

Chapter 4

The Head and the Harlot

An Adulterous Woman

Many times in Scripture our Lord uses the analogy of the church as his bride, or body. Even in the Old Testament, quite often the Hebrew people are given a corporate female identity. In the case with Israel, our Lord quite often describes her as being an adulterous woman. During this study please consider, if you are married, what it is like to have a partner having all the negative qualities mentioned in this chapter that are attributed to the early Hebrew betrothed “bride.” In Scripture our Lord quite often gives a masculine identity to leaders (Mt. 9:15) in his kingdom and a feminine identity to those of the laity (Mt. 25:1, Rev. 21:2). He consistently describes Himself with the male gender and very often the entire church with the feminine gender. Only in Proverbs is one of His attributes described with feminine characteristics (Prov. 1:20, 2:14, 2:18).

The Control of Satan Versus the Influence of the Holy Spirit

Before looking at “The Two,” who are actually the antithesis of the top Hebrew priesthood, we explore some of the facets of Israel that displeases our Lord so much. The interchange between the Hebrew priesthood and Jesus gives us significant insight into identifying what our Lord does not like in those who call themselves his leaders (then or now). There is an extreme contrast between the old iniquity-filled priesthood at the end of the last age and the new warrior-prophetic priesthood (the eleven, Paul, and others) at the beginning of this age. There is only one thing that seems to make a difference, and that is the control of the Holy Spirit within the corporate laity and the top leadership. At the end of the last age, the serpent (Satan) is in full control of the majority of the Levitical priesthood. After Jesus ascends and sends His Holy Spirit back, what a change occurs in the eleven who are left and others who call on His name! Please understand that this book may be written for a future generation of leaders who may well be in the world at this time. That makes it important to know the mistakes that are made during the last age as well as in this age!

Many Christians prefer to be pleasing in their Lord’s sight and offer up clean hands that He can utilize for His glory. This cleansing they cannot do by themselves however; the Lord must do it for them. Heartfelt prayers toward the fulfillment of that goal (sanctification) should be an honest request from a humble and contrite spirit. This request our Lord is always pleased to answer. Many Christians parade proudly about today claiming to be “filled” with the Spirit. Yet after a prolonged examination of their spiritual fruit, very little fruit can be discerned. What is observed is a life displaying a total compromise with the world and a rebellion against God. Does He not say in AC 5:32 *"And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him"*? This Scripture implies that His Spirit is given to those who obey Him, does it not? If this is so, then those people living lives of

debauchery and showing no fruit of the Spirit shouldn't make the prideful claim that displays such hypocrisy.

Following the Law Versus a Personal Relationship With the Lord

Our Lord tells us in the Gospels that we cannot serve both money and God. Jesus expresses divine anger at placing the acquisition of money for selfish use over true prayer (Mt 21:12-14). During the last age the temple was made of stone, today it is made of flesh indwelt by the Spirit, and that makes all the difference. The entire true church houses His Holy Spirit and is often referred to in Scripture as his body or his bride; this doesn't include the tares. Baby Christians, who give the corporate church today such a bad image, have a deposit of the Spirit but have not been brought to the level of obedience as yet to receive the anointing for service. Picture a small shot glass filled to overflowing with water as an analogy for a baby Christian. A large wine goblet filled to overflowing with new sparkling wine is an image of a mature Christian about ready to be poured out for a display of the Lord's glory. We need to reflect on the need for renewing our minds resulting in a spiritual walk displaying cleanness, particularly if we are in positions of authority in the church. Is our prayer life pleasing to our Lord? Do we have mercy, compassion, and the desire to set captives free?

We live in an age of grace; that means we do not have to conform immediately to the law. Many Protestants today say we do not have to conform at all to the law! If you would accept the true Law as being the perfect will of our Lord and husband, then why would we not wish to be conformed to it out of Love for Him and gratitude for what He has done for us (albeit knowing we can never completely satisfy it)? Jesus says that not one bit of the law is nullified. I believe we are given a way to grow toward obedience. We can refute every accusation of the law while standing under the blood, but this does not mean we should not choose to listen to see if there is truth in those accusations; if there is, then we need to repent and ask for help to become like our Lord. Does He not command, "*Be Holy as I am Holy*" (1 Pe 1:16)? It is interesting that one of the first things a young Christian is asked to do in many of today's denominations is to "conform to the law" in regards to the tithe before he or she displays any of the first fruits of the Spirit. He is told to serve in many different ways so that he might be blessed, in other words give to get back. Shouldn't the motive be to give in love and gratitude for what has been done for him? Shouldn't the motive be to come into a more personal relationship with the Lord? Note the words of Jesus below:

MT 21:12 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

MT 21:13 And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

Thieves, our Lord states, do not enter the Kingdom of Heaven (1 Cor. 6:10). In Isa. 1:23 our Lord places thieves in the same category as those who take bribes, those who do not defend the fatherless, and those who have no concern for widows. Again in Luke 10:30 He identifies a thief as one who takes clothing, wounds others, and causes

death. Today in many Christian denominations there are people in high positions who are wreaking havoc among the sheep. We observe that at the end of the last age as well as this one the level of depravity, or iniquity, particularly among those who rule among the nations as well as within the church, is allowed to increase.

At the end of this age we will see a significant increase in deception, depravity, and iniquity even among those who are supposed to feed and protect the flock. Tares who are in the church with the wheat will grow strong and will take positions of authority lording it over the true bride for a while. Even today the leadership of many large Christian denominations are approving and promoting significant apostasy.

Headship, or Credit Desired and Taken by the “Woman”

In Rev. 13:1 we are shown a beast that comes up out of the sea. From a study of *sea*, the sea appears to represent *all those of our world who do not belong to Christ*; this great “sea” has at its head Satan, the great leviathan, as described in Job. This corporate individual contains people of the world and they are pawns for Satan. However in Rev. 13:11 we see a second beast coming up out of the earth. The *earth* in many cases is the antithesis of the sea and may refer to *those who call themselves Christians* (echoing the forming of Adam from the earth)! In going back to Rev. 13:11-18 we see that this individual, the second beast, masquerades as a lamb with two horns; he looks like a gentle individual who has power (horns), but in reality he acts like the great dragon (Satan). This corporate entity has a religious background and appears to be very gentle but in reality is a deceiver. He is quite adept at deceiving those of the “earth,” that is, those of the false church, but remember in all of this that our Lord is in control. All the testing described in Revelation is to separate the wheat from the chaff (tares). Our Lord loses not one who belongs to Him (John 10:27-29). Many who say they are Christians today are deceived.

In the parable of the vineyard below, when Jesus speaks against the Pharisees, He points out their failings. The vinedressers are the Pharisees and they want the entire inheritance that actually belongs to our Christ and to His true bride. Consider all of the things that you are thankful for as well as the depth of your particular spiritual worship. Would you care to give credit for all of it to the clergy or to Christ?

Indeed the priesthood of the previous age wanted all that should have properly been attributed to our Christ, given to them. What kind of a spouse would that make for you? One who wanted all the credit and glory that was due you. One who was envious of the husband/wife and actually competed with him/her not expressing any joy when he/she succeeded in doing great things. (When I write “great things” I refer not to the works done for self-gratification or self edification, which indeed may look great, but to the works ordained by God and under His direction.)

MT 21:38 "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'

MT 21:41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

The first vinedressers mentioned above are the leadership of the religious Jews of the last age. In Mt. 21:41 Jesus states what He will do to those who usurp His unique position. Destruction is prescribed for them and a giving of the vineyard to another group (the true church) who recognizes and points to Him for His glory and His work. He gains the respect and proper recognition for His all-encompassing part in the fruit production of the vineyard (true church). A Scripture in Song of Songs points to the proper attitude that a loving wife should have for her husband. Please understand that this refers to male and female Christians, as we are all part of the bride.

SO 8:12 My own vineyard is before me. You, O Solomon, may have a thousand, And those who tend its fruit two hundred.

In the above Scripture the beloved of Solomon (Solomon being a type of our Lord Jesus ruling and reigning and his beloved being a very mature believer) is willing to give credit where it is due. There is nothing in any of us that deserves recognition for the spiritual works we perform. What we have of value, even the good works laid out for each of us, cannot be done without our Lord. So then it is right for the Shulammitte (thought to be a group of very mature servant leader Christians of the future) to recognize that and give the glory to Him for the ability He gave to her. Did you notice that the one thousand and the two hundred add up to twelve hundred? Yes, the authority and ability to bear fruit in the vineyard (the church) that the Lord gives her she freely attributes to Him and others. She knows that she belongs to Him and that everything she has and is comes from him. This understanding she has denotes humility. There will be much more about the Shulammitte later in the study of The Two (see chapter 14).

Hypocrisy and Pride Connected With Leadership Compromise

We see many negative attributes of the Levitical priesthood described in the Scriptures below as well as the woes that follow them. Jesus enumerates all of these attributes and woes.

MT 23:2 ...saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

MT 23:3 "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

MT 23:4 "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

MT 23:5 "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

MT 23:6 "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

MT 23:7 "greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

In Mt 23:2 we see that the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. This is the position of a judge who defines and enforces the law. The Pharisees handled the law with no compassion or mercy; the spirit of Satan indwelt them. You could identify them as being synonymous with the top of the Tree of Good and Evil that grew in the Garden of Eden. In the next verse Jesus basically calls them hypocrites, a term we hear used to

describe some in the church today particularly by worldly people. In verse four He describes them as uncaring and unwilling to help; that is lacking compassion and failing to give mercy. Finally, in verses five, six, and seven we see significant evidence of pride. They derived pleasure and fulfillment in being seen and recognized by men. Men's opinions were more important to them than our Lord's desires. Even back at the beginning in Exodus, Aaron capitulated to please the people by giving them what they asked for instead of standing up for what the Lord required. The people asked for another god and Aaron gave them the golden calf. He certainly was not a good "shepherd of the sheep." It certainly sounds like Adam and Eve all over again; the headship capitulated and didn't stand with God but compromised the Lord's will so as to elicit favor and adulation from the laity. A leader who stands with what our Lord requires quite often may find some of the sheep turning against him. The tares will definitely display open antagonism against God's plans. In 2 Ti 4:3-5 Scripture points to the fact that in due time there will be those who will not put up with sound doctrine and will seek out false teachers to tell them what they want to hear. Does that sound a bit like today? A true Teacher-Shepherd will give the sheep what they need at the proper time, not what they may want (Matthew 24:45-46). This of course will exact a great cost from those who are true shepherds. In these end days, hopefully, the true sheep will find the true shepherds. A true shepherd will speak with the voice of the Lord and we know that the true sheep will not follow anyone but the Lord (John 10:27-29).

Looking at the woes that follow we see that each is connected with some form of rebellion against our Lord. Let's see specifically what aggravated and grieved Him.

MT 23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

In the above statement Jesus is stating that the Pharisees refuse to enter into heaven and actually prevent others from doing so as well. He calls them hypocrites here, and this word is repeated more often in these woes than any other word. They are pretending to represent Him but are actually representing an imposter and claiming the Lord's position for themselves. They are not His servants but the servant of another. They pretend to be His bride but are actually the bride of another as they obey the enemy.

MT 23:14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

In the above Scripture the devouring of widow's houses could be related to the Pharisees' love of money. The pretense of making long prayers would make them look important as well as spiritual in the eyes of others. A widow has little protection and is easily taken advantage of. This makes what they are doing to her doubly heinous. The inclusion of greed and false spirituality (false portrayal of a deep godly relationship) in the same sentence displays an awesome contrast. This certainly is a mark of pride and their true father Satan has always had a real problem with it. Note that greater condemnation awaits them. Leadership will be judged to a greater degree than laity, and

a teacher of the Word will be judged to a greater degree (James 3:1). Having the truth and living a lie is a disparity that will not be tolerated. Today many of those in the church promote a God of total “love” who is one who allows rampant disobedience to Him and yet still will say come into my Kingdom and I will marry you. This has become a dangerous lie, as it takes grace to the same extreme at the end of this age as the law was taken to at the end of the last age.

Foolish “Spiritual” Legalism, or a Critical Spirit

When Jesus and his disciples are hungry on the Sabbath, they pick grain in a field and eat it. The Pharisees condemn this action (Mt. 12:1-2). When Jesus heals on the Sabbath, the religious rulers of that day chastise Him (Mt. 12:10-12).

MT 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

The emphasis in the above Scripture is to win people to the Law as interpreted and twisted by Satan, and today it is to win those for Christ supposedly to develop a righteous balance in the use of law and grace. In many of our Lord's dispensations leadership points the way to God and to shepherd the Lord's people in such a way as to lead them to learn what our God requires. Then those who are His are able to fellowship with Him and be like Him and, yes, even enjoy Him as a husband and friend. The leaders of Jesus' day model Satan and encourage laity to do the same. Modeling is an important concept today. A leader should not be a hypocrite but should pray for the ability to model the very character of the One to whom he is pointing, our Christ (1Ti. 3:1-11).

MT 23:16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'

MT 23:17 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

MT 23:18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.'

MT 23:19 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

MT 23:20 "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.

MT 23:21 "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.

MT 23:22 "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

In all the above Scriptures, out of the book of Matthew, Jesus points out that the leaders of that time could not discern the ways of our Lord so as to teach truth. They use their own interpretations and teach falsehood to the people. He calls them fools and blind guides. To properly handle Scripture takes the work of the Holy Spirit. No man has the whole truth and should not pretend that he does. We need each other and the truth He

gives each of us. (I need you to analyze the truths presented in this book and to sift out what I cannot see and thereby correct it.) Denominations separate the people of God and often are a mark of pride (1 Co. 11:18). Christians prefer their denomination for various reasons: tradition, familial associations, music and praise, the minister, socioeconomic status, and many others. Have you ever heard someone say that they go to a particular church because they really feel loved and cared for? It is a rare response, but I have heard it.

MT 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

MT 23:24 "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

Here Jesus does say that the tithe should be paid by the leaders of that age who lived under the Old Covenant, the law. However He points out that they are so careful to meet every aspect of this portion of the law, probably as showmanship for others, but neglect the far more important aspects of the law. We still see a major problem like this among the leaders today in many churches. There really is nothing new under the sun; whatever was perverting the old system of the last age is creeping into the new. Indeed, that which originally is given form and is filled with His Spirit at the beginning of this age is now becoming formless and empty of His Spirit. There is one outstanding difference: the Holy Spirit is within the true sheepfold today. That true sheepfold seems to be distributed rather sparsely throughout the entire secular Christian church. Some of these sheep refuse to enter the doors of any denomination today and simply stay home and fellowship with others in their home churches. Do they make up the true *ecclesia*, the called out ones?

Uncleanness, or Rebellion Related to Motives

MT 23:25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

MT 23:26 "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

MT 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

MT 23:28 "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Jesus has much to say regarding the actual condition of the hearts of these rulers and judges of Israel. He spends more time addressing the issue of the internal uncleanness, or lack of change, within these people than any other topic. This chief complaint of our Lord is that they falsely attempt to portray what is correct on the outside, yet inside the motives are entirely self-oriented. Scripture does address a double-tongued and a double-minded man (1Ti. 3:8, Jas. 1:8).

I do not think it would be stretching it too far to say that some religious rulers meet the negative criteria of these two Scriptures. Two woes are pronounced against these two closely associated character traits. Many nonbelievers and believers, who forsake the fellowship of the saints, use the excuse that people in the church are “hypocrites.” Could it be that we in the church are no longer placing emphasis on spiritual maturity but on numbers? If sin (uncleanness) is preached against from the pulpit, is it not called meddling? Then there are the tares that inhabit the church --- people who have joined for social reasons and are not truly saved. The problem Jesus addresses above did not disappear at the end of the last age but is rampant in the modern church. Few churches address sin within their ranks, and when they do, they often make a mess of it. It is not something easily addressed. Sin may well be dealt with but often with the same legalistic attitude of the Pharisees. Mercy and compassion are often missing and the motive for addressing sinful behavior is often not to restore but to “get even” or dismiss the child of God. In most cases, sin is not dealt with at all under the mistaken assumption that we live in an age of grace so we all may do as we wish anyway. Frequently as long as someone is placing funds in the pot, particularly a significant amount, the thinking is to not offend them or ask them to change!

Finally, looking at the seventh woe pronounced by Jesus, we notice it is against the scribes and Pharisees because of their false public adulation of those who went before them doing the will of our Lord. By praising a righteous man, these rulers attempt to draw recognition to themselves as being righteous as well. Our Lord views this act of hypocritical adoration as a travesty. Some denominations today hold out the hook, the Savior Jesus Christ, and then after the people come into their sheep pen, utterly pervert them by feeding false doctrine for the purpose of taking them captive to work as willing slaves. This is an attribute of many Christian cults.

MT 23:29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous. And you say, “If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.”

A Review List of Negative Attributes

Although there are many others, let’s look at a partial list of those things our Lord points out in the old priesthood that should have no place today in His modern day church leadership:

- They didn’t practice what they preached.
- They placed loads on people and would not help to lift them off.
- Everything they did was for men to see.
- They loved the place of honor.
- They called themselves teachers when there is only one teacher.
- It’s possible they called themselves father because Jesus told his own not to use that term to refer to themselves because there is only one Father.
- They prevented people, who wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven, from entering.
- They made converts and formed in them copies of themselves.

- They pretended to know God's ways and yet perverted his Word.
- They selected portions of the law to obey and left out the more important parts.
- They pretended to be righteous by performing traditional rituals.
- They were greedy and self-indulgent.
- They were full of hypocrisy and wickedness.
- They gave insincere praise and recognition to those righteous prophets who had been killed in times past.

Jesus actually tells them that He was going to send to them prophets, wise men, and teachers. He also states that they would kill and crucify them. These men He talks about include the eleven left of the twelve plus Paul, Stephen, and many others in the early church. The Hebrew priesthood, to whom Jesus speaks, does all the things they say they would never do to these men. My dear reader, as you survey the list above, how many of these attributes can you find in the church leadership today? (Now if you have only served in one church your whole life and in one denomination perhaps you should reserve your answer until a later date.) Understand that the above list contains many of the antitheses of the true qualities that are found in "The Two," those whom our Lord chooses to be very close to Him, at the end of this age.

The Promise for a Remnant at the End of This Age

Understand that a portion of Israel has a promise: at the end of this age, after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, a remnant of the Jews are remembered and blessed. Note this in the parable of the fig tree below:

LU 13:7 "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?'

LU 13:8 "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.

LU 13:9 'And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "

The *fig tree* is symbolic of *the country of Israel and all that belong to her*. Remember when Jesus curses the fig tree because it has no fruit (Mt. 21:19, Mr. 11:21)? This occurs at the end of the last age during a time when His Spirit has not been given to those who belong to Israel. But all Israel is not Israel; there is a portion that has denied him over and over, and there is a portion that He will take and bless at the end of this age by making them part of His bride. Our Lord is entreating the Father to spare the fig tree until the end of this age when He will give of His Spirit to the remnant of the Jews who are called. These are then grafted (Rom. 11:24) into the olive tree (the tree of life) but they will actually no longer be the fig tree but will bear much fruit at that time. The other Israel that does not bear fruit (the fig tree) is cut down at the end of this age; that work is done by the antichrist authorized by the Father.

The following verses prophetically treat the end day's restoration of a portion of the Israeli people. This occurs as another portion of Israel is prepared for destruction.

HO 1:10 "Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'

In their own land of Israel they are told, "*you are not my people,*" and soon in that same land many of them are called '*sons of the living God.*' This happens to those who accept Christ as Savior at the end of this age.

HO 1:11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; they shall come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel!

The day of Jezreel ("*God scatters,*" so as to sew grain in the field ¹⁸ or "*God plants,*"²⁹) is our Lord's Day for the reaping of the remnant of Israel. (This subject will be treated in much greater depth in chapters that cover the seals, which are opened during the tribulation week.) This remnant has now been gathered back together again in the land of Israel. Soon many of them appointed for salvation will approve of the fact that Jesus is their "one head!"

Below, Gomer is given as a type of apostate Israel, and Hosea is told to divorce her due to her behavior toward him as her husband. Finally, after a time, Hosea is told to buy her back as a type of our Lord buying with the blood of Christ a loved one who had turned her back on Him years before.

HO 3:1 Then the Lord said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the Lord for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love the raisin cakes of the pagans."

HO 3:2 So I bought her for myself for fifteen shekels of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley.

Hosea, obedient to his Lord, bought her back for fifteen shekels of silver as well as with some barley and lived with her for the rest of his days. *Fifteen* seems to signify *the cost of removal from a place of sin* and it also seems to be used to denote *Israel or a portion that will be redeemed*. *Silver* marks a *redemptive act* and *salvation*. *Barley* is associated with the quality that results from that process. The Barley crop is the early wheat and does not have the quality that the fall wheat crop is known for. Apparently many are saved as though from the fire and perhaps do not have time to grow a great deal of fruit. There is Scripture that also implies that many of the Jews are to have an incredible empowering at the end of the age (RO. 11:12). "*Now, if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!*" Quite probably, as with the Gentile portion of the bride, there is at that time a laity and priesthood associated with the Hebrew portion of the bride. I believe our Lord above is describing the laity being brought in as the barley crop.

To be honest, there is one more possible way to look at this. Jesus, while on the cross, pays for the spring rains of Pentecost that allows the barley crop (early Christians) to flourish and mature. It might be that this barley alludes to the same sacrifice that

Christ makes making it possible at the end of the age for the called Jews to repent and receive what Christ pays for them.

The Harlot

HO 2:5 For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has behaved shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.'

Finally in showing attributes of the harlot, the above Scripture describes her and her iniquity. This is Israel, lost and depraved. Not only does she run after others but also gives credit to others for what her lawful husband gives her (Hosea 2:8). Contrast this with what is below after she hears and sees Him resulting in being alive and bearing much fruit! He gives His Spirit to her.

HO 14:8 "Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do anymore with idols?' I have heard and observed him. I am like a green cypress tree; your fruit is found in Me."

Looking back up to the above list of negative traits shown to be in the Pharisees, you can find almost every one of the above attributes in many of today's spiritual leaders of Christianity to some degree. True, we are covered with the blood and are under grace. Nevertheless it is still rebellion, and I am sure it must grieve our Lord. I believe there is a time coming, and it is very close, that our Lord will raise up a new group of warrior prophetic priests --- an end day's priesthood of apostles and prophets who walk before Him with a true mature righteousness. Quite possibly some of the so-called "old guard" does not recognize them for who they are and persecute them as the Pharisees persecuted Christ and those who belonged to Him. These apostle-prophets I refer to as "The Two."

Two corporate entities are revealed at a later proper time and fulfill their duties to our Lord. They go through a terrible time of refining in our Lord's purging fire before they are permitted to take up their ministries. During that time they look quite unclean to others and to themselves. True repentance, and the honest change that accompanies it, allows them to become as white as snow and their subsequent empowering is incredible. The cost to them is letting go of everything that they might have valued in this world and placing the Lord's interests above all. Their reward in this world for all their work and sacrifice, in bringing this age to an end and starting the next age, is quite likely death that insures a great victory.

So then, where are the Scriptures that allude to this end day's juggernaut of super Christians, The Two, whom I believe our Lord is presently building? What do they look like before their empowering? And if the following chapters are true about The Two, then how shall they be viewed or thought of by the present church --- this special loyal and much loved dual group of our Lord? What is our part to play in their formation and their purpose? How can we be of help so that they might become all God wants them to be? And then you might consider carefully, as did the ancient Pharisaical leadership in their day, what is the place of the present leadership after they arrive?