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1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,

2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 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 marveled with great amazement.

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come I will show you..." So he carried me away in the spirit... And I saw... (17:1,3)

Interestingly, similar language is used further ahead to introduce the description of the *Heavenly City*:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. (Revelation 21:9-11)

Both passages feature one of the seven Judgment Angels, and the pattern is similar. The angel "carried" John "away in the Spirit" to "show" him another "great city". But there in chapter 21 the apostle beholds, not the ugly *Harlot of Babylon*, filled with corruption, but the true *Bride* and her heavenly *City* which is "holy". He views the Kingdom of Heaven, the real thing in a new Age, where Love and Light will reign instead of the hatred, greed, and oppression of the former Age with its counterfeit utopia, known as the *Harlot*, "that great city *Babylon*". (18:10,21)

I will show you the judgment of the great harlot. (17:1)

The *Great Harlot* has suffered many collapses throughout history but always rebounded to continue her corrupting influence. (See [Appendix 2](#).) At the End of the Age, however, comes her final and most horrific collapse. Why it must be so is a question that much of the rest of chapters 17-18 answers by detailing how her crimes and corruption have earned her the judgment that is to come.

The great harlot who sits on many waters. (17:1)

Verse 15 states, "*The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.*" Similarly, the *Beast* also was pictured earlier as "*rising up out of the sea*". (13:1) So the *Beast* and the *Harlot* are the systems (portrayed symbolically) that have been ruling "*the waters*" or "*the sea*" of nations and peoples throughout the world and

throughout history.

It can be difficult to differentiate between the *Harlots* of history and their *Beasts* since both may occupy the same territory, and both rule over the “seas” of the peoples of the world. ([Appendix 2](#) examines the peculiar relationship between the two ruling classes of *Harlot* and *Beasts*.) Interestingly, the *Earth-Beast*, which is also a commercial empire, doesn’t sit on the waters or on the *Sea-Beast*. Instead of trying to take advantage of the first *Beast*, the *Earth-Beast* cooperates with and paves the way for him to rise to power.

A little further ahead, the apostle notes, “*I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast.*” And then in verse 18, the guiding angel explains, “*And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.*” (17:3,18) Logically, that would mean that the *Harlot* is sitting, not only on the people, but also on the governments who are ruling over the people - the *Beast* - through her control of resources, wealth, money, and media influence.

It is the “*beasts*” who have captured their people’s loyalty through war and their demagoguery. And so, they are pictured as “*rising up out of the sea*”. (Revelation 13:1, Daniel 7:3) The *Harlot*, on the other hand, takes advantage of that situation and just has to “*sit*” on the people and on their governments - like a parasite. (Revelation 17:1,15) (See [here in Appendix 3.](#))

The *Beast* rules over the people via his capabilities in war and his Demagoguery, while the *Harlot* has the Materialism angle by which she rules over them (through her Dollar financial control). But the *Beast* is also able to include in his empire the lure of Materialism via his partnership with the other *Beast* from the “*earth*”. That *Beast* won’t have the loyalty of the people the way the *Antichrist Beast* will, but it can supply what the *Harlot* once did - the material needs of the world (through the *Mark-Number* buying and selling system).

The kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (17:2)

A harlot who knows her business will be skilled in the practice of

loosening up her clients and their purse strings with alcohol. The metaphor illustrates the *Harlot's* ability to attract and seduce nations and people, using her earthly enticements and treasure and a vast trading/financial network by which she is able to gain control over everyone else's wealth.

By and large, the rulers of our present world are obliged to “*commit fornication*”, that is, get “*married*” to the forces of spiritual Darkness, who work furiously to downgrade nations to *Harlot* status, to get them devoted to the religion of Materialism; and by so doing, divorce them from their Creator. And the people, “*the inhabitants of the earth*”, having swallowed the *Harlot's* “*wine*”, are also guilty. They are “*made drunk*” - stupefied, lured, and caught in the net of the *Harlot's* Materialism. Her “*wine*” has immobilized the masses in western culture into a state of lethargic apathy. (See [articles on this subject](#).)

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. (17:3)

John goes on a spirit trip and lands in the “*wilderness*” (desolate place), an appropriate setting for that barren utopia, the empire of the *Harlot Babylon* who is riding on the empire of the *Beast*. The next time John gets “*carried away in the spirit*” he lands, not in a desolate place, but on “*a great and high mountain*” from where he beholds “*the great city*” - the stupendous and glorious heavenly abode for the righteous. (21:10)

And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. (17:3)



Illustration from publication of [The Family International](#)

At this point the apostle sees the *Beast* in the uncomfortable position of having to bear the weight of the *Harlot*. This is the same *Beast* introduced in chapter 13, who also has “seven heads and ten horns.” (13:1) The “seven heads” represent the seven empires that have controlled and will control the people of Israel, starting with Egypt and continuing on to Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the

final empire.

Some of these political-military empires were mentioned previously in a vision given about 600 years earlier to the prophet Daniel and were depicted there as separate Beasts. (Daniel 7:3-7)

But in the *Book of Revelation* these separate Beasts are portrayed as a single Beast with “seven heads”. And at the End of the Age this Beast is the empire that will dominate the world and Israel.

The symbolism of “seven heads” seems to carry two messages: 1) there will have been seven separate empires and rulers, and 2) the final one (the seventh) possesses the combined wisdom and might of all of them.

And a couple of other features about this Beast worth noting are its “ten horns” and a mysterious “eighth” head (in 17:11). These peculiar features are small clues that will help to pinpoint the historical era, the specific places and empires, which were symbolized in this startling vision of a *Harlot* sitting atop a seven-headed, ten-horned *Beast*.

And it would appear from the symbolic picture here that the *Harlot* has been riding the *Beast(s)* (the governments of the world) for a long time. Nothing so unusual about that; it’s a pattern repeated throughout history. To better understand the broad historical panorama, see [Appendix 2](#), which traces the presence of the *Beast-Harlot*’s existence from ancient times up to our present day.

And if the *Harlot* is pictured as riding on the *Beast*, then we may assume that she is a freeloader, a parasite, who is using the nations of the world to feed herself and live in luxury. Look [here in Appendix 3](#) (various news articles with analysis of how this is happening in the modern world).

Full of names of blasphemy. (17:3)

To claim divine status for oneself, in the Jewish religion, was the worst form of blasphemy. Throughout history emperors have done it, even in modern times - in a peculiar secular form of adulation - such as in the reigns of Hitler or the communist demagogues of the 20th century. No wonder then that the Beast is “full of names of blasphemy.”

This practice of claiming divinity for oneself serves to cement a leader's authority by capturing their people's religious devotion, which otherwise would be diverted in some way towards a Higher Power other than the emperor. Interestingly, this final *Beast* is often referred to as the "Antichrist", a word which in the ancient Greek meant "instead of Christ".

This "*names of blasphemy*" phrase differentiates the *Beast* from the *Harlot*. The *Harlot* symbolism stands for a system, not a specific person. ("The woman... is that great CITY" - 17:18.) The real leader of the *Harlot* are the "*merchants*", and the "*emperor*" is just their puppet. (18:23) The *Great Harlot* does not have an emperor as such, or at least not one who is worshipped.

The *Beast* symbolism, however, stands for both an empire and the person who leads it. (See [discussion](#) on this point.) Having become an object of worship, this person thereby takes on the "*name of blasphemy*".

Because of the *Harlot's* Christian veneer, she would not be guilty of that kind of blasphemy. But her "*golden cup*" is "*full of abominations and... filthiness*". (17:4) Her "*blasphemy*" shows up in a different way - similar to how the Apostle Paul expressed it regarding certain hypocritical teachers and leaders in the Early Church:

Romans 2:1-6

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man [nation?], whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another [nation(s)] you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth...

And do you think this, O man [O nation], you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?...

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

who "*will render to each one [each nation] according to his deeds*":

Romans 2:17-24

Indeed you... make your boast in God,

and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent...

You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?

You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?...

You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

For “*The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,*” as it is written.

Herein lies the meaning and intent of the *Harlot* symbolism. America portrays herself as the beacon of freedom and democracy, as if she were the *Bride of God*. If that were true, the vision would picture her destroying the *Beast’s “names of blasphemy”* by living and presenting the reality of God - His love and truth to a world that so desperately needs it.

Instead she just sits on the *Beast*, trying to fleece him for everything she can get. She has betrayed the teachings of Christ and become a *harlot*, imposing financial tyranny and military devastation over much of the rest of the world. As the above Scripture puts it, she “*dishonors God*”, and “*the name of God is blasphemed... among the Gentiles*”. And her “*hardness*” and “*impenitent heart*” is “*treasuring up... wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*”

Arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls. (17:4)

Like many a prostitute, the *Harlot* is finely attired in order to lure customers. The symbolic description here shows the *Harlot* to be very powerful (“*purple and scarlet*”, color of royalty) and very rich (“*adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls*”).

A golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. (17:4)

But her “*golden cup*”, which looks beautiful from the outside, contains inside “*abominations*” and “*filthiness*”, as well as the “*blood of the saints and... martyrs of Jesus.*” (17:6) We’re starting to look now beyond the façade and get a glimpse of the *Harlot’s* corrupt state. This awful brew is the “*wine*” that she drinks and serves to the nations, making them also “*drunk with the wine of her fornication.*” (17:2)

Further ahead, we learn that this cup of oppression she serves is served back to her. *“In the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.”* (18:6)

In the Scriptures, the “cup” symbolism would often express a person’s or a nation’s divine destiny.

By a figure common to Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and not unknown to Latin writers, one’s lot or experience, whether joyous or adverse, divine appointments, whether favorable or unfavorable, are likened to a cup which God presents one to drink. [from *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889, pg. 533]

Example of a joyous destiny: King David declared, “*My cup [of blessing] runs over.*” (Psalm 23:5) An adverse destiny: “*Great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.*” (Revelation 16:19)

God’s cup of “wrath” contains His indignation against evil; it is pure and fully justified. The “wrath” in the *Harlot*’s wine, however, reeks of madness and deranged violence. The apostle observed that she was “*drunk with the blood of the saints and... the martyrs of Jesus.*” (17:6) Her cup is full of “*abominations and the filthiness of her fornication*”. (17:4)

Whatever that is, certainly it can’t be good. For we read, further ahead, “*God has remembered her iniquities... the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication.*” (Revelation 18:5, 19:2) And not only this but, according to the angel, her corrupt influence has spread everywhere: “*all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*” (18:3)

In place of honoring and loving God, the *Harlot* (and her allies) have committed “*fornication*”. She has dishonored God. In her economic-political-military activities, she has blindly pursued the acquisition of wealth; and this has resulted in considerable oppression, economically and militarily, over the poorer nations of the world.

If the *Harlot* were the true *Bride*, she would be helping to lift the poorer nations of the world to prosperity. Instead, having departed from Her Husband, she has become a *Harlot*, who is oppressing the world - stealing

their wealth, waging war against nations to maintain her empire.

But she makes one awful blunder: sitting on and oppressing the Beast. Instead of engaging in fair, win-win trading practices (which could have brought peace), she has done everything she can to fleece the Beast for all he's worth and to threaten him militarily. (Look [here in Appendix 3](#) for news articles on that subject.)

Under communist rule, the Soviet Union was “full of names of blasphemy”. Now Russia has pulled away from that to some extent. But instead of welcoming her into peaceful co-existence, America, the supposed bastion of Christianity in the modern world, has done just the opposite. Her transformation into a *Harlot*, unfaithful to her God, has driven America into spoiling and squandering the precious opportunity that came up in the 1990's to create a peaceful world situation. (Look [here in Appendix 3](#) news articles.)

Her greed pushed her into pursuing a policy of taking advantage of Russia in her weakened state after the fall of communism. Will it be any surprise then to see Russia once more take on a “name of blasphemy”? (See [Footnote 1](#).) And, in alliance with her *Ten Horns* and with China (also “full of names of blasphemy”), will it be any surprise to see Russia become the *Beast* who will mete out on the *Harlot* the chastisement that she needs and deserves?

Alas, American foreign policy has spiraled ever downwards, in direct opposition to Christ's teaching to “love your enemies”. (Matthew 5:44) And this is sure to cause long-term resentment, resulting finally in the *Harlot's* catastrophic downfall.

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

Here is what one teacher has to say about this:

It was customary for Roman prostitutes to wear a headband with their name on it (cf. Jer 3:3) parading their wretchedness for all to see. The harlot's forehead is emblazoned with a 3-fold title... (from *The*

MacArthur Study Bible: Revised and Undated Edition, pg. 2016)

At this point the vision was a “mystery” to the apostle, but the angel says later, “I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast.” (17:7) What the angel explains further ahead no doubt cleared up much of that mystery for the apostle. However, there was much also that could not be understood until this Modern Age, and we are only now starting to see the full scope of how this dreadful vision of the future will come to pass in historical reality.

As for the *Harlot*’s forehead-title, we note a similar feature in the *“Bride, the Lamb’s wife”*. This “woman”, symbolic of God’s people, have the “*Father’s name written on their foreheads.*” (Revelation 21:9, 14:1, 7:3, 9:4) And this “name” (or “seal”) serves to identify and protect them as true followers of the Light of Christ.

The *Harlot*’s title on her forehead also identifies (and describes) her from two angles: 1) “*Babylon the great*” - a warmongering tyrant; 2) “*The mother of harlots*” - not only a harlot in God’s eyes by turning away from Him into the idolatry of Materialism, but the “*mother*”, the one causing other nations to follow in her footsteps to become “*harlots*” who also indulge in “*abominations*”.

From the sounds of her title - “*mother of harlots and... abominations*” - it appears that this ruling system has reached its climax. And, knowing the context of this passage (in the End of the Age era), this ultimate worst manifestation of the *Harlot* is happening right now, before our very eyes.

How then does this startling vision apply in our modern historical situation? For one thing, through the *Harlot*’s...

“Abominations.”

An all-encompassing term, and tops on the abominations list: our weapons of war - to be utterly banned in the coming Age of Peace when “*they shall beat their swords into plowshares*”, and “*nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore*”. (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3) Related to this are the violence-filled influences emanating from American media productions.

No surprise then that, over the last several decades, America has led the way in the warmongering arena - in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, and others. And many Western nations have shown themselves to be fellow "harlots" by contributing their "abominations" of military resources to fight in these conflicts. (See [news article excerpts in Appendix 3](#) about the extent of America's war industry.)

Another "abomination" is the financial skullduggery inherent in America's capitalist economy - the practice of profiting from the labor of others, of squeezing the wealth out of the laboring classes and poorer nations of the world, the economic strangleholds she maintains over many nations of the world. To maintain this kind of favoring-the-rich *status quo* requires that wars be fought to keep nations in line and in subjection to America's economic interests. (See [news article excerpts in Appendix 3](#) to learn how this works in today's world.)

Perhaps the phrase "*abominations and filthiness of her fornication*" conjures up thoughts of immoral acts, idol-worship, petty criminal behavior, perversions, that sort of thing. But the greatest immorality, the greatest evil indulgence and depravity, exists in those nations where war and greed reign supreme. When ancient Israel went astray and became a harlot, God said "*For they do not know to do right... who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.*" (Amos 3:10)

"*Violence and robbery*" - those special domains of the *Red* and *Black* Horses of war and greed (in Revelation 6) - these rank as the highest and worst level of "*abominations and filthiness*". And sad to say, America has wallowed in it for decades. She has allowed herself to be overcome by those dreadful *Horses of war and greed*.

I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (17:6)

False religion has killed millions of believers over the centuries. And at times that has included Christianity. Long ago the prophet Samuel warned, "*Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*" (1Samuel 15:23) It is possible for those who call themselves Christians, if they wilfully ignore the voice of God, to sink to the same level as those who indulge in witchcraft and pagan practices.

In one form or another, the *Harlot* has been at it for thousands of years. (In verse 9, we learn that she sits on “seven mountains” or empires that have ruled over Israel.) As brought out in [Appendix 2](#), the usual pattern for *Beast* empires is that in their declining stages they would transform into *Harlot*-type empires; and in the process become oppressors over the people of God - the truth-tellers who were viewed as religious rivals, subversives, threatening the religious *status quo* that the *Harlot* was trying to maintain. And in the vision’s more specific application - the *Harlot* of the End Time - we will see, further ahead, how the American empire has also done her part to shed the blood of “*saints*” and “*martyrs*”.

The first *Head of the Beast* was Egypt who welcomed the tribes of Israel in the days of Joseph. But some generations later, a new Pharaoh became their oppressor and tried to defy the God of Israel. Greece under Alexander spared the Israeli nation from brutal conquest, but generations later, the Greek king from Syria raised persecution and slaughter and tried to impose the Hellenic culture and religion on Jewish society. The religious hierarchy in Israel viewed Christ Himself as a threat to their wealth and power and had Him crucified. Ancient Rome was indifferent to the rise of Christianity and often came to its rescue when it fell under Jewish persecution, but in time the Roman Caesars saw Christianity as a threat to their “divinity” and raised extensive persecution.

When ancient Israel descended at times into *Harlot* status, she persecuted and killed the prophets who were trying to get the nation back on track. Similarly, during Medieval times the Church had become more interested in wealth and power and became the *Harlot* and oppressor of true Christians, especially during those shameful years of the Catholic Inquisition. During the Colonial Age, it was the whorish, moneyed interests from the Christian European nations who exploited their foreign colonies and made it difficult for European and American missionaries to carry on with their work.

All through history, the pattern has repeated itself. The *Harlot*, who controls the *Beast*, urges governments to slaughter and persecute the *saints*.

And who are the “*saints*”? In our modern, secular culture, what do we

really mean by that word? Some of the definitions from the ancient Greek include terms like “different”, “set apart”, “persons whose services God employs - apostles, angels, prophets”. (See [Footnote 2](#).) Who then are the truth-tellers, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the merciful, those persecuted for righteousness’ sake? These were Christ’s standards for saints, who are supposed to be “*not of the world*” and as a result are hated by the world. (Matthew 5:1-12, John 15:19)

According to the above definitions, we would have to include as “*saints*” many righteous men and women who, although they may not claim to be Christian, are living according to the standards that Christ laid out. For an example, Mahatma Gandhi, who never claimed to be a Christian, lived a Christ-like life, and his truth-telling words encouraged non-violent change and peace amongst his people; and like many Christian saints of the past, he also died a martyr’s death. (See [Footnote 3](#) **discussion:** “Is it possible for non-Christians to achieve sainthood?”)

In this modern era the *Harlot* influence is as strong as it ever was. And as it was sometimes for ancient Judaism, the *Harlot* metaphor pictures the kind of stifling, compromised version of Christianity that is all too common nowadays. In Revelation 3 Christ reprimanded the Laodicean church for being rich and increased with goods, thinking they had “*need of nothing*”, when in fact they were “*wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked*” in God’s eyes. He even went so far as to say, “*I will vomit you out of My mouth.*” (Revelation 3:16-17) Clearly, the *Harlot*’s Materialism had infected that Church to its core.

This does not mean to say that there are not many loyal, worthy, and dedicated followers of the light of Christ in America and other western nations. And this would explain why later in this revelation an angel is heard, pleading, “*Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.*” (18:4)

After all, it is not the sincere believers and followers of Christ who are responsible for causing havoc in the modern world. That responsibility rests with the ultra-rich power-brokers who have so much control over American government and military policy. “*Your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.*” (18:23)

And by their control of the media outlets, the “merchants” have deceived much of the world (including many Christians) into their way of thinking. So God is calling His children, even those who are misinformed and duped by the powers that be, to wake up to reality and to get out of harm’s way... by whatever means they can.

From that passage about the ancient Laodicean church, we can understand how it is possible for modern Churches in wealthy countries to spiral down into a pitiful state. And if those who claim to represent the God of the Bible have become corrupted like this and apathetic to the needs of the world, and a bad example, then God will not continue to protect them and will allow His people to pass through the fires of chastisement.

“He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” is a well known passage of Scripture. (Psalm 23:3) And sometimes, to get back on the path to righteousness, God has to allow His people to endure chastening and discipline.

A similar situation existed in ancient Israel. The prophet Isaiah received a message, expressing clearly what had gone wrong in the nation - a message which could be applied also to the state of Christianity in many rich nations of today’s world. In the message the people are complaining because, in spite of their religious observances and fasting, God doesn’t seem to be listening to them. God responds, saying,

Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isaiah 58:6-7)

Sad to say, that passage depicts all too well the state of modern, western Christianity. American society projects a polished veneer of religiosity, yet the poor of the land are suffering. And America’s behavior on the international scene has caused misery in the world at large - the complete opposite of what the above Scripture recommends that a godly nation is supposed to do.

In its epicenter of America, the Christian church has turned away from being the conscience of the nation. Instead, Christian leaders have approved of America's extraction of the world's wealth for herself and of the military violence that goes along with it; they have watched in silence as the nation transformed into the warmongering tyrant of today. (Yes, "warmongering tyrant" is a serious accusation, but the evidence, presented by sincere journalists, in [Appendix 3](#), offers plenty of corroboration.)

We live in a secular, non-superstitious age. In ancient times emperors could establish themselves as gods, and the people would worship them by engaging in various religious rituals. Nowadays, worship of rulers comes in the form of secular adulation (demagoguery) - without the religious trappings.

And we might view modern saints in a similar way. Nowadays, they have to distance themselves from a religious system that has become irrelevant and corrupt. As a result they may operate outside mainstream Christianity and suffer rejection from the established religious order, or in some cases, become a sort of secular saint.

It's a sad state of affairs when the "saints" have to don secular clothing in order to be effective while the villains don their religious cloaks, loudly proclaiming their adherence to Christianity.

We usually apply the "saint" designation to those who bring the Gospel to a region hostile to Christianity. That is true enough. But "sainthood" includes also those who bring godly change into society through their wisdom and actions. In recent U.S. history, persons like Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Kennedy brothers were assassinated because of their struggle against the powers that be and their efforts to bring about a more just society: Mahatma Gandhi, another example; Jamal Kashoggi, journalist, brutally assassinated for exposing problems in America's client state of Saudi Arabia.

These men were promoting social causes, not religious ones. Nevertheless, their attempts to bring reform and confront evil were introducing the values and standards of the Kingdom. By promoting righteousness in their spheres of influence, they were modern day

versions of saints. How many political leaders, who seem pious and attend church services, are willing to do the same, even at the cost of their popularity, position, wealth, or their very life? Or are they just there to please a certain voting bloc?

In the United States, religion and politics have become inseparable. To lend authority to their views, presidential aspirants of both parties regularly press God into service... ([America: With God on our side](#) by Andrew J. Bacevich, 16 October 2011, *Los Angeles Times*)

Truth-tellers, willing to expose modern evils, are hard to find among Christians these days. On the other hand, many who call themselves atheists or agnostics, have bravely risked their lives “striving against sin”. (Hebrews 12:4) (The [news article excerpts here in Appendix 3](#) explore this question of where are the truth-tellers in America’s mainstream Christian population and the question of how America has caused the martyrdom of Christians in the Middle East.)

And where do we see the martyrs of today? In the Middle East untold numbers of Christians have died for their faith at the hands of Isis and other terrorist groups. And how did those groups come into being? In their efforts to de-stabilize Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, America employed the services of Al-Qaeda, whose extremist philosophy inspired the Isis movement in Iraq. America’s conquest and mishandling of that oil-rich nation led to the vicious backlash of Isis, whose murderous mujahideen carried out mass beheading operations against Christians, Muslims, and Yazidis.

And where did the extremist philosophy of Isis and Al-Qaeda originate? From Wahhabi fundamentalism - the strict version of Islam found in Saudi Arabia whose financial largesse has bankrolled the export of this jihad philosophy throughout the Islamic world. Does the United States know or care? Not in the least; Saudi Arabia is too valuable an ally.

And those terrorists? Why, they are much too useful as agents whom the *Harlot* can use to destabilize regimes she doesn’t like; they serve also as a ready-made excuse for her to maintain a presence in those oil-rich regions, supposedly for the noble cause of fighting terrorism. A master in the art of deception, the *Harlot* pretends to be a friend when she’s

actually an enemy. And many a nation caught in her treachery has suffered the results in a ruined economy or destroyed infrastructure.

One of the more blatant examples of this was America's 2003 entrance into war with Iraq, which was based on fooling the world into believing that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was supporting terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda.

Awareness of the *Harlot*'s shameful trickery helps us to better understand what the angel meant further ahead when he said, "by your sorcery [devilish wisdom] *all the nations were deceived*". (18:23)

The same sort of deception happened during the rise of Communism in the Soviet Union. Atheist Communism brought on the martyrdom of countless numbers of Christian people. It may be wondered, how could these have been victims of the *Harlot*? Indirectly, yes. The new Bolshevik regime could never have succeeded without the funds supplied to them by some of America's ultra-rich elite. (See [article](#) published by *Great Game India*.)

Apparently, these "merchants" were hoping that, by toppling the Tsarist regime, they could gain access to Russian resources and wealth under a new government. Seems like that succeeded only partly. But many years later, a new generation of American ultra-rich were able to influence Soviet leadership to abandon Communism - with a false promise that NATO would not move its forces towards the Russian border. Then during the 1990's, American capitalists plundered the Russian economy - at least until a new leader (Putin) came along who has succeeded in removing most of the capitalist oligarchs who were busy stripping Russia of her wealth.

And then there have been other occasions when the "merchants" went in the opposite direction and fought wars or destabilized nations, supposedly to save the world from Communism. Those conflicts, in Vietnam for example (Korea, Indonesia, and elsewhere) accomplished nothing, except to destroy the country while benefiting American weapons manufacturers' pocketbooks. If the *Harlot* can be said to have a foreign policy, that's it - money. Whatever makes a profit that's the "right" course of action.

Even if some of the violence against the followers of Christ has happened indirectly, the *Harlot* is still the one who caused it, and she is still responsible for it. Such deception and manipulation have fooled much of the world, but it did not fool the angel who said, “*By your sorcery [devilish wisdom] all the nations were deceived.*” (18:23)

And his final statement - “*in her was found the blood...*” (18:24) - suggests that much of the murder and mayhem committed by the *Harlot* is hidden from view... unless we can manage to access the kind of news that peers behind the glossed-over, sanitized version perpetrated by mainstream media.

So even in this modern day, the *Harlot* system has lived up to the gruesome portrayal given in the Revelation Book: “*drunk with the blood of the saints and... the martyrs of Jesus.*” In America, the saints and prophets are those who’ve tried to get the nation back on track; in the Middle East, the “*martyrs*” are those communities that have been slaughtered by religious fundamentalists sponsored originally by America’s misguided Mideast policies. In the Soviet Union, the “*martyrs*” were those who suffered under atheist Communism, financed in its beginning by American capitalists. These are some of the modern day victims whose blood the *Harlot* has been drinking. (17:6)

And to grasp the full magnitude of the *Harlot*’s crimes, we find out that “*in her was found*”, not only the blood of prophets, saints, and martyrs, but also the blood “*of all who were slain on the earth.*” (18:24) How many millions have perished as a result of America’s wars in the 20th and 21st centuries. (See [here in Appendix 3](#) for the long list of inexcusable atrocities perpetrated on various nations by the American superpower.)

Modern war technology has made it easy to destroy extensively and in a detached, mechanical manner. America, with her wide array of weapons manufacturers, has made full use of these modern military capacities to destroy. In addition, as the world’s biggest arms exporter, she is selling and spreading this deadly machinery all over the world. Thus, we can better understand what that statement means, “*In her was found the blood... of all who were slain on the earth.*” (18:24)

“*The devil... was a murderer from the beginning,*” Christ stated long

ago. (John 8:44) How can it be denied that America has partnered with the forces of Darkness, fulfilling their plans to wreak havoc in the Earth? (Look [here in Appendix 3](#) to learn how religion in America and the war industry are working together.)

It doesn't take a great deal of insight to know that history will repeat itself. As ancient Israel went astray from the godly principles on which she was founded and fell before the rising powers of those days (Assyria and Babylon), so also America is destined to fall before the rising superpowers of today (which looks to be the Russia-China combine).

America's only salvation, if she could ever bring herself to do it, would be to humbly submit to the demands of the rising powers of our day. Long ago the prophet Jeremiah advised the Israeli kings to "*bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! Why will you die?*" (Jeremiah 27:12-13) Israel's kings refused to submit, and Jerusalem was destroyed as a result. And we are seeing history repeat itself; America has no intention of submitting to the rising Russia-China world order. By resisting it so fiercely, the end result for America will be catastrophe. (See [news articles here in Appendix 3](#).)

As a final note, although the *Harlot* has been responsible for the persecution and death of untold numbers of "*saints*", that dishonorable reputation is not hers alone. The *Beast* powers also will commit their share of atrocity against the people of God and those who rise up in defiance against a godless and tyrannical system. Of course, it is one thing for a *Beast* power to persecute the *saints* - they don't know any better - but for the *Harlot*, who claims to be "*Christian*" to persecute them, that is a serious matter. They are supposed to know better.

I marveled with great amazement. (17:6)

The apostle's initial view of the "*woman*" caused him to "marvel with great amazement". It is difficult to see the forest for the trees sometimes. When in the middle of it, one may gain a sense that something's terribly wrong with the world system of government. But at this point John seems over-awed by the spectacle. (Indeed, the world has an idealized impression about America, perhaps because of how she is able to portray herself so well in popular culture.) Anyway, it seems that the vision of this

“woman”, who represented the enormous city system of modern times, looked so awesome that the apostle was caught off guard somewhat. And the angel has to tell him, “Why did you marvel?” (17:7)

Continue to [4A: Angel Explains the Mystery \(17:7-11\)](#)

FOOTNOTE 1:

[Russia's rising young Communists pose an unexpected new threat to Putin's grip](#) by Robyn Dixon, 6 October 2021, Washington Post

A candidate for the Communist Party in Russia's parliamentary elections, Mikhail Lobanov, went overnight from being an obscure university math lecturer to being the new face of a rising threat to the Kremlin.

....

Russia's Communist Party has long been known for its compliance, never threatening the Kremlin, in return for state funding and perks. But some young communists and leftist allies did not get that memo. They are starting to behave like a genuine opposition.

....

With a generation of elders fading, a new cohort of outspoken, social-media savvy communists is rising. They don't wave red flags or speak in stale ideological jargon; they take issue with Putin's regime over corruption and poverty...

“This is one of the really powerful tectonic plates in Russian politics that is beginning to shift,” said London-based analyst Mark Galeotti, an honorary professor at the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies at University College London.

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FOOTNOTE 2: Meaning of the word “saint” (*hagios*)

(from *HELPS Word-studies*, 1987, 2011)

hágios* – properly, *different (unlike), other (“otherness”), holy; for the believer, (*hágios*) means “likeness of nature with the Lord” because “different from the world.”

The fundamental (core) meaning of (*hágios*) is “different” – thus a temple in the 1st century was *hagios* (“holy”) because *different* from other buildings (Wm. Barclay). In the NT, *hágios* (“holy”) has the “technical” meaning “different from the world” because “like the Lord.”

[(*hágios*) implies something “set apart” and therefore “different (distinguished/distinct)” – i.e. “other,” because *special* to the Lord.]

(From Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 1889, pgs. 6-7)

ἅγιος, , (from τό ἀγός religious awe, reverence; ἄζω, ἄζομαι, to venerate, revere, especially the gods, parents (Curtius, § 118)), rare in secular authors; very frequent in the sacred writings; in the Sept. for ;שְׁתִּים

- 1. properly reverend, worthy of veneration:**
- 2. set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his... a. of things which on account of some connection with God possess a certain distinction and claim to reverence, as places sacred to God which are not to be profaned... b. of persons whose services God employs; as for example, apostles... angels... prophets... worthies of the O. T. accepted by God for their piety...**
- 3. of sacrifices and offerings; prepared for God with solemn rite, pure, clean...**
- 4. in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright, holy...**

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FOOTNOTE 3: Is it possible for non-Christians to achieve sainthood?

In this secular age, there are many who are disillusioned with what they have seen in church congregations because they were not addressing the burning issues of the day for fear of persecution or loss of financial support. As a result many persons of integrity have felt they had to turn away from mainstream Christianity in order to uphold the truths and convictions that Christ Himself would have taught. Many call themselves atheist or agnostic, not so much out of antipathy towards God, but as a way to separate themselves from the kind of shallow Christianity they have seen that seems irrelevant and ineffective.

It is almost unbelievable that in this day and age, many who are not officially Christians are the very ones proclaiming the Kingdom by standing up for truth, encouraging righteousness and love and peace amongst their peoples, nations, or circles of influence.

They may not be Christians in the usual sense of belonging to a church, or being baptized, but in some way they have been “born again”. They have chosen to forsake their old unfruitful ways or their evil ways, and so they are “born again”.

As Jesus pointed out, being “born of the Spirit” - like the “wind” - is not something that can be easily defined. And He made it clear that outward signs of repentance, like water baptism, were not enough (even if they are a step in the right direction). Without the u-turn, the genuine change of heart - that is, without being “born of the Spirit” - a person “cannot see the Kingdom of God”. (John 3:1-8)

We cannot know everything about how God looks at things, and for all we know, He has honored many non-Christians with the rank of “saints” - by virtue of the fact that they were yielding to their conscience, listening to and obeying the Spirit of God, following the Light of Christ, even if they didn’t know Who it is they were following.

We know that the Spirit of God will lead people to Christ eventually, but many are in what could be called the pre-Christian stage. By proclaiming and living truth, righteousness, peace, and love, many folks, even though not Christians officially, would - in God’s eyes - be counted as “saints”.

Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. (John 3:21, NIV)

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. (1John 2:29)

The apostle James noticed long ago in the Early Church that for many, their faith was more for show, and they were neglecting to live out their faith. “Show me your faith without your works,” he wrote, “and I will show you my faith by my works.” (James 2:18-19) This, and the above Scriptures, place emphasis on what a person does and how they live,

rather than on their belief system, as the measure of whether or not they are coming “*into the light*”, of their standing with God (their sainthood).

In the Beatitudes, Jesus called those “*blessed*” who practise the virtues of peace-making, purity of heart, meekness, mercy, who seek for righteousness or get persecuted for righteousness’ sake. (Matthew 5:3-12) Evidently, the Lord is not nearly as interested in our professed belief system as He is in the attitudes of our heart and how they affect the world around us.

Well, this is a big subject and is covered more fully in other posts: [“Who Are God’s People?”](#) and [“Salvation by Works?”](#)

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