Revelation 18 posts:

5: Second Angel's Proclamation (18:1-3)
6A: Warning Voice from Heaven (18:4-8)
6B: Voice from Heaven Continues! And the Crash? (18:9-11)
6C: No More Trade, No More Luxury (18:12-20)
7: A Mighty Angel's Millstone (18:21-24)
Appendix 4: Rise of the Merchant Class (Colonial Era)
Appendix 5: Rise of the Merchant Class (20th Century and Beyond)

See also Revelation 17 posts:

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Appendix 5: Rise of the Merchant Class (20th Century and Beyond)

Around the turn of the 20th Century, the world saw another dramatic upsurge in the power of money and the merchant class through the introduction of *laissez-faire* capitalism (when restrictions on trade and commercial exchange all but disappeared). The original idea brought forth by Adam Smith in the 18th century provided some useful guidance: break away from rigid, controlled economies and allow more freedom in the economic realm.

And the new philosophy did help individuals and nations to prosper. The virtue of free enterprise came to the fore. In this respect, the new system had its advantages. And these virtues are enshrined now in the term "democracy", with its noble ideals of freedom, individualism, universal voting.

But the new system's fatal weakness centered around the fact that the big merchants now had free rein to dominate the economic landscape. It was different in ancient times. In the Roman system, the military enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy since its loyalty was directed to the state rather than a monarch and his descendants. The Caesars, many of whom were former generals, were thus able to use the army to keep the merchant class under control. And later on in the era of monarchical

governments, kings with their loyal armed forces could keep the merchants under their control.

But with the rise of a powerful merchant class and the advent of republicanism, *laissez-faire* economics, and democratic ideals, that control was loosened. In fact, the military in many countries became the tool of the merchant class, instead of the tool of a monarch or dictator.

As so often happens, the forces of Darkness like to usurp mankind's useful ideas and inventions, corrupting and distorting them in such a way as to harness them into serving a destructive purpose instead of the constructive one for which they were originally intended. And so, it wasn't long before the seemingly noble ideals of *laissez-faire* economics degenerated into a greedy scramble for the almighty Dollar and the good life.

In like manner, the noble concept of Democracy, which was supposed to mean rule by the people and freedom from tyranny, provided a loophole through which the commercial/capitalist forces could enter into nations and gain the upper hand in controlling their affairs. Instead of the ideal, republican, democratic system in which authority stems from the people through responsible, elected representatives, wealth began more and more to override that authority and became the new basis of power in the world.

These forces of military devastation and economic deprivation that ravage the Earth were also portrayed in another form as the *"black horse"* and *"red horse"* in Revelation 6:4-6. And the two work together. Warmongers and arms merchants connive in cooperation with each other. They start wars or prolong wars.

And as a result the merchants profit from selling weapons to both sides in a conflict or from collecting interest on massive war debts, and in many other ways. All this deceit and double-dealing, just for selfish gain. No principles or conscience among an elite whose aim is not to govern but to make a profit.

***"He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress."* (Hosea 12:7 – KJV) These words referred originally to the**

dishonest traders who were corrupting the nation of ancient Israel, but they echo loudly through the ages to describe what is going on in the modern *Harlot* empire. *"For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived."* (Revelation 18:23)

Giving so much power to the people (in democracies) has often played into the hands of the money moguls, for the "people" can be manipulated easily via the media. In theory the "people" are supposed to be in control. In practice those wealthy enough to guide the thinking of the people through the media – as well as pay off the politicians – end up dominating the political landscape. And so, time and again, the wealthy have fooled "the people" and caused governments to implement policies favorable to them, or to oust those governments not cooperating with them.

And so the arrival of democracy turned into a springboard that enabled the merchant class to catapult itself into supremacy. And sometimes in the other direction, "democracy" has worked as the means by which military dictatorships were able to rise to power (as in Hitler Germany).

Just as the military dominated the ancient Roman world, so the business-commercial forces have grown so strong and organized that they now dominate the world in modern times. That doesn't mean that the influence of *"iron"* has petered out; it still exists everywhere in the modern world. For as Daniel 2:41 states, *"Yet the strength of the iron shall be in it."*

Similar to the rise of European colonialism in the former era, commercial interests have led the way to enlarging America's borders – the borders of her Dollar capitalist empire and media culture. And this is somewhat different from the ancient Roman conquest, which was accomplished mostly by means of military invasions and occupations. So the American empire is an example of one where iron and clay *"mix"*. Or more accurately, big business enlists the military whenever it can't deceive nations into surrendering their resources. In this way the *"merchants"* of the *Harlot* empire are able to bear rule over much of the world.

Now besides the rise of democracy, there is another factor that has

boosted the power of the *"merchants".* As mentioned in Appendix 4, the great expansion of scientific knowledge and technology over the last 150 years or so has unlocked the Earth's resources in ways those in olden time could not have imagined. This greater access to resources has led to an increased flow of wealth in the world of trade and industry. And through their clever manipulation of the world's purse strings and means of exchange, the financial wheeler-dealers have acquired a disproportionate and tremendous share of this new-found wealth.

This new technology has also introduced new avenues of power: rulers now have the capacity to keep a close surveillance over vast populations through the use of omniscient computer information systems; the same computer technology has facilitated financial transactions, making it easier for the ultra-rich to increase their wealth; in addition, modern media systems enable rulers to psychologically manipulate the masses, and this has proven effective in the game of installing new leaders or deposing them.

And so it has come to pass in the modern world that, because of advanced technology, these grand new domains of power are flourishing, which, in times past, existed only in a very primitive stage. Judging by what Revelation 13:11-18 says, it looks as if these new avenues of power belong, or are about to belong, under the jurisdiction of the *"beast from the earth"*, whose leadership, it appears, will have access to great storehouses of wealth. And the same power has belonged to the *"merchants"* of the *Great Harlot,* the *"great men of the earth"* by whose *"sorcery all the nations were deceived."* (Revelation18:23)

From behind the scenes, these wealthy power-brokers pull the strings that cause certain events to happen according to their wishes on the world stage. And they have succeeded in this, using the new avenues of power available to them to structure a modern style of empire – the *Great Harlot* – based on the power of wealth and all that it controls.

In these modern times the *"merchants"* have become organized and seem to have a definite plan for ruling the world. (Refer to Post 6B.) Whereas in ages past their influence was more fragmented.

But along with the *Harlot* empire, another commercial empire – the

Earth-Beast **– is rising up. By combining with the other *"beast from the sea"*, this is structuring a rival empire, with its modern style of religion – a secular one based on Materialism and demagogic worship of the Antichrist.**

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Example of How the *"Merchants"* have Worked in Recent History

Although we may sense that a new controlling body, not under the thumb of national or international governments, has arisen in today's world, where or how this historical reality is emerging can be difficult to pinpoint. Because of the unsavory nature of their activities, these mega-*"merchants"* tend to cover their tracks as best they can. As a result very little is taught in mainstream history books about their activities.

However, some courageous historians have tried to do so. The following quotes, for example, offer a glimpse at how these behind-the-scenes power-brokers influenced the course of history in World War II. (From *Descent into Slavery* by Des Griffin, 1980:)

◊ (Pgs. 156-157, about the course of fighting in the middle of World War II:)

> **Why wasn't the Allies' "tremendous fighting machine" allowed to continue its powerful advance from northern Italy up through the "soft underbelly" of Europe towards the heart of Hitler's Germany? What was the real reason behind the fact that [German] Kesselring's army, which was reeling in disarray before the onslaught of the Allied Fifth Army, was allowed to regroup, reorganize and rearm so that it could continue the struggle for nearly another two years?**
>
> **It is generally acknowledged by military experts that, had the Allies taken the logical and direct route to Germany, four important results would have occurred:**
>
> **(1) The duration of the war would have been shortened by at least a year.**
> **(2) The lives of more than 100,000 Allied troops would have been spared;**

(3) The United States National Debt that resulted from the war, would have been greatly reduced, and
(4) The political face of Europe would have been vastly different. [Eastern Europe would have been spared from the oppression of communism; the whole world might have been spared from the 20th century Cold War.]

The answers to the above questions are as simple as they are shocking. The men who were outwardly "leading" the United States – Roosevelt, Marshall and Eisenhower – were under strict orders from their hidden masters [*"merchants… great men of the earth"* – Revelation 18:23] to conduct the concluding stages of the war in the European "theater" in such a manner that [their hidden masters'] goals… would be furthered. It was of no concern to the international power brokers that the delay in finishing the war resulted in hundreds of thousands of needless deaths, and unnecessary expenditure of many billions of dollars. They view humanity as so much cannon fodder to be used in the accomplishment of their Satanic purpose.

◊ **(Pg. 162)**

We have seen clear evidence that the top authorities in Washington forbade the Allied army to strike for the heart of Hitler's Germany following the victorious Italian campaign in 1943. Dramatic evidence has also been presented to prove that at the same time as huge numbers of Allied troops were being diverted in order to participate in an irrelevant invasion of Southern France, the top officials in Washington refused to pay any attention to repeated German offers to surrender. As a result of those apparently senseless "blunders", dramatic changes took place in the political make-up of Europe. The course of history was changed!

The reader must grasp the fact that although these amazing and unprecedented events "staggered" and "startled" individuals like Commander Earle, General Mark Clark, General Kesselring and Admiral Canaris, these same decisions made a lot of sense to the unseen manipulators who were calling the shots and pulling the strings behind the scenes. They were working to a definite plan. They had their strategy clearly marked out.

◊ (Pg. 180)

> **Who was responsible for the barbaric Dresden Massacre which took place when Germany was clearly beaten and when no strategic purpose could be served by such wanton destruction and loss of life? "I can only say," states Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, the top man in the British Air Force, "that the attack on Dresden was at the time considered a military necessity by much more important people than myself" (*Bomber Offensive*, 1947, P, 242).**
>
> **Those "much more important people" were obviously the men who were running the European "theater of war" for their own profit and for their own ends. They were clearly looking beyond the end of the war, to the vast fortunes that could be picked up in "redevelopment projects" in such cities as Dresden. The fact that millions of "peasants" were incinerated in such "urban renewal" projects was of no import to them.**
>
> **The destruction of human life is of little importance to those who would rule the world!**

◊ (Pg. 201)

> **World War II, which had been prolonged for up to two years to permit the Soviets to occupy Eastern Europe, cost the United States a staggering $400 Billion and raised the National Debt to $220 Billion. This forced the United States deeper into the clutches of the international bankers.**

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The above quotes mention a few times the term "hidden masters", something which may require some explanation. In the *Book of Revelation,* they were termed the *"merchants… the great men of the earth"* by whose sorcery *"all the nations were deceived".* (18:23) They are the evil geniuses behind the *Harlot* empire that has controlled much of the world since about the mid-20th century.

Regarding the historical misdeeds mentioned in the above quotes, needless to say, these are not much advertised or known to the general public. And such activities didn't stop with World War II. They are still

going on; it's just that the behind-the-scenes manipulators prefer to remain out of sight, for that makes it easier for them to carry on with their power-brokering. Although governments appear to be in control, behind the scenes the *"merchants… the great men of the earth"* are going about their business – by which *"all the nations were deceived."* (Revelation 18:23)

This façade of political respectability provides a useful cover for all the dirty dealings, corruption, deception, murder, and mayhem these *"merchants"* engineer behind the scenes to make sure their plans get carried out. So much corruption going on under the veneer of respectability that governments and politicians try to exude on behalf of their hidden masters. Thank God for those brave government officials, and some of the ultra-wealthy, who do try to stand up for truth, justice, and righteousness. But unfortunately, they are few and far between in our present world system.

In contrast to the "hidden masters" (the *"merchants"*), the *"beast"* governments *"from the sea"* have visible rulers whom the people acknowledge, respect, or even worship. (Revelation 17:15 explains the *"sea"* symbolism: *"the waters which you saw… are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."*) And so, in addition to the military, this loyalty and patriotism from their people provide a powerful engine that can strengthen a *Sea-Beast* superpower into a potent, ruling force.

But the *Harlot* empire operates in a different way. Her *"merchants"* govern secretly from behind the scenes – and don't have to interact in the same way with the people. They leave that up to their puppets, the politicians. A legion of conspiracy advocates have tried to expose the inner workings of this, what amounts to a world government carrying on behind the scenes, whose power is based on its control of the world's wealth.

Even if we don't believe all the conspiracy theories, there is still such a preponderance of evidence that it would be naïve to deny the existence of a powerful ruling force operating behind the scenes, exercising a considerable degree of control over world affairs through its crafty manipulation of financial resources. (For more discussion on this, see Footnote.)

In spiritual terms, the Revelation Book sums it up well: *"For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived."* (18:23) From this Scripture we learn that *"the great men of the earth"*, these *"merchants"*, exercise control over society through deception and even, it would seem, the use of spiritual power (from the Dark side – *"sorcery"*).

In that chapter 18 of the Revelation Book these *"merchants"* are the leaders of the *"great harlot"*, a term that was symbolic of the commercial system that was to rule the world during the Modern Age.

The chapters of Revelation 17-18 graphically portray this *"harlot"* as a powerful empire in the Last Days, one which saturates the nations with her shameful, corrupting influence: *"the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication… having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication… the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury… her sins have reached to heaven… "* (17:2,4, 18:3,5)

(*"Fornication"* is a term for a type of sexual activity common in the ancient Mediterranean world: sexual favors associated with demon worship. That is, prostitution was a way of canvassing for local pagan temples. Thus, *"fornication"* is used symbolically here to depict how the modern religion of Materialism, like ancient temple prostitution, is aggressively drawing the world away from faith in God and obedience to His ways and into the worship of Materialism – the modern equivalent to the worship of the demon god Mammon.)

Not a very complimentary picture is given then in the Sacred Book of these backroom power-brokers who, as we've learned, caused so much devastation in World War II; and who knows what havoc they are wreaking nowadays? It is difficult to know much about their activities because, as the Revelation Scripture points out, they are masters of deception. (*"By your sorceries all the nations were deceived."*) And we seldom learn about how they were the cause of the mayhem until long after it has passed.

Going back to the 19th Century, we can get a revealing look at a time when the commercial forces' struggle for supremacy came to a major head in the U.S. during the rule of President Andrew Jackson (1828-1836). Back

then, the European money-lenders were conniving to infiltrate the banking system of the resource-rich nation of America. Jackson realized what was going on and fought hard to prevent the money system from falling into the hands of private bankers. His summation of the perils that lay ahead if his opponents should win out is contained in the following statement:

> **◊ "Controlling our currency, receiving our public moneys, and holding thousands of our citizens in dependence… would be more formidable and dangerous than a military power of the enemy." (Andrew Jackson's speech to Congress, 1832)**

This echoes similar, earlier statements from Thomas Jefferson:

> **◊ "I sincerely believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies (1813)… The issuing power should be taken away from the banks and restored to the people to whom it properly belongs." (1816)**

Around the turn of the century, monopoly capitalists re-gained control, and eventually, the American money system fell to the private bankers in the form of the creation of the Federal Reserve (in 1913). The same has happened in much of the rest of the world, which has surrendered control of its money systems to the rule of these elite bankers (whom we may consider as the real heads of the *"great harlot"* empire).

And the world has seen the sad results in the last century: the unnecessary or prolonged wars, the Great Depression and recent Recession, the extreme poverty and debt-ridden condition of many Third World countries, inequality between rich and poor, military devastation of nations who refuse to bend to the will of the *Harlot's "merchants",* and many other woes can be traced back to the behind-the-scenes meddling of the mega-merchants and bankers.

And of course, there was World War II which, as mentioned above, dragged on – a series of incredible blunders and poor decisions made because of the meddling influence of wealthy, behind-the-scenes power brokers who were trying to profit as much as they could from the War.

By way of contrast, ancient Rome, the original *"iron"* power, fought its

wars with greater efficiency. And so will the modern *"iron"* power, of whom it was written, *"Who is able to make war with him?"* (Revelation 13:4) This modern *Beast* from the *sea* will have the backing (rather than the interference) of the commercial side of operations (symbolized as the *"beast coming out of the earth"*).

Over the last century the commercial powers seem to have dominated the political landscape, especially those who are based in America. But the commercial system is destined to suffer decline in the future. This is a whole other subject which is described vividly in Revelation 17-18. These chapters portray the eventual fall of the commercial system, symbolized there as the *"great harlot".* That is a lengthy study, and there are several posts in this series to explain how to apply those prophetic passages to historical reality.

A brief summation here: The *"harlot"* stands for the once-loyal *"bride"*, a godly people who had once observed the statutes of their God but then went astray and thus transformed into a *"harlot"*. She will oppose the Antichrist's rise to power, but because of her own corruption and poor example to the world, God will have to allow her to fail in this and suffer a great collapse.

On the other hand, another commercial empire, symbolized as *"clay"* in the Daniel 2 vision and as the *Earth-Beast/False Prophet* in Revelation 13, has also started to rise. Instead of fighting against the Antichrist *Beast,* as the *Harlot* is doing, this *Beast* (likely the Chinese superpower) will pave the way for the Antichrist's rise to power. So, although the *Great Harlot* and the *False Prophet Beast* are similar in that their power is based in the commercial/trading system and ability to supply the world's material needs, there are some major differences.

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Footnote: Role of conspiracy theory

To a great extent, conspiracy theory has preoccupied itself with the belief that subterranean, secret organizations are running things, calling the shots on the world stage. What appears on the surface of history as a tide of random events are actually planned by those behind-the-scenes

power-brokers – the money masters of the world. These are the *"merchants"* of Revelation 18:23, *"the great men of the earth"* by whose *"sorcery all the nations were deceived."*

But these hidden masters, whoever they are, are destined to collapse – they and their wealth and influence and their nations – as the Eurasian superpower integrates and rises up to grab the reins of power in the world. So whatever conspiratorial "plans" the *Harlot* empire hopes to implement in the world nowadays will come crashing down.

The evil powers of spiritual Darkness have their own plans, of course – to shift their base of operations from the old "new world order" of America to the new "new world order" of Eurasia. And in time Eurasia will become the new oppressor. Instead of being oppressed by western Capitalism (symbolized as the *Great Harlot*), the world will be oppressed by the new socialist "utopia" of Eurasia. This is the final *Beast* with its imposition of the mark-number system of rule and regulation. And for the time being, God is allowing the Eurasian power to rise. We might say it is the lesser of two evils.

As far as political systems go, there will be a great shift away from selfish, unregulated Capitalism to the system of Socialism. And this will help to resolve many of the problems of modern society. And we should go along with it. Socialism is the need of the hour: more government guidance to share the wealth and to replace the profit-motive *modus operandi* of the *"merchants".* The American ideal of rugged individualism and free enterprise has degenerated into greedy, capitalist oppression and a chaotic world situation.

But eventually, the new socialism will go astray, sliding into totalitarian control. Even now the world is getting some experience with that in the pandemic. As chaos and uncertainty increase, government control will become more of a necessity. The problem as always: the forces of Darkness are right there to carry it too far, exercising more control over individual freedom than is needed.

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