

The Turks in Bible Prophecy

The sixth trumpet prophecy

An exposition of Revelation Chapter 9:12-22

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Introduction

The sixth trumpet prophecy

¹³ Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

¹⁵ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

¹⁶ Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.

¹⁷ And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone.

¹⁸ By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.

¹⁹ For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. Revelation 9:12-19

The sixth trumpet prophecy is the second of the three woe trumpets.

The first woe was the Arab invasion represented by the torment unleashed by the locusts of the five month period.¹ However it was not limited to only one third of men, as occurs with the rest of the trumpets. The reason is that the Arabs in their conquests of the Roman Empire would conquer almost two thirds of the empire’s territory, including all of the Eastern Roman Empire and a large section of Western Rome.

Each woe appears to be more severe than its predecessor. Whereas the first woe, the fifth trumpet, tormented men, this second woe is to slay a third of mankind.

¹ Refer chapter 14, *Tormented by Locusts for five months.*

Significance of the voice from the altar

The second woe commences with a voice from the horns of the golden incense altar in the first apartment of the heavenly temple. This is significant for three reasons:

1. It sets the timing for the sixth trumpet. The ministrations in the heavenly sanctuary from 31AD to 1844 took place in the first apartment of the Temple. There Jesus ministered at the incense altar before the eternal throne. The fact that the voice is heard from the altar indicates that the priestly ministry continues to be based there, indicating that the period in which the sixth trumpet sounds must be prior to 1844 (see Appendix A).
2. Sometimes in Scripture the location of a voice indicates an area where transgression prevails. For instance, in Genesis 4:9 when God came to question Cain about his murder of Abel, He asked him *Where is Abel your brother?* Cain replied, *I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?* In response the Lord said to Cain

The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground. Genesis 4:10

The ground was where Abel's blood had been spilt.

Again in Habbakuk scripture speaks of the sins of Babylon and how judgment would come on her:

For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the timbers will answer it. Habakkuk 2:11

That was the location where Babylon had committed her crimes.

3. The altar of incense that is depicted under the sixth trumpet represents the intercession of Christ. It was the predominant area where the professed church of the day had apostatized. God's professed people had become deeply involved in seeking the intercession of saints and martyrs. The voice from the altar under the sixth trumpet was from the place of true intercession, which they had profoundly neglected.

In the exposition of the first four trumpets it was revealed that there were judgments of God upon apostasy which were a response to the prayers of His true people.² The sixth trumpet is a judgment upon the apostate Christians of that day who had established a false form of priestly intercession, and as a result the commands in this prophecy are issued.

² Refer to chapter 12, *Visigoths, Vandals, Huns & Heruli*.

The four angels

....loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. v14

This term, *the four angels*, has been a problem through the years for many scholars. It has been their main objection to the position that the Turks fulfilled the sixth trumpet prophecy as nothing about the Turkish power corresponded correctly to the four angels.

One attempt to explain the four angels is that they were the four Turkish caliphates.³ But the four Turkish caliphates were not yet in existence, and when they were finally formed most of them had no connection with the Euphrates. The four Turkish caliphates, it is claimed, were at Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus and Iconium in Asia Minor. However, there were actually at least five caliphates, as follows:

1. Baghdad on the Tigris in Iraq
2. Aleppo in Syria
3. Damascus in Syria
4. Roum (Nice & Iconium) in Asia Minor
5. Kerman in South Persia⁴

Iconium and Nice in Asia Minor could never be considered to be in the region of the Euphrates. Baghdad was situated on a canal from the Euphrates where it joined the Tigris. Therefore it is questionable whether the caliphate of Baghdad could be counted as being in the region of the Euphrates. Aleppo was about 100 kilometres from the Euphrates so its inclusion would also be doubtful. Damascus was many more kilometres across the desert from the Euphrates and its caliphate was not united with the Ottoman Turks until 1517 AD (64 years after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 AD). Only the Roum caliphate in Asia Minor was involved in the downfall of Eastern Rome.⁵

However the prediction declared that the four angels are *released* from the river Euphrates. So what could the four angels represent? Scripture must interpret Scripture. The book of Revelation reveals clues concerning the four angels in Chapter 7. This latter-day prophecy pictures four angels holding the four winds so that they should not blow on the earth until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. This is a latter-day prophecy depicting heavenly agencies holding back the judgments of God until a special work is completed.

The four angels of the sixth trumpet are most likely the same four angels. They may be understood to be the agents of God controlling the powers that would bring judgments and punishments upon the world. The six trumpets are judgments on the Roman Empire and these four angels could be the same divine agents who were to release the powers that would bring punishment upon that empire.

³ Uriah Smith, *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1881), 506.

⁴ Roy A Anderson, *Unfolding Revelation* (Mountain View CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn, 1953), 92.

⁵ Edward B. Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticæ* (London: Seeley, Jackson and Halliday, 1862), 487-489.

On the other hand, the term *four angels* in some manuscripts reads *four winds*.⁶ If this is the application, then the command would be more understandable: *Release the four winds ...bound at the great river Euphrates*. This reading makes better sense, especially when associated with the Euphrates.

The river Euphrates

We need to understand what the Euphrates River represents. Generally, in the past, a literal interpretation has been given to this word and it has been claimed that the Euphrates represents the country through which it flows.⁴ But the difficulty with this interpretation is that the area where the Turks existed at that period was far beyond the Euphrates. It would be more correct to conclude that the Euphrates was the Western boundary of the area where the Turks then resided. This understanding is well supported.

When we turn to the Old Testament, upon which the book of Revelation is based, the Euphrates is seen to have a much greater significance. The term *Euphrates* is employed in two different ways. First, it was the designated boundary of literal Israel.⁷ Any power invading Israel from the North must pass over the Euphrates. Second, the term *Euphrates* is used to refer to an invading, destroying power.

The word *Euphrates* according to Dr Strong, means *to break forth - rushing*. It seems that this meaning was based on the fact that when the snows of Mt. Ararat melted, the Euphrates became a roaring, raging torrent which often overflowed its banks. This phenomenon was employed in the Old Testament to represent an overflowing, invading power. Isaiah declares

*Woe to the multitude of many people who make a noise like the roar of the seas,
And to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty
waters!*

*The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters;
But God will rebuke them and they will flee far away,
And be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. Isaiah 17:12-13*

Again the actual river Euphrates is referred to as representing the Assyrians when they invaded Israel

*Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River,
strong and mighty -
The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks.
He will pass through Judah, he will overflow and pass over,
He will reach up to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.
Isaiah 8:7-8*

⁶ Ibid. 495 (footnote re Griesbach, Knittel, Primasius & Ambrose Arnsbert.)

⁴ Uriah Smith, *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* 506.

⁷ Genesis 15:18-21; 1 Kings 4:21, 24-25.

The prophet likens the Assyrian power to the overflowing of the Euphrates in flood. Thus the Euphrates represents a rushing, invading power. This is also how the term is employed in the sixth plague of Revelation 16. When the supporters of spiritual Babylon are inspired by their leaders to rise up and overflow and destroy the saints of God, Heaven in response dries up *the waters of the Euphrates* - turning aside the invading, destroying peoples and delivering God's people.⁸

Likewise in the sixth trumpet of Revelation 9:14 the Euphrates represents a rushing invading destroying power. The command is given

Release the four angels (or four winds) who are bound at the great river Euphrates

so that they might perform their work of destruction.

The conquering Turks

In the following two verses a mighty invasion is described.

So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.
Revelation 9:15-16

Here is presented an army of horsemen poised to invade a third of the Roman Empire. Who were these horsemen? There are at least eight identification points given in the prophecy:

1. The type of army – horsemen (or cavalry)
2. How they are numbered
3. The colour of their uniforms
4. Their courageous and destructive spirit
5. Their destroying power would appear to issue from the horses' mouths
6. Their power (authority) is in their mouths and tails
7. Their tails are like serpents – they had heads, and with them they harm
8. An allotted period of time is given in which they kill or slay.

After the reign of the Arabs of the fifth trumpet, which power matched exactly the eight points of the prediction and invaded Eastern Rome and destroyed it? It was the Turks, also known as Turkomans.

Where did these Turks originate? They were a numerous people situated in central Asia who were descendants of Japheth, of the family of Magog. The Turkish race was comprised of five branches: the Kipchaks, Uigurs, Kanklis, Kalaches and the Kaluks. They had three language groups with six different alphabets. They were closely related to the Mongols and were involved with them four times in their career of conquest.

The Turks were known as the Scythians by the Greeks, and formed a loosely knit empire from the Volga River (at their peak) north of the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea, right

⁸ Refer to chapter 28, *The Drying up of the River Euphrates*.

across to the East, to Lake Baikal and North China. The Oxus River, north of Persia, was their southern boundary. That vast expanse of territory was the area they ruled.

In 308-589 AD northern China was under Turkish control. In 562 Mogan, a Turkish ruler, ruled from the Volga River to Lake Baikal, a distance of about 10,000 kilometres. Edward Gibbon says that it took their caravans six months to travel from Samarkand (North of Persia) to Northern China.

In 800 AD Turkish soldiers were employed as mercenaries by the Arabian caliphs in Baghdad. As a consequence, before very long, Turkish officers had taken control of the territories where the Caliph reigned, which is how the Turks first emerged in the Middle East.⁹



Figure 1 – the extent of Turkish power at various intervals between the fourth and sixteenth centuries AD.

By 960 AD the Turks had become established in Persia and set up an empire in East Persia which extended into India. They conquered a large section of India and this resulted in the formation of the famous Mogul empire, a Muslim state under the remarkable and renowned Mahmud. Around Delhi, even today, remnants of the Mogul Empire can be seen, including the emblematic Taj Mahal.

By 1030 AD the Seljuk tribe of the Turks had migrated into Khorosan (the north eastern province of Persia) because related peoples, already settled there, invited them to join them.

⁹ Henry Smith Williams, *Historians History of the World* (New York: Hooper Jackson, 1907), 24:257-272

The Seljukian Turks (Seljuks)

The Seljuks developed into a dominant power. They overthrew the Turks who had occupied the area and before long they were invited by the Arabian caliph at Baghdad to aid and protect him. In this manner the leader of the Seljuks, a man called Togrul Beg, became the first Lieutenant of *the prophet*, and a controlling power in Persia.

From this position they prepared their mission to invade and destroy the Roman Empire. They poised for their assault in the area east of the Euphrates. This river could correctly be identified as the boundary between the Turks and the Roman Empire. Edward Gibbon, speaking of the beginning of the Turkish invasion under the nephew of Togrul Beg, stated

*Alp Arslan passed the Euphrates at the head of the Turkish cavalry.*¹⁰

The initial Turkish conquests embraced Armenia and Georgia. The Seljuks then confronted the great Roman army from Constantinople led by the emperor. This was the decisive battle of Melazkerd, (now Malazgirt) in 1071 AD, near the headwaters of the river Euphrates. The army of Eastern Rome was soundly defeated and the Seljuks took control of the Middle East. They conquered Syria and Asia Minor, setting up their capital at Nice, the birthplace of the Nicæan Creed. Professor Davis in his history states

*The Turks in the 10 years following 1071 burned their way clear across Asia Minor almost to within sight of Constantinople.*¹¹

The Seljuks then conquered Arabia, Yemen, Egypt and West Africa, and further extended their empire eastward to the Indus River - the border of India. Northwards they conquered territory clear across to Kashgar on the Chinese border. It was while they controlled the Middle East that appeals were made to Europe to deliver Palestine from the Turks. This resulted in the establishment of the Crusades.



Figure 2: The Crusades against the Seljukian Turks

¹⁰ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Strahan and Cadell, 1789), 6:253.

¹¹ William S. Davis, *A Short History of the Near East* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 78.

The crusaders drove the Turks out of much of Asia Minor, forcing them to remove their capital from Nice to Iconium. Later the Seljuk power was well nigh destroyed by the Tartars, under Tamerlane, when they overran the Middle East. The Mogul's empire reached from the Sea of Japan in North China right across to the Caspian Sea. In Moscow today you can see memorials of mighty battles that were fought by the Russians against the Tartars.



Figure 3: The East at the time of the Crusades.

The Ottomans

The Mongols under Tamerlane soon disappeared but they had driven out many other Turkish tribes from Turkestan. One tribe migrated to Asia Minor, under the leadership of Othman. This tribe joined a remnant of the Seljuk Turks at Iconium and subsequently developed into the dominant power of Asia Minor, conquering the territory.

Othman and his successors set their sights upon Constantinople, the capital of Eastern Rome. It was the Ottoman Turks in particular who fulfilled the specifications of the sixth trumpet. The Seljuk Turks prepared the way but the task was completed by the Ottomans. The eight points of identification in the prophecy, especially the latter ones, apply particularly to them.

Note the comments of some historians concerning the Turks in their attacks upon Eastern Rome. Finlay, a historian of Greece, notes the similarity of the Turkish attacks to the attacks of the Goths upon western Rome, and it was the Goths who fulfilled three of the four first trumpets.

*The Turks in Asia Minor acted a part not unlike that which the Goths had acted in the history of the western empire.*¹²

Professor Vambery, a historian of the Levant says

*Alp Arslan was the first Turkish chieftain who led Turkish cavalry across the Euphrates, and brought the classic and sacred ground of Western Asia under the dominion of the race which rules it to this day.*¹³

Eight prophetic descriptors fulfilled

1. Horsemen

The first point of identification was that the invading army would comprise numerous horsemen.

Now the number of the army of the horsemen was...

So numerous were they that the prophet declared, *I heard the number of them in vision*, indicating their vast number.

Edward Gibbon, the skeptic and unconscious commentator of the Apocalypse, described the invasion of the Turks in the following manner

*The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of 600 miles from Taurus to Azeroum and the blood of 130,000 Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet (to the Muslim religion).*¹⁴

Notice that the Turkish horsemen spread over a 600 mile frontier, from Taurus (near Tarsus) in the south east corner of Asia Minor, right up to the Black Sea. For 600 miles, the Turkish horse extended. Gibbon continues,

*200,000 soldiers marched under his banners.*¹⁵

These were all horsemen. A French writer who visited Asia Minor in 1433 speaks of *the innumerable host of cavalry* of the Turks. Hezekiah Holland, who published a book in 1650 on the sixth trumpet, made the following observation

*I well remember that living in the University of Ireland, a gentlemen that newly came from Scangrown or Alexandretta, told me he saw the Turkish army march by to recover Badget or Babylon, and that the army was over a week marching by, consisting of fifteen hundred thousand men.*¹⁶

1,500,000 horsemen! No wonder the prophet said *I heard the number of them*. But weren't horses the modus operandi of every army in that era? Wasn't the horse typically used as a means of warfare in that era? It is true that there were numerous armies in the

¹² George Finlay, *A History of Greece* (London: Clarendon Press, 1877), 3:89.

¹³ Arminius Vambery, *History of Bokhara* (London: HS King & Co, 1873), 96.

¹⁴ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 6:252.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 6:260.

¹⁶ Hezekiah Holland, *An Exposition ... upon the Book of Revelation of St John* (London: T Ratcliffe & E Mottershed, 1650), quoted in W.A. Spicer, *Beacon Lights of Prophecy* (Takoma Park, WA: Review and Herald Publishing Assn, 1935), 238.

world of that day, but none possessed the numbers of horsemen that the Turks did. In contrast to the Turkish armies the European armies consisted mostly of foot soldiers, and the cavalry elements were comparatively small compared with the rest of the army.

2. Method of numbering

... *the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million.* v16

In the Greek this number reads *myriads of myriads*. Various scholars confirm this view using both external and Biblical evidence. In the Old Testament this was one way of numbering.

...*may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands.* Genesis 24:60

The original is thousands of myriads.

Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel. Numbers 10:36 (margin: ten thousand thousands)

The Hebrew reads *myriads of thousands*.

...*A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him...* Daniel 7:10

The Hebrew reads *myriads of myriads* stood before Him.

What is the significance of this numbering in the sixth trumpet? It was the Turkish method of numbering. They numbered by *tomens*. A *tomen* is ten thousand people, or the number 10,000, or *myriad*. Gibbon himself uses this very term when he describes the Turks. Alluding to Timur the Lame – the leader of the Tartars from Mongolia, he says

*The sea (the Bosphorus) rolled between the two continents of Europe and Asia and the Lord of so many tomens or myriads of horse was not master of a single galley.*¹⁷

Of the Turkish invasion of Asia Minor he says,

*The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of 600 miles from Taurus to Azeroum.*¹⁸

This method of numbering was peculiar to the Turks.¹⁹

2. Colour

...*of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow...* v17

Red, blue and yellow - were these in fact the colours of the uniforms of the Turkish army? Daubuz, an English scholar writing of the time, says:

¹⁷ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 7:72.

¹⁸ Ibid. 6:252.

¹⁹ Edward B. Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticae* 506.

From their first appearance the Ottomans have affected to wear warlike apparel of scarlet, blue and yellow: a descriptive trait the more marked from its contrast to the military appearance of Greeks, Franks or Saracens (Arabs) who were contemporary.²⁰

This third point indisputably identifies the Turks.

4. Horses' heads like lions

...and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions...

The *heads* no doubt refers to the Turkish leaders who are described as lion-like. The lion is symbolic of courage and destructiveness. It is significant to note that the Turkish leaders in their titles, as well as their character often used the term *lion*.

The name of Alp Arslan, the valiant lion is expressive of the popular idea of...the fierceness and generosity of the royal animal.¹⁹

Alp Arslan's successor was named *Kilij Arslan* which means *the noble lion*. Another writer says

The Turks compare the Grand Seignior (their king) to the lion and other kings (of other nations) to little dogs.²¹

Gibbon again says

It would be superfluous to praise the valour of a Turk.²²

The Anzacs in 1915 were very much aware of the courage and fighting qualities of the Turk in modern times.

5. Horses' mouths which issue destruction

The method of killing was via an issue from the horses' mouths.

...and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed - by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths.

A *third* denoted the third part of the Roman Empire.²³ At this time it was the Eastern division of the Roman Empire, Eastern Rome. Under the fifth trumpet the Arabs were to torment Eastern Rome but under the sixth trumpet the Turks were to slay Eastern Rome. That meant to destroy it as a political power. To accomplish that, it would mean striking at the heart of the empire – the capital - which was Constantinople.

The great city of Constantinople had stood for 1100 years. Eight determined attempts had been made to capture it, but in vain. It seemed as if it would last forever. However the Turks, when they conquered Asia Minor, being Muslims and fanatically opposed to

²⁰ Ibid. 508 (quoting C. Daubuz, *A perpetual commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1720).

¹⁹ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 6:253.

²¹ Ibid. 6:72.

²² Ibid.6:248.

²³ Refer to chapter 13, *Visigoths, Vandals, Huns & Heruli*.

Christianity, especially the apostate Christianity centered in Constantinople, were determined to capture the city. Because of this they became a terrible threat to Europe.

Initially the Turks crossed the Bosphorus, bypassed Constantinople, and ravaged the territories of Greece and beyond. J.H. Newman in his lectures on Greece said

*No race cast so broad and dark a shadow on the page of ecclesiastical history.*²⁴

A Turkish historian wrote,

*The Turkish invasion was a scourge far heavier than that of the Saracens. While the latter, when bent on permanent conquest, offered the tribute as alternative to the 'Koran or the sword', the Seljouks were mere savages who slew for the pleasure of slaying.... Never, probably even in the thick of the Teutonic (Gothic) invasions of the fifth century, was so much harm done in ten short years, as in Asia Minor during this period of 1071-1081. By the end of the latter years the flourishing themes (areas) which had been for so long the core of the East Roman realm had been reduced to mere wastes. Thirty years after (the battle of) Manzikert, when the armies of the crusaders marched from Nicaea to Tarsus, right across the ancient heart of the empire, they nearly perished of starvation in a land of briars and rivers.*²⁵

This reveals the destructiveness of the Turks. They destroyed like the lion. As Lord Houghton wrote,

*Think of that age's awful birth,
When Europe echoed, terror-riven,
That a new foot was on the earth,
And a new name came down from heaven.*

The Turks certainly filled Europe with fear and terror.

*For many a year the church bells of Germany called the people to pray for deliverance from the Turks.*²⁶

Aid for the Protestant Reformation

It is fascinating to learn that the Ottoman Turks in particular were, by contrast, of great assistance to the Protestant Reformation. When the Turks were invading Europe, King Charles V of Spain was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. This was the Roman Catholic political empire of the Middle Ages. Protestantism had risen in 1517 and hundreds of thousands of people had left the Mother church to become Protestants.

Charles V, being a devout Roman Catholic, was earnestly persuaded by his church to not only sternly oppose the Protestant faith, but to destroy it.²⁷ But whenever he advanced to attack the Protestants, so often tidings would come that the Turks were on the attack and Charles would be forced to turn away from the Protestants and march against the Turks. History is very clear that had it not been for the Turks, Protestantism would never have survived. As one scholar says

²⁴ John H Newman, *Lectures on the History of the Turks* (Dublin: Charles Dolman, 1854), 122.

²⁵ CWC Oman, *History of the Art of War* (New York: Putnam's, 1898), 222.

²⁶ W.A. Spicer, *Beacon Lights of Prophecy* 239.

²⁷ Eugene Lawrence, *Historical Studies* Harper, 1876), 96.

In the 16th and 17th centuries support and encouragement for Protestants and Calvinists... were one of the fundamental principles of Ottoman policy.²⁸

Another declared

There would have been no Protestantism had there been no Turk.²⁹

It has since been revealed that there was an agreement between the Turkish Sultan and some of the minor powers of Europe, including German barons. It was agreed that whenever Charles V would exert his political strength, especially against Protestants, the Turks would attack Europe and divert Charles' attention. No wonder Charles in utter frustration finally buried himself in the monastic life and handed over the kingdom to his son, Phillip II. His last words to Philip were

Take care that the heretics...were repressed... without regard to any plea in their favour.³⁰

Philip certainly endeavoured to fulfill the wishes of both his father and his church.

A new weapon of destruction

We now return to Turkish times of the early fifteenth century. There finally ascended to the Turkish throne a sultan named Mahomet II. He named himself *Hunkiar* which means *the slayer of men*. This he proved to be, for he was responsible for the final destruction of Eastern Rome. His unrelenting resolve was to take Constantinople. He proclaimed

I ask a present far more valuable and important - Constantinople.³¹

Inspiring the Turkish armies to capture Constantinople he assured them that

....the door would open to them, by its capture, to conquer the whole of the Greek empire (Eastern Rome)³²



Muhammed II
(1430-1481)

His words proved accurate. In preparation for the fulfillment of his heart's desire he studied the latest instruments of destruction with which he might bring Constantinople to its knees. He particularly focused on investigating the potential of gunpowder and artillery - not that any European powers had yet used it successfully. Before long, however, a constructor of cannon deserted to the Turks. This was a windfall for Mahomet, whose first question to him was

Am I able to cast a canon capable of throwing a ball or stone of sufficient size to batter the walls of Constantinople?³³

²⁸ Hilal Inalcik, *The Heyday and Decline of the Ottoman Empire*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1:325-329

²⁹ Kenneth Oster, *Islam Reconsidered* (New York: Exposition Press, 1979), 72.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 7:193-195

³² E. Pears, *The Destruction of the Greek Empire* (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1903), 324.

The answer was in the affirmative and consequently a foundry was immediately built. Within three months a cannon was produced with a bore of five feet in diameter. It was to blast a 600 lb missile several furlongs and then bury itself in the earth.³⁴

The prophecy had stated that

....fire, smoke and brimstone came out of the horses' mouths.

With the invention of muskets the Turkish horsemen acquired the skill of discharging them while charging into battle on horseback. As they charged they fired their muskets. It is reasonable to assume that for the prophet in vision, gazing at these horsemen in the distance, it appeared as if *fire, smoke and brimstone came out of the horses' mouths.*

Many scholars have understood this new type of warfare to be an accurate fulfillment of the prediction. The Turks were the first to successfully employ gunpowder in the prosecution of warfare, perhaps this is one reason this detail is featured in the prophecy.

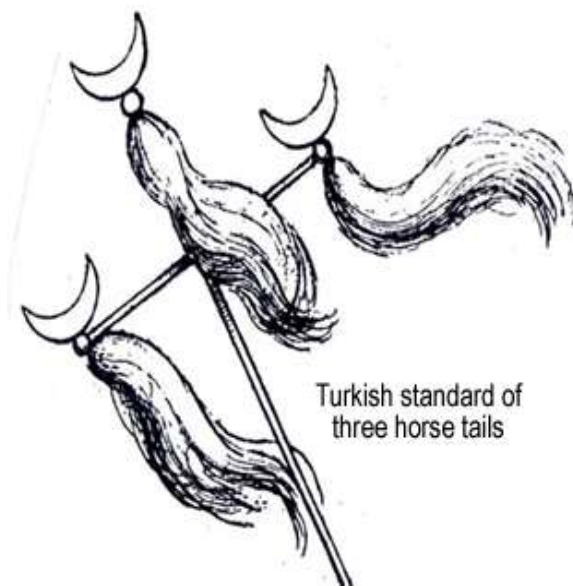
6. Power in the horses' heads and tails

...their power (or authority) is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads...

In Scripture the word *power* may signify *authority* (Romans 13:1). The word *heads* could indicate *rulers* or *leaders* in association with the horse tails.

This is a puzzling symbolism and it has challenged many students of prophecy. How could a horse's tail be associated with a warlike leader? Normally the tail would represent the rear: either those who are followers or those brought into subjection. In this puzzling symbol we are given remarkable evidence of Turkish identity. The Turks' peculiar ensign – the standard that they used to represent authority, was a horse's tail. From prime vizier to the governors of provinces, the horse's tail was the badge of authority. Elliott says

*The ensign of one, two or three horse tails that marks distinctively the dignity and power of the Turkish Pasha.*³⁵



According to Turkish history a Turkish general, not knowing how to rally his troops who had lost their standard, cut off a horse's tail and fixed it to the end of a spear. The soldiers, rallying at that signal subsequently gained the victory. Thereafter the horse's tail was used as a Turkish symbol of office.³⁶

³³ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 4:339.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7:193-195.

³⁵ Edward B. Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticæ* 514.

³⁶ *Ibid.* (See footnote).

A writer on Turkish history in 1842 stated

*The recent overthrow of the Mameluc (in Egypt) by the Ottomans (Turks) had extended the shadow of the horsetails far along the coast of Africa.*³⁷

When France occupied North Africa, one of its generals summoned a certain tribe to submit to the French after having been under Turkish rule. In response the tribe stated that

*The horse of submission has no tails.*³⁸

This meant that the Turks no longer possessed any form of authority. The prediction continues

7. Harmful tails with heads

...with them (tails) they do harm.

With their tails *they do harm*. Here is an apparent contradiction. They have lion-like heads from which issue fire and smoke and brimstone, that would kill a third of mankind - by which they were to destroy Rome.

This verse speaks of *heads* that are connected with the *tails* which do harm. The Greek word for *do harm* represents *committing injustice*. It is believed that this refers to the oppression by the Turkish leaders over those whom they conquered, especially the Christians in Greece. History records the truth of this. Knolls says

*His Bassaes, like ravening harpies, as it were, suck out the blood of his poor subjects.*³⁹ (referring to the Turkish Pashas or leaders)

The following is an eyewitness account of Turkish oppression.

Anywhere is the traveler through European Turkey...that has not with his own eyes witnessed the same? Even now the scene rises in memory before the author, of the long train of a Turkish Pasha proceeding to his Pashalik (or governorship) in Greece; which passed him by,... And bright, he remembers, shone the sunbeams on the varied colorings, the 'red, blue and yellow' of the horses, horsemen and foot-retainers, in the procession; and proudly the ensign was borne before the Turkman of two horsetails, to mark his dignity.

*But associated with the remembrance there rise up other recollections also: the scene of a village, which, on entering it a few days before with his companions, he had found deserted, though with marks of recent habitation; and from which, a straggler emerging from his hiding place informed them, men, women, and children had fled to the mountains, to escape from the visit, on some errand of oppression of one of the officers of a neighboring Pasha. Nor again can the scene be forgotten of other permanently deserted villages... and often with nothing but the silent graveyard in its loneliness, to tell the tale of former life and population. Thus was there set before his eyes how the inhabitants had failed before the oppressions of the Turkman Pashas.*⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Richard Knolls, *A brief Discourse on the Greatness of the Turkish Empire* (London: TBA, 1610), 487.

⁴⁰ Edward B. Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticæ* 515-516.

The Turkish *heads* associated with *the tails* certainly *harmed* those whom they conquered.

The fall of Constantinople

We now come to the siege of Constantinople – the final *slaying* of the Eastern Roman Empire. On April 6, 1453 Mahomet II assembled 258,000 men to commence the attack. The inhabitants implored the Virgin Mary for deliverance – this, in itself, is a confirmation of their apostasy. The city was over 20 kilometers in circumference and had 7,000 - 8,000 men defending it. The city was set out in the form of a triangle – two sides ran along the sea (the Black Sea and the Bosphorus) and the base of the triangle was protected by a double wall and a trench 100 feet deep and six miles long. This is the area that was attacked by the Turks.

Edward Gibbon describes the attack and reveals how the prediction was fulfilled that *by fire, by smoke and by the brimstone* was the empire killed.

The volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of the musketry and cannon... the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls; fourteen batteries thundering at once on the most accessible places... the fortifications which had stood for ages against hostile violence, were dismantled on all sides by the Ottoman cannon, many breaches opened, and near the gate of St. Romanus, four towers leveled with the ground... from the lines, the galleys and the bridge, the Ottoman artillery thundered on all sides, the camp and city, the Greeks and the Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke, which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman empire... the double walls were reduced by the cannon to a heap of ruins "... the Turks at length..." rushing through he breaches... Constantinople was subdued, her empire subverted, and her religion trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors.⁴¹

A Turkish historian writing of the same event records

The Moslems placed their cannon in an effective position. The gates and ramparts of Constantinople were pierced in a thousand places. The flame which issued from the mouths of those instruments of warfare, of brazen bodies and fiery jaws, cast grief and dismay among the miscreants. The smoke which spread itself in the air rendered the brightness of day somber as night; and the face of the world soon became as dark as the black fortune of the unhappy infidels.⁴²

So it was, as the prophet declared 1350-odd years before, *by these three ... by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone* was one third of mankind killed. The Roman Empire was no more.

There was now no independent Greek state left.⁴³

⁴¹ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 9:203.

⁴² Translated from the *Tadg al Tivariikh* (Diadem of Histories) of Saaddedin, the preceptor and historiographer of Murad III, in David's *Grammar of the Turkish Language*, See Literary Gazette No 804, June 16, 1832, p 370.

⁴³ Edward A Freeman, *The Ottoman Power in Europe* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1877), 116.

8. The time period

The period of time allotted for the killing of one third of mankind was to be *for an hour and day and month and year*. The *third* applied at this particular time to Eastern Rome alone.

One interpretation through the years has been that this description of *an hour and day and month and year* simply implies “at an appointed time”. The margin reads *at an hour, day, month and year*. Some versions, however, confirm that the above expression represents a period of time and not an appointed time. In other places in Scripture time periods are expressed in a similar way, as in Revelation 9:15.

In describing the 1260 years time period of Papal supremacy, Daniel says it is *for a time, times and half a time* (Daniel 12:7). This equates to three and a half prophetic years or 1260 days, and represents 1260 years, based on the Bible principle of a day representing a year in symbolic prophecy.

Cambridge lecturer E.B. Elliott in his *Horae Apocalypticae* (commentary) on the book of Revelation, has closely examined this expression in the original Greek. He has concluded that it represents a period of time - not an appointed time.⁴⁴ If this is the case, then it means that the period allotted amounts to 391 years and 15 days - if we include the *hour*.

We can reverse the order for the sake of clarity as follows: a year, a month, a day and an hour. A Bible year is 360 days which equals 360 years. A Bible month is 30 days which equals 30 years. A day is 1 year. The total is 391 years plus the *hour* which is a 24th part of a 360 day year. An hour calculates to 15 days. Altogether the time period is 391 years, 15 days.

This is calculated as follows:

One year	= 360 Bible Days	= 360 solar years
One month	= 30 Bible Days	= 30 solar years
One day	= 1 Bible Day	= 1 solar year
One hour	= 1/24 of a day	= 1/24 th of a year = 15 solar days
	TOTAL	= 391 years and 15 days

A prediction fulfilled

In 1840 Josiah Litch, a noted preacher associated with William Miller in The Great Second Advent Movement of 1833 -1844, predicted, on the basis of this time period, that the Ottoman empire would come to its end on 11 August, 1840. He and William Miller believed that both the fifth and the sixth trumpets applied to the Ottoman Empire; that the fifth trumpet applied to the rise of the Ottomans and the sixth applied to the domination of the Ottoman Turks.⁴⁵

Litch believed that the five month period of torment of the fifth trumpet (150 years) began with the first king of the Ottomans, who was Othman. According to Gibbon, Othman began his career of conquest on 27 July, 1299. By adding 150 years to July 27, 1299 Litch obtained the date of July 27, 1449. On that date John Palaeologus, the Roman

⁴⁴ Revised Standard Version and New International Version.

⁴⁵ Edward B. Elliot, *Horae Apocalypticae* 516-522.

Emperor died and his brother Constantine XI was elected in his place. However he could not be crowned except by permission of the Turkish Sultan. This revealed that the Eastern Roman empire had lost its authority and independence. It meant that the Turks were now in control.

Therefore 27 July 1449 marks the commencement of the period of *an hour and day and month and year*.

By adding 391 years and 15 days to July 27, 1449, Litch obtained the date of 11 August 1840. His conclusion was historically correct as far as the dates were concerned, and it was fulfilled on the very day. Josiah Litch proclaimed to the world several months before 11 August 1840 that the infamous Ottoman Empire would end on that very date. The world waited and watched. When it was fulfilled to the very day, hundreds of infidels were converted to the Christian faith. It was a dramatic fulfillment of Litch's prediction.

The Spirit of Prophecy refers to this event in the year 1840 as

another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy...At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction. When it became known, multitudes were convinced of the correctness of the principles of prophetic interpretation adopted by Miller and his associates, and a wonderful impetus was given to the Advent movement.⁴⁶

Josiah Litch's conclusions were based on the year/day principle – as were William Miller's. (Litch's conclusions regarding the fifth trumpet have been shown to be less reliable - see Appendix B).

The period of 391 years commenced on the very date that Josiah Litch commenced it - 27 July 1449 AD. When the Eastern Roman Emperor, Constantine XI, was elected, the fact that he could only take office with the approval of the Turkish sultan meant that the Turks now controlled the empire. Effectively the Emperor's authority and independence were gone - it had been *killed*.

At the fall of Constantinople four years later, the last vestige of the empire was annihilated. With July 27, 1449 as the starting date for the 391 year period, the termination, in accordance with Litch's calculation, was August 11, 1840 AD. On this exact date the Ottoman empire lost its independence at the Treaty of London, confirming the final date of Josiah Litch's prediction. The eighth specification of the prophecy was fulfilled. The time period of 391 years satisfactorily fits the Ottoman power.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the sixth trumpet, what are the main points of significance that we should note?

Deal promptly with apostasy

All the trumpets were judgments on apostasy but it is significant to note that after the judgment of the sixth trumpet Scripture says:

⁴⁶ F.D.Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, (Washington DC, Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1957), 8:795.

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. Revelation 9:20-21

In other words, the terrible judgment by the Turks was completely ineffective in bringing the apostate Christians to repentance.

This is a powerful lesson for the church today. When Christians apostatize, very seldom do they turn back from their apostasy. Very seldom is there true repentance. This is a solemn lesson to those in positions of ecclesiastical responsibility. When apostasy raises its head, it is vital that it receive immediate and appropriate attention, otherwise the damage will seldom if ever be rectified.

Scripture is reliable

The sixth trumpet introduces the Turks for the first and last time into the prophetic picture. The Turks did take control of Asia Minor and destroy Eastern Rome. That vast multitude of people who inhabited the central Asiatic mainland played a part in Divine Providence through two groups, the Seljuks and the Ottomans.

This remarkable fulfillment of Bible prophecy by the Turks confirms the reliability of Scripture.

God protects His true church

The other point of significance is that the Turks were used by heaven to safeguard the Protestant Reformation. As one historian was previously quoted

There would have been no Protestantism, had there been no Turks.³¹

It is awe-inspiring to consider that one reason God permitted the millions of Turks to migrate from Asia into the Middle East was to use them as protectors of His people and to keep at bay the powers of apostasy. The Arabs of the fifth trumpet protected the Church of the East from the attacks of the Papal apostasy.⁴⁹ The Turks of the sixth trumpet protected the Protestant Reformation from the assaults of the Papal apostasy.

The sixth trumpet concludes the part that the Turks and Turkey play in the panorama of prophecy, in the great controversy between Christ and Satan as portrayed in the book of Revelation. The Turks never again come into the prophetic picture. The conflict from here on moves westward and involves the European powers, the Papacy, the United States of America and finally the whole world. This will be addressed in expositions of Revelation Chapters 10 to 18.

³¹ Kenneth Oster, *Islam Reconsidered*

⁴⁹ A.P. Cooke, *Tormented by Locusts for Five Months* (Self-published, 2011), ?

Appendices

Appendix A – Timing of the sixth trumpet

It is claimed by some on the basis of Hebrews 9:3-4 that the golden incense altar and the censer belonged to the second apartment of the sanctuary and that therefore the period indicated for the trumpets must be after 1844 AD.

The answer to this claim is given in Hebrews 9:6.

Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.

The morning and evening offering of the incense on the golden incense altar occurred in this daily first-apartment service. This altar stood before the veil in the first apartment (Luke 1:8-9 and Exodus 30:1-8). The fact that the ordinary priests performed the daily incense service also proves that the altar and censers were located in the first apartment, because only the high priests could enter into the second apartment and that was only on one day of the year.

Appendix B – Josiah Litch's application of the fifth trumpet to the Turks

Since the time of Josiah Litch, further study has identified some problems in certain parts of his interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets. Litch held that the fifth trumpet applied to the Turks at their rise, but the current position is that the fifth trumpet applied to the Arabian conquests commencing with Mohammed, not the Ottoman Turks.⁴⁷

This being so, the period of torment of the locust power as understood by Litch needs to be re-examined. The 150 years were not connected with the Turks but with the Arabs, and the first king was not Othman the Ottoman, but Mahomet, the Arabian. The 150 years of torment fits exactly the period of the Arabian conquests. They commenced in 612 AD when the Arabian armies sallied forth to invade Eastern Rome. From that point the period of torment of the apostate Christians of Eastern Rome began. Exactly 150 years later, in 762 AD, the Arabian caliph moved his capital from Damascus to Baghdad, outside the boundary of the Roman empire, and this ended the period of conquest of the Arabs and the period of torment.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1898), 334-5.

⁴⁸ A.P. Cooke, *Tormented by Locusts for Five Months* (Self-published, 2011), 23.

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