

the great whore: unmasking mystery babylon

the original crime scene - the tower of babel (genesis 11)

berēshith (genesis) 11:1-9

1. 'and all the earth had one language and one speech.
 2. and it came to be, as they set out from the east, that they found a plain in the land of shin'ar, and they dwelt there.
 3. and they said to each other, "come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." and they had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.
 4. and they said, "come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens, and make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over all the face of the earth."
 5. then יהוה came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.
 6. and יהוה said, "look, they are one people and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do! and now, they are not going to be withheld from doing whatever they plan to do.
 7. "come, let us go there and confuse their language, so that they do not understand one another's speech."
 8. and יהוה scattered them from there, over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.
 9. that is why its name was called babel, because there יהוה confused the language of all the earth, and from there יהוה scattered them over the face of all the earth...
- **the motive:** "let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth." (genesis 11:4).
 - **the crime:** direct rebellion against yhvh's command to fill the earth. it was the first man-made, unified religious-political system designed for self-glorification and independence from the creator.
 - **the location:** the land of **shinar** (genesis 11:2). this is ground zero.
 - **the verdict:** yhvh confused their language and scattered them. the city was called "babel" (confusion).

the first clue: babylon's origin is a **city** born in pride and rebellion against yhvh, located in **shinar**.

the prophetic pattern - the head of gold (daniel 2)

- **the image:** king nebuchadnezzar dreams of a great statue. the head is made of **gold**.
- **the interpretation:** "you are this head of gold." (daniel 2:38). the first kingdom is **babylon**.
- **the crime:** babylon, under nebuchadnezzar, destroys **jerusalem** and burns the **temple of yhvh** with fire (2 kings 25:9). it is the archetypal persecutor of yhvh's people and the defiler of his set-apart place.

the second clue: babylon is not just any city; it is the **golden-headed empire** that destroys jerusalem and the temple.

the spiritual label - "the great whore" (isaiah, jeremiah)

the prophets use shocking language to describe a city that has betrayed its covenant with yhvh.

- **isaiah 1:21:** "how the faithful city has become a **harlot!** it was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers."
- **the defendant: jerusalem.**
- **jeremiah 3:6-9:** yhvh accuses both **yashar'el (the northern kingdom)** and **judah (the southern kingdom, with jerusalem)** of playing the **harlot** by turning to other elohiym's.
- **ezekiel 16 & 23:** two entire chapters graphically detailing jerusalem's history as an adulterous wife to yhvh.

the third clue: in the tanakh, the title "harlot" or "whore" is repeatedly and specifically applied to **jerusalem** when it abandons yhvh for idolatry and political alliances (spiritual adultery).

the fingerprint - "the blood of the prophets" (matthew 23)

we now move to the new testament to see if the pattern holds.

- **the accusation:** yahusha speaks directly to the religious leaders in jerusalem:
 - "jerusalem, jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!" (matthew 23:37).
 - "...that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous abel to the blood of zechariah... whom you murdered between the temple and the altar." (matthew 23:35).

the fourth clue: the city of jerusalem is forensically identified as the place guilty of **shedding the blood of yhvh's prophets and righteous ones.**

the prime suspect - "the great city" in revelation

now, we open the book of revelation. the term "the great city" is used as a key identifier.

- **revelation 11:8:** "and their dead bodies will lie in the street of **the great city** which spiritually is called **sodom and egypt, where also our master was impaled.**"
 - **the verdict:** this is the master key. "the great city" is **spiritually identified by two things:**
 1. it is like sodom (moral depravity) and egypt (worldly bondage).
 2. it is the city "**where also our master was impaled.**"
 - **there is only one city on earth that fits this description: jerusalem.**

the great whore revealed (revelation 17-18)

with the identity of "the great city" confirmed, we can now read the description of mystery babylon without confusion.

- **revelation 17:1-6:** the description of the "great whore":
 - she sits on many waters (peoples, nations).
 - the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.

- she is drunk with **the blood of the set-apart ones and with the blood of the witnesses of יהושע**.
- **the connection:** this is the **same crime** for which yahusha indicted jerusalem in matthew 23. the "great whore" is the **mature, final manifestation** of the city that has killed the prophets throughout history, culminating in the rejection and execution of the messiah.
- **revelation 17:18:** "and the woman whom you saw is **that great city** which reigns over the kings of the earth."
 - this is not ancient rome (which did not reign over the kings of the earth in john's day in the way described). this is the city that, in the 1st-century jewish worldview, saw itself as the center of the world, destined to rule.
- **revelation 18:24:** "and in her was found the blood of prophets and set-apart ones, and of all who were slain on the earth."
 - the final charge. the guilt of all righteous blood is laid at her feet because she was the one entrusted with the oracles of yhvh (romans 3:2) and she betrayed that trust utterly, becoming the headquarters of rebellion against the messiah.

the prophetic blueprint for destruction

these prophecies are so precise that they read like historical accounts written after the fact. but they were given centuries before the babylonian siege of 586 bc.

1. the prophet micah (circa 740-690 bc)

- **the accusation:** corruption among the rulers, priests, and prophets in jerusalem. they abhor justice and pervert all that is right.
- **the prophecy:** "therefore because of you, **zion shall be ploughed like a field, jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.**" (micah 3:12)
- **the aftermath:** this prophecy was so well-known that it saved the prophet jeremiah from execution a century later (jeremiah 26:18). it sets the stage: the city and the temple mount will be utterly desolated.

2. the prophet jeremiah (circa 626-586 bc) - the prime witness

jeremiah lived through the final years leading to the destruction. his book is a relentless indictment.

- the crime of the priests & people: "an appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priest's rule by their own hand; and my people love to have it so." (jeremiah 5:30-31).
- the specific judgment on the temple: "i will do to the house which is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place which i gave you and your fathers, as i have done to shiloh." (jeremiah 7:14).
 - shiloh was the first resting place of the tabernacle. it was destroyed and abandoned. yhvh says he will do the same to the jerusalem temple.
- the reason: "but go now to my place which was in shiloh, where i set my name at the first, and see what i did to it because of the wickedness of my people yashar'el." (jeremiah 7:12). this is a direct comparison. the pattern of sin leads to the pattern of destruction.
- the unstoppable judgment: "and i will make jerusalem a heap of ruins, a den of jackals. i will make the cities of judah a desolation, without an inhabitant." (jeremiah 9:11).

3. the prophet ezekiel (circa 593-571 bc) - the vision of abomination

ezekiel, a priest himself, prophesied from exile in babylon. his visions are terrifyingly specific about the defilement of the temple.

- **the vision of idolatry in the temple:** "so he brought me to the door of the north gate of yhvh's house; and to my dismay, **there were women sitting there weeping for tammuz...** then he brought me into the inner court of yhvh's house; and there, at the door of the temple of yhvh, **between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of yhvh and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.**" (ezekiel 8:14, 16).
 - **this is the ultimate priestly betrayal:** pagan fertility cults and sun worship happening inside the temple courts itself.
- **the consequence - the departure of the glory:** because of this defilement, ezekiel sees the glory of yhvh (the *shekinah*) depart from the temple (ezekiel 10:18-19). the divine presence abandons the building before its physical destruction. the temple is just an empty shell.
- **the prophecy against the wicked shepherds (priests):** "woe to the shepherds of yashar'el who feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?... **you eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock....** i am against the shepherds, and i will require my flock at their hand." (ezekiel 34:2-3, 10). this is a direct indictment of the priesthood for exploiting the people.

4. the fulfillment in lamentations

after the destruction, jeremiah writes lamentations, a poetic funeral dirge for the city. it confirms the prophecies came true.

- **lamentations 1:8:** "jerusalem has sinned grievously, therefore she has become vile."
- **lamentations 2:6-7:** "he has done violence to his tabernacle... he has given up the walls of her palaces... **he has rejected his altar, he has abandoned his sanctuary;** he has delivered the walls of her palaces into the hand of the enemy."

connecting the arrows: from tanakh to revelation

the charges against mystery babylon in revelation are not new. they are the *same charges* leveled against apostate jerusalem by the tanakh prophets.

charge in revelation	fulfillment in 586 bc (type)	prophecy in tanakh
"drunk with the blood of the saints" (rev 17:6)	killling the prophets (jeremiah, uriah)	jer 2:30, "your own sword has devoured your prophets."
"full of abominations" (rev 17:4-5)	idolatry in the temple (tammuz, sun worship)	ezek 8, detailed abominations.
"the great city... where the master was crucified" (rev 11:8)	the city that rejected yhvh's word and killed his messengers.	matt 23:37 (which quotes the tanakh pattern).

charge in revelation	fulfillment in 586 bc (type)	prophecy in tanakh
"fallen, fallen is babylon the great!" (rev 18:2)	jerusalem destroyed by babylon, becoming a desolate heap.	jer 9:11, micah 3:12.
"come out of her, my people" (rev 18:4)	the call to flee jerusalem before its destruction (jeremiah, et al.)	jer 6:1, "flee for safety, people of benjamin! flee from jerusalem!"

the destruction of jerusalem by the babylonians in 586 bc was a **prophetic preview** of the final judgment on the same spirit of apostasy. the prophets foretold it in graphic detail because it reveals a core principle: **yhvh judges his own people first when they betray the covenant**.

when yahusha wept over jerusalem and prophesied its destruction (matthew 24, luke 19:41-44), he was standing in the line of jeremiah and micah. he was pronouncing a *second*, final judgment on the city that had not learned the lessons of the first destruction.

mystery babylon is the full flowering of this ancient pattern of covenant betrayal. it is the spirit of jerusalem when it rejects its messiah and aligns itself with the world system, becoming the very opposite of its calling. the tanakh prophecies prove that this is not a new idea; it is the tragic, repeating story of what happens when the "city of peace" becomes the "city of blood."

the verdict: the case is closed

mystery babylon the great is not a future city in iraq. it is not the roman catholic church, though all systems that oppose yhvh share her spirit.

mystery babylon is the spirit of apostate jerusalem, the city that was chosen by yhvh but then corrupted into the very opposite of its purpose. it is the religious-political system that:

1. **began in rebellion at babel.**
2. **was patterned by ancient babylon when it destroyed the temple.**
3. **was labeled a "harlot" by the prophets for its idolatry.**
4. **was indicted by yahusha for killing the prophets.**
5. **is explicitly named in revelation as the city where he was impaled.**
6. **is finally judged for being drunk with the blood of his followers.**

the "mystery" is not that we don't know who she is. the mystery is the shocking, heartbreaking revelation that the city meant to be the "city of the great king" (psalm 48:2) could become the "great whore" because it rejected the king when he came.

this understanding is crucial because it shifts the focus from an external enemy "out there" to the sobering warning against **covenant betrayal**. it is a warning to any system, any city, any people who have the truth but then compromise with the world, persecute the righteous, and reject the messiah. they risk inheriting the title and judgment of "babylon."

the call of revelation is not to find babylon on a map, but to **"come out of her, my people"** (revelation 18:4) — to separate ourselves from any and all systems, religious or political, that carry the spirit of the harlot: rebellion, self-glorification, and the persecution of those who hold to the testimony of yahusha.

the case is closed. the verdict is clear.