

THE EASTERN QUESTION

1. WHAT, briefly stated, is the Eastern question?

The driving out of Turkey from Europe, and the final extinction of the Turkish Empire, with the world-embracing events that follow [By 2006, this may include radical Islam in whatever country, thus helping to prepare the whole world to “wander after the beast”]. It has been otherwise described as “the driving of the Turk into Asia, and a scramble for his territory.”

2. What scriptures are devoted to the Turkish power?

Daniel 11:40–45; Revelation 9; and Revelation 16:12.

NOTE — In the eleventh chapter of Daniel, Turkey is dealt with under the title of the “king of the north;” in Revelation 9, under the sounding of the fifth and sixth “trumpets;” and in Revelation 16, under the symbol of the drying up of the water of the chief river of the Turkish Asiatic possessions, “the great river Euphrates.” The actual drying up of the river Euphrates was the signal for the overthrow of ancient Babylon.

3. When did Turkey take Constantinople, and thus the northern division of ancient Greece and Rome?

In A.D. 1453, under Mohammed II. See pages 293, 294.

NOTE — After the death of Alexander the Great, the Grecian Empire was divided by his four leading generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, into four parts,—east, west, north, and south,—the first three of which were shortly afterward absorbed into one kingdom, the kingdom of the north, Egypt remaining the king, or kingdom, of the south. In the breaking up of the of the Roman Empire, the Turks gained possession of the Holy Land in A.D. 1058, and finally of Constantinople, and considerable portions of eastern Europe—the kingdom of the north—in 1453, to which, with varying fortunes and shrinking geographical boundaries, it has held ever since.

4. How has Turkey been regarded by European nations?

“The Turks have ever remained quite insensible to the influences of European civilization, and their government has been a perfect

blight and curse to the countries subject to their rule. They have always been looked upon *as intruders* in Europe, and their presence there has led to several of the most sanguinary wars of modern times. Gradually they have, been pushed out from their European possessions, and the time is probably not very far distant when they will be driven back across the Bosphorus." Myers's "General History," edition 1902, page 463.

5. When did the independence of Turkey cease?

In 1840, at the close of a two years' war between Turkey and Egypt, when the fate of Turkey was placed in the hands of four great powers of Europe,—England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. See study on "The Seven Trumpets."

6. What is one of the last predictions of the prophecy of Daniel concerning the king of the north?

"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." **Daniel 11:44.**

NOTE — Upon this, Dr. Adam Clarke, writing in 1825, said: "If the Turkish power be understood, as in the preceding verses, it may mean that the Persians on the *east* and the Russians on the *north* will at some time greatly embarrass the Ottoman government." Such indeed was the case, and these conditions brought on the Crimean war of 1853–56, between Russia and Turkey. In this war England and France came to the help of Turkey, and prevented Russia from grasping Constantinople, her coveted prize, and thus gaining access to the Dardanelles and the Mediterranean Sea, and so possessing herself of the gateway of commerce between Europe and Asia. Without an outlet to the sea, Russia cannot be a strong naval power. In his celebrated will, Peter the Great of Russia (1672–1725) admonished his countrymen thus: "Take every possible means of gaining Constantinople and the Indies, for," said he, "he who rules there will be the true sovereign of the world; excite war continually in Turkey and Persia; . . . get, control of the sea by degrees; . . . advance to the Indies, which are the great depot of the world. Once there, we can do without the gold of England."

The authenticity of this will has been questioned, but it outlines a policy which Russia has quite faithfully pursued.

7. What since 1840 has saved Turkey from complete overthrow?

The help and interference of various European powers.

NOTE — “It is not too much to say that England has twice saved Turkey from complete subjection since 1853. It is largely,—mainly,—due to our action that she now exists at all as an independent power. On both these occasions we dragged the powers of Europe along with us in maintaining the Ottoman government.” *Duke of Argyle (1895), in “The Turkish-Armenian Question,” page 17.*

8. Why have these powers thus helped Turkey?

Not from love for Turkey, but for fear of the international complications that its downfall might entail.

NOTES — In his Mansion House speech, Nov. 9, 1895, Lord Salisbury, responding to a wide-spread demand for the overthrow of the Turkish power, said: “Turkey is in that remarkable condition that it has now stood for half a century, mainly because the great powers of the world have resolved that *for the peace of Christendom it is necessary that the Ottoman Empire should stand.* They came to that conclusion nearly half a century ago. I do not think they have altered it now. *The danger, if the Ottoman Empire fall, would not merely be the danger that would threaten the territories of which that empire consists; it would be the danger that the fire there lit should spread to other nations, and should involve all that is most powerful and civilized in Europe in a dangerous and calamitous contest.* That was a danger that was present to the minds of our fathers when they resolved to make the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire a matter of European treaty, *and that is a danger WHICH HAS NOT PASSED AWAY.*”

“The Balkan, or Near Eastern, question has been one of the most complicated political problems of the world’s history for half a century. . . . For four centuries and a half, or ever since the conquering Turk crossed the Bosphorus and took

Constantinople, the grim contest has been on to dislodge him by war and diplomacy.” *American Review of Reviews*, November, 1912.

Nearly a century ago, Napoleon, while a prisoner on St. Helena, explained that when emperor of France, he would not consent for Alexander, the czar of Russia, to have Constantinople, “foreseeing that the equilibrium of Europe would be destroyed.”

9. What is the divine prediction regarding the future and final downfall of the king of the north?

“And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas *in the glorious holy mountain: yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*” **Daniel 11:45.**

NOTE — It would seem natural that the Ottoman government should make its last stand at Jerusalem. Around the city of the Holy Sepulcher and the tombs of the “saints” has been waged for long years a war between the followers of Islam and the believers in the Christian religion. In this place, many Bible students believe, Turkey will come to her end in fulfillment of this scripture.

10. Under which of the seven last plagues is the water of the Euphrates (Turkey) to be dried up, and for what purpose?

“And *the sixth angel* poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was *dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.*” **Revelation 16:12.**

NOTE — For years the drying-up process of the Turkish Empire has been in progress, as may be seen from the following:—

(1) In 1783 Turkey was compelled to surrender to Russia the territory of the Crimea, including all the countries east of the Caspian Sea.

(2) In 1828 Greece secured her independence.

(3) In 1830 Algeria was ceded to France.

(4) In 1867 Turkey was forced to recognize the independence of Egypt.

(5) In the same year Turkey lost possession of Servia and Bosnia.

(6) In 1878 the Treaty of Berlin granted autonomous government to Bulgaria and independence to Roumelia, Roumania, and Montenegro.

(7) In 1912 Tripoli was taken over by Italy.

(8) In 1912 and 1913 the Balkan States and Greece dispossessed Turkey of nearly all of her remaining territory in Europe.

11. Under this plague, what incites the nations to war?

“And I saw *three unclean spirits* like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are *the spirits of devils*, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, *to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*” **Verses 13, 14.**

12. At this time, what event is near at hand?

“*Behold, I come as a thief.* Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” **Verse 15.**

13. To what place will the nations be gathered for battle?

“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue *Armageddon.*” **Verse 16.**

NOTE — Armageddon consists of a great triangular plain in northern Palestine, twelve by fifteen by eighteen miles, extending southeast from Mt. Carmel, otherwise known as the plain of Esdraelon, or valley of Jezreel. It has been the scene of many great battles, such as that of Gideon’s overthrow of the Midianites (**Judges 6, 7**), when “the Lord set every man’s sword against his fellow;” of Saul’s defeat by the Philistines (**1Samuel 29:1; 1Chronicles 10**); and of Josiah’s defeat by Pharaoh Necho (**2Kings 23:20, 30, 2Chronicles 36:20–24**): and, as this scripture indicates, it is the place where, under the influence of evil spirits just preceding Christ’s second coming, the great armies of the world will be gathered for their final struggle and utter destruction under the seventh plague,

14. When the king of the north comes to his end, what, according to the prophecy, is to take place?

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1.

NOTE — The expression “stand up” occurs eight times in this line of prophecy (**Daniel 11 and 12**), and in each case means *to reign*. See **Daniel 11:2, 3, 4, 7, 14, 20, 21; 12:1**. Michael is Christ, as will be seen by comparing **Jude 9, 1Thessalonians 4:16, and John 5:25**. When the Turkish Empire is brought to an end, therefore, the time will have come for Christ to receive His kingdom (**Luke 19:11–15**), and begin His reign. This great change will be ushered in by the downfall, not only of Turkey, but of all nations (**Revelation 11:15**); by the time of trouble here spoken of; by the seven last plagues described in **Revelation 16**; and by the deliverance of all God’s people,—those whose names are found written in the book of life (**Revelation 3:5; 20:12**),—which shows that probation and the investigative judgment will then be past.

Publisher’s Note: This event, the move of the Turkish Empire to Jerusalem, signifies the close of the Antitypical Day of Atonement, that day of judgment that began on October 22, 1844. Indeed, all preparation of character must be completed before that event for afterwards, there will be no more mercy or salvation for any person.

15. What will take place at this time?

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Verse 2.

NOTE — At the resurrection of Christ there was a special resurrection, when many of the saints were raised from the dead, were seen of many, and were taken to heaven with Christ at His ascension. **Matthew 27:52, 53; Ephesians 4:8**. So, just prior to Christ’s second coming and the general resurrection of the righteous, many of the sleeping saints, and some colossal sinners (those that “pierced Him,” **Revelation 1:7**), it seems, will be raised to witness His coming, and hear God’s covenant of

peace with His people. This line of prophecy, therefore, brings us down to the resurrection of the righteous, which takes place at the second advent.

16. What false message will go forth before destruction comes upon those unprepared for Christ's coming and kingdom?

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them. . . .* and they shall not escape.” **1Thessalonians 5:2, 3.**

NOTE — The so-called Christian nations will not go to Palestine merely to expel the Turks from the land. As in the crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the idea will be to rescue the Holy Land from the Mohammedans, and make Jerusalem the center of a glorious kingdom, with Christ as king. The Papacy itself, it is thought by some, will at this time remove its seat to Jerusalem, and issue a great peace proclamation, directing the nations to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and calling upon all to come up to the mountain of the Lord, as described in **Isaiah 2:2-5** and **Micah 4:1-5**. Infatuated by the doctrine of a temporal millennium, many nations will join in the call, and say, “For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” **Isaiah 2:3**. But this will be but the signal for the battle of Armageddon and the “sudden destruction” that is to overtake the world and bring to an end the present order of things. See **Revelation 19:17-21; Ezekiel 38:14-23; 39:17-22**. Toward this consummation passing events all indicate we are rapidly hastening.

WATCHMAN on the walls of Zion,
What, O tell us, of the night?
Is the day-star now arising?
Will the morn soon greet our sight?
O'er your vision shine there now some rays of light?
Tell, O tell us, are the landmarks
On our voyage all passed by?
Are we nearing now the haven?
Can we e'en the land descry?
Do we truly see the heavenly kingdom nigh?