

## Revelation 17-18: Tale of Two Cities

John borrows imagery from Isaiah 21:1–17

“whore or harlot” - metaphor for false religion, idolatry and religious apostasy

Jeremiah 51:13 - speaks of ancient Babylon as “dwelling by many waters” - applied to the ‘new Rome’.

“many waters” - peoples, multitudes, nations and languages

Scarlet beast - colour associated with luxury, splendour, and royalty and of sin = Anti-Christ

Contrast woman of Rev 12 and the woman of Rev 17.

# The Two Women

	Israel Chapter 12	Woman riding Beast Chapter 17
Where?	In Heaven	Upon many waters
Mother	Of Man-Child	Of Harlots
Clothed with	With sun	Purple, Scarlet, Gold
Identity	Sun, Moon, Stars	Reigns over Kings of the Earth
Enemy	Dragon	10 Kings (Ultimately)
Relationship	Hated by world	Caressed by world
Sustained by	Wings of heaven	Dragon
Headdress	Crown of 12 stars	Mystery Babylon the Great
Status	Widowed, divorced	“Am no widow...”
Final location	New Jerusalem	Habitation of demons

Babylon symbolically the ultimate centre of power for the Antichrist – possibly a code word for Rome.

1 Peter 5:13

Seven heads = seven hills (Rome) and seven kingdoms.

“Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.” Rev. 12.3

Daniel 7:24–25

“The great city that rules over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18).

# Satan's Seven Super-Kingdoms

Egypt

Assyria

Babylon

Persia

Greece

Rome

Rome II  
10 Horns

Daniel's 4 + 1

And there appeared another wonder in heaven;  
and behold a great red dragon,  
having seven heads and ten horns,  
and seven crowns upon his heads.

Revelation 12:3

Daniel 2:31-35, 40-45; 7:7-8, 19-25  
Revelation 13:1-2; 17:3, 7, 12-18

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And there are seven kings:  
five are fallen, and one is,  
and the other is not yet come;  
and when he cometh,  
he must continue a short space.

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Rev 18:1–24

Queen Babylon, the great whore (17:1–2). C.f. Nebuchadnezzar

History of Babylon:

- Nimrod founds a city named Babel (Genesis 10:10).
- ~1000 years BCE Babylon centre of many power struggles. Assyrians in north and southern tribes of Babylonia.
- Sargon II, king of Assyria swept into Babylon in 710 BCE.

- Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 BCE) – beautified Babylon
- Isaiah (Isa 13,14) & Jeremiah (Jer 50–51) prophesied her fall
- Cyrus entered city after diverting the Euphrates River
- Babylon became a byword for all that’s cruel and evil.
- Persian monarchs after Cyrus allowed the city to deteriorate, until Alexander the Great conquered the city.
- Over time Babylon declined in importance and though still inhabited, never regained its former glory.

“But desert creatures will lie there, jackals will fill her houses; there the owls will dwell, and there the wild goats will leap about. Hyenas will inhabit her strongholds, jackals her luxurious palaces. Her time is at hand, and her days will not be prolonged.”

Isaiah 13.21-22

18:5–8: John justifies the harshness of the sentence on Queen Babylon. Babylon deserves what she gets, for her sins “are heaped high as heaven” (Jer 51:9) and receives a sentence twice as harsh “double for her deeds” (Jer 50:29; Isaiah 40:2).

Revelation 18:9–20: 3 groups who will witness her downfall:- kings of the earth, merchants of the earth, shipmasters, seafarers and sailors – all watch the demise of this great city.

Setting moves to a courtroom - Queen Babylon is on trial

“When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it, and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, ‘Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disasters that I am bringing on her’” (Jer 51:63–64).

“I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jer 25:10-11)

“I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more” (Ezekiel 26:13)