

Revelation 9:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

Analysis

Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.... This verse from Revelation's vision of fifth and sixth trumpets - demonic torment and massive army, unrepentant humanity employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

Historical Context

John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 9:14 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

Interlinear Text

λέγουσαν τῷ ἔκτῳ ἀγγέλους ὃς εἶχε τῷ
 Saying which to the sixth angel which had which
 G3004 G3588 G1623 G32 G3739 G2192 G3588

σάλπιγα Λῦσον τῷ τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους τῷ
 the trumpet Loose which the four angel which
 G4536 G3089 G3588 G5064 G32 G3588

δεδεμένους ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ
 are bound in which river which the great Euphrates
 G1210 G1909 G3588 G4215 G3588 G3173 G2166

Additional Cross-References

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

Revelation 9:15 (Parallel theme): And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

Jeremiah 51:63 (Parallel theme): And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:

Genesis 2:14 (Parallel theme): And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

2 Samuel 8:3 (Parallel theme): David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

Revelation 8:6 (Parallel theme): And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Revelation 7:1 (Parallel theme): And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

Revelation 8:2 (Parallel theme): And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

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