

Revelation 9:12-19. The Sixth Trumpet



This is the continuation of [The Last Prophecy: An Abridgment of Elliott's Horae Apocalypticae.](#)

The Turco-Muslims, A.D. 1063

[12] One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

[13] ¶ And 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 which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

[15] 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.

[16] And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

[17] And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

[18] By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

[19] For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. (Rev 9:12-19)

WE HAVE SEEN in the last lecture that in the year 934 the Caliphate at Bagdad was stripped of its temporal dominion in the east, and that in the west, though not until towards the end of the tenth century, the Moslem power was reduced to act wholly on the defensive. The date A.D. 985 might be fixed as about the period when the woe had totally passed away.

About this time a strong persuasion was abroad that the final consummation of all things was at hand. It was preached of and listened to by breathless crowds. Under the impression that Christ would descend to judgment at Palestine, numbers made over their properties to monasteries, and traveled away to the Holy Land. Others devoted themselves as servants to the churches and priests, so as to have milder sentence, as being the dependents of Christ's servants. Buildings were let go to ruin, it being supposed they would be thenceforth useless; and, on occasion of eclipses, etc., the affrighted multitudes fled to the rocks and caverns for refuge. But the time of the end was not yet. In the decrees of Heaven it stood written, "One woe

hath passed; behold there come yet two more woes after them." The dreaded 1000th year came and went without any great attending calamity, and gradually expectation died away.

But the *Sixth Trumpet* was about to sound. Would its woe fall on western Christendom, which had long been settling down into the idolatrous worship of departed saints and its accompaniments – priestly fraud, avarice, superstition, and gross immorality, insomuch that afterwards this period was denominated the Iron Age? Or was it to fall on Rome itself, where these impieties were still more rife, particularly amongst its popes, cardinals, and bishops, so as to be compared by certain writers to Sodom? Not so. Antichrist was not yet fully matured, its time was not yet come., The approaching woe was again designed to fall on the eastern division.

Basil II. was then on the throne of Constantinople. Had it been at the time foretold to him that woe was at hand, he might not unreasonably have discredited the prediction; for looking around over the known world, no enemy appeared formidable, nor did approaching storm threaten from any quarter – least of all, perhaps, from the Euphrates and Bagdad. That power once so fearful was fallen. Could it be again raised up and become terrible?

So might the royal Basil have spoken. Devoted to Greek superstition, all the evils before named were unchecked in his empire, and he reckoned not that they would surely bring down vengeance from God. Fearful was the word which was now fulfilled, "They shall be given to strong delusion to believe a lie." How differently would real Christians have looked upon the state of things; – such as were represented on the Apocalyptic scene as God's sealed ones. These would in the features of the time foresee the coming woe; and that, while men were saying "Peace, peace," judgment was even at the door.

From the quarter least expected the danger impended. The agencies were prepared; the trumpet-note again sounded; and the four angels, newly commissioned to destroy, loosed from the Euphrates.

Observe whence issued the "voice" mentioned in the vision – from the four horns of the altar of incense. Had it come from the throne in the inner temple, it had been from God; or if from an angel specially sent, the same idea would attach to it. But when a voice proceeded from any other place invoking judgment, it would rather seem to indicate guilt connected with that locality. In Gen. 4:10, when Cain had struck Abel to the ground, we read, "Thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground;" in James 5:4, "The hire of the laborers who have reaped your fields crieth;" in Isaiah 66:6, "A voice of noise from the city! a voice from the temple! a voice from the Lord that rendereth recompense." The ground, fields, city, temple, whence in each case the cry, were in each case also the scene of guilt. Just so as to the cry from the four horns of the golden altar. It seemed to indicate sins in Roman Christendom, involving the profanation of that mystic altar and its golden horns. Now the projecting horns of the altar, as noted in Lev. 4:7, were appointed for sacrificial blood-sprinklings expiatory of the sins of priests and sins of people. On this rite's due performance, in Hezekiah's time, both priests and people, after previous apostasy of God, were reconciled. (2 Chron. 29:20) A voice then went forth from the altar, not of judgment but of

mercy – of mercy through Him, thus typified, whose blood was to be shed as “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.” Sennacherib’s army, which was then approaching, was bidden back, and the city for that season was spared: – a contrast to the voice which, in the vision before us, went forth calling for judgment. What then, when St. John heard its sound, would be the interpretation he would put on it? Would it not be that both priests and people of Roman Christendom, in spite of former judgments, persisted unrepentant in their old sins: – still abandoning Christ in His character of the one divinely appointed propitiation for sin; still adopting other means of atonement, and other mediators? So, it would seem to him, their sins were registered, as it were, on the horns of the symbolic altar; and that the High Priest himself was forced to pronounce from thence the decree of judgment, “Loose the four angels to slay the third part of men.” The opportunity for repentance had past altogether unheeded by Greek Christendom. The guilt of inveterate Antichristian apostasy was stamped at the time spoken of on their ritual worship. Indeed, the mariolatrous impress of the national coinage still testifies of it to the eye of the numismatist.

But who were these four angels? Surely the same that had formerly let loose the winds and tempests; and who might seem to have been stayed in their commission, when the Saracen woe inflicted by them ceased, and where it ceased (like as in the case of the angel-inflicted pestilence, 2 Sam. 24:16); even at Bagdad, by the Euphrates. To prove how this was, I must take up the history of the Turkmen.

We mentioned Basil as being the emperor at Constantinople. He died A.D. 1025; as did, three years after, Mahmoud, the Caliph at Bagdad, whose empire then began to fall to pieces. Many Turkmen tribes had been established during his lifetime at Khorasan, near the Caspian Sea. It was these that were now to become a woe to Christendom. Proceeding to assert independence, they killed Mahmoud’s son; chose Togrul Beg as their commander; and stood forth as the chief power in Central Asia.

Originally idolaters, they had lately become Mohammedans, and were called into Bagdad, A.D. 1055, to assist the Caliph on occasion of domestic danger. After subduing the factions and overthrowing the weak dynasty of the Bowides, who had ruled in Persia since A.D. 933, Togrul Beg became lieutenant to the Caliph; thus being constituted, in effect, temporal lieutenant of the Prophet’s Vicar, and head of the secular power of Islam.

Animated by the same spirit from hell as their Arab precursors, a holy war against Greek Christendom was now resolved on. Togrul dying, he was succeeded by his nephew Alp Arslan, who passed the Euphrates, A.D. 1063, at the head of the Turkish cavalry, and the loss of the kingdom and frontier of Armenia was, Gibbon says, “the news of a day.” The Greek emperor, Romanus, having invoked the Virgin Mary’s aid, the chief object of his worship, hastened to oppose him. But in vain. At Malazgerd he was defeated, taken prisoner, and the fate of the Asiatic provinces sealed irretrievably. Alp Arslan was succeeded by Malek Shah, who continued the victorious career of the Turks. In A.D. 1074 Asia Minor came into their hands, and then Nice became the capital. This, remarks the historian, was the severest loss the empire had sustained since the first conquests of the Caliphs. Asia Minor, called also Roum, became an

independent kingdom after its conquest by Malek's general, Suleiman, who had gained the name of Holy Champion for his zeal against the infidels (i.e., Christians). Throughout the whole extent of the new empire Mohammedanism now prevailed; mosques were built even from the Euphrates to Constantinople. Alexius the emperor trembled on his throne, and begged assistance from Western Europe; representing that, unless some succor were sent, his division of Roman Christendom must fall. "The third part of men would be destroyed." Succor was sent: – the Crusades began. Yet through two centuries the Turkish Sultany of Roum was preserved in its vitality. In the first crusade, A.D. 1097, the Turkmans were defeated; but in 1147 the leaders of the second crusade had to tell that their power was unbroken; and how the bones of Christian hosts lay bleaching among the Pamphylian mountains. In the third crusade, the Emperor Frederick I. lost immense numbers before he stormed Iconium, and made the Sultan sue for peace. It was not till the next century that the Moguls subdued the Seljukian dynasty, and partially interrupted the Turkish sway. But Othman soon furnished a new head to the Turkman host; the Moguls declined, while the Ottoman Empire rose and progressed. As to the rest, the history of the Sultans Othman and Orchan, Amurath and Bajazet, is well known. Their victorious armies crossed the Hellespont; and scarcely aught but the city of Constantinople remained for the eastern Roman emperor. Even this they surrounded on all sides.

Let us observe some of the characteristic national features of these Turks.

[I] AS TO THEIR NUMBERS.

In the vision it is said, "The number of the army of the horsemen was myriads of myriads." This implies a large but indefinite number. The peculiarity in the description is their being horsemen. In European armies at that time foot soldiers were numerous and cavalry few; but just the reverse prevailed with the Turks, with whom literally the number numberless was cavalry. There may be a reference also in the expression to the method in use amongst them of counting by myriads.

It is added, "I heard the number of them." St. John heard it in his representative character. Just at that period went forth the cry that alarmed Europe and led to the Crusades. From the Patriarch of Europe came letters to all princes and churches: "Jerusalem has been besieged, ransacked, and taken. What may the rest of Christendom promise to itself? The strength of the Turks is daily increased. We call on you for help, as Christians. Ere the tempest thunder, ere the lightning fall on you, avert from yourselves and children the storm hanging over your heads. Deliver us, and God shall requite you." So the report ran throughout Europe; the ferment rose, and the Crusades ensued.

[II] THEIR APPEARANCE.

"I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire (i.e., of fire color), and jacinth, and sulphur." This, it is said, is exactly the ornament of apparel which these people assumed. "From their first appearance the Ottomans affected to wear warlike apparel of scarlet, blue, and yellow." It needs but to see the Turkish cavalry to be struck with their rich and varied colorings. The word hyacinthine or jacinth

fixes the meaning of the other two words, fire-like, sulphur-like, necessarily to color; these words, fire and sulphur, having no indistinct bearing on other characteristics of the Turkish armies, as we shall presently see.

[III] THE HEADS OF THE HORSES.

"The heads of the horses," the Evangelist observes, "were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths goeth forth fire, and smoke, and sulphur. By these were the third of men slain, – by the fire, and by the smoke, and the sulphur which proceedeth out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouths." The heads of the horses, being unnatural, are clearly symbolical; the symbol being constantly used to designate the leaders of the people, and that of lions we take to signify the lion-like haughtiness of their characters and bearing. But it is of the new destroying agents, "fire, smoke, and brimstone," we are now to speak. It was entirely by the use and force of artillery that Constantinople was destroyed, and with it fell the Greek Empire. Eleven hundred years it had stood and repelled Goths, Huns, Avars, Persians, Bulgarians, and Saracens, one after another, its walls remaining impregnable. Hence the anxiety of the Sultan Mohammed to find a force still stronger. "Canst thou," he said to one, "find a cannon of sufficient size to batter down the walls of Constantinople?" Gibbon gives, in his "History of the Fall of the Greek Empire," the account of the new invention of gunpowder, – "that mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal." He describes how, in the siege, the arrows were accompanied by the smoke of fire of the musketry and cannon: – how, "as from the lines, the galleys, and the bridge, the Ottoman artillery thundered on all sides; the camp and city, the Greeks and Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke which could' only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Greek Empire:" – how the walls were rendered by the cannon a heap of ashes; and so "Constantinople was irretrievably subdued, her empire subverted, and her religion trampled in the dust by her Moslem conquerors."

[IV] Next as to the horses' tails. These were seen in the vision as having heads, and so associated with that which the head symbolized – rulers or governing authorities. But when did a horse-tail ever denote a ruler? One historical fact must answer in part the question. It seems that in the time of their early career the standard having been once lost in the course of the battle, the commander, cutting off his horse's tail, lifted it as a rallying ensign, and won the day. Hence this ensign became among the Turks, and them alone, a badge of authority. The number of one, two, or three horsetails still marks the Turkish pasha's dignity, from the grand vizier down to the lower governors of provinces.

"And with these they do injustice." Where is the historian of Turkish conquests or the traveler through Turkish scenes who has not to tell of cruel tyrannies and heartless oppressions? The writer of the *Horae Apocalypticae* describes his feelings on seeing, as he traveled in that country, the terror of the inhabitants when one of these horse-tailed pashas was near. After noticing the procession of horsemen and retainers, shining in red, blue, and yellow, and how the ensign of two horse-tails was carried before the pasha to mark his dignity, he tells how he entered a village which a few days before

had been deserted; and how a straggler, coming from his hiding-place, informed him that men, women, and children had fled to escape the oppressive visit of a neighboring pasha.

One point more remains to be explained, viz., the time within which the commission to destroy was to be accomplished. "The four angels were loosed, which were prepared for, or rather after, an hour, and day, and month, and year, to slay the third part of men." That is, that the slaying, the national slaying, should occur or be completed at the end of these portions of time added together.

Now, counting up these several parts of time, we have, according to the prophetic principle of a day for a year –

A year equal to 365½ days, i.e., to 365 years, 91 days.				
A month	=	30 days	=	30 years.
A day	=		=	1 year.
An hour	=	½ of a day	=	½ of a year, or 30 days.
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Total	.	.	.	396 years, 121 days.

It was on the 18th day of January, A.D. 1057, that the Turco-Moslem power was loosed from the Euphrates; in other words, when Togrul Beg, the acknowledged head of Islamism, with his Turkmans, quitted Bagdad to enter on a long career of war and conquest. It was on the 29th of May, A.D. 1453, that Constantinople fell and the siege ended. The interval coincides with the prophecy exactly in years, being 396; and very nearly in days, being 130. In effect the prophetic period expired nearly about the middle of the siege, – as nearly as possible at the very critical turning-point of defeat or victory.

Four hundred years had passed; generation after generation had lived and died; one power after another had been held back from overthrowing the Greek Empire; space had been given for repentance; but at length the predicted period arrived. When the Sultan Mohammed pressed the siege, no intervention occurred to delay the catastrophe, either from the east or the west – from the Crusaders of Christendom or from the savage warriors of Tartary. On the dial-plate in heaven the pointing of the shadow-line told that the fatal term had expired, – the "hour, and day, and month, and year." Then could no longer the fate of the unhappy Greeks be averted. The artillery of the Ottomans thundered, the breach was stormed, and amidst the shouts of the conquering Turkmans from the Euphrates and the dying groans of the last Constantine, Constantinople fell! The third of the men were slain!- The Greek Empire was no more!

Continued in [Revelation 9:20-21. The Unrepentant State of Western Christendom](#)

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