**Babylon and the New Jerusalem: Biblical Texts (NRSV)**

**Babylon**

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the judgement of the great whore who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk.’ So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: ‘Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth’s abominations.’ And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly amazed (Rev 17:1–6).

How the faithful city has become a whore! She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers! (Isa 1:23 *[Jerusalem]*).

Take a harp, go about the city, you forgotten prostitute!

Make sweet melody, sing many songs,

that you may be remembered (Isa 23:16 *[Tyre]*).

Raise a standard against the walls of Babylon; make the watch strong;

post sentinels; prepare the ambushes;

for the Lord has both planned and done what he spoke concerning the

inhabitants of Babylon.

You who live by mighty waters, rich in treasures,

your end has come, the thread of your life is cut. (Jer 51:12–13).

**New Jerusalem**

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites; on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width; and he measured the city with his rod, fifteen hundred miles *(literally ‘twelve thousand stadia’)*; its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, one hundred and forty-four cubits by human measurement, which the angel was using. The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth cornelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass (Rev 21:9–21).

You shall make a breastpiece of judgement, in skilled work; you shall make it in the style of the ephod; of gold, of blue and purple and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen you shall make it. It shall be square and doubled, a span in length and a span in width. You shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald shall be the first row; and the second row a turquoise, a sapphire, and a moonstone; and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold filigree. There shall be twelve stones with names corresponding to the names of the sons of Israel … (Exod 28:15-21).

O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted,

I am about to set your stones in antimony,

and lay your foundations with sapphires.

I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of jewels,

and all your wall of precious stones (Isa 54:11-12).

The gates of Jerusalem will be built with sapphire and emerald,

and all your walls with precious stones.

The towers of Jerusalem will be built with gold,

and their battlements with pure gold.

The streets of Jerusalem will be paved

with ruby and with stones of Ophir (Tobit 13:16).

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches (Gen 2:8-10).