

Q394 - Is Jerusalem the Harlot of Revelation 17?



• Question

I'm confused. In your article about the harlot, you say that it can't be Jerusalem because it is Babylon that is destroyed in Rev 17 and 18. Babylon was destroyed long ago, and the Babylon in Revelation is called a mystery. It is symbolic, not literal. You also say that God would be untrue, if in fact, the prophetic roles were reversed. Scripture, however, DOES reverse roles. In the NT Hagar becomes Jerusalem below, and in the Hosea prophecy about Jerusalem as those who were not my people becoming those who are my people, in the NT, the role IS reversed to mean Gentiles. If Jerusalem is not the Harlot, then who is it that fornicates with the kings of the earth and the beast during the end times? Who does God call out of the Harlot to become the Bride? Whose flesh do the ten kings tear and burn with fire? Who cried out, We have no King but Caesar? And who today is looking to the US and the UN for help, rather than looking to their Maker? To me it seems obvious that present day Jerusalem will fornicate with the kings of the earth by making a covenant with many for one seven, and after being burned with fire, a remnant will be saved to be made part of the Bride.

• Answer

- Article about the Harlot: [Q63 - Jerusalem and the Harlot of Revelation 17 ?](#)

<https://www.spiritandtruth.org/questions/63.htm>

- Assertions

- Babylon was destroyed long ago

You say [Babylon] can't be Jerusalem because it is Babylon that is destroyed in Rev 17 and 18. Babylon was destroyed long ago.

- Babylon has never been "destroyed" like the bible describes

- Among other passages, see Isaiah [13](#), [14](#); Jeremiah [50](#), [51](#); Revelation [17](#), [18](#)

- As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah... so no one shall reside there, nor son of man dwell in it (Jer. [50:40](#) cf. Isa. [13:19](#))

- It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation (Isa. [13:20](#))

- They shall not take from you a stone nor a corner nor a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever (Jer. [51:26](#))

- To make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant (Jer. [51:29](#))

- A dry land where no one dwells, through which no son of man passes (Jer. [51:43](#))

- Notice the geographical specifics regarding Babylon

- Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, *the beauty of the Chaldeans pride* will be was when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. [13:19](#))

- Judgment against "Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans"

- The sound of a cry comes from Babylon, and great destruction *from the land of the Chaldeans* (Jer. [51:54](#))

- Historically, Babylon has never experienced a cataclysmic overthrow, see [Babylon's Historic Fall](#)

https://spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/babylon.html#4.1.2.1

- The Harlot is "Mystery Babylon"

Babylon in Revelation is called a mystery. It is symbolic, not literal.

- Mystery is not part of the Harlot's title

- As the angel explains, "I will tell you the mystery of the woman *and of the beast that carries her*" (Rev. [17:7](#))

- Mystery is not part of the title of the harlot, rather identifying aspects of the harlot *and the beast* involve new revelation which is now being given to John

- And on her forehead was written *a name of mystery*: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." (ESV)

- and on her forehead a name was written, *a mystery*, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (NASB95)

- On her forehead was written a name, *a mystery*: "Babylon the Great, the Mother of prostitutes and of the detestable things of the earth." (NET)

- On her forehead *a cryptic name was written*: BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE VILE THINGS OF THE EARTH. (HCSB)

- Also bear in mind: mystery in the NT does not mean what we think of as "mysterious"

- Scripture reverses meanings

You also say that God would be untrue, if in fact, the prophetic roles were reversed. [If "Babylon" in Revelation means "Jerusalem."] Scripture, however, DOES reverse roles. In the NT Hagar becomes Jerusalem below, and in the Hosea prophecy about Jerusalem as those who were not my people becoming those who are my people, in the NT, the role IS reversed to mean Gentiles.

- Hagar does not become Jerusalem below, but merely represents Jerusalem in Paul's analogy (Gal. [4:22-26](#)) where Ishmael and Isaac are used to represent a work of the flesh (Ishmael from Hagar) vs. the promise (Isaac from Rachel)

- Paul clearly tells us when he is using symbols to communicate typology, "which things are symbolic" (Gal. [4:24](#))

- In any case, in Revelation [17](#) the symbol is the Harlot, not Babylon. It is what the Harlot *represents* which is tied to Babylon, not Jerusalem

- Pauls is *making an application* of the concept of those who were not close to God (e.g., Israel in apostasy) later coming close to God (e.g., Israel in her restoration) to the idea that, through Israel's stumble at the first coming, a similar thing has happened to the Gentiles.

- In the *similar way* in which Israel today is not in fellowship, but will be in the future, *so too* the Gentiles were not in fellowship in the past, but are now through Christ.

- Paul's use of Hosea's prophecy does not alter the original meaning: Hosea's passage was entirely about Israel being forsaken and restored. Hosea's meaning continues, just as it was given.

- Nothing is "reversed", Paul is taking a passage with a fixed meaning and using it in an application, much like a modern preacher.

- The Harlot is an end-time entity

If Jerusalem is not the Harlot, then who is it that fornicates with the kings of the earth and the beast during the end times?

- This is a key aspect of the Harlot: she is not an upstart on the stage of world history -- which Jerusalem is relative to Babel.

- The beast she rides relates to the beasts seen by Daniel during the Babylonian captivity

- Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. (Rev. [13:2](#))

- These are identities of the first three of the four beasts shown to Daniel (Daniel [7](#))

- The Harlot rides the beast for its entire existence -- which is way, way before the end-times (at least as early as the Times of the Gentiles begins in the 6th century B.C.) -- I argue longer.

- The bride is called out of Babylon

Who does God call out of the Harlot [Babylon] to become the Bride?

- What do the called-out passages reveal concerning location?

- "Move from the midst of Babylon, *go out of the land of the Chaldeans*" (Jer. [50:8](#))

- Such passages have a near-term referent (in our past) -- mentioning "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon" (Jer. [50:17](#); Jer. [51:34](#))

- Also a far-future referent (in our future) -- "In those days and at that time, says the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none. And the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found" (Jer. [50:20](#))

- "You who have escaped the sword, get away! Do not stand still! . . . let Jerusalem come to your mind" (Jer. [51:50](#))

- Those called out of Babylon are not the bride of Christ

- The bride of Christ is the Church, also equated with the Body of Christ

- For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. (Eph. [5:23](#))

- And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Col. [1:18](#))

- I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, (Col. [1:24](#))

- The bride of Christ is the body of Christ formed by the baptizing work of the Spirit which began on the Day of Pentecost and ends at the Rapture.

- If the rapture is pretribulation, as I believe, then the bride won't be present in Babylon of the end, during the Tribulation

- For additional background, see [The Body of Christ Ascends to Heaven \(Acts 1:9-12\)](#)

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts_by_Tony_Garland/04_Acts_1_9-12/20130310_04_Acts_1_9-12.html

- Jerusalem, not Babylon, is burned with fire

Whose flesh do the ten kings tear and burn with fire?

- OT PREDICTION: And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. (Isa. [13:19](#))

- OT PREDICTION: Thus says the LORD of hosts: "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, And her high gates shall be burned with fire; The people will labor in vain, And the nations, because of the fire; And they shall be weary." (Jer. [51:58](#))

- NT FULFILLMENT: And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. (Rev. [17:16](#))

- NT FULFILLMENT: Therefore her plagues will come in one day--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong [is] the Lord God who judges her. (Rev. [18:8](#))

- Jerusalem will fornicate

Who cried out, We have no King but Caesar? And who today is looking to the US and the UN for help, rather than looking to their Maker? To me it seems obvious that present day Jerusalem will fornicate with the kings of the earth by making a covenant with many for one seven, and after being burned with fire, a remnant will be saved to be made part of the Bride.

- Is Jerusalem the most godless city throughout the ages? Even now?

- At her worst, is she the "*mother* of harlots" -or just another daughter?

- Thus says the LORD God to Jerusalem, . . . "Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!' You are your mother's daughter, loathing husband and children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.'" (Eze. [16:3-44-45](#))

- Where else did Israel get her harlotry from? Egypt!

- "Son of man, there were two women, The daughters of one mother. They committed harlotry in Egypt, They committed harlotry in their youth; Their breasts were there embraced, Their virgin bosom was there pressed. (Eze. [23:2-3](#))

- Harlotry goes back earlier than Egypt... all the way to Babel

- Additional considerations

- Old Testament teaches that Jerusalem is defended/vindicated but Babylon is destroyed

- God *restores* Israel in an end-times context (Zec. [2](#))

3 And there [was] the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, 4 who said to him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited [as] towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. 5 'For I,' says the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'" 6 "Up, up! Flee from the land of the north," says the LORD; "for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven," says the LORD. 7 "Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon." Zec. [2:3-7](#)

- Zechariah [2](#) is meaningless if Jerusalem is Babylon

- Zechariah [12-14](#) - God fights for Jerusalem

- It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. (Zec. [12:9](#))

- For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city (Zec. [14:2](#))

- Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. (Zec. [14:3](#))

- And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zec. [14:4](#)) - *the context is the Second Coming*

- Zechariah's wicked economic system is placed in the land of Shinar, not in Israel (Zec. [5](#))

9 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there [were] two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. 10 So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?" 11 And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, [the basket] will be set there on its base." (Zec. [5:9-11](#))

- Times of Gentiles begins/ends with Babylon (not Jerusalem)

- Begins with the Babylonian Captivity (Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel)

- Last kingdom overthrown at second coming is Gentile

- Daniel [2](#) (statue of four metals) = Daniel [7](#) (sequence of 4 beasts) ► Revelation [13-17](#) (seven-headed beast with characteristics of 3 of Daniel's four)

- Turning Scripture into Swiss cheese

- Passages where Babylon and Jerusalem are contrasted no longer make sense

- Words have meaning, especially God's words!

You can't have numerous passages indicating Jerusalem and Israel are vindicated/rescued while others indicating total destruction of Babylon and then turn-around and make Babylon Jerusalem!

- *Words of the Covenant* - by Paul Henebury

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- <https://www.amazon.com/Words-Covenant-Biblical-Testament-Expectation/dp/1736770403/>

- Misunderstanding God's heart regarding Israel

- Out of step with God at a time of Israel's increasing isolation

- What is motivating this role reversal by Christians?

- Additional resources

- [Course on Revelation](#)

<https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/5.htm>

- [Revelation Commentary on Revelation 17](#)

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/chapters/17.html#3.17

- The Bible - you can't ignore or change OT meaning!

Many Christians have a deficient understanding of the Old Testament. As if the "Old" in "Old Testament" means "out of date" and therefore irrelevant

- In Paul's words...

28 Concerning the gospel [they are] enemies for your sake, but concerning the election [they are] beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God [are] irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. (Rom. [11:28-31](#))