

Understanding Revelation – Topic 28

The kings from the sunrising

**Why their way
must be prepared**

An exposition of Revelation Chapter 16:12b

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Introduction

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. Revelation 16:12

It is clear from a study of Revelation 18:4-8 that the seven last plagues fall upon a Babylon which represents the apostate Christian churches. The leader of Babylon is the Papacy - the Church of Rome - consequently Babylon encompasses all those who support the Papacy. The number 6 is Babylon's number, and the sixth plague is targeted especially at her.¹ During this plague Babylon is exposed for what she is.

Plagues 1-5 and 7 are based upon the plagues of Egypt, and Egypt is applied in a literal sense in the book of Revelation. The sixth plague is couched in symbolic language. For that reason the sixth plague has always been understood to have a symbolic application.² This is because it is based on ancient Babylon and in the book of Revelation Babylon is always symbolic. We must therefore interpret Revelation 16:12 symbolically.

We see in this passage that the sixth plague brings about the drying up of the river Euphrates. The Euphrates represents the millions of people who will initially support spiritual Babylon but whose support will eventually dry up, turn away and finally turn against its religious leaders.³ This momentous event will prepare the way for *the kings of the east* - or *sunrising* as the original Greek reads. Who are these kings from the *sunrising*?

Revelation Chapters 12-19 portray the opposing powers in the great controversy between good and evil. In each chapter the two sides are presented - God's side and Satan's side. It will be seen that in the great controversy the kings of the East are on God's side.

¹ Murl Vance, *666 - The Mysterious Number* (Sydney: Waymarks Publications),

² The drying of the River Euphrates has not been applied to the literal river, but to the country through which it flows. This is symbolic application.

³ A.P. Cooke, *The Drying up of the River Euphrates* (Sydney: Self-published, 1985)

Comparison between the two sides in the great controversy

(Refer to Revelation Chapters 12-19)

Scripture reference	The Lord's Side	Lucifer's Side
Revelation 12	The woman (church), The man child (Jesus), The woman's seed.	The invisible dragon – Satan. The visible dragon - pagan Rome - kings, rulers and governors under the brand of Antichrist. ⁴
Revelation 13:1-18; 14:1-5	The Lamb and the saints: The 144,000.	The 7 headed, 10 horned beast . The 2 horned, lamb-like beast. The image to the beast. <i>All whose names are not in Book of Life... All the world...</i>
Revelation 14:6 -13	The Lamb, the holy angels and the saints.	Babylon, the beast and his image, and those who worship them.
Revelation 14:14-20	The Son of Man and the harvest of the saints.	The clusters of the vine of the earth and its fully ripe grapes – the unsaved.
Revelation 15	Those that have gotten the victory over->	The beast and his image.
Revelation 16	The kings from the sunrising.	The dragon, beast and false prophet. The kings of the earth and the whole world.
Revelation 17	The Lamb and those that are with Him.	The whore, the 7-headed beast and the 10 horns.
Revelation 18	God and His people.	Babylon – the kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and all nations.
Revelation 19:11-21	The King of kings and the armies of heaven.	The beast, the false prophet, the kings of the earth and their armies. Those that receive the mark of the beast.

In Revelation Chapter 16, the forces on the side of Lucifer are *the kings of the earth and the whole world* plus the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. On the side of Christ are the *kings of the east*. They represent Christ and the armies of heaven, the Lamb, the saints, etc. Other Scriptural evidence confirms that *the kings of the east* or *sunrising* represent the heavenly powers in the final conflict.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 3rd ed. (Boise, ID.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1962), 39.

Symbols used in Revelation 16:12b

Sunrising

In Scripture the term *sunrising* is used of Jesus Christ. In the inspired song of Zacharias the priest the Holy Spirit refers to Jesus Christ as the *Dayspring* or *Sunrising* (Gk).

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us. Luke 1:76-78

For *Dayspring* the margin says *Sunrising, Dawn* or *Branch*. Jesus Christ is clearly referred to as the *sunrising*. This is confirmed by the prophet Malachi who, when alluding to Christ, declared:

But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings... Malachi 4:2

The sun is a symbol of Christ. As the sun rising in the east sheds its beams of light and life upon the physical world, so Jesus, the spiritual sun, rises and sheds his spiritual rays of light and life upon the souls of human beings.

When the Revelator describes the sealing message of the Sabbath that is to come to the world in the last days, he likens it to an angel *ascending from the east*⁵ - from the *sunrising*. This indicates the origin of the message and the method of its rise. The Sabbath message comes from heaven. It comes from Christ.

Also, as the sun rises gently and slowly at first and finally reaches the noonday of its strength, so the sealing message began gently and slowly at first and it continues to grow stronger until it will reach its fullness in the *Loud Cry* of Revelation Chapter 18.

The prophet Ezekiel informs us that the glory of the Lord that was to come to the renewed temple at Jerusalem was to come from the east.

And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east... Ezekiel 43:2

When Christ returns in power and glory at the Second Advent, He comes from the east.

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24:27

Lightning may appear from any direction, but Jesus says his coming will be as the lightning that shines from the east to the west - not from the north to the south or from west to east, but from the east to the west. His glory will first appear on the eastern horizon and will then stream across the heavens to the west and envelope the globe. One author vividly describes the scene:

*Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud.*⁶

⁵ Revelation 7:1-4.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1882), 15.

We can clearly see why the term *east* or *sunrising* is used in connection with the heavenly forces coming to destroy Babylon.

Kings

In Revelation 16:12 the heavenly powers are called *kings*, and yet Jesus Christ is the King. This imagery is borrowed from the Old Testament description of the fall of literal Babylon. When Isaiah and Jeremiah forecast the destruction of Babylon, the plural noun *kings* was used. Here is the remarkable prediction by Isaiah of the overthrow of Babylon:

Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid". Isaiah 44:28

Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held - to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut: 'I will go before you and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze and cut the bars of iron. ... That you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel. Isaiah 45:1-3

Cyrus - a type of Christ

Over one hundred and fifty years before Cyrus' birth, God revealed to the prophet Isaiah the name of the Persian king who would overthrow Babylon and deliver Israel. This is one of the most remarkable predictions in Scripture. Only one other person was forenamed in this way, and that was Jesus Christ.

Cyrus (559-530 BC) is a classic type of Christ. This has been recognized by many scholars.⁷ There are at least fourteen remarkable parallels between Cyrus and Christ (see Appendix A). History demonstrates that he was a remarkable character and strikingly distinctive from other rulers of ancient times.

He had subdued all the east from the Aegean Sea to the river Indus and thereby erected the greatest empire that had ever been in Asia to that time; which work was owing as much to his wisdom as his valour, for he equally excelled in both. And he was also a person of that great candour and humanity to all men, that he made greater conquests by his courtesy, and his kind treatment of all he had to do with, than by his sword, whereby he did knit the hearts of all men to him; and, in this foundation, lay the greatest strength of his empire....⁸

Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, was one of the greatest characters of history, comparable to Nebuchadnezzar himself. Herodotus declared that 'wherever Cyrus marched throughout the earth, it was impossible for nations to escape him.' Of the nobility of his character, Dr John Lord said: 'The early Persians chose the bravest and most capable of their nobles for kings, and these kings were mild and merciful.'

⁷ F.D. Nichol, ed. *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assn, 1957), 4:250.

Also see Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1706-1721), *Ibid.*

⁸ Humphrey Prideaux, *The Connection of the History of the Old and New Testaments* (London: R Knaplock, 1725), 116.

*Xenophon makes Cyrus the ideal of a king – the incarnation of sweetness and light, conducting war with a magnanimity unknown to the ancient nations, dismissing prisoners, forgiving foes, freeing slaves, and winning all hearts by a true nobility of nature. He was a reformer of barbarous methods of war. In short he had all the qualities which we admire in the chivalric heroes of the Middle Ages.*⁹

Xenophon, the ancient Greek historian declared of Cyrus,

I came to this judgment...that...it was easier to rule every sort of creature than to rule man. But when I considered Cyrus the Persian, who rendered many men, many cities, and many nations, obedient to him, I was then necessitated to change my opinion...that to rule men is not...impossible...if a person undertakes it with understanding and skill...there were some who willingly obeyed Cyrus that were many days' journey, and others that were even some months' journey distant from him; some, too, who had never seen him, and some who knew very well that they never should see him; and yet they readily submitted to his government; for he so far excelled all other kings, as well as those who had received their dominion from their forefathers....

*He was able to inspire all with so great a desire of pleasing him, that they ever desired to be governed by his opinion; and he attached to himself so many nations as it would be a labour to enumerate...*¹⁰

*The giant figure of Cyrus the Great appears all the more splendid in the sunlight. He is fitly called the great, as belonging to the small numbers of the immortals to whom humanity cannot deny this highest title...he attained unheard of success with insignificant means.... He was great too, if it be great to fight and even to fall for the sake of justice.... More than this, he was the most humane. His shield is stained by no horrible deeds of blood, of frightful revenge and cruelty, such as disgraced the son of Olympias. He spared, and made gifts to conquered enemies.... Thus he was the greatest, far beyond the spirit of his nation and age, anticipating the remotest future both as man and statesman...carried by a commanding personality who not only compelled the admiration of his own people, but also brought his enemies to their knees.... Who is there that approaches him? Above all, the little people of the Jews hailed him...as they have done no other mortal before or since, as the victor and rescuer, the liberator and savior, the favored of God and lord of the earth.... He was not the product and child of his age...he was its creator and father, solitary and unique in the world's history; he took firmer grip of the wheel of time than any other mortal; in the term of his life he brought an epoch to its close, snatched the lordship of the earth from the Semites and Egyptians, and won it for the Aryans for all time.*¹¹

⁹ John Lord, *Beacon Lights of History* (New York: James Clarke & Co, 1902), 1:56.

¹⁰ Henry Smith Williams, *Historians History of the World*, ed. Henry Smith Williams, vol. 8 (New York: Hooper Jackson, 1907), ; Xenophon, ed. *Historians History of the World*, ed. Henry Smith Williams, vol. 2 (New York: Hooper Jackson, 1907), 597.

¹¹ Xenophon, 597-600.

Cyrus must have been a great warrior and statesman. Nor is his character without nobility. He excels in the humanity with which he treated the vanquished. He destroyed no town nor did he put the captive kings to death...by the Persians his memory was cherished as 'the father of the people and the Greek tradition....' This shows that his greatness was acknowledged also by his enemies. He therefore deserved the homage which Xenophon paid to him in choosing him as hero for his didactic novel.¹²

Cyrus was preceded by a reputation for clemency.... Thus the history of Babylonia closes peaceably upon the noble figure of Cyrus, the Achaemenid prince, who commands our warmest sympathies.¹³

The builder of this empire was the mighty Cyrus, one of the most powerful and, if tradition is to be credited, one of the best of the great conquerors of history.¹⁴

It is clear that Cyrus is a suitable symbol, or type, of Jesus Christ.

From the east

In the invasion of Babylon, Cyrus is also described as coming from the east.

Who raised up one from the east? Who in righteousness called him to His feet? Who gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? Isaiah 41:2¹⁵

Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country... Isaiah 46:11

The phrase *a bird of prey* denoted the rapidity of Cyrus' march from distant regions to pounce upon his prey.

The standard of Cyrus was a golden eagle on a spear...¹⁶

Cyrus was from the Persian province of Anshan or Susiana in Elam which was directly east of Babylon but Isaiah also predicted that Cyrus would be raised up from the north.

I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come; from the rising of the sun. Isaiah 41:25

Cyrus was a Persian by virtue of his father and a Mede by virtue of his mother's heritage. His army consisted of Persians whose country was to the east of Babylon, and of Medes whose country was north of Babylon. While Cyrus' native province was Anshan, directly east of Babylon, when he assembled his allied forces to invade Babylon, it was from the north that they came.

¹² ed., *Encyclopædia Britannica*, (1911) 7:708.

¹³ Xenophon, 459.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 567.

¹⁵ Robert Jamieson et al., *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1871), on Isaiah 42:1.

¹⁶ Robert Jamieson et al., on Isaiah 46:11.

In view of the fact that Cyrus fulfilled the amazing prediction of Isaiah, made one hundred and fifty years before his birth, it may be profitable to take a glimpse at some of the historical details concerning this event. For a map showing the Persian Empire during the time of Cyrus refer to

http://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map_persian_empire.html

Influence of Daniel the prophet

Another character who stands out in the overthrow of ancient Babylon by Cyrus is the beloved Daniel. What a remarkable witness for God this man was before the leading lights of the world.

Initially Daniel was used to introduce Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to the true God.¹⁷ Under Daniel's influence, along with the divine interventions in Nebuchadnezzar's life, Nebuchadnezzar finally became a convert to the true God. Nebuchadnezzar will be among the saved in God's kingdom. He will be a star in Daniel's crown.

It is a remarkable fact that on his deathbed, Nebuchadnezzar was given prophetic foresight by which he foretold the end of Babylon. Under the symbol of a Persian mule, he declared how Cyrus would reduce the Babylonians to servitude.¹⁸

King Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, rejected the lessons God had taught his grandfather. Instead of submitting to Jehovah as Nebuchadnezzar had done, Belshazzar defied Him. This defiance climaxed in his blasphemous use of the sacred vessels of Jehovah in the worship of the gods of Babylon.

God's response was the appearance of a bloodless hand, which suddenly emerged from the sleeve of darkness, which inscribed its words of doom in letters of fire on the palace wall. However, no one understood the words, probably because the language was the old Samaritan Hebrew, which was unknown to the Babylonians.¹⁹ Daniel, a Hebrew, was not present on this occasion but the queen mother reminded Belshazzar of the aged man and his celebrated wisdom. Daniel was summoned. He interpreted the words and Babylon's doom was pronounced.

...Your kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Daniel 5:28

In fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction one hundred and fifty years before, Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon that very night. He was informed of the handwriting on the wall the next day and of how Daniel, the renowned prime-minister of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, had foretold Babylon's capture and fall to the Medes and Persians.

There can be no doubt, but that this decree in favour of the Jews was obtained by Daniel. When Cyrus first came to Babylon, on his taking the city, he found him there an old minister of state, famed for his great wisdom all over the east, and long experienced in the management of public affairs of the government, and such counselors wise kings always seek for: and moreover his late reading of the wonderful handwriting on the wall, which had puzzled all the wise men of Babylon besides, and the event which happened immediately after, exactly agreeable to

¹⁷ Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as recorded in Daniel 2, was given him by God. Subsequently Daniel was introduced to the king and the king received the divine interpretation of the dream.

¹⁸ Humphrey Prideaux, footnote on page 14.
Xenophon, 1:579.

¹⁹ Xenophon, footnote page 117.

his interpretation had made a very great and fresh additions to his reputation; and therefore on Cyrus having made himself master of the city, he was soon called for, as a person who was best able to advise and direct about the settling of the government on this revolution, and was consulted with on all the measures taken therein. On which occasion, he so well approved himself...he was made...prime minister... And when Cyrus returned from his Syrian expedition again to Babylon, he found a new addition to his fame, from his miraculous deliverance from the lion's den...which gave sufficient reason for that wise and excellent prince to have him in the highest esteem.... And since he had been so earnest with God in prayer for the restoration of his people.... And to induce him (Cyrus) the readier to grant his request, he showed him the prophecies of the prophet Isaiah, which spake of him by name one hundred and fifty years before he was born, as one whom God had designed to be a great conqueror, and king over many nations, and the restorer of his people, in causing the temple to be built, and the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem to be again dwelt in by its former inhabitants. That Cyrus had seen and read these prophecies, Josephus tells us; and it is plain from...his decree in Ezra for the rebuilding of the temple. And who was there that should show them unto him but Daniel, who... had constant access unto him... in the first year of Cyrus' monarchy over the east, he issued out of his royal decree for the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, and the return of the Jews again into their own country.²⁰

The author of the book *Prophets and Kings* states:

The deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions had been used of God to create a favorable impression upon the mind of Cyrus the Great. The sterling qualities of the man of God as a statesman of farseeing ability led the Persian ruler to show him marked respect and to honor his judgment. And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty.

As the king saw the words foretelling, more than a hundred years before his birth, the manner in which Babylon should be taken; as he read the message addressed to him by the Ruler of the universe, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me;" as he saw before his eyes the declaration of the eternal God, "For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me;" as he traced the inspired record, "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward," his heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission.²¹

²⁰ Ibid., 125-126.

²¹ Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1917), 557.

Daniel was successful in leading King Cyrus the Great to the knowledge of the true God.

Through association with him (Daniel), these heathen monarchs were constrained to acknowledge his God as "the living God, and steadfast forever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed".²²

It is thrilling to notice how Cyrus worded his decree for the restoration of Israel to their homeland:

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. Ezra 1:2-3

The wording of this decree indicates that Cyrus acknowledges Jehovah as having given him the kingdoms he had conquered. He also acknowledges the veracity of Isaiah's prophecy of one hundred and fifty years before, which Daniel had brought to his attention. When he included in his decree *the LORD God of Israel 'he is the God'*, this could imply that Cyrus received Jehovah as the true God.

Nebuchadnezzar had been won to the true God by Daniel. If Daniel also won Cyrus this was a marvelous testimony to the character, personality and influence of the man. One stands in awe at the remarkable influence of this individual whose name rang with renown throughout the ancient world for centuries. It is a testimony to what Heaven can do for the person who is unreservedly devoted to God. No wonder Scripture tells us he was *greatly beloved* (Daniel 10:19). The life, character and influence of such a man should inspire us to cherish, study and understand his inspired writings.

King of kings

Cyrus was also a type of Jesus Christ in that he was a ruler over kings - a *King of kings*.

...and made him rule over kings.... Isaiah 41:2

There were other kings under Cyrus. In predicting the destruction of Babylon, Jeremiah wrote:

...many kings shall be raised up from the ends of the earth. Jeremiah 50:41

...the LORD has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes... Jeremiah 51:11

Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes... Jeremiah 51:28

The angel Gabriel, interpreting the symbols of Daniel 8 stated:

The ram which you saw, having the two horns - they are the kings of Media and Persia. Daniel 8:20

History records that in the overthrow of Babylon more than one king was involved. Other kings were with Cyrus - *the kings from the east*.

Xenophon referred to Cyrus and the Persian kings in this way:

Still more usual is the title 'King of kings'...the description which, as is well known, has remained the regular appellation of the Persian king...it would seem to express the summit of royalty.²³

²² Ibid., 545.

Jesus the antitype

King of kings

When Jesus Christ, who is greater than Cyrus, is pictured leading the armies of heaven to destroy spiritual Babylon at the Second Advent, he is described (in upper case), as *KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS* (Revelation 19:16).

This title suggests that there must be other kings under Christ. These could not be earthly kings because the earthly kings, having supported spiritual Babylon, will be destroyed at the Second Advent.²⁴ So the other kings who will be with Christ must be heavenly kings.

There are kingly powers in the unfallen universe. The apostle Paul referred to

...the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Ephesians 3:10

A principality is a domain, ruled over by a prince, indicating kingly power. Scripture affirms the fact that in the world to come there are principalities and powers.

...He raised Him (Jesus) from the dead and seated him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. Ephesians 1:20-21.

The great God of the universe shares His rule. He delegates responsibility amongst His intelligent creatures. Our God is not a dictator.

For by Him (Christ) all things were created that are in heaven...whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers. Colossians 1:16

Heavenly rulers under Christ's authority

Scripture depicts at least five classes or groups to whom Jesus has delegated ruling authority.

1. Certain angels. When Isaiah described how Lucifer coveted the position of God the Son, he spoke of him as having a throne.

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. Isaiah 14:13

This reveals that Lucifer already had kingly or ruling authority.

When Satan rebelled, there was war in heaven, and he, with all his sympathizers, was cast out. He had held a high office in heaven, possessing a throne radiant with light. But he swerved from his allegiance to the blessed and only Potentate, and fell from his first estate.²⁵

²³ Xenophon, 2:570.

²⁴ Revelation 17:2; 18:2, 9; 19:19; 16:14; 6:15-17.

²⁵ F.D. Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1957), 7:9,73 (EG White comments).

2. The leaders of other worlds. These could appropriately be classed as kings. Originally Adam was a *son of God*.²⁶ As the leader of this world God gave him dominion and authority over this earth.²⁷ He was the king of this world and when Satan usurped Adam's position, he became *the prince of this world*.²⁸ At various intervals leaders of other worlds, in Scripture described as *the sons of God*, assemble in the great councils of heaven.²⁹ These leaders of other worlds are kings, just as Adam was the king of this world.

3. The saints

He has...made us kings and priests to His God and Father. Revelation 1:5-6

In a spiritual sense the saints are kings now, but in the kingdom, the saints will literally share Christ's throne. They *will sit on his throne*. They will be given kingly authority (Revelation 3:21).

4. The twenty-four elders. These are beings that assist Christ now in his priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. They declare that they are *kings and priests* and *shall reign on the earth* (Revelation 4:4; 5:10). To them also will be delegated kingly power.

5. The twelve apostles. Jesus promised that the twelve apostles would be kings in the renewed earth.

In the regeneration...you who have followed me will also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew 19:28

So we see that there are several groups who could rightfully be classed as kings under Jesus Christ *the King of kings and Lord of lords*.

Preparation for the arrival of the kings of the east

The prediction of Revelation 16:12 declares that the purpose of the drying up of the great river Euphrates is that the way of the kings of the east is prepared. The need to *prepare the way* has great significance.

As already discussed in the previous topic, the drying up of the Euphrates depicts the exposure of Babylon, in particular the clergy and religious leaders. It represents their supporters turning against them and destroying them. This is the signal that the preparation has been completed for the coming of Christ and the heavenly hosts.

All of these events are a part of the final conflict in the great controversy. Grave questions about the character of God have been implanted in the minds of both fallen and unfallen beings. It is therefore necessary for God to permit certain events to take their course so that in the end His actions and character will be vindicated.

Christ's return at the Second Coming will precipitate the most devastating destruction on the part of the Deity that the universe has ever witnessed. There will be a fearful slaughter of the clergy as well as the staggering destruction of the many millions of the unsaved, all of whom will be destroyed upon the earth.

²⁶ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 145, 286.

²⁷ Luke 3:38.

²⁸ Genesis 1:26-27.

²⁹ John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

However prior to this event, before Christ performs *his strange act* of judgment as the avenger, Babylon must be exposed in all her guilt. This is essential because even amongst believers who know the truth concerning spiritual Babylon, there are many who are not convinced of her awful guilt. Very few, even among God's people, fully realize the depths to which spiritual Babylon has fallen. There is a reluctance to believe all that Scripture declares about her.

...by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.
Revelation 18:23-24

This passage is a damning indictment. For example, a publication entitled *The Secret History of the Jesuits* documents how World War I and World War II were engineered by the Jesuits. The author of this book documents how the Papacy planned these terrible conflicts with the intention of restoring Catholic world power.³⁰ This would be the kind of guilt for which Babylon must be exposed. This is why God declares that before Christ comes to destroy Babylon that is exactly what will happen.

In the last days God permits Satan to set up his kingdom - Babylon the Great. He permits Babylon to attain universal dominion. He gives her sufficient room to reveal her true character to the world and to the universe. This ensures that when Christ destroys Babylon and all who support her, there will be no dissent. There will be no doubt anywhere in the universe that God is just.³¹

Rather there will be a vast *Amen* to Christ's awful act of carnage. This is why *the drying up of the Euphrates*, the exposure of Babylon, *prepares the way* for the coming of the heavenly host that destroys her.

As a previously quoted author has so vividly written:

Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud...the cloud which surrounds the Saviour...the sign of the Son of man...it draws nearer the earth...until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror. Not now a "man of sorrows"... he comes...to judge the living and the dead...in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And "the armies of Heaven follow Him"...a vast, unnumbered throng, attend him on his way...No human pen can portray the scene, nor mortal mind is adequate to conceive its splendor....every eye beholds the Prince of life...a diadem of glory rests on his holy brow.... His countenance outshines the dazzling brightness of the noonday sun. Upon the rejecters of God's mercy falls the terror of eternal despair.... The faces of the righteous are lighted up, and joy fills every heart. The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before him. The derisive jests have ceased. Lying lips are hushed Naught now is heard but the voice of prayer and the sound of weeping and lamentation.... The cry bursts forth from lips so lately scoffing, "The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" The wicked pray to be buried beneath the rocks of the mountains, rather than meet the face of Him whom they have despised and rejected."

³⁰ Edmond Paris, *The Secret History of the Jesuits* (Paris: Chick Publications, 1975),

³¹ Revelation 19:1-6.

That voice (of Jesus) they know. How often have its plaintive, tender tones called them to repentance? How often has it been heard in the touching entreaties of a friend, a brother, a Redeemer? To the rejecters of his grace, no other could be so full of condemnation, so burdened with denunciation, as that voice which has so long pleaded, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" That voice awakens memories which they would fain blot out - warnings despised, invitations refused, privileges slighted.³²

Conclusion

At the Second Advent when the universe witnesses the greatest display of power and majesty ever known, they will behold Jesus Christ in His glory, and the glory of the Father, and the glory of the holy angels. The angelic hosts with their leaders, possessing kingly power, will be with Him along with the twenty-four elders as kings and priests. There will also be the saints who were either resurrected or translated to heaven, such as Enoch, Moses and Elijah, and there will be the leaders of other worlds.

All these will comprise *the armies of heaven* that escort Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. Heaven will be empty, and this is when there will be *silence in heaven*,³³ as the Father awaits the return of his Son with the redeemed from the earth.³⁴ In the sixth plague, *the kings from the east* (or sunrising) are comprised of all the heavenly powers that come with Christ to destroy Babylon.

³² Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1898), 640-642.

³³ A.P. Cooke, *Silence in Heaven* (Sydney: Self published, 1985)

³⁴ Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:4-7. The Sons of God existed before creation, and they, like Adam in his unfallen state, are the kings of other inhabited worlds.

Appendix A - Parallels between Cyrus and Jesus Christ

Cyrus	Jesus
The name Cyrus means <i>the sun</i> .	Jesus Christ is called <i>the sun of Righteousness</i> . Malachi 4:2
At his birth, the reigning king attempted to destroy him. ³⁵	At His birth the reigning king attempted to destroy him. Matt 2:16
Named by God 160 years before his birth	Named by God 700 years before his birth
<i>...he shall call upon My name... Isaiah 41:25 Thus says Cyrus...the Lord God of heaven... (He is God)... Ezra 1:2-3</i>	Jesus continually called on God's name in prayer, eg <i>Our Father who is in heaven... Matt 6:9-13</i>
<i>I will direct his ways... Isaiah 45:13 ... whose right hand I have held... Isaiah 45:1</i>	<i>I seek...the will of the Father who has sent me. John 5:30 I...will hold Your (Christ's) hand... Isa.42:6</i>
<i>Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus... Isaiah 45:1</i>	<i>We have found the Messiah (which is translated, the Christ). John 1:41 (margin: the anointed)</i>
<i>... Who says of Cyrus, He is My shepherd... Isaiah 44:28</i>	<i>I am the good shepherd... John 10:11 ...that great Shepherd... Hebrews 13:20 ...the Chief Shepherd... I Peter 5:4</i>
<i>...the man who executes My counsel... Isaiah 46:11 (margin: the man of my counsel)</i>	<i>Behold the Man...the counsel of peace shall be between them both. Zechariah 6:13</i>
Cyrus was officially titled <i>King of kings</i> . (...made him rule over kings... Isaiah 41:2)	Jesus will be titled <i>King of kings Lord of lords</i> . Revelation 19:16
Referring to Cyrus: <i>...who gave the nations before them as the dust to his sword, as driven stubble to his bow? Isaiah 41:2 ...to subdue nations before him... Isaiah 45:1</i>	<i>Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron... Revelation 19:15</i>
Cyrus came from east of Babylon - Anshan or Susiana - a Persian province. <i>...one from the east... Isaiah 41:2 ...from the rising sun he shall call upon My name... Isaiah 41:25</i>	<i>...the Dayspring (margin: Dawn) from on high has visited us. Luke 1:78 ...the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east... Ezekiel 43:2. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24:27</i>

³⁵ Xenophon, 2:576-580.

Cyrus	Jesus
<p>Cyrus overthrew literal Babylon. <i>Who says to the deep, 'Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers'. Isaiah 44:27</i> <i>A drought is against her waters and they will be dried up... Jeremiah 50:38</i> <i>...I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry. Babylon shall become a heap... Jeremiah 51:36-37</i></p>	<p>Christ overthrows spiritual Babylon. <i>Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and its water was dried up... Revelation 16:12</i> <i>...And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. Revelation 16:19</i></p>
<p><i>...he (Cyrus) shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built', and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid'. Isaiah 44:28</i> <i>...he (Cyrus) shall build My city and let My exiles go free, not for price, nor reward... Isaiah 45:13</i></p>	<p><i>...the city...whose builder and maker is God. Hebrews 11:10</i> <i>...He shall build the temple of the Lord... Zechariah 6:13</i> <i>...the captives of the mighty shall be taken away and the prey of the terrible be delivered... Isaiah 49:25</i></p>

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