

04 BABYLON, THE HARLOT OF REVELATION, WAS FIRST CENTURY JERUSALEM

1. The Harlot is called “Mystery Babylon.” Rev. 17:5

This suggests she is not the literal city of Babylon.

2. Babylon is the mother of harlots. Rev. 17:5

Israel/Jerusalem was repeatedly referred to as a harlot in the Old Testament.

- A. “For their mother has played the harlot... for she said, ‘I will go after my lovers,’” Hosea 2:5, 4:15
- B. “How the faithful city has become a harlot.” Is. 1:21
- C. “Upon every high hill and under every green tree you wander, playing the harlot.” Jer. 2:20, 5:7
- D. “All her idols I make a desolation, for from the hire of a harlot she gathered them...” Micah 1:7
- E. Extensive story of Jerusalem playing the harlot (“R-rated”). Ezek. 16
- F. Another extensive story of Jerusalem (also “R-rated”) playing the harlot. Ezek. 23

3. Babylon is the Great City. Rev. 11:8, 17, 18

- A. Roman historian, Pliny the Elder (AD 43-79), named Jerusalem “by far the most famous city” of the ancient orient.
- B. The breath-taking beauty of Jerusalem caused the Jewish Rabbis to say, “Whoever has not seen Jerusalem in her splendor has never seen a beautiful city.”
- C. “The Jerusalem temple was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and at first rising of the sun, reflected back a fiery splendor and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun’s own rays.” (Josephus, Jewish historian)
- D. Jerusalem stood at the crossroads of trade between three continents.

4. Babylon is allegorically called Sodom. Rev. 11:8

Only Jerusalem/Israel is symbolically called Sodom in the Old Testament.

- A. “Hear the word of the Lord you rulers of Sodom [Jerusalem].” Is. 1:10
- B. “[Prophets of Jerusalem] have become to me like Sodom.” Jer. 23:14
- C. Your sister is Sodom and you are much worse than she is (paraphrase). Ezek. 16:44-48
- D. “Their [Israel’s] vine is the vine of Sodom.” Deut. 32:32

5. Babylon is allegorically called Egypt. Rev. 11:8

- A. Guilty of Enslaving: “They [Jewish leadership] bind heavy burdens grievous to be borne and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves will not lift a finger to help them.” Mt. 23:4
- B. In Slavery due to unbelief: “Jerusalem that exists now... she is in bondage with her children.” Gal. 4:24
- C. Suffered from plagues due to unbelief. Rev. 18:8

6. Babylon is the place “where their LORD was crucified.” Rev. 11:8

There is only one city this could be—Jerusalem. This alone is definitive.

7. The Babylon harlot was arrayed in scarlet, purple, gold, jewels, pearls... Rev. 17:4

The high priestly garments included colors of scarlet, purple and an assortment of twelve jewels sewn with golden thread. Ex. 28. The veil of the temple was similarly decorated and was, interestingly, from the city of Babylon (Josephus). The colors, jewels, and golden cup also suggest opulence, extravagance, decadence.

8. The inscription on the Harlot’s forehead: “Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth’s abomination.” Rev. 17:7

The High Priest had a plate on his turban, “Holy to the LORD.” The harlot’s priestly colors, head inscription, and behavior were a scorching commentary on how far Jerusalem had fallen.

9. In her was found the blood of prophets and saints... Rev. 18:24

- A. Jesus repeatedly called his people, “A wicked and adulterous generation.” Mt 16:4,12:39, Mk 8:38
- B. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her...” Luke 13:33
- C. “Upon you [unbelieving, first century Jews] may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah... Most certainly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. Mt. 23:35-36

10. Harlot drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. Rev. 17:6**Persistent Jewish persecution of Christians.**

- A.** Jesus, speaking to disciples: "Watch yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils. You will be beaten in synagogues...." Mark 13:9. "They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons...." Luke 21:12.
- B.** Jesus speaking to Jewish leadership: "I send you prophets and wise men and scribes. Some of whom you will kill and crucify and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city...." Mt. 23: 34
- C.** Martyr of Stephen: "They threw him out of the city and stoned him." Acts. 7:58
- D.** System for eradication of Christians/Christianity: "Saul... went to the high priest and asked for letters from him, to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of The Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." Acts 9:1-2
- E.** Persecution of Christians by Jews throughout the Empire: "The Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions wait for me." Acts. 20:23 (also Acts 8:1, 9:23, 20:3, 21:30-31, etc.)

11. Harlot is seated on the Beast/seven mountains (i.e. Rome). Rev. 17:3, 9**Jerusalem used the legal machinery of Rome to persecute Christians.**

- A.** Chief priests and officers demanded Roman governor, Pilot, put Jesus to death. Jn 19:6, Acts 13:28
- B.** Jews attacked and dragged Paul before the Roman Tribunal in Achaia. Acts. 18:12
- C.** Jewish group made pact to kill Paul while he was in Roman custody due to false accusations. Acts 21-23
- D.** The high priest and elders accused Paul before Roman governor, Felix. Acts. 24:1-10
- E.** Chief priests and principal men of the Jews accused Paul to Roman governor, Festus. Acts. 25:2

12. The Beast (Rome) turns on the Harlot and makes her desolate. Rev. 17:15, 16

The former co-operative relationship of Jewish leadership and Rome changed suddenly with the zealot led rebellion starting in AD 66. Emperor Nero sent Vespasian to put down the rebellion that lasted 3 1/2 years. The deciding blow of the war was struck in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and burning of the temple. This was all perfectly prophesied by Jesus, 40 years earlier.

- A.** "Behold, your house is left to you desolate." Matt. 23:38
- B.** "Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let those who are in the midst of her depart. Let those who are in the country not enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled...They will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Luke 21:21-22, 24
- C.** "For the days will come on you, when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, surround you, hem you in on every side, and will dash you and your children within you to the ground. They will not leave in you one stone on another, because you didn't know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:43-44
- D.** "Do you see these great [temple] buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another, which will not be thrown down." Mark 13:2

13. "Babylon" had dominion over the kings of the earth. Rev. 17:18**Her former special position was due to the old covenantal relationship with Yahweh.**

"Jerusalem... is the city of the Great King." Matt. 5:35
Jerusalem was called "the Holy City." Matt. 4:5, Matt. 27:53

14. The Book of Revelation was written to contemporaries of John with events to take place "soon," "at hand," etc. Thus, the harlot was first century Jerusalem. (See video #1)

"Show...what must happen soon." Rev. 1:1, "For the time is at hand." Rev. 1:3, "things which are and the things that will happen hereafter." Rev. 1:19, "There will no longer be delay." Rev. 10:6, God is showing... "Things which must happen soon." Rev. 22:6.

For further study: [Who is this Babylon](#) by [Don K. Preston](#), [Revelation Realized](#) by [Samuel G. Dawson](#),
Look for: [William Bell Jr.](#), [Daniel Rogers](#)