

~The Great City--Rome or Israel?~

What is the 'Great City'

Rev 11:8

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the **great city**, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, **where also our Lord was crucified.**

Rev 14:8

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, **that great city**, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Rev 16:19

And **the great city** was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Rev 18:2

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon **the great** is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Rev 18:10

Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, **that great city** Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Rev 18:21

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall **that great city** Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

Rev 18:20

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.
There is only one city that killed the apostles and prophets and that is Jerusalem.

Rev 21:10

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me **that great city**, the holy **Jerusalem**, descending out of heaven from God,

NOTE: When one looks at the many times in the book of Revelation that the term "great city" is used, in some of them, it could be Jerusalem or some other city. However, when one adds up the descriptions of this 'city' in ALL the verses, it becomes evident that it is Jerusalem. Notice that John does not speak of 'cities' plural, but of 'city' singular. He is speaking of only one city throughout. It would be totally confusing and inconsistent for him to mean Jerusalem in one verse AND Rome in another!

Likewise, the identity of the Great Harlot was seen by some preterists to be pagan Rome, yet many saw

Rev. 11:8 as an indisputable proof that it had to be apostate Jerusalem, **"the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified."** See also Rev. 17:18 and 18:24. The preterist view was not popular among the early Reformers, since it didn't provide the ammunition they needed against the Roman Catholics.

But the language which **Josephus** employs on this subject is a full justification of the apocalyptic description of Jerusalem.

'Judea,' he tells us, 'reaches in breadth from the river Jordan to Joppa. In its very center lies the city of Jerusalem; for which reason some, not inaptly, have styled that city "the navel" of the country. It [Judea] is divided into eleven allotments (toparchies), whereof Jerusalem, as the seat of royalty, is supreme, exalted over all the adjacent region, as the head over the body.'

This is language which is tantamount to the expression, 'that great city which reigns over the kings, or rulers, of the land.'

With regard to the phrase, 'which reigns over the kings of the earth,'---the fallacy which has misled many is the mistranslation **'kings of the earth' [basileiz thz ghz]**. A very fruitful source of confusion and error in the interpretation of the New Testament is the capricious and uncertain way in which **ghe** is rendered in our Authorised Version (KJV). Sometimes, though rarely, it has its proper meaning, **the land**; but more frequently it is translated **the earth**, and our translators never seem to have given themselves any trouble to inquire whether the word should be taken in its widest or in a more restricted sense. With incredible carelessness they render pasai ai fulai thz ghz, 'all the kindreds of the earth,' instead of 'all the tribes of the land;' and h ampeloz thz ghz, 'the vine of the earth,' instead of 'the vine of the land.' so in the passage before us (chap. xvii. 18), **the 'kings of the earth' should be 'kings of the land,' i.e. Judea or Palestine.**

This very phrase is used in the New Testament in the restricted sense of 'the rulers of the land,' by St. Peter in Acts iv. 26, 27, 'Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together in this city,' etc. and he recognizes this fact as the fulfilment of the prediction in the second Psalm, 'Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the land [oi basileiz thz ghz] stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his anointed.' **The 'kings of the land,' therefore, are identified by the apostle Peter as the confederate rulers who put the Son of God to death in the city of Jerusalem.** So also in Rev. vi. 15, where 'the kings of the land' [oi basileiz thz ghz] are represented as hiding themselves from the face of Him that sits on the throne, in the great day of His wrath. The phrase, therefore, is equivalent to **'the ruling authorities in the land of Judea,'** or of Palestine.

One more argument for the identity of Jerusalem with the apocalyptic Babylon, and one which we consider conclusive, is to be found in the character ascribed to the city as the persecutor and murderer of the prophets and saints: 'I beheld the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus' (chap. xvii. 6); 'And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain in the land' (chap. xviii. 24); 'Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her' (chap. xviii. 20). **Who can fail to recognise in this description the distinctive characteristics of the Jerusalem of 'that generation'?** Who is it that kills the prophets and stones them that are sent unto her? Jerusalem. What is the city out of which it cannot be that a prophet should perish---that enjoys an infamous monopoly of murdering the messengers of God? **Jerusalem.** The blood of the saints and of prophets is the immemorial stain upon Jerusalem; the brand of the murderer stamped upon her brow; and the generation that crucified Christ is described by Him as **'the children of them that killed the prophets,' and so 'filled up the measure of their fathers'** (Matt. xxiii.

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.Rev 11:8

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the **great city**, which spiritually is called **Sodom** and **Egypt**, where also our Lord was crucified. *Could we also add the name of Babylon to Sodom and Egypt or are there 2 'great cities' spoken of in Revelation??*