

Blessed is he who reads
and those who hear the
words of this prophecy,
and keep those things
which are written in it; for
the time is near.
Rev. 1:3

Verse by Verse Through the Book of Revelation

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Revelation Chapter 9

Eastern Rome is the focal point of interest under the fifth and sixth trumpets. No more descriptive prophecy can be found in all the Bible. The blast of the fifth trumpet was fulfilled in rise and progress of the Arabs. Arabia has been called “the pit of the abyss” because of its deserts and empty areas. It was here that Mohammedanism arose and spread like “a smoke.” This false and fanatical faith threatened at one time to obscure the light of the gospel.



1. **And the fifth angel sounded,** This trumpet is the first “woe”

And I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: Original Greek means “a star fallen.” The star depicted here is not seen falling, as under the third trumpet (ch. 8:10) but is shown already fallen upon the earth. Most commentators identify this fallen “star” as Mohammed.

And to him was given the key Possession of the key implies the power to open and close.

Of the bottomless pit. Greek: phrear tes abussou “well of the abyss.” With respect to the Arabs, the bottomless pit may be thought of as representing the vast wastes of the Arabian deserts, whence these followers of Mohammed issued forth, to spread their conquests over vast areas. In the bible abyss means dwelling place of the dead (Rom. 10:7 or demons Luke 8:31).

2. **And he opened the bottomless pit;** May be translated as ‘The depths of the earth.’

3. **And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth** As early as the 8th century A.D. Beatus, a Spanish monk, is said to have identified the symbol of the locusts with the Moslem Arabs, who in his day had just overrun North Africa, the Near East, and Spain

And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. Normally, locusts do not attack human beings, but these locusts are portrayed as having the venom of scorpions. Scorpions are known for their hostility toward man.

4. **And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree;** Many Bible scholars see this as reflected in the policy of the Arab conquerors not to destroy property wantonly or to kill Christians and Jews so long as they submitted to the payment of tribute

But only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. Inasmuch as the keeping of the Sabbath is ultimately to be the outward sign of the inner work of sealing by the Holy Spirit, the ones attacked by the “locusts” were those who did not observe the true Sabbath.

5. **And to them it was given that they should not kill them,** The punishment inflicted by the “locusts” is torture, not death.

But that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. The five months is an important prophetic period which establishes prophetic chronology in a marvelous way. Recognizing the well-proved principle in a prophetic chronology that a day represents a year, 5 months of 30 days each would mean 5 times 30 or 150 days. But reckoning “a day for a year” (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6) this period of 150 days becomes 150 literal years during which the Ottoman Empire would hurt and destroy men.

The historian E. Gibbon says, “It was on the 27th day of July, in the year 1299 A.D., that Othman first invaded the territory of Nicomedia; and the singular accuracy of the dates seems to disclose some foresight of the rapid and destructive growth of the monster.” This is the sounding of the fifth trumpet! It would “blow” 150 years.

Starting from 1299 and counting 150 years brings us to A.D. 1449 (when the sixth trumpet began to ‘blow’). During these 150 years the Ottoman Empire engaged in almost continual warfare against the Greek Empire. They did not conquer it until 1449 to 1453 when Constantine took the throne, but only after seeking permission of the Ottoman Empire—a striking fulfillment of prophecy .

This particular portion of Revelation became a subject of intense study during the great advent awakening of 1830 to 1844. The accuracy and drama of its fulfillment led to the conversion of more than one thousand infidels. When the sixth trumpet sounded, John declares that four angels were loosed which were bound to the great river Euphrates. Verse 14. This expression, scholars have believed, refers to the four leading sultanies, Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Baghdad, which comprised the Ottoman Empire. They were situated in the region of the Euphrates River. They were to be loosed for a specific period: an hour, a day, a month, and a year.

Calculation of the time period: “a day, and a month, and a year.” Using the prophetic month as 30 days here is the calculation:

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 1 \text{ day} & = & 1 \text{ year;} \\
 1 \text{ month} & = & 30 \text{ years} \\
 1 \text{ year} & = & 360 \text{ years} \\
 \hline
 \text{This totals:} & & 391 \text{ years}
 \end{array}$$

Reckoning from the summer of 1449, the 391 years will bring us to the summer of 1840. It was July 27, 1299, that Othman invaded Nicomedia. This begins the previous measurement of 50 years. Now let us add the last fraction of the measurement—the “one hour.” An hour is 1/24 part of a day. This fractional part of a year would therefore be 15 days. Adding 15 days to July 27 brings us to August 11, 1840. On that day—*that very day*—the Ottoman Empire collapsed.

Two years prior to this date, Josiah Litch of Philadelphia published his interpretation of this prophecy. A short time before the event he even went so far as to say that it would occur on August 11, 1840. His views were widely published. When the news of the collapse of the sultan’s empire was flashed to the unbelieving world, it was startling. Within a few months, Litch “received letters from more than one thousand prominent infidels” who had accepted the bible as God’s revelation to man. Out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire arose the new Republic of Turkey.

It is significant that from 1453, which marks the fall of Constantinople, the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, and the establishment of the Ottomans, until the hour of God’s judgment began in 1844, is exactly 391 years.

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.** The Turks did not kill—they tormented. Sometimes it is better to die than to live in torment.

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7. **And the shape of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle;** Some see in the horses a reference to cavalry, a prominent feature of Arabian military forces. Arabian horses are still a synonym of quality among equestrians, while skill in horsemanship is an Arabian art to this day.
- And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold,** The Turks wore a brilliant headdress or turban.
- And their faces were as the faces of men.** They wore beards.
8. **And they had hair as the hair of women,** Their hair was long.
- And their teeth were as the teeth of lions.** They were vicious and fearless.
9. **And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron;** Some sort of armor or indicating impregnability—unstoppable forces.
- And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.** Keep in mind there were estimated 2 million or more.
10. **And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails and their power was to hurt men five months.** For hundreds of years, the Mohammedan and Tatar tribes were divided into bands under separate leaders with little or no organization. Near the close of the thirteenth century, Othman founded a government which ever since has been known as the Ottoman Empire. This grew until it extended over all the principal Mohammedan tribes, consolidating them into one monarchy.
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 Appollyon.** Both these names—in Hebrew and Greek—mean destroyer or “one who exterminates.” The locusts in the present passage are highly organized in their destructive work, for they have a ruler whose commands they follow. Many who apply the fifth and sixth trumpets to the Moslem Arabs and Turks see in this king a reference to Othman (1299-1326) the founder of the Ottoman Empire. They mark the beginning of the 5 month period as July 27, 1299 which was his first attack on the Greek Empire.
12. **One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.**
13. **And the sixth angel sounded,** This will be the second ‘woe’
- And I heard a voice from the four horns** For the horns on the altar of incense in the ancient wilderness tabernacle see Ex. 37:26.
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Of the golden altar which is before God. Doubtless the same altar as the one where the angel had ministered the prayers of the saints. (Ch. 8:3-5)

14. **Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.** Previously the prophet had seen four angels that had power to restrain the winds from blowing (7:1). They had worldwide power; the present four appear to be localized.

Some identify the four angels as four sultans of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire, which they identify as Aleppo, Iconnium, Damascus, and Baghdad. Others see in these angels the destructive forces that moved against the Western world.

Most commentators see the river Euphrates as a symbolic boundary. Historic Babylon was literally situated upon the waters of the Euphrates, so the Euphrates is here symbolic of the domain of the power represented as mystic Babylon.

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.** We have already noticed that the five months' period associated with the previous trumpet commenced in the year 1299 and ended in 1449. Still calculating a day for a year: 1 day = 1 year; 1 month = 30 years; 1 year = 360 years. This totals 391 years. Reckoning from the summer of 1449, the 391 years will bring us to the summer of 1840.

Now let's add the last fraction of the measurement—the 'one hour.' An hour is 1/24 part of a day. This fractional part of a year would therefore be 15 days. Adding 15 days to July 27 brings us to August 11, 1840.

According to this prophecy the Ottoman Empire would fall on August 11, 1840. It did!

Events revealed wonderfully the truth of Scripture prophecy. When Palestine fell to the Allied forces during World War I, the sultan, realizing his imminent danger, sought protection on a British gunboat and fled from Constantinople to Alexandria. With his departure from the capital the last remains of the old Ottoman Empire collapsed. Out of its ruins arose the new Turkey.

These two prophetic periods, the 150 years and the 391 years, connected with the fifth and sixth trumpets are differently applied by many Bible scholars, but always they are associated with this same Mohammedan power—the power that almost wiped out the name of Jesus from the earth!

16. **And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand and I heard the number of them.** That is, two hundred million! The number is doubtless symbolic of a vast, innumerable host.

17. **And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, (a violet or dark-blue color) 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.** Some see in this the color of the Turkish uniform in which the colors red, blue and yellow are said to have predominated. The reference to fire and smoke and brimstone is believed to be a reference to the use of gunpowder and firearms, introduced about this time. They point out that the discharge of a musket by a mounted cavalryman would make it appear from a distance as though fire was coming out of the horse's mouth.

18. **By these three** Textual evidence attests to the reading of "these three plagues." The fact that these judgments are called plagues is taken by some as suggesting that a close parallel exists between the trumpets and the seven last plagues.

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,** John has already depicted these horses as killing men by the fire, smoke, and brimstone that issue from their mouths. (v. 17).

And in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. Some Bible expositors see in these "tails" a reference to a horse's tail as a Turkish standard.

20. **And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands,** Works of their hands: Particularly the idols they had made. While good in themselves, modern creature comforts—the works of men's hands—may often fill men's lives so fully that they become idols as much as the ancient gods of wood, stone, and metal served as idols to the Turks.

That they should not worship devils, This refers to the worship of spirits, common in that day and still widely practiced among many heathen groups.

And idols This condemns the worship of concrete, but inanimate objects.

Of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear nor walk: This lists in descending order the material value of the idols.

21. **Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.** The sin of idolatry against God often

leads to crimes such as those here listed. (See Rev. 21:8; 22:15; Gal. 5:20)
Fornication is translated from the Greek work porneia meaning “prostitution and/or unchastity, a general term denoting every imaginable kind of unlawful sexual behavior.

Could the 5th and 6th trumpets have had a fulfillment yet also bear a parallel fulfillment at the very end of this earth’s history? Absolutely. Many prophecies have a dual meaning.
