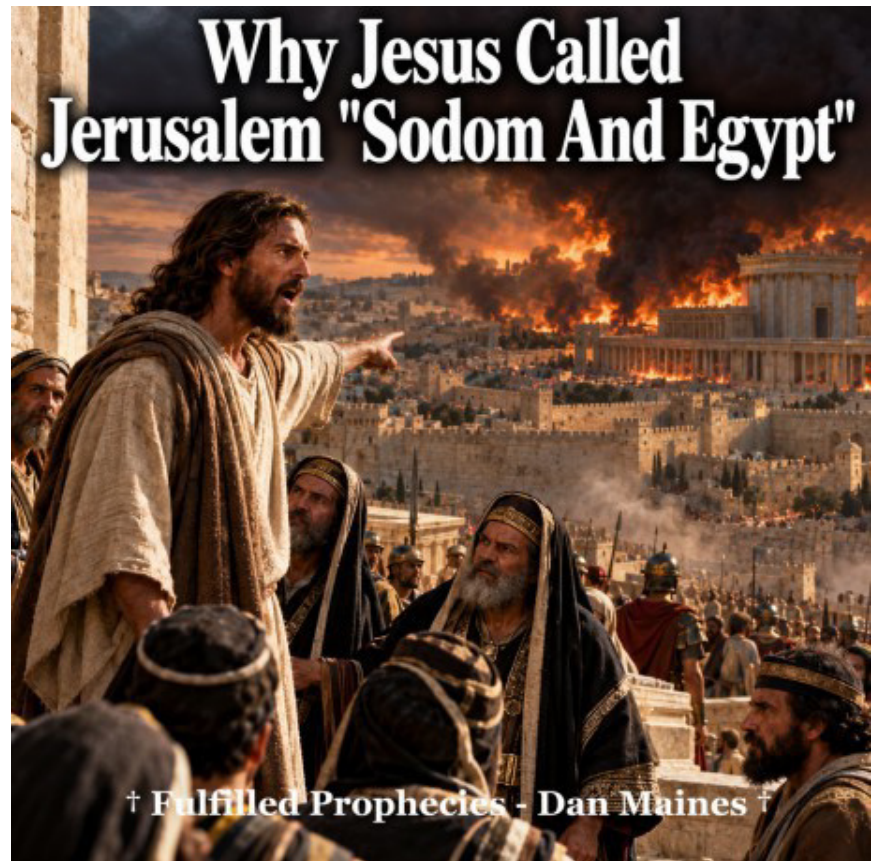


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Babylon - Why Jesus Called Jerusalem "Sodom And Egypt"



By Dan Maines

Why Jesus Called Jerusalem "Sodom And Egypt"

Introduction

† Revelation doesn't leave the identity of the great city in Revelation 11:8 to speculation. John says it was the city where their Lord was crucified. Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem.

† Calling Jerusalem "Sodom and Egypt" wasn't a geographical identification. It was covenant judgment language drawn from Israel's own Scriptures.

† The prophets had already compared rebellious Jerusalem to Sodom, and the Exodus provided the pattern of plagues, bondage,

deliverance, and judgment that Revelation applies to the first-century conflict.

† Revelation takes those familiar prophetic images and brings them together. The covenant city had become spiritually like the enemies God had judged in the past.

† This identification is important because Revelation's judgment isn't centered on modern nations thousands of years later. Its imagery points directly back to apostate Jerusalem and the covenant judgment that culminated in AD 70.

Revelation 11:8

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

† John gives us the identifying marker within the verse itself. The great city was where the Lord was crucified. That points directly to Jerusalem (Luke 13:33).

† John says the city was "spiritually" called Sodom and Egypt. Jerusalem hadn't literally become either place. These names described her spiritual condition and approaching judgment.

† Sodom represented extreme covenant corruption and divine judgment, while Egypt represented oppression, bondage, plagues, and God's judgment upon a persecuting power.

† Jerusalem had rejected Christ, persecuted His messengers, and shed the blood of the righteous. Jesus had already declared that Jerusalem would bear responsibility for righteous blood and that judgment would fall upon that generation (Matthew 23:34-36).

Isaiah 1:9-10

If the Lord of armies Had not left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah. Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; Listen to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah!

† Isaiah was speaking to Judah and Jerusalem, yet he called their rulers "rulers of Sodom" and their people "Gomorrah." This establishes the prophetic pattern long before Revelation was written.

† Jerusalem didn't have to be geographically located in Sodom to receive Sodom's name. The name described covenant rebellion and

the judgment that rebellion deserved.

† Revelation 11 uses the same prophetic method. Calling Jerusalem "Sodom" would've been immediately understandable to readers familiar with Isaiah.

† The connection also explains why Revelation can use the names of ancient enemies while speaking about a city existing in John's own time.

Ezekiel 16:46-50

Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. Yet you have not merely walked in their ways and committed their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you also acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they. As I live, declares the Lord God, Sodom, your sister and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done! Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, plenty of food, and carefree ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. So they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it.

† Ezekiel went even further than Isaiah. Jerusalem was compared directly with Sodom and was charged with becoming more corrupt than Sodom.

† Revelation 11:8 therefore isn't introducing a strange new symbol. It continues an established prophetic indictment against Jerusalem.

† The prophets repeatedly used earlier judgments as patterns for later covenant judgments. Jerusalem could become "Sodom" because she had embraced the rebellion associated with Sodom.

† By John's generation, Jerusalem's rejection of the Messiah and persecution of His followers brought that prophetic pattern to its climax (Matthew 21:33-45).

Exodus 7:17-18

This is what the Lord says: "By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, I am going to strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned into blood. Then the fish that are in the Nile will die, the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will no longer be able to drink water from the Nile."

† Egypt was remembered as the nation upon which God poured out plagues before delivering His people.

† Revelation deliberately echoes Exodus. Waters become blood, plagues strike the land, darkness appears, and other judgments recall what happened to ancient Egypt (Revelation 8:8; 16:3-4, 10).

† This doesn't mean Revelation predicts another literal Egypt. It means the Exodus judgment pattern was being applied again.

† The startling reversal is that the city once associated with God's covenant people was now spiritually identified with the oppressive Egypt from which Israel had originally been delivered.

Revelation 8:8

The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was hurled into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood,

† The blood imagery deliberately recalls the Egyptian plague. Revelation presents its judgments using the language of Israel's foundational deliverance story.

† Jerusalem had become an oppressor of Christ's people. Jesus warned His disciples that they would be persecuted, beaten, imprisoned, and killed before the judgment arrived (Matthew 23:34; Luke 21:12-18).

† The Exodus pattern had been reversed. God was delivering His faithful covenant people while bringing judgment upon the persecuting city.

† Revelation therefore isn't merely borrowing dramatic imagery. It presents a new Exodus centered in Christ and the passing away of the old covenant order.

Luke 13:33-35

Nevertheless I must go on My journey today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her young under her wings, and you were unwilling! Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!'

† Jesus Himself connected Jerusalem with the killing of God's prophets. Revelation later describes the great city as the place where God's witnesses were killed.

† Jesus also pronounced Jerusalem's house desolate. This wasn't an indefinite warning. He placed the coming judgment upon the generation that rejected Him (Matthew 23:36-38).

† Revelation 11:8 completes the identification by saying the great city was where the Lord was crucified.

† Jerusalem had become the persecuting city, and Jesus had already announced the covenant consequences before the cross.

Matthew 23:35-36

so that upon you will fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

† Jesus placed responsibility for the accumulated righteous blood upon the generation standing before Him.

† This provides the background for Revelation's repeated emphasis on the blood of prophets and saints. The judgment wasn't disconnected from Jesus' warnings, it was their fulfillment (Revelation 6:9-11; 18:20-24).

† Jesus didn't place this judgment thousands of years into the future. He said, "this generation."

† Revelation's Sodom and Egypt imagery therefore belongs within the same first-century covenant lawsuit Jesus had already announced against Jerusalem.

Revelation 18:24

And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.

† Revelation says the condemned city contained the blood of prophets and saints. Jesus had already assigned that same guilt to Jerusalem (Matthew 23:34-37).

† This parallel strengthens the identification of Revelation's condemned city with apostate Jerusalem rather than a distant modern city.

† Jerusalem was called Sodom because of her corruption, Egypt

because of her oppression, and the great city because she stood at the center of the covenant judgment described in Revelation.

† The imagery isn't random. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Exodus, Jesus' warnings, and Revelation tell one connected covenant story.

Historical References

† Josephus described Jerusalem during the Jewish-Roman War as being consumed internally by violence, murder, famine, factional warfare, and corruption before the Romans completed its destruction.

† Josephus reported that rival factions inside Jerusalem turned against one another while the Roman armies surrounded the city, creating suffering within the walls as terrible as the danger outside them.

† Josephus also described the burning and destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, providing an eyewitness-era historical account of the catastrophe Jesus had warned was coming.

† Eusebius later recorded the tradition that believers in Jerusalem departed before the war and settled at Pella, connecting the escape of the Christian community with the period surrounding Jerusalem's destruction.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Revelation 11:8 teaches us to let Scripture interpret Scripture.

"Sodom and Egypt" doesn't require us to search the modern world for another literal Sodom or Egypt.

† Isaiah and Ezekiel show that Jerusalem had already been prophetically called Sodom. Exodus explains the Egyptian plague imagery. Jesus identifies Jerusalem as the city that killed the prophets and where He would be rejected.

† Reading Revelation through its Old Testament background removes much of the mystery that has been created by modern speculation.

† We aren't waiting for these covenant judgments to happen again. We live after the old covenant judgment and in the reality of Christ's established kingdom (Hebrews 12:22-24).

† The message for us isn't fear of another prophetic countdown. It's confidence in Jesus Christ, who completed the covenant transition and brought His people into the lasting kingdom (Hebrews 12:28).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why does Revelation 11:8 call the great city "Sodom and Egypt"?

A: Because these were spiritual and prophetic descriptions. Sodom represented corruption and judgment, while Egypt represented oppression, plagues, and deliverance from bondage. Revelation applies both images to the city where Jesus was crucified (Revelation 11:8).

Q: How do we know the great city was Jerusalem?

A: Revelation gives the identifying information itself, it was "where also their Lord was crucified" (Revelation 11:8). Jesus also identified Jerusalem as the city associated with killing the prophets (Luke 13:33-34).

Q: Had Jerusalem ever been called Sodom before Revelation?

A: Yes. Isaiah addressed Jerusalem's leaders as "rulers of Sodom," and Ezekiel compared Jerusalem directly with Sodom (Isaiah 1:10; Ezekiel 16:46-50).

Q: Why is Exodus imagery used in Revelation?

A: The Exodus established a biblical pattern of oppression, plagues, judgment, and deliverance. Revelation uses that pattern to describe God's judgment against the persecuting covenant city and the deliverance of His people (Revelation 8:8; 11:8).

Q: Was this judgment still future to us?

A: No. Jesus placed the judgment upon His own generation, saying, "All these things shall come upon this generation" (Matthew 23:36). The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 brought that covenant judgment to its historical climax.

Q: What should Christians understand from this today?

A: We should read Revelation through the prophetic language Scripture itself provides. We aren't waiting for Jerusalem to become another literal Sodom or Egypt. Those images described the covenant

rebellion and judgment associated with the first-century city where Christ was crucified (Revelation 11:8).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 11:8; Isaiah 1:9-10; Ezekiel 16:46-50; Exodus 7:17-18; Revelation 8:8; Luke 13:33-35; Matthew 23:35-36; Revelation 18:24

† Josephus, The Wars of the Jews; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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