

An artistic illustration featuring two hands holding a long, unrolled scroll. The scroll is covered in several red wax seals, which are being broken by the fingers of the hand on the right. The background is a dark, starry night sky with a crescent moon in the upper left corner. The overall style is reminiscent of classic religious art or book cover illustrations.

Αποκάλυψη
REVELATION
16:12

OUTLINE

- 🕒 Main Point
- 🕒 The Vision
- 🕒 The Sixth Angel (v. 12a)
- 🕒 The Euphrates River (v. 12b)
- 🕒 Euphrates: Literal or Symbolic?
- 🕒 A Problem
- 🕒 Kings (v. 12c)
- 🕒 Of the East (v. 12d)
- 🕒 Lessons for Us

MAIN POINT

The next Bowl Judgment is against the Euphrates River

-  Dries up the river
-  Allows the armies of the Kings of the East to cross over
-  Eventual gathering spot is Megiddo, which we will get to next time

Eschatological context

-  Need to keep in mind the time, place, and overall context of this passage
-  Prevents errant analysis
-  Some translational issues and logical/logistical problems based on what God has presently revealed to us
-  None of those issues undermine the clear literal nature of the passage

God uses everything and everyone to accomplish His will

-  Even those that are in rebellion against Him, He still uses and orchestrates events to accomplish His desired outcome
-  If God is using us, are we truly pleasing to Him, or is He simply using us for some other purpose?
-  How do we know if we are pleasing to Him (c.f. **John 15:8-10**)

THE VISION

Nicolás Peña - Amisgaudi - 2020



THE SIXTH ANGEL (V. 12A)

The angel

-  As with previous angels in the Bowl Judgments, there is no indication of it going out
-  No indication of it returning or doing anything but pouring
-  Rapid-fire portion of the judgments

We are looking forward to a time just before the end

-  A pivotal moment in the eschatological picture
-  This will be right before Jesus comes back
-  How long this takes to unfold is unclear, but given the nature of these judgments it seems to be fast

Does not look back to previous history

-  Some believe this is a prediction of the fall of the Roman Empire to various barbarians
-  Would also imply that Jesus came back some time in the late-5th Century
-  Euphrates was not part of the barbarian wars which led to the fall of Rome
-  Gothic forces from the North, not the East
-  Largely an attempt to deny the literality of the Scripture and the uncomfortable realities that entails

THE EUPHRATES RIVER (V. 12B)

The judgment is poured out on the Euphrates River

-  One of the largest and most important rivers in that region
-  Along with the Tigris, formed the basis of the Fertile Crescent
-  Allowed for the birth of agriculture and civilization on the Near/Middle East
-  Still an important river to this day, though there have been changes in its flow over the years, and its discharge into the Persian Gulf

Dried up

-  Not really an agricultural issue here
-  The purpose was military and to allow for a great battle, not to destroy crops or cause other physical issues
-  Presumably this is dried up not from water, but from blood (see **Revelation 16:4**)
-  Layering impossible miracles on top of impossible miracles
-  Another demonstration of the power of God and the fact that Satan and the Beast are not in ultimate control

In the Bible

-  One of the great rivers that is continually mentioned
-  First mentioned in **Genesis 2:14** and last mentioned here
-  Last seen in **Revelation 9:14** as part of a judgment to release forces for judgment

Historically

-  The Eastern Boundary of the Promised Land (**Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7; 11:24; Joshua 1:4**)
 -  Never fully claimed, even to this day
-  Border between Rome and the various Persian/Iranian states, and in constant flux

EUPHRATES: LITERAL OR SYMBOLIC

Symbolic

-  A general barrier to forces seeking to come against the Church (Lee via Thomas v2, p. 262)
-  Implies that the Church is around at this time
-  Implies that God is not taking care of His Church
-  Does not align with what we see in the rest of the Judgment
-  Adds problems with the eschatological picture, when/where Jesus returns, the nature of the armies, etc.
-  If this is non-literal, then why does God dry up a river for a battle that will take place?
 -  Even if we argue that the battle is itself non-literal, then that also means that everything that surrounds it (the removal of evil from the world, judgment, the return of Jesus, etc. is also non-literal)

Literal

-  “Euphrates” mentioned 21 times in the Bible
-  Always spoken of in a literal manner as a literal river
 -  A river/ great river (**Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 1:7; 11:24; Joshua 1:4; 2 Samuel 8:3, etc.)**
 -  In relation to Carchemish (**2 Chronicles 35:20; Jeremiah 46:2**)

God has done this before

-  Israel entering the Land (**Joshua 3:13; 4:23**)
-  Elijah and Elisha (**2 Kings 2:8**)
-  Prophecy as pattern

A PROBLEM

🏰 What about the Tigris?

- 🏰 There is a clear military aspect to this, based on the previous verses
- 🏰 So why is only the Euphrates mentioned?
- 🏰 One would think that the Tigris would also be a logistical impediment to invasion

🏰 Why would the river need to be dried up in the first place?

- 🏰 Even the ancients could ford rivers, even large ones
- 🏰 Today we can very quickly do this with deployable bridges
- 🏰 Bridges not even needed with massed helicopters or airlift capability
- 🏰 Not a meaningful impediment during the 2003 Invasion of Iraq

🏰 Technological issue?

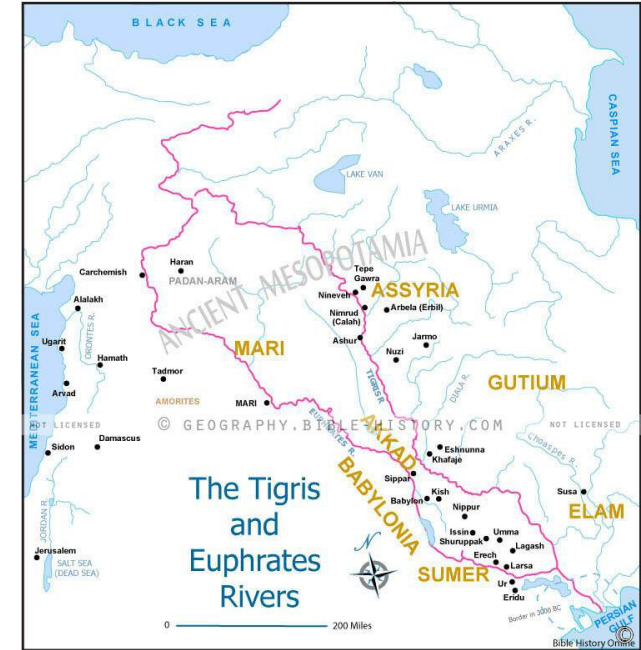
- 🏰 Do they not have the technology we have today? Either through destruction in judgments or a decay in what people have in general?
- 🏰 Too many people and moving too fast?
 - 🏰 Not really a major issue during the wars of Julian

🏰 The Tigris was already removed as a barrier?

- 🏰 Dried up in a previous judgment (e.g. Revelation 16:9)
- 🏰 Flow re-routed by an earthquake or other disruption (e.g. Revelation 6:12)

🏰 Could also be dried up but not mentioned because God wanted to make a specific point?

- 🏰 The Holy Spirit “editing” His work
- 🏰 Significance of the Euphrates



KINGS (V. 12C)

👤 Greek = *basileus*

- 👤 Strong's G935: king (82x), King (of Jews) (21x), King (God or Christ) (11x), King (of Israel) (4x)
- 👤 (through the notion of a foundation of power); a sovereign (abstractly, relatively, or figuratively):—king.
- 👤 leader of the people, prince, commander, lord of the land, king (*Outline of Biblical Usage*; Pierce)

👤 Why not other words?

- 👤 *Archon*: Strong's G757: properly, a preeminent ruler (chief); a commander with authority (influence) over people in a particular jurisdiction.
 - 👤 Example usage: **Matthew 9:18; 12:24; Mark 3:22; John 7:26; Acts 4:8**, etc.
- 👤 *Monarchos*: Not used, but a common political word/title; indicates a single ruler
- 👤 *Tyrannos*: Not used, but a common politics word/title
- 👤 *Politarchis*: Strong's G4173: a town-officer, i.e. Magistrate -- ruler of the city.
 - 👤 Used in **Acts 17:6, 8**

👤 There are plenty of words in the Bible and common Greek to describe various forms of rulers and their government

- 👤 But God did not use any of them
- 👤 He used the one that meant “king”
- 👤 I can only assume he means us to understand this as “king”; not President, President for Life, Dictator; Chairman, etc.
- 👤 If He wanted us to understand something different He would have told us something different by using a different word
- 👤 There is something, I believe, about a new foundation of power which these kings have which distinguishes them from the present order

OF THE EAST (V. 12D)

Of the east

-  As opposed to the rest of the kings of the earth
-  Indicates that these are a separate group in some way (Thomas v2, p. 263)

More literal translation is, ‘the rising of the sun’ instead of the East (Thomas v2, p. 263)

Who are they?

-  The Parthian identification lacks sufficient support
 -  John does not speak of them that way
 -  Hard to find a specific historical case where this would fit the description
 -  Localizes a clearly eschatological passage
-  They are some undefined group of leaders who come from the general direction of the East
 -  To fight for or against the Beast
 -  Some belief that they have been “summoned” by the Beast to help put down rebellion (Thomas v2, p. 263)
 -  May or may not be the case
 -  Other speculation that they come to fight against the Beast along the lines of **Daniel 11:25-30** topologically
 -  Not that they are “good” but they are just as greedy for power
 -  End up joining forces to go against the Remnant

Based on the word *basileus* I don’t think this describes any current set of leaders or nations

-  No real kingdoms left in that area that fit this idea in a political sense
-  If there is a sense of a foundation of power, it may be that these rulers come up in the Post-Rapture period and are a new political foundation in Asia

LESSONS FOR US

Need to keep in mind the context of this passage

-  May people look at the lower water levels in the Euphrates and think that this passage or **Revelation 9:15** are currently or about to be fulfilled
 -  If that is the case, then what about everything else that surrounded them
 -  Who/what is the First Beast; where is the Mark (most literally a brand of some kind), etc.?
-  This is clearly eschatological

God is using evil men to bring about His desired outcome

-  The total control of God, even of those in rebellion against Him
-  Use of Babylon to judge Israel
-  Use of demons (**1 Kings 22:22-23**)
-  Use of Satan?
-  Just because we are used by God, that does not mean our lives are pleasing to God