is to be seen that the Spirit likened these WOMEN to TWO RIVAL CITIES; "BABYLON" and "NEW JERUSALEM". That the "Whore" IS "Babylon the great", and the "Bride" IS "New Jerusalem" cannot be denied from Scripture. (One would be hard put to prove that this "Babylon" mentioned here refers to a natural city yet to be rebuilt in Iraq, and that this "New Jerusalem" is a description of heaven... or as others contend, a literal city which shall be suspended in mid-heaven, just above the earth; yet, these notions are almost universally accepted in Christendom)! These terms are used synonymously... these TWO WOMEN are CITIES; and these TWO CITIES are WOMEN! They represent two different perspectives engaged to illustrate a singular truth

(It would be just as absurd to assume that the kings of the earth literally "commit fornication" with a natural city called Babylon, as it would to think that Jesus is going to "marry" a PLACE called New Jerusalem)! By using this analogy, however, it broadened the Spirit's range of expression to John, and enabled Him to further reveal the various facets and distinct differences between the two. For instance, the name "Jerusalem" (Heb. # 3389) means, "FOUNDED PEACEFUL". It is the combination of two Hebrew root words, the first (# 3384) meaning, "TO FLOW AS WATER", and the second (# 7999) meaning, "TO BE SAVED (in mind, body, or estate); TO BE COMPLETED: -- to finish, perfect, restore, or be at peace". It corresponds to Isaiah's words, "Behold, I WILL EXTEND PEACE TO HER LIKE A RIVER..." (Isa. 66:12). It speaks of *the steady and unending flow of God's blessed provisions of rest and peace, ultimately depicting our intended place of completion or perfection in Him!* Hallelujah! In contradistinction to this, the name "BABYLON" (Heb. # 894) basically means, "CONFUSION". It comes from a primary root word (Heb. # 1101) which is defined, "TO OVERFLOW, by implying TO MIX". How graphic this is of the entire harlot system! The name is typical of her nature: *excessive confusion through the overflowing abundance of her mixtures!* She is known for her intoxicating "mixed drinks"; the good and the evil, the holy and the profane, the righteous and the worldly. There is nothing pure with her! She holds in her hand a "golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications" (Rev. 17:4)! And in the frenzied turbulence of her mixing, she causes the contents to "spill over", or overflow the rim! She is a confused, sloppy, drunken harlot who is unstable in all her ways! Both names, BABYLON and JERUSALEM, typify their final state, their predetermined destiny, and their inevitable conclusion. We could rightfully say that both of these "women" have been developing in the world; they once were, they now are, and they shall yet be! And we could also say that these two "cities" are presently in the world, but they are coming to their appointed time of fullness. They are still under "construction", both being fashioned according to their Biblical "blueprints", coming to "the measure of the stature of the fullness" of their prophetic destinies! But develop they will!

"BABYLON THE GREAT"

It is usually quite simple to identify the spirit of Babylon as it runs rampant in the world, with all of its glitter and glamour, its pomp and pride, its greedy, gluttonous, pleasure-seeking madness, its rioting and revelry, its confusing and confounding mixtures of values and ethics. And as it was in ancient Babylon, with their endless conglomerations of religious rituals, their many winds of doctrines and with their ignorant idolatry, a pattern can easily be seen within the religious sector today, as well. Babylon still exists! Though times have changed, she remains the same! She loves to give the appearance of being highly religious, all the while condoning and committing unspeakable abominations! She has made the nations of the world drunk on her "hard liquor", the strong drink of extremism. She has absolutely no sense of balance of truth or equity! She is either overly ascetic or painlessly anesthetic; either harshly condemning and unmerciful, or sedating and compromising to the convictions of the Spirit. It is a maddening mixture of confusion!

(Not only has she made the nations drunk, but she herself is "under the influence" of strong delusion. She gets "high" on "the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus" (17:6)! When she is able to cast off the restraints of those who would oppose her, seemingly prospering in her vile ways; when she is able to effectively invoke bloody inquisition and persecution upon all who dare to resist her, or call her into accountability; when she is able to put to silence the "divisive" voices of the prophets (who cry aloud against her false message of "unity"), she feels that this is a sure sign of God's approval for her ways! "For she saith in her heart, I sit a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (18:7)! She sincerely THINKS she is the true Bride, well favored of the Lord, and above judgment. She really BELIEVES that she is a "Queen"; that is, a comparable mate for Christ, bearing much fruit for the Kingdom of God. And she loudly PROFESSES that she shall "see no sorrow" or tribulation. So she goes on in her abominable lifestyle, "living deliciously", foolishly justifying her lust and greed, naming and claiming" whatever appeals to her at the moment... not knowing what her end shall be. In her drunken, deluded stupor, she is blind to the impending judgment God has appointed for her!

When John first saw her, he described her both as being arrayed in scarlet, and riding upon a scarlet colored beast (17:3-4). The word "scarlet" in Greek is "KOKEENOS" (# 2847) meaning

"crimson or red colored". It originates from # 2848 in Strong's, which gives its definition as "a kernel of seed: --corn, grain". Interestingly enough, the main Hebrew root word for "red" (# 119) is "ADAM"! Is there a connection? Most certainly there is! For this harlot is not only under ADAM'S "RED" COVERING, adorning herself with his provisional "garment"; but she also receives her mobility from THE "BEASTLY" ATTRIBUTES WHICH ARISE FROM THE ADAMIC NATURE! That this "scarlet colored beast" is an accurate depiction of the sinful, Adamic nature is doubly confirmed, first by Isaiah 1:18, "though YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET..."; and again in Eccles. 3:18, which says, "I said in mine heart CONCERNING THE ESTATE OF THE SONS OF MEN, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that THEY THEMSELVES ARE BEASTS"! In light of these passages, as well as others (such as Job 18:3; Psa. 49:12,20; 73:22; Isa. 63:13-14; Jer. 31:27; Dan. 5:21; II Pet. 2:12; and Jude 10), this "Red Beast" is plainly seen to be used as a revelation of the rebellious estate of the "sons" of Adam; the condition of his corruptible heart, commonly shared among his descendants; it is the manifestation and expression of his fleshly features and characteristics, as seen "in the Spirit"! Therefore, it is Adam's "red seed" that this Great Whore is transported on; she gets a "free ride" every time the "old man's" life and nature is expressed!

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While it is true that "Mystery Babylon" has permeated every sphere of society around us, we must ever be mindful that there is an expression of this wanton harlot much more dangerous, subtle, and seductive than her outward, external appearances in the world. Nearly three and a half centuries before our time, a brother by the name of Joseph Salmon wrote these thought-provoking words, fraught with revelational truth: *"Know therefore, O man, whosoever you are that judges the whore by these carnal conceptions of her, that you are far deceived by her in her fleshly appearances to you. Thus while sons of men seek to behold this strumpet in her proper sphere and center, they deceive themselves by looking too fleshly and carnal upon her. Know first then O man! that THIS GREAT WHORE IS IN YOU. While you seek to behold her without you, while you behold her in other men, SHE IS IN THE MEAN TIME ACTING IN A MYSTERY IN YOU. While you despised the appearance of her in other men, she has by guile caught you, and has stolen your heart from God and goodness... While you think you have nothing to do with her, SHE IS IN YOUR BOSOM; while you think she is far distant from you, and this is done in a Mystery and you see it not"* (from his book, "Antichrist in Man", 1647 A.D.). How true this is! For while so many are "caught up" into focusing their attention on one of the many outward "faces" of Babylon (be it Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Communism, the "Illuminati", the Counsel of Foreign Relations, the New Age movement, Secular Humanism, the World Council of Churches, etc., etc., and all with just cause), the main "stronghold" of this soulish Seductress goes unnoticed! She is "camouflaged" in the carnal mind, and fortified in the flesh; hidden, as it were, from the natural gaze of man! This is why it requires a revelation from the Spirit to see her! She dwells in the darkness, until she has beguiled and deceived her way into an open acceptance!

Continuing, Brother Salmon writes: *"Truly, until such time as the Lord takes a soul up into Spirit, though the wisdom of flesh appear openly to him, though she shows her very forehead,*

yet he cannot discern her in her appearances. But now when God has caught the soul into Spirit, and carried him away in Spirit, then he sees the whore in her apparitions. He beholds Mystery in the forehead, or palpable workings of the whore; Mystery in all her specious pretenses: and notwithstanding all her shows of glory. Yet he sees she is in deed and in truth "Babylon the Great": the great confused whore, which breeds all the confusion of spirit in a Christian; and all the commotion, disturbance, and out-cries that are in the heart of man, all those heavy, sad, and disconsolate thoughts that man is possessed withal; all the disorder that many a time is in the soul; every hard thought of God; every despairing imagination; all the gnawing of conscience of the creature. So that (I say) he now sees her to be the great Babel, or confused whore, who is the Mother

of Harlots and abominations of the earth" --- end quote. And may I simply add that she is that demoralizing spirit which encourages and promotes the out-working of INDEPENDENCE AND REBELLION from within the heart of man, causing him to be unfaithful to his Creator and His Covenant! She is that wicked "Jezebel" of old, motivating and inspiring acts of harlotry, resistance, and idolatry throughout "the land of Israel", that is to say, our earthen vessels (see Part 1 of this series, "All Things fit into the Pattern")!

THE ON-GOING AND ALL-INCLUSIVE WORK OF CHRIST

As we take a step back from John's vision (which was actually composed of a series of visions) for perspective's sake, we see that it was by no means limited in its location; it clearly and broadly involved every sphere of life. It was shown to be fulfilled in the three main dimensions of creation: HEAVEN, EARTH, AND SEA. As we ponder these things, three applications immediately come to mind. First, this can be properly understood to involve the THREE UNIVERSAL WORLDS (realms, or spheres of activity): the heavenly (spiritual), the earthly (natural), and the hellish (demonic). Secondly, we can liken it to THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE: the spiritually minded, the carnally minded (who oftentimes assume themselves to be spiritually minded, but whose thoughts always gravitate toward the "earth"), and the unconverted masses of the world. Thus we can also see that as it relates to our internal world, it corresponds to the THREE PARTS OF MAN (as described in I Thess. 5:23): the SPIRIT, the SOUL (the seat of our intellect, emotions, and will), and the BODY. Looking at it from this perspective, we can see that there is a tremendous amount of activity going on inside of us! (Many folks tend to confuse the spirit and the soul together, not understanding that they constitute two different components of man's tripartite being. Naturally speaking, it is impossible to distinguish one from the other; but according to Heb. 4:12, the Word of God, which is "sharper than any two-edged sword", is the only thing able to pierce "even TO THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, and of the joints and marrow" , and to discern between "the thoughts and intents of the heart". Obviously then, there is a difference... and a need to separate the two)!

For those of us who have experienced "the common salvation", that is, the initial work of Christ to the inner man, we can truly say that HE HAS SAVED OUR SPIRITS, resurrecting them out of the realm and region of death, and into the heavenlies in Him. He "HATH delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son..." (Col. 1:13). The auxiliary verb "HATH" twice used in this passage of Scripture plainly speaks of the translation of SPIRIT, the operation of God in "rapturing" (if we are allowed to use this term) the hidden man of our hearts as if it were a past experience. And truly it is! According to Biblical terminology, our inner man is PRESENTLY "seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus", based on Ephesians 2:6; and in this sense, we are now dwelling in the heavens!

While this phase of salvation is a "past-tense" reality, one we can be absolutely certain of, we are nevertheless aware of the need for the continual dealings of God in the SOUL (and thus, to the BODY. It could well be said that our spirits HAVE BEEN SAVED,

"translated" into the Kingdom; OUR SOULS ARE BEING SAVED, or "transformed" into conformance to the mind of Christ; and, as a result, OUR BODIES SHALL BE SAVED, or "transfigured" in likeness to His glorious body)! As every believer knows (and we have been redundant to remind you of in these writings), the work of deliverance is not complete the moment we first come to Christ; IT IS AN ON-GOING PROCESS. We still have those areas of rebellion and resistance in our lives (oftentimes hidden from view, and submerged in the sub-conscious regions of the mind) which need to be brought to light, and brought under subjection to the total Lordship of Christ. This is why He allows the "troubling of the waters" in our souls... He purposefully permits every "subterranean" thought, motive and habitual mannerism to manifest, to rise to the surface; so that first of all, we might acknowledge our true state of weakness and vulnerability apart from Him; and secondly, that He might prove that ONLY THROUGH HIM are we able to effectively subdue all our enemies under our feet!

CONFORMED... OR TRANSFORMED

There is the on-going work of subduing "every thought to the obedience of Christ"; of harnessing every wild emotion to the glory of God; and re-directing our wills to conform to His. And this work is accomplished in the pressurized conditions of the wilderness. Be it known that here, in the place of testing and temptation, we have the potential of characterizing and identifying with either BABYLON or JERUSALEM in our souls; of accepting either the attitude of harlotry and rebellion, or of purity and submission. As Paul said, "And be not conformed to this world; but BE YE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MINDS, that ye might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). But how, we may ask, can this be accomplished? During intense moments of stress and duress, how is it that we can keep from conforming along with the rest of the world to Babylon's overwhelming influence; or how do we keep from submitting to the "beastly" tendencies which rise up out of our "earth" and "1sea"? The so-called "experts" of psycho-study say that at best, we can merely hope to suppress them to some degree. We must learn to accept ourselves as we are, and live with our inclinations, they say. The most they can do is categorize them (the sons of Adam" are still naming the "animals", i.e. "schizophrenic", "claustrophobic", "dysfunctional", etc.), and rationalize them. But they have no real solutions! Sadly enough, many preachers propagate that same philosophy: "God loves you JUST THE WAY YOU ARE" (as if salvation should not be expected to bring change)! But James answers this question in no uncertain terms: we are to "receive with meekness THE ENGRAFTED WORD, which IS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOULS" (1:21b)! Praise God! It is through humbly accepting the rightfully divided Word (as it correctly applies and relates to our particular situation), by meekly receiving the IMPLANTATION (as the word "engrafted" translates in the original Greek) of His glorious "Seed of Truth" ("undefiled by man" and his humanistic theories and psychologies), that our souls are saved. As He reveals the revelation of His Word to us in times of turmoil and distress, AND WE COME TO UNQUESTIONABLY AND OBEDIENTLY ACCEPT IT AS OUR ONLY OPTION, OUR ONLY CHOICE OF CONDUCT, there is a cleansing, transforming work of RENEWAL that takes place in our minds... thereby separating us from all former conformances to the world's brash, "whorish" line of independent reasoning and response. Taking into consideration that the

word SOUL is used in the Greek language as a feminine noun, it is easy to draw meaning and application from Paul's words of instruction to Timothy: "SHE (the "woman") SHALL BE SAVED THROUGH CHILD BEARING..." (I Tim. 2:15)! How very appropriate this ties in! For when we are in times of tribulation, confronted with opportunities of great temptation, or faced with tremendous trials, and we learn to bear down with the "birth-pangs" of His unadulterated Seed-Word in the "womb" of our souls (rather than reacting in the flesh, according to the spirit of Babylon), then in due season we experience "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding"! As a result of this unexplainable peace, there comes A SALVATION, there comes A DELIVERANCE, there comes A TRANSFORMATION IN THE MIND that enables us to calmly and collectively "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God"! We are thus able to conquer our "Adamic" urges, to rise above our situations, and to conduct ourselves as Christ would IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE!

While our souls are in the wilderness, and we are faced with tempests of temptations, our human tendency is to immediately respond to these stressful "storms" by notions and feelings, by passion or rage. Our natural inclination is to act instinctively and impulsively to pressures, even to the point of JUSTIFYING acts of immorality, perjury, vengeance, malice, or violence (using our humanity as the excuse). The tendency of the world is to "wonder" after the Beast, saying, "Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with Him"? That is, "Who can withstand him, or keep from bowing in submission to his demands"? As we have said, to the natural man, it is totally inconceivable to think that these autonomous expressions of soul and body can be successfully restrained to any great degree, much less defeated altogether. The Harlot tells him that they must be vented, expressed, or released in order to find peace of mind, to find satisfaction of soul. But the spiritual man has learned that while no amount of carnal counseling, strength of human fortitude, or constitution of character is powerful enough to be victorious in this battle for the soul, ONLY BY SUBMITTING TO THE LAMB AND HIS NATURE CAN WE OVERCOME THE BEAST WITHIN. Only by entering into and hiding ourselves in "the secret place of the Most High" (the "marriage chamber"), waiting patiently on God, and acknowledging Him for strength and wisdom, do we subdue the beastly tendencies which attempt to rise within us. When we try to work out our problems by leaning on the arm of flesh, we only make matters worse. It is as we learn to trust Him completely, turning it all over to Him, acting only in union and concert with Christ our Bridegroom AT HIS APPOINTMENT AND BIDDING, that we experience true rest for our souls. And beloved, this has been His desire and intentions all along! He wants us to "cleave only to Him", to look solely to Him for strength and support, to find refuge only in His Presence! In doing so, we take on a purity of heart, a virginal appearance of innocency, which greatly delights the King! As it was in Esther's day, when she found favor in the eyes of King Ahasuerus for the lives of her people, the Lord is highly pleased when we "come BOLDLY before the Throne of Grace, that we might obtain mercy, and find grace to help IN TIME OF NEED" (Heb. 4:16)! And it is in this manner that we "*purify our souls* in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (I Pet. 1:22)! Hallelujah! You see, until we have conquered Babylon's influence within, until we have ceased to deal

with our troubles in her fashion, bearing her character traits, we will never truly conquer her without. Rather than receiving the Beast's "mark" in our forehead (in what we THINK), or in our right hand (in what we DO), marking our allegiance to the manifestation of his image, and giving rise to his rebellious nature, Christ desires to place His "seal" upon our foreheads! He wants to govern the way we think, and thereby control the way we act. His covenantal sealing sets us apart from the world, and gives us the assurance that we will not be touched by the judgment of the Beast, or of the Great Whore! It is His "seal of approval", His identifying mark of possession, that He has chosen us to become "His undefiled one", His Bride!

Going back to what we had previously said, throughout the Revelation both women are seen to be in the wilderness, but ONLY ONE FINDS HER WAY OUT. BABYLON IS DESTINED TO FALL! It is inevitable! WHILE IN THE WILDERNESS, she receives her plagues, and experiences her demise, BECAUSE OF THE WAY SHE HANDLES HER AFFAIRS! Nevertheless, those who hearken to the voice of the Spirit as He cries, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, THAT YE BE NOT PARTAKERS OF HER SINS, AND THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES" (18:4), departing from her adulterous suggestions and rebellious attitudes, likewise "COME OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION, having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14)! Though for a season they may still experience difficulties without, they have gotten the victory over the roilings within! Therefore, as they have responded to the cry, "BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM", they have learned how to "COME UP OUT OF THE WILDERNESS, leaning on the Arm of their Beloved"!

Of a truth, we have all at one time or another "oscillated" between Babylon and Jerusalem; halting, as it were, between two opinions, and receiving in ourselves God's dealings according

ly. But in the closing hours of this present age, there is a separation of "the waters" taking place, a calling out of the true "ecclesia" (church), and a "catching up" of the "New Jerusalem"! When this universal work of gathering is finished, and we have all found our principal identities in one or the other of these "women", then God's plan for them shall be consummated; HE SHALL BRING THEM TO THEIR PREDESTINATED CONCLUSIONS! Therefore, with a note of urgency, and as an invitation to eternal intimacy with Christ, "the Spirit and the Bride say, COME"!

to be continued...