

A response to Ministry magazine's article entitled: *Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation (Jan 2012).*

In his article "Issues in the Interpretation of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation" (*Ministry*, January 2012), Angel M. Rodríguez gathered several interpretations that were introduced in the Seventh-day Adventist Church mostly toward the end of the 20th Century. In the article he essentially attempts to establish two main ideas: that the various interpretations gathered are all historicist, and that "at the present time... a final interpretation is not available" in our church.

While we may accept that every interpretation may be improved upon and expanded, this superficial way of dealing with the matter does not make justice to the prophetic faith of our church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has an official interpretation on the trumpets that was emphatically defended for more than a century and has never been officially rejected. On the contrary, it continues to be preached by many evangelists throughout the world. After defining a clear position in 1848, our church reiterated its view on the trumpets in several congresses of the General Conference (1883, 1901, 1903). During these sessions the original position was deemed "fundamental" and "foundational" for the faith of our people, and was declared a "landmark in Adventist history" (see more references in my book, *The Mystery of the Apocalyptic Trumpets Unraveled*). With this in mind, an adequate and valuable study of the trumpets today requires a thorough analysis of the various reasons why some modern interpreters are departing from the prophetic faith of our forefathers. Simply reporting the confusion and chaos created in modern times by new theories of interpretation is insufficient.

As I have demonstrated on more than one occasion in my books and lectures, the current confusion created by divergent views first began when modern Protestantism (and now some circles of Adventism) no longer saw Rome (the last empire foretold by Daniel) as being worthy of the judgments of God for the crimes it committed against His people. At the same time, several interpreters began to impose rules of interpretation to the text that the Bible does not require. Some of these entail classic skeptical principles of modern exegesis that are not compatible with the biblical and Protestant historicist legacy we as Adventists have inherited. This is repeatedly confirmed by many scholars' reluctance to search for the fulfillment of prophecy *in history*.

Finally, Rodríguez's attempt to show that those who spiritualize the fulfillment of the trumpets of Revelation are nonetheless historicists fails from the start. In reality, it is safe to assume that no one denies there are symbols in the book of Revelation. What we reject, however, is the vague and imprecise application of the apocalyptic prophecies that results when they are reduced to mere ideas or philosophies unrelated to the entity that introduced them in history. Babylon, for instance, is not just a symbol of the apostasy of the latter days. It is Rome, and more definitely, the Roman Catholic Church and her blasphemous prince. Her daughters are the apostate Protestant churches that follow her example. Also, Egypt is not merely atheism, but "the nation represented by Egypt" (GC 269), which in its specific historical moment was France, and whose influence reached the entire world. The Israel of God today is not Christianity in general, or faithful Muslims, but the last remnant that keeps the commandments of God and has the testimony of Jesus, or more precisely, the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Similarly, the trumpets of Revelation represent armies that God raised to punish the oppressive Roman kingdom along the centuries, and should not be reduced to mere philosophies. What every true historicist should reject is the current trend of avoiding the responsibility of concretely and specifically defining the churches or kingdoms that fulfill what has previously been announced for a specific moment in history.