

The Sixth Bowl Revelation 16:12-16 The End Times

In my last post, we considered **Revelation 16:10-11 ~ The Fifth Bowl**. In this post, we continue with **Revelation 16:12-16** to explore **The Sixth Bowl**.

The War of Armageddon (Har Megiddo)

The War of Armageddon (**Har Megiddo**), the final earthly battle, is demonically inspired. It is called **the war of the Great Day of Adonai-Tzva'ot** ("the Lord of Heavenly Armies"). In this conflict the **kings of the whole inhabited world** come against God's people; but God, through His Messiah Yeshua, wins the victory after **Babylon the Great** has been destroyed (compare Zechariah 12 & 14).

"The sixth one poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water dried up, in order to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs; they came from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are miracle-working demonic spirits which go out to the kings of the whole inhabited world to assemble them for the War of the Great Day of Adonai-Tzva'ot. ¹⁵ ("Look! I am coming like a thief! How blessed are those who stay alert and keep their clothes clean, so that they won't be walking naked and be publicly put to shame!") ¹⁶ And they gathered the kings to the place which in Hebrew is called Har Megiddo." ~ Revelation 16:12-16 (CJB)

The sixth one poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water dried up, in order to prepare the way for the kings from the east. This **bowl**, like the **sixth shofar**, affects the River Euphrates. Under the sixth **shofar**, the demon army of 200 million riders was released from the Euphrates. Here the Euphrates is dried up to make way for **the kings from the east** and their vast army. This is in the area of present-day Iran, Iraq, and Syria. In years past, an army of 200 million men seemed inconceivable, but with current populations in China, Russia, India, and other eastern countries today, it is entirely feasible.

Because of its size (1,780 miles long; 300-1200 yards wide; ten to forty feet deep) the **great river Euphrates** is a natural boundary and an excellent buffer zone during times of war. History gives many examples of armies that were stopped because they could not forge the river.

This war is predicted in Psalm 2:2-4: ***"The earth's kings are taking positions, leaders conspiring together, against Adonai and his anointed.³ They cry, 'Let's break their fetters! Let's throw off their chains!'⁴ He who sits in heaven laughs; Adonai looks at them in derision."***

And I saw three unclean spirits that looked like frogs; they came from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast and from the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴ They are miracle-working demonic spirits which go out to the kings of the whole inhabited world to assemble them for the War of the Great Day of Adonai-Tzva'ot. Gary Cohen shares these interesting thoughts: ¹

In verse 13 we see that from the Infernal Trinity there goes out a clamor for the armies of this world to gather together in northern Palestine, the approach valley-plain to Jerusalem, Armageddon (verse 16). Why? We do not yet know the Satanic reasons that these three will give to the world. Some have suggested that the western world will desire to have a showdown against the eastern armies marching to take Palestine. This may be it. Perhaps both east and west are coming as a United Nations force to once and for all settle the Middle East by totally annihilating Israel, and representative armies from all over the world are to participate in this necessary "for the good of mankind" genocide? This would certainly fit the circumstances of Joel 3 and Zechariah 12:14.

¹ A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

This is a revealing insight into the way God works among the nations of the world to bring to pass His will. It is amazing how the leaders of the world's countries think they are in control of what happens when in reality they are controlled by unseen spiritual forces and moved along a course God has already laid out.

("Look! I am coming like a thief! How blessed are those who stay alert and keep their clothes clean, so that they won't be walking naked and be publicly put to shame!") Right here in the middle of this prophecy concerning the most catastrophic events ever to afflict humanity, **Yeshua** makes an announcement! It's like a wake-up call. Who is He speaking to? I believe He is speaking to two groups of Believers! First, He is speaking to those of us who are alive now. He is reminding us that His return is the theme of **Revelation**. The message here is for us to remain faithful; to live an exemplary life and reach out to those around us with the message of the **Besorah**.

The second group of Believers would be those who are alive in the closing months, weeks, days, and hours of the **Tribulation** period. They are to remain steadfast, knowing the end is close at hand. These are the ones who haven't taken the mark of the beast; nor bowed down to him, nor given in to his commands. They probably are meeting under cover of night, knowing that to worship the Lord openly would cost them their lives. I thought the Left Behind series did an excellent job of portraying this group.

To all Believers of any age the message remains the same: remain faithful, keep your garments white, **Yeshua** is coming as a thief in the night.

And they gathered the kings to the place which in Hebrew is called Har Megiddo. In Zechariah 12:11, which also places **Megiddo** in the context of the Last Days, the Hebrew word is **Megiddon**: ***"When that day comes, there will be great mourning in Yerushalayim, mourning like that for Hadad-Rimmon in the Megiddon Valley."***

Hadad-Rimmon was the place in the Valley of Yizre'el (Jezreel) near Megiddo where King Yoshiyahu (Josiah) fell at the hands of Pharaoh Nechoh in 609 B.C.E. (2 Kings 23:29-30).

David Stern comments: ²

*The city of Megiddo, which overlooks the Yizre'el Valley and guards a major pass on the ancient **Via Maris** ("Way of the Sea") connecting Egypt with Syria, has seen many battles and much mourning. The archeological remains, spanning a period from the Chalcolithic Age (4th millennium B.C.E.) to the Persian conquest (7th century C.E.), consist of twenty levels, indicating the city was destroyed and rebuilt many times. In this valley, Dvorah [Deborah] and Barak defeated the Canaanites (Judges 4-5; Megiddo is mentioned at Judges 5:19) and Gideon the Midianites (Judges 6-8). In modern times both Napoleon (1799) and General Allenby (1918) defeated the Turks near Megiddo. The hundred square miles of the Yizre'el Valley would provide more than enough space for the conflict envisioned in the book of Revelation.*

*However, the final war may not take place at **Har Megiddo** at all, but in Jerusalem, at Har Megiddo, the "mount of his choice fruit," i.e., the mountain of God's blessing, Mount Zion. Mount Zion has already been mentioned at 14:1; moreover, the imagery resembles Joel's picture of the Day of Adonai, when God's power goes forth from Mount Zion against the forces of evil (Joel 2:1-11, 4:16-17 (3:16-17); compare also Isaiah 31:4-9). The next passage (vv. 17-21) resembles 14:14-20, which also draws on imagery from Joel 4 (see 14:14-20N). Strengthening the case further Zechariah 12:11, cited above, mentions Jerusalem along with Megiddon.*

² Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stern.

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 16:10-11 ³

Historicist Approach:

Since the Garden of Eden and later Babylon were both situated at *the great river Euphrates*, **Historicists** believe human history will come to an end where it began. They also believe that the *Euphrates* points to the Turkish Empire. Some believe that the three spirits are paganism, the papacy, and Islam. Many modern Historicists do see the *War of the Great Day of Adonai-Tzva'ot* as a real armed conflict of international proportions.

Preterist Approach:

Preterists point out that Cyrus the Persian did divert the Euphrates in 536 BCE in conquering the Babylonians. Again, they still see these events as relating to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

Futurist Approach:

Most **Futurists** believe *the kings from the east* may include Japan, China, India, as well as other lesser nations. The involvement of every nation on earth is taken literally by many. They raise an interesting conundrum: *Since the countries of the whole world will be effectively under a single government during the Tribulation, how will it be possible for there to be a world war at the end of the Tribulation?* One possibility is the conflict will be against the **Messiah** and **His Heavenly Army**. The second option is that the final battle will be one of rebellion and insurrection on the part of many nations against *the beast's* authority.

Idealist Approach:

There is no consensus among **Idealists** as to whether this passage describes spiritual or physical warfare.

In my next post, we continue to explore the plagues by examining **Revelation 16:17-21 ~ The Seventh Bowl**.

³ Material in this post is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.