

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES REVELATION

THE SIXTH
BOWL JUDGMENT

16:12-16

REVELATION OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

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The Sixth Bowl Judgment

The treacherous trio of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet... the infamous battle of Har-magedon... Awfully famed and familiar? Yes... Always factual and faithful to the text? Perhaps not...

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. Revelation 16:12

The sixth angel pours his bowl on the great river called the Euphrates. The result? Its water dries up. The dry riverbed is not the end of the judgment though; God has plans for that riverbed and He will prepare it to fully execute His will. God will turn it into a great thoroughfare which the kings from the east will traverse.

The source of the River Euphrates is in Turkey; it flows through Syria and Iraq. It joins the Tigris before emptying into the Persian Gulf. It is important to note that Babylon is situated on the east bank of the Euphrates—we will see much about Babylon in the coming chapters.

Who are the kings of the East? They are kings whose nations are east of the Euphrates, which technically includes all of Asia. (By the way, the Bible always indicates directions based on the location of Jerusalem, God's chosen dwelling place). Think for a moment of some of the nations (kings) which are east of the Euphrates. Perhaps Iran? Afghanistan? China? India? Pakistan? Russia? Whichever nations are involved, we know for sure they originate east of the River Euphrates.

And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. Revelation 16:13-14

John sees three familiar characters—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (the “another” beast from Revelation 13:11-18)—three separate persons. Each has an unclean spirit coming out of his mouth. The unclean spirits are said to be like frogs because they are spirits of demons. The spirits perform signs which go out to the kings of the whole world in order to gather them together for war. The war of the great day of God, the Almighty—God’s war! In other words, this will not be the war of the unclean frogs, nor will it be the war of the kings of the whole world—this will be the war of the

great day of God, the Almighty! And since it will be the war of the Almighty, we don't have to wonder Who will be victorious!

Let me add something here. A great many people have read books and watched movies about the end times, and yet, many people have not read or studied the Bible to see what God has to say about the end times (after all, He is the author of the future). The trouble with reading books about what God has said rather than reading what God has said is that you end up believing what someone else believes rather than knowing truth for yourself.

For instance, one such popular series portrays the beast being indwelt by Satan, but if Satan indwells the beast, why does God separate them here? If you read (and study) God's book first, then you will have a plumb line to measure other book's assertions against. In other words, if you know what God has said, you will be fully aware when fiction writers deviate from His Truth. We need to let the water of The Word wash our minds—and then protect our minds from all untruth. So, be on guard!

Back to the text...

The unclean spirits coming out of the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet are *like* frogs but they are not frogs, they *are* spirits of demons. We cannot know for certain which attribute of a frog is in mind here; however, we do know that these demonic spirits use miraculous signs (along with deceptive lies from the mouths of the evil trio) to entice the kings of the entire world to wage a unified war—and according to verse 16, they successfully accomplish their treacherous task.

Once again, we are reminded how deceptive Satan and his minions are. The treacherous trio of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet can be understood as the unholy trinity—in other words, they are the anti-trinity. As God the Father is the head and authority of God the Son, so too, the dragon is the source of his accomplices' powers and gives his authority to the beast and the false prophet. As God the Father and His Son are worshiped, so too, the dragon and the beast are worshiped. As the Holy Spirit does not request praise for Himself, so too, the false prophet directs the earth-dwellers to worship the beast. As the Holy Spirit supernaturally attests the identity of the Messiah, so too, the false prophet performs signs and wonders to verify the "divinity" of the beast.

(“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”) Revelation 16:15

The Lamb, Himself, inserts a parenthetical insert here. The Greek word for “behold” is *idou* and is an interjection which means, “Be aware! Note! Pay attention! Look!” Obviously, every single thing that Jesus says is important, but in this case, He takes the added measure of making sure He has our undivided attention before He speaks to us.

After garnering our earnest attention, He announces that His coming will be like a thief. This is entirely appropriate timing for His interjection because the gathering for the great day of the war of God, the Almighty is the warning bell for the second coming of the Messiah. His coming will be like a thief— completely uncontrollable and unexpected in its timing.

Then He offers a blessing for the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes—that man will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame. Believers are admonished, “Don’t go to bed and fall asleep when you see the time approaching—stay alert”.

How will the follower of Jesus, in those days, stay awake and keep his clothes? By righteous, obedient belief and deeds. Believers are to keep themselves clothed in righteousness (by their righteous acts) because without righteous deeds they would be naked before the Lord... He is saying, “You know truth! Continue believing it! Continue persevering!”

Why the injunction to stay faithful? Consider the whole of Revelation—as the end time draws near more and more witnesses of Jesus will be persecuted and martyred without any hesitation. Things will be terrible in those times. The battle for Jerusalem will be the result of the entire world arraying itself against the Jews. The anti-christ will be pursuing the Jews with tenacity and deadly force and any believers who help the Jews or get in his way will be in his murderous sights as well...

And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-magedon. Revelation 16:16

After Jesus’ parenthetical insert of exhortation, John continues with his thought from verse 14. They gathered them (the dragon, beast, and false prophet—through the venue of deceptive lies and signs—gathered the kings of the whole world) to the place which is in Hebrew called Har-magedon.

Most people believe this is the valley of Meggido, also known as the plain of Jezreel, where many armies and battles have been fought through the centuries. It sits in northeast Israel like a bowl between mountains and their passes which have allowed passage, both access and escape, for the armies of the earth.

This is such a familiar passage and yet so many people pay little attention to what it actually says. This does not say there will be a *war* in the place called Har-magedon—it says there will be a *gathering* for a war. The war of the great day of God, the Almighty, will take place a little later... and a little further south... at Jerusalem...