

Islam in Prophecy



This is the next chapter of the book, [The Foundations Under Attack: The Roots of Apostasy – By Michael de Semlyen](#)

I learned so much from this chapter!

Chapter 6

Islam in Prophecy

Many historicists see the two legs of Nebuchanezzar's image in Daniel 2 as referring to the divide of the post-Christian Roman Empire into the Western Empire under the Papacy and the Eastern Empire under Islam. The Historicist interpretation of the fifth trumpet in the book of Revelation (chapter 9:1-11) reveals the emergence of Islam in Arabia under Mohammad and the devastating early campaigns and conquests of his followers against Christendom.

Rev. E. B. Elliott's commentary of this passage describes an antichrist spirit ruthless in its savagery. At the same time he demonstrates how the Muslim "locust hordes" were used as an instrument of God's judgement on the "Christian" idolatry of Byzantium. The fulfilment of prophecy can repeat itself. As the twenty-first century's apostate Christendom falls away into idolatry and secularism, it is instructive for us, confronted by the same malign spirit, to be reminded **by Scripture** of the roots of Islam and its savage and sustained onslaught on apostate Christendom in the seventh and eighth centuries.

ISLAM in REVELATION – Chapter 9:1-11 – the Fifth Trumpet

(From the Historical interpretation by Rev. E. B. Elliott)

1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key to the bottomless pit.
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, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

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.

4. And it was commanded 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

In his Thirteenth Lecture, Elliot interprets this passage as follows:

I. First as the peculiar country and people whence it was to originate. The locust, the groundwork of the symbol, is wholly Arabic. It was the "*east wind which brought the locusts*" on Egypt (Exodus 10:13)—a statement distinctly pointing to Arabia, as to the land upon the east of Egypt. The Syrians, we are told by Volney, "have remarked that locusts come constantly from the deserts of Arabia." The terms *Arab* and *locust* are in Hebrew almost the same. The symbol is used elsewhere in Scripture with like appropriateness: "They [the Midianite Arabs] came as grasshoppers," meaning locusts. (Judges 6:5)

Great peculiarity attached to these monsters in the vision before us; they were half beast, half man. Their coming, locust-like, in destructive swarms, is in accordance with the figure; but their shape was like horses. The horse was peculiarly Arabian, and seems to indicate hordes of cavalry; they were, it is said, "*prepared for battle.*" They had teeth like lions—savage destroyers of life—and they resembled **scorpions** in their poison stings, implying that they would be the tormentors of those whose lives they spared. The scorpion is of the same native locality; witness the words of Moses, when reminding the Israelites of God's goodness to them throughout their forty years' wanderings: "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions?" (Deuteronomy 8:15) Thus the

zoology is all Arabian.

Next, as to the human appearance of these locusts: *their faces like men, their hair as the hair of women*. What people could be thus pictured? ... There was a nation to which the whole of the descriptive symbol was literally applicable. Pliny, St John's contemporary, speaks of the Arabs as wearing the turban, having the hair long and uncut, and with the moustache too on their upper lip – "that venerable sign of manhood," as Gibbon calls it. In the Arabian poem *Antar*, written about Mahomet's time, we find the beard and moustache, the long-flowing hair and the turban, all specified as characterizing the appearance of the Arab. And the turban of the Arab was often noted as a crown. So Ezekiel spoke of "Sabeans [Arabs] from the desert, with beautiful crowns on their heads." (Ezekiel 23:42) The *breastplates of iron* worn by these creatures are also noted in the vision. The Saracens' policy was to wear defensive armour, their coats of mail being repeatedly mentioned by historians. Thus, on the whole, these concurrent symbols point to Arabia as the country whence the woe was to originate. And if we turn from prophecy to history, we find, at the opening of the seventh century, a fact notoriously verifying the prediction. A mighty Saracen or Arab invasion is the chief event, which it records.

II. But what of the *abyss*, out of which those locusts are said to have issued? The word is often used in Scripture with reference to Hell, or the place of the departed wicked. And in the New Testament it is likewise introduced as "*the deep*," into which the devils entreated of our Lord that they might not be sent; and in the Revelation as "*the bottomless pit*," where "*that old serpent, the devil*" is bound. Moreover, as the natural light of the sun is a fit emblem of the spiritual illumination that comes down from the God and Father of lights, so may we infer that whatever is described as darkening the atmosphere, even as smoke from a pit, must be meant in the opposite sense of a moral or spiritual pollution. This smoke, then, in the Apocalyptic vision, we consider to be an emanation from Satan issuing from the pit of hell; i.e., some system of false religion, which should obscure truth, or dim the light of heaven.

And was it even so? Did it so happen, at this particular juncture, that such a system of pestilent error rose up? And if so, did it take its rise from Arabia? To these enquiries we reply, Who has not heard of Mahomet, that false prophet; and of the spread of his too popular creed? This deadly evil came out from Arabia at the very time we speak of—a creed the invention of fanaticism and fraud. In its system the blessed God is described as cruel and unholy; and in its morals, pride, ferocity, superstition and sensuality, are held up for admiration, and show palpably where it had its origin. It was just after embracing Mahometan principles that the Saracens, as "locusts from the abyss," issued forth on Christendom. It was the adoption of this creed, the creed of Mahomet, that made them what they were, that united these hordes as one, that gave them the impulse to fly locust-like to propagate their faith over the world, and that imparted to them, as to raging lions of the desert, their destructive fury of fanaticism. Their scorpion venom was thereby prepared to torment such of the Christians as they should bring under their yoke, while the hope of gross licentiousness to be indulged in both

here and hereafter, added sensualism to their ferocity. Well does the Saracen history accord with the prophetic emblem concerning them!

III. We have to observe the peculiar nature of the commission, "*Hurt not the grass or trees, but only those men who have not God's seal on their foreheads.*" Mahomet expressly declared that his mission was against "idolaters;" and such he considered Christians. But in urging forward his followers against them, the Caliph Aboubeker did but fulfil the precept of the prophet when he gave the command, "Destroy no palm trees, nor any fields of corn, cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle." It was the dictate of policy, not of mercy; for by following this plan the Saracens, soon after their conquest, had formed flourishing countries round them. It was a marked peculiarity; for in other invasions, as the Gothic, fire, sword, and devastation tracked the invader's progress, and was accordingly prefigured in the Apocalyptic imagery: but with the Saracens it was the very reverse; and this reverse still more connects it with the prediction now before us.

IV. We have so far identified this passage with the Arabian heresy and irruption, that the inference we clearly deduce, is that Mahomet was the *star*, or ruler, adhered to. But why is this imposter referred to as a star? And why still more, since success followed his course for such a length of time, is he said to be a *fallen star*? To answer this question we must trace Mahomet's history back to his birth. His origin was princely, being descended from one of the noblest families in Arabia. Gibbon says, "The grandfather of Mahomet and his lineal ancestors appeared in foreign and domestic transactions as the princes of their country." They were, in the view of the Syrian Greeks, as among the stars on the political horizon. But just after the prophet's birth his father died; and soon after, his grandfather. Then the governorship of Mecca and keys of the Kaaba (or holy place of religion among the Arabians) attached to the office, passed into another branch of the family. Thus Mahomet became a *star fallen* from power. He says of himself, that at the opening of the seventh century, "he was a desolate orphan." He was indeed fallen, when as a poor widow's servant, he used to traffic in the markets of Damascus.

Mahomet, however, was imbued with a spirit calculated to struggle against, and triumph over misfortune. ... About three miles from Mecca was a cave called Hera; it was a secret and desolate spot. There he withdrew every year to consult, as he said, a spirit who was wont to visit him in his solitary hours, and hold converse with him. Gibbon well calls it, "The spirit of fraud and enthusiasm, whose abode was not in heaven, but in the mind of the prophet." This cave has aptly suggested to interpreters the idea of *the pit of the abyss*, whence the pestilential fumes and darkness were seen to issue. When, privately at first, and then more publicly, he began to announce his creed, for awhile his uncle and the elders of the city affected to despise the orphan's presumption. They chased him from Mecca, and his flight marks in history the era of the *Hegira*, A.D.622. Seven years afterwards was seen in Mecca's streets one to whom all bowed down in honour; whose words the multitudes revered; to whose command armies were obedient; who swayed the minds of men that they yielded implicit faith in his wild or crafty

imagination. The "fallen star" had come forth again. The key of office was restored to him. The fugitive missionary was enthroned as the prince and the prophet of his native country. ... Even so in allusive contrast it is written in Revelation, "The key of the abyss" was given to him; and truly the smoke that arose, upon his opening, was as the pestilential fumes and darkness of hell.

"There came out locusts on the earth." It was in A.D.629 that the Saracens first issued from the desert, and proclaimed war against Christendom. The year 639 saw Syria subdued, and the Muezzin, calling to prayer, soon after sounded from a mosque built on the site of Solomon's temple. There he is still heard to this very day, when the appointed hour comes round for remembering the prophet. The subjugation of Egypt followed quickly on that of Syria; then some few years after, that of the African province; then, at the commencement of the eighth century, that of Spain. All this was within the limits of Roman Christendom, and consequently within the sphere of the Apocalyptic vision. But beyond this their conquests extended far and wide with terrible rapidity. Two short statements from history will give some idea of the progress of the Saracens, and of the desolations caused by them; of whom it might be said, as was said of the desolating force mentioned in Joel. *"The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness."* (Joel 2:3). The one—that in ten years, from A.D.634 to 644, they had reduced 3600 castles to ruins, destroyed 4000 churches and had built 1400 mosques for the exercise of the religion of Mahomet. The other—that at the end of the first century of the Hegira, the Arabian Empire had been extended from the confines of India and Tartary to the shores of the Atlantic.

Bitterly did the Christians feel the scorpion's sting. They were deprived of the use of their arms, and like slaves of old, made to pay annually a life-redemption tax. They were required to stand up always in the presence of their tyrants, and were called by the names of opprobrium, as "infidel dog", "Christian dog", etc. In further token of contempt to their religion, to which the Christians still clung in fond attachment, no new churches were permitted to be built; no church bells to be rung; while the scoffing Moslem had free access, even during divine worship, to all those which were allowed to exist. Insults of the grossest kind were continually offered to Christian females; and undefinable acts of oppression practised on all. Every inducement was offered to apostasy; and the punishment of death was inflicted on any, who, after apostasy, again professed the Christian faith.

These *locusts*, it is said, had a *king over them*, whose name was "*Abaddon*," or the "*Destroyer*." Mohammed professed that the "spirit of the cave" had dictated to him the Koran; this was accordingly the law that governed the Saracens. The Caliphs, or chief governors, held rule only as vicars of the false prophet. What the doctrine of the book was, as acted out by them, appeared on the field of battle. There, when we see not only the loss of bodily life resulting, but also the ruin of souls from the poisonous precepts of Mohammedism, we cannot find more a fitting title to express the perpetuation of the prophet's character in each successive Caliph, than that of the "*Abaddon*," the "*Destroyer*" of Christians! There was, however, a term and limit prescribed to these locusts, both as to effect and as to duration.

For observe, they were not to kill, i.e., to annihilate the men of Roman Christendom as a political body; but "*only to torment them.*" And this woe was to last 150 days; i.e., in prophetic language, 150 years. ...

Observe now what had been the length of time occupied in these transactions. We date from the period when Mahomet publicly announced his mission to propagate his religion by violence and with the sword: a mission, which made his followers a woe to all countries, but especially to Christendom. The destroying commission might be said to commence at that period, when Mahomet, addressing his assembled followers, enquired, "Who will be my lieutenant?"

Ali, called by him "the Lion of God," replied, "O prophet, I will be thy lieutenant. Whoever rises against thee I will dash out his teeth, tear out his eyes, break his legs, rip him open. I am the man. I will be thy vizier."

Mr. Hallam justly observes: "These words of Mahomet's illustrious disciple are, as it were, a text upon which the commentary extends into the whole Saracenic history."

Thus then, reckoning from A.D.612 to A.D.762, when the Caliphate was removed to Baghdad, we find the intervening period to be precisely 150 years. To two remarkable coincidences, which occurred during this period, we should give attention. It has been observed that the apostasy of the Church was the assigned and predicted cause of this judgment. Now Mahomet's asserted commission was especially directed against idolaters; and it was in that character, as an idolatrous people, that Christendom appeared when the Saracen woe fell upon it. Up to the close of the seventh century the reproach of image-worship might seem deservedly to give cause for the scourge which they suffered under the Moslem sword; but about the year 717, the Isaurian family ascended the throne of Constantinople. For sixty years its princes, supported by many real Christians, though opposed by the Popes and the masses of the people, resisted image-worship and endeavoured to overthrow it. Mark then—it was during this period of resistance to the error that the Saracen horde received its first defeat at Constantinople.

Again in A.D.754 Constantine Copronymus called a council in order to condemn the idolatrous image-worship. It passed a solemn judgment against it: and, behold, it was the very next year that the Caliphate was divided, and the intensity of the Saracenic woe was brought to an end. But alas! The efforts of these emperors availed but little. In the year 781, the Queen Irene succeeded to the throne, having murdered her image-destroying husband. She convened what is called the seventh general council; and by a solemn act of the Catholic Church, the worship of images was declared lawful. Just then the Saracenic woe seemed for a time to revive. The Arab forces swept through Asia Minor into Greece, again and again bearing down all before them. Was there in all this no warning from God? The Eastern Church, however, persisted. In A.D.842 the struggle ended under the reign of the Empress Theodora, and image-worship became indisputably established. Through the ninth and tenth centuries it so continued; yet such was the long-suffering of God, no judgment seemed to follow.

But the time of retribution came at last.

Here we close, as far as regards this vision. But a fact or two, relative to the downfall of the Saracenic power, may be added. Luxury, we have said, weakened its strength. In A.D.841, the Caliph, distrusting his guards, was forced to hire a protective force of 50,000 Turks. These, like the Praetorian guards at Rome, in their turn became tyrants, and accelerated the sinking of the Saracens.... The Persians, in A.D.934, stripped the Caliph of Baghdad of all temporal power, and left him only the title of Pontiff of Islamism. In the west, a century after, the Saracens were driven out; and though they continued as marauders, and even gained victories in Crete and Sicily, the woe might be said to have passed from Christendom.

One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes hereafter. (Revelation 9:12)

The sixth trumpet's first woe was again soon to fall on idolatrous Eastern Christendom. Vast numbers of Turkmen, or Turks, from the area of the Caspian sea and the Euphrates, converted to the new all-conquering religion and "animated by the same spirit of hell," as Elliot describes it, waged "a holy war against the infidels" of Greek Christendom, occupying and settling all of Asia Minor. The second woe of the sixth trumpet culminated in the fall of Constantinople when history records *a third part of the men were killed* (Revelation 9:18).

Note: Another great commentary about Revelation chapter 9 verses 1-11 is David Wilcoxson's article: [The Fifth Trumpet Of Revelation 9](#)

Continued in [The Proliferation of Modern "Bibles"](#)

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