

# THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

by Uriah Smith

We name as the subject of this chapter the seven trumpets, as these constitute the main theme of the chapter, although there are other matters introduced before the opening of that series of events. The first verse of this chapter relates to the events of the preceding chapters, and therefore should not have been separated from them by the division of the chapter.

"VERSE 1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

The series of seven seals is here resumed and concluded. The sixth chapter closed with the events of the sixth seal, and the eighth commences with the opening of the seventh seal; hence the seventh chapter stands parenthetically between the sixth and seventh seals, from which it appears that the sealing work of that chapter belongs to the sixth seal.

Silence in Heaven. - Concerning the cause of this silence, only conjecture can be offered, - a conjecture, however, which is supported by the events of the sixth seal. That seal does not bring us to the second advent, although it embraces events that transpire in close connection therewith. It introduces the fearful commotions of the elements, described as the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll, caused by the voice of God, the breaking up of the surface of the earth, and the confession on the part of the wicked that the great day of God's wrath is come. They are doubtless in momentary expectation of seeing the King appear in, to them, unendurable glory. But the seal stops just short of that event. The personal appearing of Christ must therefore be allotted to the next seal. But when the Lord appears, he comes with all the holy angels with him. Matt.25:31. And when all the heavenly harpers leave the courts above to come down with their divine Lord, as he descends to gather the fruit of his redeeming work, will there not be silence in heaven?

The length of this period of silence, if we consider it prophetic time, would be about seven days.

"VERSE 2. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."

This verse introduces a new and distinct series of events. In the seals we have had the history of the church during what is called the gospel dispensation. In the seven trumpets, now introduced, we have the principal political and warlike events which were to transpire during the same time.

"VERSE 3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

Having as it were, in verse 2, brought out the seven angels, and introduced them before us upon the stage of action, John, for a moment, in the three verses last quoted, directs attention to an entirely different scene. The angel which approaches the altar is not one of the seven trumpet angels. The altar is the altar of incense, which, in the earthly sanctuary, was placed in the first apartment. Here, then, is another proof that there exists in heaven a sanctuary with its corresponding vessels of service, of which the earthly was a figure, and that we are taken into that sanctuary by the visions of John. A work of ministration for all the saints in the sanctuary above is thus brought to view. Doubtless the entire work of mediation for the people of God during the gospel dispensation is here presented.

This is apparent from the fact that the angel offers his incense with the prayers of all saints. And that we are here carried forward to the end, is evident from the act of the angel in filling the

censer with fire and casting it unto the earth; for his work is then done; no more prayers are to be offered up mingled with incense; and this symbolic act can have its application only at the time when the ministration of Christ in the sanctuary in behalf of mankind has forever ceased. And following the angel's act are voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake - exactly such occurrences as we are elsewhere informed transpire at the close of human probation. (See Rev.11:19; 16:17,18.)

But why are these verses thus thrown in here? Answer: As a message of hope and comfort for the church. The seven angels with their warlike trumpets had been introduced; terrible scenes were to transpire under their sounding; but before they commence, the people of God are pointed to the work of mediation in their behalf above, and their source of help and strength during this time. Though they should be tossed like feathers upon the tumultuous waves of strife and war, they were to know that their great High Priest still ministered for them in the sanctuary in heaven, and that thither they could direct their prayers, and have them offered, with incense, to their Father in heaven. Thus could they gain strength and support in all their calamities.

"VERSE 6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

The subject of the seven trumpets is here resumed, and occupies the remainder of this chapter and all of chapter 9. The seven angels prepare themselves to sound. Their sounding comes in as a complement to the prophecy of Daniel 2 and 7, commencing with the breaking up of the old Roman empire into its ten divisions, of which, in the first four trumpets, we have a description.

"VERSE 7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

Mr. Keith has very justly remarked on the subject of this prophecy:—"None could elucidate the texts more clearly, or expound them more fully, than the task has been performed by Gibbon. The chapters of the skeptical philosopher that treat directly of the matter, need but a text to be prefixed, and a few unholy words to be blotted out, to form a series of expository lectures on the eighth and ninth chapters of Revelation." "Little or nothing is left for the professed interpreter to do but to point to the pages of Gibbon."

The first sore and heavy judgment which fell on Western Rome in its downward course, was the war with the Goths under Alaric, who opened the way for later inroads. The death of Theodosius, the Roman emperor, occurred in January, 395, and before the end of the winter the Goths under Alaric were in arms against the empire.

The first invasion under Alaric ravaged Thrace, Macedonia, Attica, and the Peloponnesus, but did not reach the city of Rome. On his second invasion, however, the Gothic chieftain crossed the Alps and the Apennines and appeared before the walls of the "eternal city," which soon fell a prey to the fury of the barbarians.

"Hail and fire mingled with blood" were cast upon the earth. The terrible effects of this Gothic invasion are represented as "hail," from the fact of the northern origin of the invaders; "fire," from the destruction by flame of both city and country; and "blood," from the terrible slaughter of the citizens of the empire by the bold and intrepid warriors.

The blast of the first trumpet has its location about the close of the fourth century and onward, and refers to these desolating invasions of the Roman empire under the Goths.

I know not how the history of the sounding of the first trumpet can be more impressively set forth than by presenting the graphic rehearsal of the facts which are stated in Gibbon's History, by Mr. Keith, in his Signs of the Times, Vol. I, pp. 221-233:-

"Large extracts show how amply and well Gibbon has expounded his text in the history of the first trumpet, the first storm that pervaded the Roman earth, and the first fall of Rome. To use his words in more direct comment, we read thus the sum of the matter: 'The Gothic nation was in arms at the first sound of the trumpet, and in the uncommon severity of the winter, they rolled their ponderous wagons over the broad and icy back of the river. The fertile fields of Phocis and Boeotia were crowded with a deluge of barbarians; the males were massacred; the females and cattle of the flaming villages were driven away. The deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths could

easily be discovered after several years. The whole territory of Attica was blasted by the baneful presence of Alaric. The most fortunate of the inhabitants of Corinth, Argos, and Sparta were saved by death from beholding the conflagration of their cities. In a season of such extreme heat that the beds of the rivers were dry, Alaric invaded the dominion of the West. A secluded "old man of Verona," the poet Claudian, pathetically lamented the fate of his contemporary trees, which must blaze in the conflagration of the whole country [note the words of the prophecy, - "The third part of the trees was burned up"]; and the emperor of the Romans fled before the king of the Goths.'

"A furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany, from the northern extremity of which the barbarians marched almost to the gates of Rome. They achieved the destruction of the West. The dark cloud which was collected along the coasts of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the upper Danube. The pastures of Gaul, in which flocks and herds grazed, and the banks of the Rhine, which were covered with elegant houses and well-cultivated farms, formed a scene of peace and plenty, which was suddenly changed into a desert, distinguished from the solitude of nature only by smoking ruins. Many cities were cruelly oppressed, or destroyed. Many thousands were inhumanly massacred; and the consuming flames of war spread over the greater part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul.

"Alaric again stretched his ravages over Italy. During four years the Goths ravaged and reigned over it without control. And in the pillage and fire of Rome, the streets of the city were filled with dead bodies; the flames consumed many public and private buildings; and the ruins of a palace remained (after a century and a half) a stately monument of the Gothic conflagration.

"The concluding sentence of the thirty-third chapter of Gibbon's History is of itself a clear and comprehensive commentary; for in winding up his own description of this brief but most eventful period, he concentrates, as in a parallel reading, the sum of the history and the substance of the prediction. But the words which precede it are not without their meaning: 'The public devotion of the age was impatient to exalt the saints and martyrs of the Catholic Church on the altars of Diana and Hercules. The union of the Roman empire was dissolved; its genius was humbled in the dust; and armies of unknown barbarians, issuing from the frozen regions of the North, had established their victorious reign over the fairest provinces of Europe and Africa.'

"The last word, Africa, is the signal for the sounding of the second trumpet. The scene changes from the shores of the Baltic to the southern coast of the Mediterranean, or from the frozen regions of the North to the borders of burning Africa; and instead of a storm of hail being cast upon the earth, a burning mountain was cast into the sea."

"VERSE 8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

The Roman empire, after Constantine, was divided into three parts; and hence the frequent remark, "a third part of men," etc., in allusion to the third part of the empire which was under the scourge. This division of the Roman kingdom was made at the death of Constantine, among his three sons, Constantius, Constantine II, and Constans. Constantius possessed the East, and fixed his residence at Constantinople, the metropolis of the empire. Constantine the Second held Britain, Gaul, and Spain. Constans held Illyricum, Africa, and Italy. (See Sabine's Ecclesiastical History, p. 155.) Of this well-known historical fact, Elliott, as quoted by Albert Barnes, in his notes on Rev. 12:4, says: "Twice, at least, before the Roman empire became divided permanently into the two parts, the Eastern and the Western, there was a tripartite division of the empire. The first occurred in A.D. 311, when it was divided between Constantine, Licinius, and Maximin; the other, A.D. 337, on the death of Constantine, Constans and Constantius."

The history illustrative of the sounding of the second trumpet evidently relates to the invasion and conquest of Africa, and afterward of Italy, by the terrible Genseric. His conquests were for the most part NAVAL; and his triumphs were "as it were a great mountain burning with fire, cast into the sea." What figure would better, or even so well, illustrate the collision of navies, and the general havoc of war on the maritime coasts? In explaining this trumpet, we are to look for some events which will have a particular bearing on the commercial world. The symbol used naturally

leads us to look for agitation and commotion. Nothing but a fierce maritime warfare would fulfil the prediction. If the sounding of the first four trumpets relates to four remarkable events which contributed to the downfall of the Roman empire, and the first trumpet refers to the ravages of the Goths under Alaric, in this we naturally look for the next succeeding act of invasion which shook the Roman power and conducted to its fall. The next great invasion was that of "the terrible Genseric," at the head of the Vandals. His career occurred during the years A.D. 428-468. This great Vandal chief had his headquarters in Africa. But as Gibbon states, "The discovery and conquest of the black nations [in Africa], that might dwell beneath the torrid zone, could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric; but he cast his eyes TOWARD THE SEA; he resolved to create a naval power, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance." From the port of Carthage he repeatedly made piratical sallies, and preyed on the Roman commerce, and waged war with that empire. To cope with this sea monarch, the Roman emperor, Majorian, made extensive naval preparations. Three hundred long galleys, with an adequate proportion of transports and smaller vessels, were collected in the secure and capacious harbor of Cartagena, in Spain. But Genseric was saved from impending and inevitable ruin by the treachery of some powerful subjects, envious or apprehensive of their master's success. Guided by their secret intelligence, he surprised the unguarded fleet in the bay of Cartagena; many of the ships were sunk, taken, or burned, and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day.

Italy continued to be long afflicted by the incessant depredations of the Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage, and Genseric himself, though at a very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions.

The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Lucania, Bruttium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece, and Sicily.

The celerity of their motion enabled them, almost at the same time, to threaten and to attack the most distant objects which attracted their desires; and as they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, they had no sooner landed than they swept the dismayed country with a body of light cavalry.

A last and desperate attempt to dispossess Genseric of the sovereignty of the seas, was made in the year 468 by Leo, the emperor of the East. Gibbon bears witness to this as follows:-

"The whole expense of the African campaign amounted to the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds of gold, - about five million two hundred thousand pounds sterling. . . . The fleet that sailed from Constantinople to Carthage consisted of eleven hundred and thirteen ships, and the number of soldiers and mariners exceeded one hundred thousand men. . . . The army of Heraclius and the fleet of Marcellinus either joined or seconded the imperial lieutenant. . . . The wind became favorable to the designs of Genseric. He manned his largest ships of war with the bravest of the Moors and Vandals, and they towed after them many large barks filled with combustible materials. In the obscurity of the night, these destructive vessels were impelled against the unguarded and unsuspecting fleet of the Romans, who were awakened by a sense of their instant danger. Their close and crowded order assisted the progress of the fire, which was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence; and the noise of the wind, the crackling of the flames, the dissonant cries of the soldiers and mariners, who could neither command nor obey, increased the horror of the nocturnal tumult. While they labored to extricate themselves from the fire-ships, and to save at least a part of the navy, the galleys of Genseric assaulted them with temperate and disciplined valor; and many of the Romans who escaped the fury of the flames, were destroyed or taken by the victorious Vandals. . . . After the failure of this great expedition, Genseric again became the tyrant of the sea; the coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia were again exposed to his revenge and avarice; Tripoli and Sardinia returned to his obedience; he added Sicily to the number of his provinces; and before he died, in the fulness of years and of glory, he beheld the FINAL EXTINCTION of the empire of the West." - Gibbon, Vol. III, pp. 495-498.

Concerning the important part which this bold corsair acted in the downfall of Rome, Mr. Gibbon uses this significant language: "Genseric, a name which, in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila."

"VERSE 10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. 11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

In the interpretation and application of this passage, we are brought to the third important event which resulted in the subversion of the Roman empire. And in finding a historical fulfilment of this third trumpet, we shall be indebted to the Notes of Dr. Albert Barnes for a few extracts. In explaining this scripture, it is necessary, as this commentator says, -

"That there should be some chieftain or warrior who might be compared to a blazing meteor; whose course would be singularly brilliant; who would appear suddenly LIKE a blazing star, and then disappear like a star whose light was quenched in the waters. That the desolating course of this meteor would be mainly on those portions of the world which abounded with springs of water and running streams; that an effect would be produced as if those streams and fountains were made bitter; that is, that many persons would perish, and that wide desolations would be caused in the vicinity of those rivers and streams, as if a bitter and baleful star should fall into the waters, and death should spread over lands adjacent to them, and watered by them." - Notes on Revelation 8.

It is here premised that this trumpet has allusion to the desolating wars and furious invasions of Attila against the Roman power, which he carried on at the head of his hordes of Huns. Speaking of this warrior, particularly of his personal appearance, Mr. Barnes says:-

"In the manner of his appearance, he strongly resembled a brilliant meteor flashing in the sky. He came from the East gathering his Huns, and poured them down, as we shall see, with the rapidity of a flashing meteor, suddenly on the empire. He regarded himself also as devoted to Mars, the god of war, and was accustomed to array himself in a peculiarly brilliant manner, so that his appearance, in the language of his flatterers, was such as to dazzle the eyes of beholders."

In speaking of the locality of the events predicted by this trumpet, Mr. Barnes has this note; "It is said particularly that the effect would be on 'the rivers' and on 'the fountains of waters.' If this has a literal application, or if, as was supposed in the case of the second trumpet, the language used was such as had reference to the portion of the empire that would be particularly affected by the hostile invasion, then we may suppose that this refers to those portions of the empire that abounded in rivers and streams and more particularly those in which the rivers and streams had their origin; for the effect was permanently in the 'fountains of waters.' As a matter of fact, the principal operations of Attila were on the regions of the Alps, and on the portions of the empire whence the rivers flow down into Italy. The invasion of Attila is described by Mr. Gibbon in this general language: 'The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field.'"

"And the Name of the Star is Called Wormwood [denoting the bitter consequences]." These words - which are more intimately connected with the preceding verse, as even the punctuation in our version denotes - recall us for a moment to the character of Attila, to the misery of which he was the author or the instrument, and to the terror that was inspired by his name.

"'Total extirpation and erasure,' are terms which best denote the calamities he inflicted." He styled himself, "The Scourge of God."

"One of his lieutenants chastised and almost exterminated the Burgundians of the Rhine. They traversed, both in their march and in their return, the territories of the Franks; and they massacred their hostages as well as their captives. Two hundred young maidens were tortured with exquisite and unrelenting rage; their bodies were torn asunder by wild horses, or were crushed under the weight of rolling wagons; and their unburied limbs were abandoned on public roads, as a prey to dogs and vultures.

"It was the boast of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot which his horse had trod. The Western emperor with the senate and people of Rome, humbly and fearfully deprecated the wrath of Attila. And the concluding paragraph of the chapters which record his history, is entitled, 'Symptoms of the Decay and Ruin of the Roman Government.' 'The name of the star is called

Wormwood.'" - Keith.

"VERSE 12. And the fourth angel wounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

We understand that this trumpet symbolizes the career of Odoacer, the barbarian monarch who was so intimately connected with the downfall of Western Rome. The symbols sun, moon, and stars - for they are undoubtedly here used as symbols - evidently denote the great luminaries of the Roman government, - its emperors, senators, and consuls. Bishop Newton remarks that the last emperor of Western Rome was Romulus, who in derision was called Augustulus, or the "diminutive Augustus." Western Rome fell A.D. 476. Still, however, though the Roman sun was extinguished, its subordinate luminaries shone faintly while the senate and consuls continued. But after many civil reverses and changes of political fortune, at length, A.D. 566, the whole form of the ancient government was subverted, and Rome itself was reduced from being the empress of the world to a poor dukedom tributary to the Exarch of Ravenna.

Under the heading, "Extinction of the Western Empire, A.D. 476 or A.D. 479," Elder J. Litch (Prophetic Expositon, Vol. II, pp. 156-160) quotes from Mr. Keith as follows:-

"The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace; and he signified his resignation to the senate; and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom and the forms of the constitution. An epistle was addressed, by their unanimous decree, to the emperor Zeno, the son-in-law and successor of Leo, who had lately been restored, after a short rebellion, to the Byzantine throne. They solemnly 'disclaim the necessity or even the wish of continuing any longer the imperial succession in Italy; since in their opinion the majesty of a sole monarch is sufficient to pervade and to protect, at the same time, both the East and the West. In their own name, and in the name of the people, they consent that the seat of universal empire shall be transferred from Rome to Constantinople; and they basely renounce the right of choosing their master, the only vestige which yet remained of the authority which had given laws to the world.'

"The power and glory of Rome as bearing rule over any nation, became extinct. The name alone remained to the queen of nations. Every token of royalty disappeared from the imperial city. She who had ruled over the nations sat in the dust, like a second Babylon, and there was no throne where the Caesars had reigned. The last act of obedience to a Roman prince which that once august assembly performed, was the acceptance of the resignation of the last emperor of the West, and the abolition of the imperial succession in Italy. The sun of Rome was smitten. . . .

"A new conqueror of Italy, Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, speedily arose, who unscrupulously assumed the purple and reigned by right of conquest. 'The royalty of Theodoric was proclaimed by the Goths (March 5, A.D. 493), with the tardy, reluctant, ambiguous consent of the emperor of the East.' The imperial Roman power, of which either Rome or Constantinople had been jointly or singly the seat, whether in the West or the East, was no longer recognized in Italy, and the third part of the sun was smitten, till it emitted no longer the faintest rays. The power of the Caesars was unknown in Italy; and a Gothic king reigned over Rome.

"But though the third part of the sun was smitten, and the Roman imperial power was at an end in the city of the Caesars, yet the moon and the stars still shone, or glimmered, for a little longer in the Western empire, even in the midst of Gothic darkness. The consulship and the senate ["the moon and the stars"] were not abolished by Theodoric. 'A Gothic historian applauds the consulship of Theodoric as the height of all temporal power and greatness;' - as the moon reigns by night after the setting of the sun. And instead of abolishing that office, Theodoric himself 'congratulates those annual favorites of fortune, who, without the cares, enjoyed the splendor of the throne.'

"But in their prophetic order, the consulship and the senate of Rome met their fate, though they fall not by the hands of Vandals or of Goths. The next revolution in Italy was in subjection to Belisarius, the general of Justinian, emperor of the East. He did not spare what barbarians had hallowed. 'The Roman Consulship Extinguished by Justinian, A.D. 541,' is the title of the last paragraph of the fortieth chapter of Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of Rome. 'The

succession of the consuls finally ceased in the thirteenth year of Justinian, whose despotic temper might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom.' The third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars. In the political firmament of the ancient world, while under the reign of imperial Rome, the emperorship, the consulate, and the senate shone like the sun, the moon, and the stars. The history of their decline and fall is brought down till the two former were 'extinguished,' in reference to Rome and Italy, which so long had ranked as the first of cities and of countries; and finally, as the fourth trumpet closes, we see the 'extinction of that illustrious assembly,' the Roman senate. The city that had ruled the world, as if in mockery of human greatness, was conquered by the eunuch Narses, the successor of Belisarius. He defeated the Goths (A.D. 552), achieved 'the conquest of Rome,' and the fate of the senate was sealed."

Elliott (*Horae Apocalypticae*, Vol. I, pp. 357-360) speaks of the fulfilment of this portion of the prophecy in the extinction of the Western empire, as follows:-

"Thus was the final catastrophe preparing, by which the Western emperors and empire were to become extinct. The glory of Rome had long departed; its provinces one after another had been rent from it; the territory still attached to it became like a desert; and its maritime possessions and its fleets and commerce been annihilated. Little remained to it but the vain titles and insignia of sovereignty. And now the time was come when these too were to be withdrawn. Some twenty years or more from the death of Attila, and much less from that of Genseric (who, ere his death, had indeed visited and ravaged the eternal city in one of his maritime marauding expeditions, and thus yet more prepared the coming consummation), about this time, I say, Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, - a barbarian remnant of the host of Attila, left on the Alpine frontiers of Italy, - interposed with his command that the name and the office of Roman emperor of the West, should be abolished. The authorities bowed in submission to him. The last phantom of an emperor - one whose name, Romulus Augustus, was singularly calculated to bring in contrast before the reflective mind the past glories of Rome and its present degradation - abdicated; and the senate sent away the imperial insignia to Constantinople, professing to the emperor of the East that one emperor was sufficient for the whole of the empire. Thus of the Roman imperial sun, that third which appertained to the Western empire was eclipsed, and shone no more. I say, That third of its orb which appertained to the Western empire; for the Apocalyptic fraction is literally accurate. In the last arrangement between the two courts, the whole of the Illyrian third had been made over to the Eastern division.

Thus in the West 'the extinction of the empire' had taken place; the night had fallen.

"Notwithstanding this, however, it must be borne in mind that the authority of the Roman name had not yet entirely ceased. The senate of Rome continued to assemble as usual. The consuls were appointed yearly, one by the Eastern emperor, one by Italy and Rome. Odoacer himself governed Italy under a title (that of patrician) conferred on him by the Eastern emperor. And as regarded the more distant Western provinces, or at least considerable districts in them, the tie which had united them to the Roman empire was not altogether severed. There was still a certain, though often faint, recognition of the supreme imperial authority. The moon and the stars might seem still to shine on the West with a dim reflected light. In the course of the events, however, which rapidly followed one on the other in the next half century, these, too, were extinguished. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, on destroying the Heruli and their kingdom at Rome and Ravenna, ruled in Italy from A.D. 493 to 526 as an independent sovereign; and on Belisarius's and Narses's conquest of Italy from the Ostrogoths (a conquest preceded by wars and desolations in which Italy, and above all its seven-hilled city, were for a time almost made desert), the Roman senate was dissolved, the consulship abrogated. Moreover, as regards the barbaric princes of the Western provinces, their independence of the Roman imperial power became now more distinctly averred and understood. After above a century and a half of calamities unexampled almost, as Dr. Robertson most truly represents it, in the history of nations, the statement of Jerome, - a statement couched under the very Apocalyptic figure of the text, but prematurely pronounced on the first taking of Rome by Alaric, - might be considered as at length accomplished: 'Clarissimum terrarum lumen extinctum est,' 'The world's glorious sun has been extinguished;' and that, too, which our own poet has expressed, still

under the same beautifully appropriate Apocalyptic imagery, -

'She saw her glories star by star expire.' till not even a single star remained, to glimmer on the vacant and dark night."

The fearful ravages of these barbarian hordes, who, under their bold but cruel and desperate leaders, devastated Rome, are vividly portrayed in the following spirited lines:-

"And then a deluge of wrath it came,  
And the nations shook with dread;  
And it swept the earth, till its fields were flame,  
And piled with the mingled dead.  
Kings were rolled in the wasteful flood,  
With the low and crouching slave,  
And together lay, in a shroud of blood,  
The coward and the brave."

Fearful as were the calamities brought upon the empire by the first incursions of these barbarians, they were comparatively light as contrasted with the calamities which were to follow. They were but as the preliminary drops of a shower before the torrent which was soon to fall upon the Roman world. The three remaining trumpets are overshadowed with a cloud of woe, as set forth in the following verses.

"VERSE 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound."

This angel is not one of the series of the seven trumpet angels, but simply one who announces that the three remaining trumpets are woe trumpets, on account of the more terrible events to transpire under their sounding. Thus the next, or fifth trumpet, is the first woe; the sixth trumpet, the second woe; and the seventh, the last one in this series of seven trumpets, is the third woe.

## **Revelation Chapter 9**

### **THE SEVEN TRUMPETS CONTINUED**

"VERSE 1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."

For an exposition of this trumpet, we shall again draw from the writings of Mr. Keith. This writer truthfully says: "There is scarcely so uniform an agreement among interpreters concerning any other part of the Apocalypse as respecting the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets, or the first and second woes, to the Saracens and Turks. It is so obvious that it can scarcely be misunderstood. Instead of a verse or two designating each, the whole of the ninth chapter of the Revelation in equal portions, is occupied with a description of both.

"The Roman empire declined, as it arose, by conquest; but the Saracens and the Turks were the instruments by which a false religion became the scourge of an apostate church; and hence, instead of the fifth and sixth trumpets, like the former, being designated by that name alone, they are called woes.

"Constantinople was besieged, for the first time after the extinction of the Western empire, by Chosroes, the king of Persia."

"A star fell from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."

"While the Persian monarch contemplated the wonders of his art and power, he received an epistle from an obscure citizen of Mecca, inviting him to acknowledge Mohammed as the apostle of God. He rejected the invitation, and tore the epistle. 'It is thus,' exclaimed the Arabian prophet, 'that God will tear the kingdom, and reject the supplication of Chosroes.' Placed on the verge of these two empires of the East, Mohammed observed with secret joy the progress of mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs he ventured to foretell, that, before many years should elapse, victory would again return to the banners of the Romans. 'At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment (!) since



the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire.'

"It was not, like that designative of Attila, on a single spot that the star fell, but UPON THE EARTH.

"Chosroes subjugated the Roman possession in Asia and Africa. And 'the Roman empire,' at that period, 'was reduced to the walls of Constantinople, with the remnant of Greece, Italy, and Africa, and some maritime cities, from Tyre to Trebizond, of the Asiatic coast. The experience of six years at length persuaded the Persian monarch to renounce the conquest of Constantinople, and to specify the annual tribute of the ransom of the Roman empire, - a thousand talents of gold, a thousand talents of silver, a thousand silk robes, a thousand horses, and a thousand virgins.

Heraclius subscribed to these ignominious terms. But the time and space which he obtained to collect those treasures from the poverty of the East were industriously employed in the preparation of a bold and desperate attack.'

"The king of Persia despised the obscure Saracen, and derided the message of the pretended prophet of Mecca. Even the overthrow of the Roman empire would not have opened a door for Mohammedanism, or for the progress of the Saracenic armed propagators of an imposture, though the monarch of the Persians and chagan of the Avars (the successor of Attila) had divided between them the remains of the kingdoms of the Caesars. Chosroes himself fell. The Persian and Roman monarchies exhausted each other's strength. And before a sword was put into the hands of the false prophet, it was smitten from the hands of those who would have checked his career and crushed his power.

"Since the days of Scipio and Hannibal, no bolder enterprise has been attempted than that which Heraclius achieved for the deliverance of the empire. He explored his perilous way through the Black Sea and the mountains of Armenia, penetrated into the heart of Persia, and recalled the armies of the great king to the defense of their bleeding country."

"In the battle of Nineveh, which was fiercely fought from daybreak to the eleventh hour, twenty-eight standards, besides those which might be broken or torn, were taken from the Persians; the greatest part of their army was cut in pieces, and the victors, concealing their own loss, passed the night on the field. The cities and palaces of Assyria were opened for the first time to the Romans."

"The Roman emperor was not strengthened by the conquests which he achieved; and a way was prepared at the same time, and by the same means, for the multitudes of Saracens from Arabia, like locusts from the same region, who, propagating in their course the dark and delusive Mohammedan creed, speedily overspread both the Persian and the Roman empire.

"More complete illustration of this fact could not be desired than is supplied in the concluding words of the chapter from Gibbon, from which the preceding extracts are taken."

"Although a victorious army had been formed under the standard of Heraclius, the unnatural effort seems to have exhausted rather than exercised their strength. While the emperor triumphed at Constantinople or Jerusalem, an obscure town on the confines of Syria was pillaged by the Saracens, and they cut in pieces some troops who advanced to its relief, - an ordinary and trifling occurrence, had it not been the prelude of a mighty revolution. These robbers were the apostles of Mohammed; their frantic valor had emerged from the desert; and in the last eight years of his reign, Heraclius lost to the Arabs the same provinces which he had rescued from the Persians."

"The spirit of fraud and enthusiasm, whose abode is not in the heavens,' was let loose on earth. The bottomless pit needed but a key to open it, and that key was the fall of Chosroes. He had contemptuously torn the letter of an obscure citizen of Mecca. But when from his 'blaze of glory' he sunk into the 'tower of darkness' which no eye could penetrate, the name of Chosroes was suddenly to pass into oblivion before that of Mohammed; and the crescent seemed but to wait its rising till the falling of the star. Chosroes, after his entire discomfiture and loss of empire, was murdered in the year 628; and the year 629 is marked by 'the conquest of Arabia,' and 'the first war of the Mohammedans against the Roman empire.' 'And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit.' He fell unto the earth. When the strength of the Roman empire was exhausted, and

the great king of the East lay dead in his tower of darkness, the pillage of an obscure town on the borders of Syria was 'the prelude of a mighty revolution.' 'The robbers were the apostles of Mohammed, and their frantic valor emerged from the desert.'"

The Bottomless Pit. - The meaning of this term may be learned from the Greek , which is defined "deep, bottomless, profound," and may refer to any waste, desolate, and uncultivated place. It is applied to the earth in its original state of chaos. Gen.1:2. In this instance it may appropriately refer to the unknown wastes of the Arabian desert, from the borders of which issued the hordes of Saracens like swarms of locusts. And the fall of Chosroes, the Persian king, may well be represented as the opening of the bottomless pit, inasmuch as it prepared the way for the followers of Mohammed to issue from their obscure country, and propagate their delusive doctrines with fire and sword, till they had spread their darkness over all the Eastern empire.

"VERSE 2. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." "Like the noxious and even deadly vapors which the winds, particularly from the southwest, diffuse in Arabia, Mohammedanism spread from thence its pestilential influence, - arose as suddenly and spread as widely as smoke arising out of the pit, the smoke of a great furnace. Such is a suitable symbol of the religion of Mohammed, of itself, or as compared with the pure light of the gospel of Jesus. It was not, like the latter, a light from heaven, but a smoke out of the bottomless pit."

"VERSE 3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."

"A false religion was set up, which, although the scourge of transgressions and idolatry, filled the world with darkness and delusion; and swarms of Saracens, like locusts, overspread the earth, and speedily extended their ravages over the Roman empire from east to west. The hail descended from the frozen shores of the Baltic; the burning mountain fell upon the sea from Africa; and the locusts (the fit symbol of the Arabs) issued from Arabia, their native region. They came as destroyers, propagating a new doctrine, and stirred up to rapine and violence by motives of interest and religion.

"A still more specific illustration may be given of the power like unto that of scorpions, which was given them. Not only was their attack speedy and vigorous, but 'the nice sensibility of honor, which weighs the insult rather than the injury, shed its deadly venom on the quarrels of the Arabs; an indecent action, a contemptuous word, can be expiated only by the blood of the offender; and such is their patient inveteracy, that they expect whole months and years the opportunity of revenge.'"

"VERSE 4. And it was commanded from them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

After the death of Mohammed, he was succeeded in the command by Abubekr, A.D. 632, who, as soon as he had fairly established his authority and government, dispatched a circular letter to the Arabian tribes, from which the following is an extract:-

"When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women and children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. And as you go, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way; let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. And you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute.'

"It is not said in prophecy or in history that the more humane injunctions were as scrupulously obeyed as the ferocious mandate; but it was so commanded them. And the preceding are the only instructions recorded by Gibbon, as given by Abubekr to the chiefs whose duty it was to issue the commands to all the Saracen hosts. The commands are alike discriminating with the

prediction, as if the caliph himself had been acting in known as well as direct obedience to a higher mandate than that of mortal man; and in the very act of going forth to fight against the religion of Jesus, and to propagate Mohammedanism in its stead, he repeated the words which it was foretold in the Revelation of Jesus Christ that he would say."

The Seal of God in Their Foreheads. - In remarks upon chapter 7:1-3, we have shown that the seal of God is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and history is not silent upon the fact that there have been observers of the true Sabbath all through the present dispensation. But the question has here arisen with many, Who were those men who at this time had the seal of God in their foreheads, and who thereby became exempt from Mohammedan oppression? Let the reader bear in mind the fact, already alluded to, that there have been those all through this dispensation who have had the seal of God in their foreheads, or have been intelligent observers of the true Sabbath; and let them consider further that what the prophecy asserts is that the attacks of this desolating Turkish power are not directed against them, but against another class. The subject is thus freed from all difficulty; for this is all that the prophecy really asserts. Only one class of persons is directly brought to view in the text; namely, those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads; and the preservation of those who have the seal of God is brought in only by implication.

Accordingly, we do not learn from history that any of these were involved in any of the calamities inflicted by the Saracens upon the objects of their hate. They were commissioned against another class of men. And the destruction to come upon this class of men is not put in contract with the preservation of other men, but only with that of the fruits and verdure of the earth; thus, Hurt not the grass, trees, nor any green thing, but only a certain class of men. And in fulfilment, we have the strange spectacle of an army of invaders sparing those things which such armies usually destroy, namely, the face and productions of nature; and, in pursuance of their permission to hurt those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, cleaving the skulls of a class of religionists with shaven crowns, who belonged to the synagogue of Satan.

These were doubtless a class of monks, or some other division of the Roman Catholic Church. Against these the arms of the Mohammedans were directed. And it seems to us that there is a peculiar fitness, if not design, in describing them as those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; inasmuch as that is the very church which has robbed the law of God of its seal, by tearing away the true Sabbath, and erecting a counterfeit in its place. And we do not understand, either from the prophecy or from history, that those persons whom Abubekr charged his followers not to molest were in possession of the seal of God, or necessarily constituted the people of God.

Who they were, and for what reason they were spared, the meager testimony of Gibbon does not inform us, and we have no other means of knowing; but we have every reason to believe that none of these who had the seal of God were molested, while another class, who emphatically had it not, were put to the sword; and thus the specifications of the prophecy are amply met.

"VERSE 5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man." "Their constant incursions into the Roman territory, and frequent assaults on Constantinople itself, were an unceasing torment throughout the empire; and yet they were not able effectually to subdue it, notwithstanding the long period, afterward more directly alluded to, during which they continued, by unremitting attacks, grievously to afflict an idolatrous church, of which the pope was the head. Their charge was to torment, and then to hurt, but not to kill, or utterly destroy. The marvel was that they did not." (In reference to the five months, see on verse 10.)

"VERSE 6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

"Men were weary of life, when life was spared only for a renewal of woe, and when all that they accounted sacred was violated, and all that they held dear constantly endangered, and the savage Saracens domineered over them, or left them only to a momentary repose, ever liable to be suddenly or violently interrupted, as if by the sting of a scorpion."

"VERSE 7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men."

"The Arabian horse takes the lead throughout the world; and skill in horsemanship is the art and science of Arabia. And the barbed Arabs, swift as locusts and armed like scorpions, ready to dart away in a moment, were ever prepared unto battle.

"And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold.' When Mohammed entered Medina (A.D. 622), and was first received as its prince, 'a turban was unfurled before him to supply the deficiency of a standard.' The turbans of the Saracens, like unto a coronet, were their ornament and boast.. The rich booty abundantly supplied and frequently renewed them. To assume the turbans is proverbially to turn Mussulman. And the Arabs were anciently distinguished by the miters which they wore.

"And their faces were as the faces of men.' 'The gravity and firmness of the mind of the Arab is conspicuous in his outward demeanor; his only gesture is that of stroking his beard, the venerable symbol of manhood.' 'The honor of their beards is most easily wounded.'"

"VERSE 8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions."

"Long hair" is esteemed an ornament by women. The Arabs, unlike other men, had their hair as the hair of women, or uncut, as their practice is recorded by Pliny and others. But there was nothing effeminate in their character; for, as denoting their ferocity and strength to devour, their teeth were as the teeth of the lions.

"VERSE 9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle."

The Breastplate. - "The cuirass (or breastplate) was in use among the Arabs in the days of Mohammed. In the battle of Ohud (the second which Mohammed fought) with the Koreish of Mecca (A.D. 624), 'seven hundred of them were armed with cuirasses.'"

The Sound of Their Wings. - "The charge of the Arabs was not, like that of the Greeks and Romans, the efforts of a firm and compact infantry; their military force was chiefly formed of cavalry and archers. With a touch of the hand, the Arab horses darted away with the swiftness of the wind. "The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle."

Their conquests were marvelous both in rapidity and extent, and their attack was instantaneous. Nor was it less successful against the Romans than the Persians."

"VERSE 10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."

Thus far, Keith has furnished us with illustrations of the sounding of the first five trumpets. But we must now take leave of him, and proceed to the application of the new feature of the prophecy here introduced; namely, the prophetic periods.

Their Power Was to Hurt Men Five Months. - 1. The question arises, What men were they to hurt five months? - Undoubtedly the same they were afterward to slay (see verse 15); "The third part of men," or third of the Roman empire, - the Greek division of it.

2. When were they to begin their work of torment? The 11th verse answers the question.

(1) "They had a king over them." From the death of Mohammed until near the close of the thirteenth century, the Mohammedans were divided into various factions under several leaders, with no general civil government extending over them all. Near the close of the thirteenth century, Othman founded a government which has since been known as the Ottoman government, or empire, which grew until it extended over all the principal Mohammedan tribes, consolidating them into one grand monarchy.

(2) The character of the king. "Which is the angel of the bottomless pit." An angel signifies a messenger, a minister, either good or bad, and not always a spiritual being.

"The angel of the bottomless pit," or chief minister of the religion which came from thence when it was opened. That religion is Mohammedanism, and the sultan is its chief minister. "The Sultan, or grand Seignior, as he is indifferently called, is also Supreme Caliph, or high priest, uniting in his person the highest spiritual dignity with the supreme secular authority." - World As It

Is, p.361.

(3) His name. In Hebrew, "Abaddon," the destroyer; in Greek, "Apollyon," one that exterminates, or destroys. Having two different names in two languages, it is evident that the character, rather than the name of the power, is intended to be represented. If so, as expressed in both languages, he is a destroyer. Such has always been the character of the Ottoman government. But when did Othman make his first assault on the Greek empire? - According to Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, etc., "Othman first entered the territory of Nicomedia on the 27th day of July, 1299."

The calculations of some writers have gone upon the supposition that the period should begin with the foundation of the Ottoman empire; but this is evidently an error; for they were not only to have a king over them, but were to torment men five months. But the period of torment could not begin before the first attack of the tormentors, which was, as above stated, July 27, 1299.

The calculation which follows, founded on this starting-point, was made and published in a work entitled, *Christ's Second Coming*, etc., by J. Litch, in 1838.

"And their power was to hurt men five months." Thus far their commission extended, to torment by constant depredations, but not politically to kill them. "Five months," thirty days to a month, give us one hundred and fifty days; and these days, being symbolic, signify one hundred and fifty years. Commencing July 27, 1299, the one hundred and fifty years reach to 1449. During that whole period the Turks were engaged in an almost perpetual warfare with the Greek empire, but yet without conquering it. They seized upon and held several of the Greek provinces, but still Greek independence was maintained in Constantinople. But in 1449, the termination of the one hundred and fifty years, a change came, the history of which will be found under the succeeding trumpet.

"VERSE 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."

The first woe was to continue from the rise of Mohammedanism until the end of the five months. Then the first woe was to end, and the second to begin. And when the sixth angel sounded, it was commanded to take off the restraints which had been imposed on the nation, by which they were restricted to the work of tormenting men, and their commission was enlarged so as to permit them to slay the third part of men. This command came from the four horns of the golden altar.

The Four Angels. - These were the four principal sultans of which the Ottoman empire was composed, located in the country watered by the great river Euphrates. These sultans were situated at Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Bagdad. Previously they had been restrained; but God commanded, and they were loosed.

In the year 1449, John Palaeologus, the Greek emperor, died, but left no children to inherit his throne, and Constantine, his brother, succeeded to it.<sup>1</sup> But he would not venture to ascend the throne without the consent of Amurath, the Turkish sultan. He therefore sent ambassadors to ask his consent, and obtained it before he presumed to call himself sovereign.

Let this historical fact be carefully examined in connection with the prediction given above. This was not a violent assault made on the Greeks, by which their empire was overthrown and their independence taken away, but simply a voluntary surrender of that independence into the hands of the Turks. The authority and supremacy of the Turkish power was acknowledged when Constantine virtually said, "I cannot reign unless you permit."

The four angels were loosed for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, a to slay the third part of men. This period, during which Ottoman supremacy was to exist, amounts to three hundred ninety-one years and fifteen days. Thus: A prophetic year is three hundred and sixty prophetic days, or three hundred and sixty literal years; a prophetic month, thirty prophetic days, is thirty literal years; one prophetic day is one

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<sup>1</sup> Some historians have given this date as 1448, but the best authorities sustain the date here given, 1449. See Chamber's Encyclopedia, art., Palaeologus.

literal year; and an hour, or the twenty-fourth part of a prophetic day, would be a twenty-fourth part of a literal year, or fifteen days; the whole amounting to three hundred and ninety- one years and fifteen days.

But although the four angels were thus loosed by the voluntary submission of the Greeks, yet another doom awaited the seat of empire. Amurath, the sultan to whom the submission of Constantine XIII was made, and by whose permission he reigned in Constantinople, soon after died, and was succeeded in the empire, in 1451, by Mohammed II, who set his heart on securing Constantinople as the seat of his empire.

He accordingly made preparations for besieging and taking the city. The siege commenced on the 6th of April, 1453, and ended in the capture of the city, and the death of the last of the Constantines, on the 16th day of May following. And the eastern city of the Caesars became the seat of the Ottoman empire.

The arms and mode of warfare which were used in the siege in which Constantinople was to be overthrown and held in subjection were, as we shall see, distinctly noticed by the Revelator.

"VERSE 16. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them"

Innumerable hordes of horses, and them that sat on them! Gibbon thus describes the first invasion of the Roman territories by the Turks: "The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Taurus to Erzeroum; and the blood of 130,000 Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet." Whether the language is designed to convey the idea of any definite number or not, the reader must judge. Some suppose 200,000 twice told is meant, and, following some historians, they find that number of Turkish warriors in the siege of Constantinople. Some think 200,000,000 to mean all the Turkish warriors during the three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days of their triumph over the Greeks. Nothing can be affirmed on the point. And it is nothing at all essential.

"VERSE 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."

The first part of this description may have reference to the appearance of these horsemen. Fire, representing a color, stands for red, "as red as fire" being a frequent term of expression; jacinth, or hyacinth, for blue; and brimstone, for yellow. And these colors greatly predominated in the dress of these warriors; so that the description, according to this view, would be accurately met in the Turkish uniform, which was composed largely of red, or scarlet, blue, and yellow. The heads of the horses were in appearance as the heads of lions to denote their their strength, courage, and fierceness; while the last part of the verse undoubtedly has reference to the use of gunpowder and firearms for purposes of war, which were then but recently introduced. As the Turks discharged their firearms on horseback, it would appear to the distant beholder that the fire, smoke, and brimstone issued out of the horses' mouths, as illustrated by the accompanying plate.<sup>1</sup>

Respecting the use of firearms by the Turks in their campaign against Constantinople, Elliott (Horae Apocalypticae, Vol. I, pp. 482-484) thus speaks:-

"It was to 'the fire and the smoke and the sulphur,' to the artillery and firearms of Mahomet, that the killing of the third part of men, i.e., the capture of Constantinople, and by consequence the destruction of the Greek empire, was owing. Eleven hundred years and more had now elapsed since her foundation by Constantine. In the course of them, Goths, Huns, Avars, Persians, Bulgarians, Saracens, Russians, and

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<sup>1</sup> Quite an agreement exists among commentators in applying the prophecy concerning the fire, smoke, and brimstone to the use of gunpowder by the Turks in their warfare against the Eastern empire. (See Clarke, Barnes, Elliott, Cottage Bible, etc.) But they generally allude simply to the heavy ordnance, the large cannon, employed by that power; whereas the prophecy mentions especially the "horses," and the fire "issuing from their mouths," as though smaller arms were used,

and used on horseback. Barnes thinks this was the case; and a statement from Gibbon confirms this view. He says (IV, 343): "The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of their musketry and cannon." Here is good historical evidence that muskets were used by the Turks; and, secondly, it is undisputed that in their general warfare they fought principally on horseback. The inference is therefore well supported that they used firearms on horseback, accurately fulfilling the prophecy, according to the illustration above referred to.

indeed the Ottoman Turks themselves, had made their hostile assaults, or laid siege against it. But the fortifications were impregnable by them. Constantinople survived, and with it the Greek empire. Hence the anxiety of the Sultan Mahomet to find that which would remove the obstacle. 'Canst thou cast a cannon,' was his question to the founder of cannon that deserted to him, 'of the size sufficient to batter down the wall of Constantinople?' Then the foundry was established at Adrianople, the cannon cast, the artillery prepared, and the siege began.

"It well deserves remark, how Gibbon, always the unconscious commentator on the Apocalyptic prophecy, puts this new instrumentality of war into the foreground of his picture, in his eloquent and striking narrative of the final catastrophe of the Greek empire. In preparation for it, he gives the history of the recent invention of gunpowder, 'that mixture of saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal;' tells of its earlier use by the Sultan Amurath, and also, as before said, of Mahomet's foundry of larger cannon at Adrianople; then, in the progress of the siege itself, describes how 'the volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of the musketry and cannon;' how 'the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls, fourteen batteries thundering at once on the most accessible places;' how '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:' how, as '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:" how 'the double walls were reduced by the cannon to a heap of ruins:' and how the Turks at length 'rising through the breaches,' 'Constantinople was subdued, her empire subverted, and her religion trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors.' I say it well deserves observation how markedly and strikingly Gibbon attributes the capture of the city, and so the destruction of the empire, to the Ottoman artillery. For what is it but a comment on the words of our prophecy? 'By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the sulphur, which issued out of their mouths.'"

"VERSE 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."

These verses express the deadly effect of the new mode of warfare introduced. It was by means of these agents, - gunpowder, firearms, and cannon, - that Constantinople was finally overcome, and given into the hands of the Turks.

In addition to the fire, smoke, and brimstone, which apparently issued out of their mouths, it is said that their power was also in their tails. It is a remarkable fact that the horse's tail is a well-known Turkish standard, a symbol of office and authority. The meaning of the expression appears to be that their tails were the symbol, or emblem of their authority. The image before the mind of John would seem to have been that he saw the horses belching out fire and smoke, and, what was equally strange, he saw that their power of spreading desolation was connected with the tails of the horses. Any one looking on a body of cavalry with such banners, or ensigns, would be struck with this unusual or remarkable appearance, and would speak of their banners as concentrating and directing their power.

This supremacy of the Mohammendans over the Greeks was to continue, as already noticed, three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. Commencing when the one hundred and fifty years ended, July 27, 1449, the period would end Aug. 11, 1840. Judging from the manner of the commencement of the Ottoman supremacy, that it was by a voluntary acknowledgment on the part

of the Greek emperor that he reigned only by permission of the Turkish sultan, we should naturally conclude that the fall or departure of the Ottoman independence would be brought about in the same way; that at the end of the specified period, that is, on the 11th August, 1840, the sultan would voluntarily surrender his independence into the hands of the Christian powers, just as he had, three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days before, received it from the hands of the Christian emperor, Constantine XIII.

This conclusion was reached, and this application of the prophecy was made by Elder J. Litch in 1838, two years before the predicted event was to occur. It was then purely a matter of calculation on the prophetic periods of Scripture. Now, however, the time has passed by, and it is proper to inquire what the result has been - whether such events did transpire according to the previous calculation. The matter sums itself up in the following inquiry:-

When Did Mohammedan Independence in Constantinople Depart? - For several years previous to 1840, the sultan had been embroiled in war with Mehemet Ali, pasha of Egypt. In 1838 the trouble between the sultan and his Egyptian vassal was for the time being restrained by the influence of the foreign ambassadors. In 1839, however, hostilities were again commenced, and were prosecuted until, in a general battle between the armies of the sultan and Mehemet, the sultan's army was entirely cut up and destroyed, and his fleet taken by Mehemet and carried into Egypt. So completely had the sultan's fleet been reduced, that, when the war again commenced in August, he had only two first-rates and three frigates as the sad remains of the once powerful Turkish fleet. This fleet Mehemet positively refused to give up and return to the sultan, and declared that if the powers attempted to take it from him, he would burn it. In this posture affairs stood, when, in 1840, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia interposed, and determined on a settlement of the difficulty; for it was evident that, if let alone, Mehemet would soon become master of the sultan's throne.

The sultan accepted this intervention of the great powers, and thus made a voluntary surrender of the question into their hands. A conference of these powers was held in London, the Sheik Effendi Bey Likgis being present as Ottoman plenipotentiary. An agreement was drawn up to be presented to the pasha of Egypt, whereby the sultan was to offer him the hereditary government of Egypt, and all that part of Syria extending from the Gulf of Suez to the Lake of Tiberias, together with the province of Acre, for life; he on his part to evacuate all other parts of the sultan's dominions then occupied by him, and to return the Ottoman fleet. In case he refused this offer from the sultan, the four powers were to take the matter into their own hands, and use such other means to bring him to terms as they should see fit.

It is apparent that just as soon as this ultimatum should be put by the sultan into the hands of Mehemet Ali, the matter would be forever beyond the control of the former, and the disposal of his affairs would, from that moment, be in the hands of foreign powers. The sultan despatched Rifat Bey on a government steamer to Alexandria, to communicate the ultimatum to the pasha. It was put into his hands, and by him taken in charge, on the eleventh day of August, 1840!. On the same day, a note was addressed by the sultan to the ambassadors of the four powers, inquiring what plan was to be adopted in case the pasha should refuse to comply with the terms of the ultimatum, to which they made answer that provision had been made, and there was no necessity of his alarming himself about any contingency that might arise. This day the period of three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days, allotted to the continuance of the Ottoman power, ended; and where was the sultan's independence? - GONE! Who had the supremacy of the Ottoman empire in their hands? - The four great powers; and that empire has existed ever since only by the sufferance of these Christian powers. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled to the very letter.

From the first publication of the calculation of this matter in 1838, before referred to, the time set for the fulfilment of the prophecy - Aug. 11, 1840 - was watched by thousands with intense interest. And the exact accomplishment of the event predicted, showing, as it did, the right application of the prophecy, gave a mighty impetus to the great Advent movement then beginning to attract the attention of the world.

"VERSE 20. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and



brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

God designs that men shall make a note of his judgments, and receive the lessons he thereby designs to convey. But how slow are they to learn! and how blind to the indications of providence! The events that transpired under the sixth trumpet constituted the second woe; yet these judgments led to no improvement in the manners and morals of men. Those who escaped them learned nothing by their manifestation in the earth. The worship of devils(demons, dead men deified) and of idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, may find a fulfilment in the saint worship and image worship of the Roman Catholic Church; while of murders, sorceries, (pretended miracles through the agency of departed saints), fornications, and thefts in countries where the Roman religion has prevailed, there has been no lack.

The hordes of Saracens and Turks were let loose as a scourge and punishment upon apostate Christendom. Men suffered the punishment, but learned no lesson.

(The entire text is quoted from the book *Daniel And The Revelation*, by Uriah Smith)