

Program: SS Panel 2025 2 Q

Quarterly title: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

Quarterly author: Shawn Boonstra

Lesson Title: #13 Title Here

For Lesson Dates: *June 21-27* , 2025

Section title: Wednesday - The Drying of the Euphrates

Record date: Wednesday July 22 , 2025

Note: This color and font = quarterly text

Note: This color and font = John Dinzey notes

]]> Emphasize this

Question:

>[=] Story:

REF:>>

READ

NIL: Not in Lesson

Lesson 13

*June 21–27

Images of the End

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Matt. 12:38–42; Jonah 3:5–10; Rev. 18:4; Dan. 5:1–31; Rev. 16:12–19; 2 Chron. 36:22, 23.*

Memory Text: "So he said to them, 'I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land' " (*Jonah 1:9, NKJV*).

WEDNESDAY

June 25

The Drying of the Euphrates

READ

One of Babylon's strengths was the way the Euphrates River flowed underneath her walls, providing the city with an unlimited supply of water. It also proved to be her weakness. Nitocris, an ancient Babylonian queen, had created earthen works along the river in order to develop it as a route to the city, and in the process had diverted the river into a swamp in order to allow crews to work comfortably. **Cyrus realized that he could do the same thing, drying up the Euphrates enough that he could comfortably march his troops under the wall. Once inside the city walls, he found the defensive walls that followed the river through the city unguarded, and the city fell in a single night.** The ancient Greek historian Herodotus tells us that "those who lived in the centre of Babylon had no idea that the suburbs had fallen, for it was a time of festival, and all were dancing, and indulging themselves in pleasures." — Herodotus, *The Histories*, Tom Holland, trans. (New York: Penguin, 2015), p. 94. Can there be any doubt that this is the same feast as portrayed in Daniel 5?

Read Daniel 5:18–31 and Revelation 16:12–19. What parallels do you find between some of the plagues of Revelation and the story of Babylon's fall?

Daniel 5:18–31 . 18 O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor.

19 And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.

21 Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, **till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.**

22 “But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, **although you knew all this.**

23 And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And **you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.**

24 Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.

25 “And this is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of *each* word. **MENE:** God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it;

27 **TEKEL:** You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting;

28 **PERES:** Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Daniel 5:29 Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30 **That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.**

31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, *being* about sixty-two years old.

One of Babylon’s strengths was the way the Euphrates River flowed underneath her walls, providing the city with an unlimited supply of water. It also proved to be her weakness. Nitocris, an ancient Babylonian queen, had created earthen works along the river in order to develop it as a route to the city, and in the process had diverted the river into a swamp in order to allow crews to work comfortably. **Cyrus realized that he could do the same thing, drying up the Euphrates enough that he could comfortably march his troops under the wall. Once inside the city walls, he found the defensive walls that followed the river through the city unguarded, and the city fell in a single night.** The ancient Greek historian Herodotus tells us that “those who lived in the centre of Babylon had no idea that the suburbs had fallen, for it was a time of festival, and all were dancing, and indulging themselves in pleasures.”—Herodotus, *The Histories*, Tom Holland, trans. (New York: Penguin, 2015), p. 94. Can there be any doubt that this is the same feast as portrayed in Daniel 5?

Revelation 16:12–19 12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, **so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.**

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings [of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief. **Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.**”

16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”

18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Rev 17:15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

READ

In explaining how to discern the signs of the times, Jesus warned His disciples, “**Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into’**” (Matt. 24:42, 43, NKJV). Just as in the fall of Babylon, the sudden appearance of Christ will catch modern Babylon by surprise. It does not need to be this way, however; we have been given ample evidence of the soon coming of Jesus in a multitude of detailed prophecies.

READ

The world will not be caught by surprise merely because it is ignorant of what God has predicted; **it will be surprised because it has chosen to disbelieve what God has said would happen.**

Revelation 16:15 *15 “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”*

Additional Notes

Great river Euphrates. See p. 724; see on ch. 9:14. Proponents of both the first and the second views agree that **John does not here refer to the literal river as a river, or to the drying up of its literal waters. There is also general agreement that the waters of the river Euphrates here represent human beings** (cf. ch. 17:15). According to the first view, however, the Euphrates represents the former Ottoman Empire, through which this river flowed, and since the fall of that empire at the end of World War I, its modern successor, Turkey. This view assumes that the term Euphrates, while not referring to the literal river as a river, nevertheless retains a measure of literal geographical significance, to the extent of being a designation for the geographical area traversed by the river, the Mesopotamian valley. For more than 1,000 years this area was administered by the Saracens and the Turks, and more recently by the government of Iraq.

According to the second view the significance of the term Euphrates is to be ascertained from the context which reveals that the term Babylon is used exclusively as a symbol of apostate Christianity (see on chs. 14:8; 17:5). Historically and geographically the literal river Euphrates was the river literal Babylon (Jer. 51:12, 13, 63, 64). As the river of mystical Babylon, that great city (see on Rev. 17:18), the Euphrates would here be dissociated altogether from its former literal, geographical significance and be understood in terms of its companion symbol, mystical Babylon. The waters of the Euphrates would thus be the “many waters” of ch. 17:1–3, 15 on which mystical Babylon sits, the “inhabitants of the earth,” whom she makes “drunk with the wine of her fornication” (ch. 17:2; cf. ch. 13:3, 4, 7, 8, 14–16).

Dried up. The form of the verb in the Greek denotes as an accomplished fact the act of drying up. According to the first view the drying up of the river Euphrates here referred to began to meet its fulfillment in the gradual shrinking of the Ottoman Empire, with the complete fulfillment of this prophetic feature still future.

According to the second view the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates refers to the withdrawal of human support from mystical Babylon in connection with the sixth plague (see above on “great river Euphrates”; see on Rev. 16:14, 16, 17, 19; cf. Isa. 44:26 to 45:2). Proponents of this view find the results of the drying up described symbolically in Rev. 16:18, 19; 17:15–18, and literally in GC 654–656.

Way. Gr. hodos, “road,” “highway.” In the setting of vs. 12–16 this is the way by which the kings and their armies pass through the Euphrates to join battle with their opponents. According to the first view this “way” would be geographically through the Mesopotamian valley, formerly the territory of the Ottoman Empire. According to the second view, way is figurative—the “way” by which the situation on earth is prepared for Christ and the armies of heaven to triumph over Babylon (v. 19) and “the kings of the earth” (v. 14).

Kings of the east. Literally, kings from the [sun] rising (see on ch. 7:2). In harmony with the geographical significance that they attribute to “the great river Euphrates,” those who hold the first view understand the “kings of the east” in a geographical sense, as denoting nations situated to the east of the Mesopotamian valley.

According to the second view “the kings of the east” represent Christ and those accompanying Him. This view bases the term “kings of the east,” like the other symbolic expressions of Rev. 16:12, on the historical incident of Cyrus conquering Babylon and later releasing God’s people, the Jews, to return to their native land.