

Babylon The Great of Revelation

Don K. Preston

**"The coming of Jesus as foretold in Revelation was at hand ([Revelation 22:6](#), [10-12](#), [20](#)). The coming of Jesus as foretold in Revelation was to come at the end of the millennium. Therefore, the end of the millennium was at hand."
(from "Who is this Babylon?" p. 259)**

Everyone agrees that the book of Revelation predicts the fall of Babylon; what they do not agree upon is the identity of Babylon. Some say it is Rome, Roman Catholicism, a modern day world-wide church, or apostate Christianity as a whole. One thing is certain, the interpretation of Revelation and thus much of the Bible, hinges upon who Babylon is or was.

In Revelation the coming of Christ, the New Creation, judgment and resurrection are associated with the fall of Babylon. To mistakenly identify Babylon is to incorrectly interpret these issues. Whatever one makes Babylon to be these issues are inextricably linked with her fall! Can we identify Babylon? Yes indeed!

[Revelation 16:6](#); [17:1-6](#); [18:20](#), [24](#) tell us that Babylon was drunk with the blood of the prophets. This is a critical point! The term "the prophets" appears 88 times in the New Testament. The overwhelmingly normal usage of the term refers to Old Testament prophets.

Now, the city of Rome, the Roman Catholic Church, apostate Christianity, or any modern world-wide church ever persecuted Old Testament prophets! But Babylon of Revelation did, therefore none of these can be identified as Babylon; it is just that simple! What city persecuted the Old Testament prophets and filled the Cup of her Sin by so doing? It was Jerusalem.

Comparing Matthew 23 with Revelation plainly reveals this. In [Matthew 23:31](#) Jesus said it was Jerusalem that had killed the prophets; in Revelation it is Babylon. In [Matthew 23:32](#) Jesus said the Jews were about to fill the cup of their sin by continuing to persecute those sent to her; in Revelation 17 Babylon has filled her cup by persecuting not only the prophets of old but the followers of Jesus as well, 17:6. In [Matthew 23:35](#) Jesus said Jerusalem was guilty of "all the blood shed on the earth," 23:35; in [Revelation 18:24](#) Babylon bears the guilt for "all the blood shed on the earth." In [Matthew 23:36](#) Jesus said judgment on Jerusalem for killing the prophets would come in his generation; in Revelation Jesus said "Behold, I come quickly" 22:6, 10, 12, 20. Such parallels are not accidental!

Finally, the Great City Babylon is "spiritually called Sodom," [Rev. 11:8](#); and the only city in the Bible--other than historical Sodom--that is ever called Sodom is Jerusalem, [Isaiah 1:10](#); [Jer. 23:14](#), [Ezek. 16:44f](#). Babylon is also "where the Lord was crucified" [Rev. 11:8](#). Jesus was not crucified in Rome, or by the Catholic Church; Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem!

Avenging the Prophets

One of the major themes of Revelation is the avenging of the martyrs. This theme is stated in chapter 6:9ff; 11:11-19; 17:4-6; 18:20, 24, to cite a few passages. The judgment of Revelation is on "Babylon" the city "drunken with the blood of the saints" and "all those slain on the earth," 17:6; 18:24. Who was Babylon?

Many believe it was Rome because the city was said to "sit on many waters" 17:2; and to rule over the kings of the earth, 17:18. But "waters" in Revelation often signifies "people" or nations instead of "H²O." See [Revelation 13:1ff](#) where the beast arose out of the "sea." Further, the city of Jerusalem was "supreme, and presided over all the neighboring country as the head does over the body" so says Josephus the Jewish historian of the first century. He also called Jerusalem "the great city". Every designation of "Babylon" in the book of Revelation was used by secular writers of the first century to describe the city of Jerusalem!

More importantly, as just seen, Jesus defined Jerusalem as the persecuting city drunken with the blood of the saints. In [Matthew 23:31-39](#) Jesus said it was Jerusalem that had slain the prophets through the ages. He said he would send them prophets and they would slay them also. He also said the blood of the martyr's all the way back to Abel would be judged in that generation, vss. 35-36! Read [Matthew 23:29-36](#) side by side with Revelation 18 and see the perfect correlation.

The Bible places the blame for persecuting the church squarely at the feet of Israel/Jerusalem; not on Rome!

It was the Sanhedrin that beat Peter and John, Acts 4-5; and stoned Stephen, Acts 6-7. The Jews instigated a "great persecution" against the church in Jerusalem, Acts 8. Saul the persecutor of the early church had letters of authority from the High Priest to persecute Christians, [Acts 9:2-3](#). Even Herod, when persecuting the church did so to please the Jews, [Acts 12:1-3](#). The Jews in Antioch stirred up the city against Paul, [Acts 13:50](#). The Jews stirred up the Gentiles to persecute Paul in Iconium and Derbe, [Acts 14:4ff](#), [19f](#). At Thessalonica the Jews "set all the city in an uproar" attempting to kill Paul, [Acts 17:5f](#). The Jews attempted to involve the Romans against Paul but they refused to persecute him, [Acts 18:12ff](#). The Romans actually rescued Paul from the Jews, [Acts 21:27-40](#).

While the Gentiles participated in persecution against the early church, blame for instigating the persecution was pointed by Biblical writers at the Jews "who have both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men," [1 Thessalonians 2:15f](#).

If Revelation was written in A.D. 95-98 as is generally suggested, Rome had only persecuted the church for about four years! Nero, at the instigation of the Jews, persecuted the church from approximately A.D. 64-68. It is now being admitted that Domitian did not actually persecute the church! Are we to believe that Revelation ignores Jerusalem, the city that had

persecuted the saints for centuries, and focuses on the destruction of a city that had persecuted the saints for only four years?!?

If **Babylon was Jerusalem of the first century** as we have suggested then the modern ideas of a coming Armageddon, a millennium, and "end of time" judgment are false concepts. What more evidence is there that Babylon was Jerusalem of the first century?

In [Revelation 14:6f](#) John's vision revealed an angel with the gospel to preach to "all the world" with the message of the soon coming judgment on Babylon. When the gospel had been preached to "all the world" we find the coming of the Lord in judgment because the sin of the land was full, vs. 14ff. The elements of concern here are 1) the preaching of the gospel into all the world; 2) the filling of the measure of sin; 3) the soon coming of the Lord. Notice the comparison chart of Revelation 14 and Matthew.

Matthew 23-24	Revelation 14
Preaching to all the world, 24:14	Preaching to all the world, 14:6
Message of judgment, 23:34-35	Message of judgment, 14:7
Filling the measure of sin, 23:32	Harvest is fully ripe, 14:15f
Judgment in Jesus' generation, 23:34; 24:34	The hour of his judgment has come, 14:7

This chart shows the perfect harmony between Jesus' prediction against Jerusalem and Revelation's prediction of coming judgment against "Babylon." Can it be shown that the gospel was preached into "all the world" before Jerusalem fell?

In [Romans 10:18](#); [16:25-26](#) the apostle said, about 60 A.D., that the gospel had been preached to all the nations in all the world. In [Colossians 1:5-7](#), [23](#), about 63-64 A.D., he said the gospel had been preached "to every creature under heaven." In [Titus 2:11](#) he said the gospel had appeared to all men. If we are going to accept scripture the Bible says the gospel was preached in all the world before the fall of Jerusalem!

Now unless one can demonstrate that there were to be two great commissions to be preached into all the world, declaring the imminent coming judgment upon two cities that were about to fill the measure of sin by persecuting the saints of God, then consistency demands that we identify **Babylon as Jerusalem of the first century**. It was Jerusalem that was to fill the measure of her sin by killing the prophets; Jerusalem that Jesus said the gospel would be preached world-wide before her fall; Jerusalem that was to see his coming in his generation. **Babylon was first century Jerusalem.**