

What does Daniel 11:45-12:1 and Revelation 16:12-16 Have in Common?

First Testimony.—The following is from Rev. Mr. Goodell, missionary of the American Board at Constantinople, addressed to the Board, and by them published in the *Missionary Herald*, for April, 1841, p. 160:—

“The power of Islamism is broken forever; and there is no concealing the fact even from themselves. They exist now by mere sufferance. And though there is a mighty effort made by the **Christian governments** to sustain them, yet at every step they sink lower and lower with fearful velocity. And though there is a great endeavor made **to graft** the institutions of civilized and Christian countries upon the decayed trunk, yet the very root itself is fast wasting away by the venom of its own poison. How wonderful it is, that, **when all Christendom** combined together to check the progress of Mahometan power, it waxed exceedingly great in spite of every opposition; **and now, when all the mighty potentates of Christian Europe, who feel fully competent to settle all the quarrels and arrange all the affairs of the whole world, are leagued together for its protection and defence, down it comes, in spite of all their fostering care.**”

Mr. Goodell has been for years a missionary in the Turkish dominions, and is competent to judge of the state of the government. His deliberate and unequivocal testimony is, that, “the power of Islamism is broken forever.” But it is said the Turks yet reign! So also says our witness—“but it is by mere sufferance.” They are at the mercy of the Christians. Their independence is broken.—*J. White The Seven Trumpets. page 40.4-6 reprint.*

For years statesmen and observers have discussed the approaching dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Travelers in Turkey have reported that thoughtful Turkish people held the conviction that the crisis of their nation was near at hand. Years ago Mr. Charles MacFarlane wrote:

“The Turks themselves seem generally to be convinced that their final hour is approaching. 'We are no longer Mussulmans, the Mussulman saber is broken, the Osmanlis will be driven out of Europe by the gaiours, and driven through Asia to the regions from which they first sprang. It is Kismet! We cannot resist destiny! I heard words to this effect from many Turks, as well in Asia as in Europe.'”—*Kismet; or the Doom of Turkey* (London, 1853), v. 409.—*W.A. Spicer. Our Day In Light of Bible Prophecy. pg. 333.2,3.*

Indeed, it is plainly stated by one of the leading authorities of the world that it is as a bulwark against this great danger of universal war that the Ottoman Government has been maintained these last fifty years. Read the following lines from the speech of Lord Salisbury, at the Mansion House, November 9, 1895:—

“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 civilised 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.”—*A T Jones The Eastern Question. pg. 6.1, 2 reprint.*

The Sixth Plague. What is the great River Euphrates, upon which this vial is poured out? One view is that it is the literal River Euphrates in Asia; another is that it is a symbol of the nation occupying the territory through which that river flows. The latter opinion is preferable for the following reasons: {1912 UrS, DAR 691.1}

1. It would be difficult to see what end would be gained by the drying up of the literal river, as that would not offer an obstruction at all serious to the progress of an advancing army; and it should be noticed that the drying up takes place to prepare the way of the kings of the East; that is, regular military organizations, and not a promiscuous and unequipped crowd of men, women, and children, like the children of Israel at the Red Sea or at the Jordan. The Euphrates is only about 1,400 miles in length, or about one third the size of the Mississippi. Cyrus, without difficulty, turned the whole river from its channel at his siege of Babylon; and notwithstanding the numerous wars that have been carried on along its banks, and the mighty hosts that have crossed and recrossed its streams, it never yet had to be dried up to let them pass. {1912 UrS, DAR 691.2}

2. It would be as necessary to dry up the River Tigris as the Euphrates; for that is nearly as large as the latter. Its source is only fifteen miles from that of the Euphrates, in the mountains of Armenia, and it runs nearly parallel with it, and but a short distance from it throughout its whole course; yet the prophecy says nothing of the Tigris. {1912 UrS, DAR 691.3}

3. The literal drying up of the rivers takes place under the fourth vial, when power is given to the sun to scorch men with fire. Under this plague occur, beyond question, the scenes of drought and famine so graphically described by Joel, chapter 1:14-20; and as one result of these, it is expressly stated that "the rivers of waters are dried up." The Euphrates can hardly be an exception to this visitation of drought; hence not much would remain to be literally dried up under the sixth vial. {1912 UrS, DAR 691.4}

These plagues, from the very nature of the case, must be manifestations of wrath and judgments upon men; but if the drying up of the literal Euphrates is all that is brought to view, this plague is not of such a nature, and turns out to be no serious affair, after all. {1912 UrS, DAR 692.1}

These objections existing against considering it a literal river, it must be understood figuratively as symbolizing the power holding possession of the territory watered by that river, which is the Ottoman, or Turkish, empire. {1912 UrS, DAR 692.2}

1. It is so used in other places in the Scriptures. (See Isa.8:7; Rev.9:14.) In this latter

text, all must concede that the Euphrates symbolizes the Turkish power; and being the first and only other occurrence of the work in the Revelation, it may well be considered as governing its use in this book. {1912 UrS, DAR 692.3}

2. The drying up of the river in this sense would be the consumption of the Turkish empire, accompanied with more or less destruction of its subjects. Thus we should have literal judgments upon men as the result of this plague, as in the case of all the others. {1912 UrS, DAR 692.4}

But it may be objected to this, that while contending for the literality of the plagues, we nevertheless make one of them a symbol. We answer, No. A power is introduced, it is true, under the sixth vial, in its symbolic form, just as it is under the fifth, where we read of the seat of the beast, which is a well known symbol; or as we read again in the first plague of the mark of the beast, his image, and its worship, which are also symbols. All that is here insisted upon, is the literality of the judgments that result from each vial, which are literal in this case as in all the others, though the organizations which suffer these judgments may be brought to view in their symbolic form. {1912 UrS, DAR 692.5}

Again: It may be asked how the way of the kings of the East will be prepared by the drying up, or consumption, of the Ottoman power? The answer is obvious. For what is the way of these kings to be prepared? Answer: To come up to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Where is the battle to be fought? Near Jerusalem. (Joel and Zephaniah.) But Jerusalem is in the hands of the Turks; they hold possession of the land of Palestine and the sacred sepulchers. This is the bone of contention; on these the nations have fixed their covetous and jealous eyes. But though Turkey now possesses them, and others want them, it is nevertheless thought necessary to the tranquillity of Europe that Turkey should be maintained in her position, in order to preserve what is called the "balance of power." For this the Christian nations of Europe have cooperated to sustain the integrity of the sultan's throne, because they cannot agree as to the division of the spoils, when turkey falls. By their sufferance alone that government now exists, and when they shall withdraw their support, and leave it to itself, as they will do under the sixth plague, that symbolic river will be wholly dried up; Turkey will be no more, and the way will be all open for the nations to make their last grand rally to the Holy Land. The kings of the East, the nationalities, powers, and kingdoms lying east of Palestine, will act a conspicuous part in the matter; for Joel says in reference to this scene, "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat." The millions of Mohammedans of Persia, Afghanistan, Toorkistan, and India will rush to the field of conquest in behalf of their religion. (See more about Turkey in Dan.11:4045.) {1912 UrS, DAR 692.6}

Those who place five of the plagues in the past, and contend that we are now living under the sixth, urge, as one of their strongest arguments, the fact that the Turkish empire is now wasting away, and this takes place under the sixth vial. It is hardly necessary to reply, The event that takes place under the sixth vial is the entire and utter consumption of that power, not its preliminary state of decay, which is all that now appears. It is necessary that the empire should for a time grow weak and powerless, in order to its utter

dissolution when the plague shall come. This preliminary condition is now seen, and the full end cannot be far in the future. {1912 UrS, DAR 693.1}

Another event to be noticed under this plague is the issuing forth of the three unclean spirits to gather the nations to the

great battle. The agency now already abroad in the world known as modern Spiritualism, is in every way a fitting means to be employed in this work. But it may be asked how a work which is already going on can be designated by that expression, when the spirits are not introduced into the prophecy until the pouring out of the sixth plague, which is still future. We answer that in this, as in many other movements, the agencies which Heaven designs to employ in the accomplishment of certain ends, go through a process of preliminary training for the part which they are to act. Thus, before the spirits can have such absolute authority over the race as to gather them to battle against the King of kings and Lord of lords, they must first win their way among the nations of the earth, and cause their teaching to be received as of divine authority and their word as law. This work they are now doing; and when they shall have once gained full influence over the nations in question, what fitter instrument could be employed to gather them to so rash and hopeless an enterprise? {1912 UrS, DAR 693.2}

To many it may seem incredible that the nations should be willing to engage in such an unequal warfare as to go up to battle against the Lord of hosts; but it is one province of these spirits of devils to deceive, for they go forth working miracles, and thereby deceive the kings of the earth, that they should believe a lie. {1912 UrS, DAR 694.1}

The sources from which these spirits issue, denote that they will work among three great religious divisions of mankind, represented by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, or Paganism, Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism. {1912 UrS, DAR 694.2}

But what is the force of the caution thrown out in verse 15? Probation must have closed, and Christ have left his mediatorial position, before the plagues begin to fall. And is there danger of falling after that? It will be noticed that this warning is spoken in connection with the working of the spirits. The inference therefore is, that it is retroactive, applying from the time these spirits begin to work to the close of probation; that by an interchange of tenses common to the Greek language, the present tense is put for the past; as if it had read, Blessed is he that hath watched and kept his garments, as the shame and nakedness of all who have not done this will at this time especially appear. {1912 UrS, DAR 694.3}

"And he gathered them." Who are the ones here spoken of as "gathered," and what agency is to be used in gathering them? If the word them refers to the kings of verse 14 it is certain that no good agency would be made use of to gather them; and if the spirits are referred to by the word he, why is it in the singular number? The peculiarity of this construction has led some to read the passage thus: "And he (Christ) gathered them (the saints) into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon (the illustrious city, or New Jerusalem)." But this position is untenable. The following criticism, which appeared not long since in a religious magazine, seems to shed the true light upon this passage. The

writer says: {1912 UrS, DAR 695.1}

"It seems to me that verse 16 is a continuation of verse 14, and that the antecedent of (them) is 'the kings' mentioned in verse 14. For this latter verse says, 'Which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them,' etc., and in verse 16 it says, 'And he gathered them.' Now in the Greek, 'a neuter plural regularly takes a verb in the singular.' (See Sophocles's Greek Grammar, sec. 151, 1.) Might not, therefore, the subject of the verb (gathered) (verse 16) be (the spirits) of verse 14, and thus the 'gathering' mentioned in the two verses be one and the same? {1912 UrS, DAR 695.2}

"And if this is to be a gathering of 'the kings of the earth and of the whole world.' will it not be for the purpose mentioned in the text; namely, 'to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty?'" {1912 UrS, DAR 695.3}

In accordance with this criticism, several translations use the plural instead of the singular pronoun. {1912 UrS, DAR

Mr. Wakefield, in his translation of the New Testament, renders this verse thus: "And the spirits gathered the kings together at a place called in Hebrew Armageddon." {1912 UrS, DAR 695.5}

The Syriac Testament reads: "And they collected them together in a place called in Hebrew Armageddon." {1912 UrS, DAR 695.6}

Sawyer's translation renders it: "And they assembled them in the place called in Hebrew Armageddon." {1912 UrS, DAR 695.7}

Mr. Wesley's version of the New Testament reads: "And they gathered them together to the place which is called in the Hebrew Armageddon." {1912 UrS, DAR 696.1}

Whiting's translation gives it: "And they gathered them into a place called in Hebrew Armageddon." {1912 UrS, DAR 696.2}

Professor Stuart, of Andover College, a distinguished critic, though not a translator of the Scriptures, renders it: "And THEY gathered them together," etc. De Wette, a German translator of the Bible, gives it the same turn as Stuart and the others. {1912 UrS, DAR 696.3}

Mr. Albert Barnes, whose notes on the New Testament have been so extensively used, refers to the same grammatical law as suggested by the criticism above quoted, and says, "The authority of De Wette and Professor Stuart is sufficient to show that the construction which they adopt is authorized by the Greek, as indeed no one can doubt, and perhaps this construction accords better with the context than any other construction proposed." {1912 UrS, DAR 696.4}

Thus it will be seen that there are weighty reasons for reading the text, "They gathered them together," etc., instead of "he gathered." And by these authorities it is shown that the persons gathered are the minions of Satan, not saints; that it is the work of the spirits, not of Christ; and that the place of assemblage is not in the New Jerusalem at the marriage supper of the Lamb, but at Armageddon (or Mount Megiddo), "at the battle of that great day of God Almighty." {1912 UrS, DAR 696.5}

The hills of Megiddo, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, was the place where Barak

and Deborah destroyed Sisera's army, and where Josiah was routed by the Egyptian king Pharaoh-Necho. {1912 UrS, DAR 696.6}