

ANDREWS BIBLE COMMENTARY
Light. Depth. Truth
Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer
Critical Review on the Trumpets (March 2023)

A new Bible Commentary has just been published under the auspices of Andrews University. Lead editor Angel Manuel Rodriguez bills it as “an outstanding contribution that will bless the church for years to come.” Pastor Mark Finley also believes that it is a monumental work that will enrich his personal preaching, teaching, and writings. There is no doubt that a work of this nature that required so much effort from many Adventist theologians in the world will contain some very valuable things. Unfortunately, we also see a very significant departure from the prophetic inheritance that we received from our pioneers and that was confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy. I refer to the commentary on the book of Revelation. Is it too strong to say it contains seeds of apostasy that will confuse many and weaken our prophetic message? That is what I see, and I will be detailing, little by little, how this new biblical commentary departs from our prophetic legacy.

Let us start with the trumpets of Revelation. Our pioneers adopted the Protestant interpretation of the trumpets as punishments from God against the oppressive empire of Rome. Going back in history, they could see that the first divine judgments that fell against the pagan empire of the Caesars had to do with the barbarian-Germanic invasions that caused the fall of Western Rome in the fifth century. Then, from the seventh century there were the Muslim invasions that caused the fall of Eastern Rome in Constantinople in the fifteenth century, and terribly harassed the new Holy Roman Empire that rose in the West under a union of the emperor with the pope. This is what you will find in any reliable history book.

This historicist interpretation was confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy in a remarkable way. When a new interpretation was introduced toward the end of the nineteenth century, our church reacted through its world congresses, warning that such an interpretation “would unsettle some of the most important and fundamental points of our faith.” E. G. White also warned against that “new light” as an attempt by Satan to confuse the remnant and warned that there would be more attempts to bring new light that would destroy the prophetic truth entrusted to us. And in fulfillment of this warning, when E. G. White died, new voices were raised with different interpretations that discarded our prophetic heritage starting in 1914 and more definitely in 1919. Those new lights were never officially accepted in our church, but have now planted their banner in the new Andrews Bible Commentary as far as the book of Revelation is concerned. We find there a complete elimination of the first six trumpets from the perspective of our prophetic heritage. Such is “the new light” that they want to impose on us.

In essence, what we see in this new commentary is a downward march toward the spiritualization of the symbols of Revelation, a trend already seen in a commentary on the Sabbath School by the same senior editor. By spiritualization we mean the tendency so common in today’s theological world to make the historical prophetic fulfillment diffuse and vague, instead of clearly specifying its concrete fulfillment in history. In the context of the

Trumpets, instead of armies rising up against Rome, they propose fuzzy philosophies or general ideas, something that can also be perceived in other aspects of that commentary on the book of Revelation.

The trumpets

Let's begin with *the first trumpet*. Instead of seeing its fulfillment in the burning of much of the city of Rome with the invasion of Alaric—the first Visigoth general who was able to penetrate the capital of the empire—these new interpreters want to see the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Thus, the punishment is no longer against the empire that persecuted Christians. On the contrary, it has to do with the pagan Roman empire as the instrument of divine punishment against the Jews. But by the time John wrote the book of Revelation, Jerusalem had already been destroyed more than 20 years earlier, and he himself was suffering banishment to the Roman-held island of Patmos. The church's concern at that time was Roman persecution, and the apostle identifies himself as a "companion" with them in that tribulation (Rev 1:9).

Jesus no longer addresses the Jews in the book of Revelation, but the seven churches over which He was officiating as a High Priest in John's day, after the destruction of Jerusalem. In this context, the following statement of E. G. White is pertinent: ***"the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion"*** (GC 438). With Stephen's death, the divine revelation was no longer directed toward the Jewish nation, but toward the Gentiles.

Neither does the description of the first trumpet fit the destruction of Jerusalem. The text says that only a third would be destroyed in that first divine judgment against the empire, and Jerusalem was completely destroyed and abandoned, left without inhabitants. No Jews were left there. This is the reason why Jesus referred to the destruction of Jerusalem not as a symbol of a partial destruction at the end of the world, but of its total destruction (Matt 24).

"Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, because there remained none to be the objects of their fury (for they would not have spared any, had there remained any other work to be done), [Titus] Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple" (Flavius Josephus, VII, 1,1-4).
"Jerusalem was completely destroyed at the end of the siege" (*Wikipedia*, Siege of Jerusalem (70 CE)).

"After the destruction of the temple, the whole city soon fell into the hands of the Romans... Both the city and the temple were razed to their foundations, and the ground upon which the holy house had stood was 'plowed like a field.' Jeremiah 26:18. In the siege and the slaughter that followed, more than a million of the people perished; the survivors were carried away as captives, sold as slaves, dragged to Rome to grace the conqueror's triumph, thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheaters, or scattered as homeless wanderers throughout the earth!" (GC 35).

On the other hand, in the first barbarian invasion that penetrated the city of Rome, only a part was burned, as expressed by the first trumpet. Since Alaric did not persecute Christians, those who suffered the most were the pagans who sought protection in the Christian churches. And when the Romans tried to deter the Visigoth general from attacking the city, warning him of the impressive number of people who lived there, Alaric used words equivalent to those of John to depict the first trumpet: “the thicker the grass, the better it is mowed.”

Huge forests were within Rome, and one can only imagine how intensively must have burned much of the city with this first divine punishment. Even Christians understood that the partial destruction of Rome was a judgment of God, and there were those who identified this judgment of “the barbarians” as the first trumpet of the book of Revelation. Since I am developing a more comprehensive dialogue presentation with the aid of my two sons regarding the trumpets of Revelation, I submit here only the reaction of Andreas of Caesarea, a contemporary of the barbarian invasions, who rose up against the tendency to spiritualize the trumpets in his day. Here is just one paragraph from this Eastern author:

“Hail from heaven means those afflictions that will come according to the just judgment of God, the fire mingled with blood (indicating) the destruction by fire and the daily murders taking place at the hands of barbarians.”

By wrongly associating the first trumpet of Revelation with the destruction of Jerusalem, these new interpreters with “new light” are forced to spiritualize the fulfillment of the following trumpets, making their message and identification diffuse.

Consequences of misinterpreting the first trumpet

The second trumpet depicts naval wars and declining maritime trade, similar to descriptions of war that appear in the Old Testament as God’s punishments (Isa 2:16; 23:1,14; Hos 4:3; Zeph 1:3). And that’s exactly what happened. The second notable Barbarian general to invade Rome and penetrate within the city itself was Genseric, the great pirate of the sea who destroyed two huge Roman fleets that were formed to destroy him, leaving the empire at the mercy of this terror to Roman civilization. All major coastal cities were besieged, if not completely destroyed.

This series of events was also understood by many over the centuries, and again our pioneers took up the torch that those Protestant interpreters bequeathed to them. Throughout the history of our church this position was taught as well. But none of this is brought up in this new Andrews Bible Commentary. There is not even a mention of any of the generals who dealt the decisive blows to Rome which caused it at last to succumb. What an incredible omission of history!

Here we can clearly perceive the seeds of skepticism that these modern authors of our church sow without scruples in their interpretation of the book of Revelation. Because the *Biblical Research Institute* of the General Conference was founded to protect the church from the theological and prophetic deviations that come to us from time to time, one wonders how they could have strayed so far from our prophetic legacy. Indeed, these new

and improvising essayists no longer speak of Genseric or naval wars as associated with the second trumpet, but simply of the “fall of Rome” supposedly represented by “Babylon.”

It is obvious that for the committee charged with preparing the new Biblical Commentary sponsored by Andrews, it is too much to ask that God reveal in such accurate detail the dreadful work of a general who contributed so much to the fall of the Roman Empire! This is why they must speak simply of the “fall of Rome” in such a general way that it permits giving the second trumpet any number of applications. When you spiritualize the fulfillment of the prophecies, you don’t need to turn to history to find specific fulfillments. We find the same in Medieval Catholicism, where people didn’t resort to history, but to fantasies.

In this second trumpet, the new Bible Commentary backdrops the description of Babylon as a “destroying mountain” according to Jer 51:25. Since Babylon is destroyed, they want to advance the idea that the description of a burning mountain in the second trumpet is fulfilled in the overall fall of Rome, represented by Babylon. But in the second trumpet, the burning mountain falls into the sea not to be destroyed, but to destroy people by warships. This is also the meaning of the “destroying mountain” of Babylon. In fact, the text doesn’t say “destroyed mountain,” or “that it is destroyed,” but “destroying mountain.”

Why does this new Andrews Bible avoid mentioning Genseric in the second trumpet? Besides trying to avoid being so precise as to give names of generals, they know that they cannot mention Genseric without also considering Alaric and Attila in the other two trumpets. They have no choice but to generalize, to leave the Rome of the Caesars behind, before the arrival of the third trumpet. But let us agree with the secular historian Edward Gibbon backed by other historians, when speaking of the second general who penetrated the city of Rome with his army: “Genseric, a name which, in the destruction of the Roman Empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila” (Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, III, 370).

Should we wonder that the new *Andrews Bible Commentary* jumps to Medieval times for **the third trumpet**? Now, according to this “new light,” Christianity is punished by the *apostasy* and *obscurantism* resulting from the fall of Rome. It is now no longer the Roman Empire that is punished by God’s judgments, because that empire would have already been supposedly punished in the second trumpet. According to this new commentary, God punishes Christians with *apostasy* and *obscurantism*, which leads to “the man of sin,” “the illegal man” foretold by the apostle Paul.

What? Is the great apostasy of the Roman antichrist with its “scholastic traditions and teachings” the punishment of God against original Christianity? Are the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church the instruments of divine punishment upon true Christians who suffer from such apostate teachings? Did God go mad so that He no longer seems to know who to punish or why or how?

Where are the armies that punish old Rome according to the interpretation that was the standard in Protestantism and in our church? They have completely disappeared. Thus, these new interpreters spiritualize the fulfillment of the third trumpet, without bringing up any of the many existing texts which show that its symbols were applied in the past to literal

wars against the enemies who oppress God's people or, even to literal armies who came to punish God's apostate people (Judges 5:20-21; Lam 3:15,19; Isa 8:6-8; Jer 8:14; 9:15-16, etc).

No! A thousand times NO! If our pioneers and even E. G. White were to rise from their graves, they would look with horror at what these people are doing, how they are diverting the attention of God's people in another direction, throwing overboard the harmonious legacy they left us about the apocalyptic fulfillment of the trumpets! Moreover, the *Daniel and Revelation Committee* organized by the *Biblical Research Institute* of the General Conference in the 80s, rejected this spiritualization of the trumpets. But now, these supposedly "enlightened" people are accepting it without solid foundation, to override what we have been preaching for so long.

Since we have already considered in other books the fulfillment of the trumpets, we will not bring all the documentation that we offer there. Let us simply say here that our spiritual ancestors were right when they saw Attila in the star which fell from heaven. This general came with the Huns from the East like the stars do. Historians and maps that can be found on the Internet about Attila's advance on Rome report that he settled on the rivers he found in his path. No other general is referred to so much about rivers to mark the progression of their invasion, something understandable because even today there are populations that migrate from regions of rivers and seek to settle on the banks of the new rivers they encounter.

The Belgian historian Jacques Pirenne wrote literally of Attila that "in 453 his death freed the Empire from the greatest danger it had in history" (J. Pirenne, I, 419-420). The bitterness (as that of "wormwood") that this general of the Huns produced in the Roman Empire is notably described in the writings of historians.

The fourth trumpet depicts the decline of the emperors as darkening stars. The general who darkened the Roman imperial sun and the stars of the senate was Odoacer. It was he who made the last emperor of Rome abdicate in 476. From then on there will never again be emperors in the ancient capital of the empire. In a similar way the prophet Ezekiel projected the extinction of the Egyptian empire before the army of the king of Babylon. He represented the divine judgment against that ancient empire of the pharaohs (Eze 32:7-8,11).

However, the fourth divine judgment, the one that Odoacer executes, wounds the stars, obscuring but not altogether extinguishing their brightness. Yes! The ancient pagan Roman Empire disappeared in the West. But their laws and their pagan religion were perpetuated to a lesser degree in different forms in many ancient paganized Christian laws and cults. For example, the pagan idolatry of the stars was replaced by the figures of the saints who became venerated with the sun or moon drawn behind their heads, as well as in the tonsure of the priests. The result was a hybrid and apostate Christianity, and an imperial system that was unable to reach the splendor of the ancient Caesars.

In the Andrews' Bible, however, they go too far. They want us to believe that the fourth trumpet refers to the apostasy of Protestantism with the introduction of secularism toward

the end of the second Christian millennium. So, is God now punishing Protestants with secularism, so that they lose their spiritual life? Because for these clueless interpreters, the last empire described in the visions of the book of Daniel, the Roman one, is no longer the target of divine punishment, but Protestantism. The Lord, presumably, punishes Protestants with secularism (???)

These novice performers (because no one ever preceded them in their inventions and imaginations), do not take into account the literary structure of the trumpets that mark a remarkable separation between the first four trumpets that fall on ancient Rome, and the next three that are more severe and extensive because they produce misfortune (“woes”) to an apostate and persecuting Christianity.

Why is the new Andrews Bible Commentary changing the prophetic Adventist interpretation?

Because they are more concerned with fixing the literary structure of the book of Revelation to fit their particular views rather than with the historical fulfillment of its prophetic projections. It seems to them that they can fix the apocalyptic package better than God did through his apostle John, and they forget its real content and purpose. In other words, they are more concerned with embellishing the envelope of the book of Revelation in their own way than with understanding its content. This is the reason why they resort to the spiritualization of their content, and therefore avoid more easily going to history to find its specific fulfillment. The outcome is that the apocalyptic divine admonitions and punishments cannot be clearly seen in their interpretations.

In a separate chart the new Andrews Bible Commentary offers what they believe to be “different historicist views of the seven trumpets.” There they summarize their new interpretation of the fourth trumpet as “Truth compromised” and of the fifth as “Sources restricted.” In the sixth trumpet they speak of “Secularist movement.” If they would spend time to study the history of the interpretation, they could have seen how Christians in the Middle Ages spiritualized the fulfillment of the trumpets in a similar way, to prevent the people from seeing the judgments of God upon the Roman papacy. There is a tendency in this new approach to return more or less to the Middle Ages. I will highlight this aspect in detail in the dialogues I am preparing on the trumpets of the book of Revelation.

Why do they want to fit each church, each seal, and each trumpet with its respective number? Because they see that in the book of Daniel the empires follow each other in the same order. But in the book of Revelation Christians do not live under the old empires. They live under the last empire that Daniel saw in his dreams, in its different phases. Moreover, the sevenfold prophetic series of the book of Revelation do not project empires, but different phases of the development of Christian history, and with different purposes.

Should we put the seven thunders under the same historical order as well? (Rev 10:3-4). And what about the seven plagues? (Rev 16). Should we put the first plague in the first century and so on until we reach the end of the world with the last? No. Because these are the final plagues (Rev 15:1). Where do we locate the seven mountains and the seven kings of Rev 17:9-10? The *Andrews Bible Commentary* dates the first mountain back to the

beginning of history with the Egyptian empire. Why? If the greatest concern is literary-structural, should they not start the first mountain in the Christian era? This, if you want to fit each mountain within each prophetic sevenfold series.

In the following trumpets of the book of Revelation we will see how these modern apostates of historicism believe themselves to be more intelligent than Jesus Himself who confirmed the historicist interpretation of our pioneers through the Spirit of Prophecy.

The presumption of being historicists

There are four methods that have been used to interpret the prophecies of the Bible. That does not mean they're all valid from a biblical perspective. Only one of them has all the biblical support, namely *historicism*. Historicism is understood as the fulfillment of prophecies throughout history. Since this way of understanding biblical prophecies was lost during medieval apostasy, the Protestants of the sixteenth century recovered it when trying to return to the Bible. And the Nineteenth Century Adventist Church received that historicist Protestant legacy as the foundation of its prophetic faith.

Of the four methods still active today, *preterism* and *historicism* have in common an interest in history. While preterism wants to circumscribe the entire content of the prophecies to the historical moment in which the prophet lived, historicism follows the prophetic imprint projected by the prophet throughout history. Simply put, historicists believe Jesus' words when He took leave of His disciples: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20). We seek to see how Jesus, as anticipated in the prophecies, was, is, and will be with His people until His return.

Idealism and *Futurism* have in common a contempt for Christian history. Instead, they prefer to give free rein to the imagination. That's another veiled form of skepticism, because it pretends to believe prophecies simply because they are not preterist. While *Futurist* fantasies consist of projecting all prophecies into the future without a backbone linking the past to the end of the world, *Idealism* does not necessarily project everything into the future. It is interested only in *ideologies*, in general lessons that can be drawn from apocalyptic symbols. The latter is what we see in the *Andrews Bible Commentary*.

Those who currently promote the idealistic principles that are expressed in this new commentary that we are analyzing, affirm that they are 100% historicist. It is obvious that they cannot completely detach themselves from historicism because they would be rejected outright in the Adventist Church. But their idealistic tendency is seen in the disbelief they manifest when considering the details given by the prophecies. While sometimes they try to maintain some historicist format, they try to avoid as much as possible giving names and dates to the announced events. They don't want confrontations with the outside world, and so they feel more comfortable in presuming that the trumpets of Revelation represent philosophies.

For example, the editors of the *Andrews Bible Commentary* say regarding the fifth trumpet that the indicated five-month date has been debated and, therefore, they completely ignore it. Does it mean, then, that because there are those who discuss the Trinity today, we must

set aside that doctrine? And what about all the other doctrines about which the devil tries to sow doubts? Because there are those who keep Sunday, do we have to ignore the Seventh-day Sabbath as the only day of the Lord?

Who is “the star that fell from heaven,” and “the Angel of the Abyss” in the fifth trumpet? For these *infiltrated idealists* he is nothing but the devil as leader of the spiritual armies of demons. But the devil and the demons act through human agents, and these interpreters are not even motivated to discover who such agents are. They prefer to stick with the description of a purely spiritual and philosophical war. They simply talk about the devil and demons that confuse people after the “Age of Enlightenment” with “rationalism, skepticism, humanism, relativism, and liberalism.”

Let us see how this Bible Commentary of Andrews expresses this issue.

“The locusts [of Joel 2:2-11] which would illustrate, according to them, the fifth trumpet] resemble an army. However, they were not a real army, for their activity was not military but spiritual.” “The torment of the demonic locusts was both spiritual and mental.” “The demonic forces that were shown afflicting humans in the fifth trumpet had grown [in the sixth trumpet] into a huge army that was spiritually killing humanity.” “Spiritual weaponry...” “The nature of this final crisis [supposedly revealed in the sixth trumpet] as not physical or military but spiritual: a battle for the minds and hearts of all people.”

But what is the purpose of the book of Revelation? Is it to foretell only spiritual wars? Isa 14 portrays the work of the devil in the king of Babylon, not purely and simply in a philosophy. Therefore, what should interest us as historicists is to discover in Revelation 9, the human and earthly instrument that the devil uses to distress and destroy, not to ramble purely and simply with ideologies and philosophies. Or do we find it hard to say, like Daniel to the king of Babylon, “you are that head of gold”?

The locusts in the Bible reveal earthly armies, not demonic philosophies. This is clearly seen in Judges 6:5 and 7:12, in reference to the armies of the Eastern descendants of Ishmael. Those two passages are not going to be quoted, of course, in the *Andrews Bible Commentary*. The fact that the locusts or “armies” of the fifth trumpet torment and produce anguish does not mean that we should consider them solely in the context of a spiritual battle. Did not the eastern armies of the book of Judges cause anguish in the people? Were they no longer real armies because of that?

The fifth trumpet begins by describing a star as having fallen from heaven. In this way it is shown, as in the third trumpet, its oriental origin, since the stars come from the east. From there came both Attila, king of the Huns according to the third trumpet, and the Muslim armies that fell on apostate Christendom following the star that had fallen from heaven in the fifth trumpet: Muhammad.

The fifth and sixth trumpets contain typical desert terminology. This is the reason why it was so easy for many Protestants and then for Adventists who took up their prophetic torch, to see in the Islamic invasions which arose from the desert, that divine punishment on

medieval apostate Christianity of the Eastern Roman Empire in Constantinople, and of the Holy Roman Empire in the West. That happened throughout the Middle Ages, from the seventh century to the nineteenth century. There, too, the new *Andrews Bible Commentary* avoids referring to the prophetic time indicated in prophecy, and completely dismisses the specific statements of the Spirit of Prophecy in that interpretation.

The prophetic dates of the fifth and sixth trumpets

One major difference between historicism and idealism is the acceptance or rejection of the apocalyptic dates. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always defended the value of such dates and confirmed them at various General Conference meetings. With regard to the playing of trumpets, including their dates, the GC confirmed it in 1883 and 1884. E. G. White also confirmed what was voted in 1883, and warned that the attempt to introduce modifications in the interpretation of the trumpets came from Satan to confuse the people of God. She also warned that other “new lights” would appear in the future with the same purpose of altering and destroying the Adventist prophetic message.

Well, in Andrews’ new Bible commentary, the dates of the fifth and sixth trumpets have been completely erased. Why? Because dates cannot be set for the philosophies which, they claim, fulfill what is described in those two trumpets or divine judgments. There is a tendency, typical of modern theological schooling, to strip the Bible of its transcendent role. Doing this with the prophetic dates of the trumpets leads to undermining the Protestant and Adventist historicist foundation of the other prophetic dates of Daniel and Revelation.

There were two well-defined Muslim invasions in history, that of the Saracen Arabs which began in the Seventh Century, and that of the Ottoman Turks which began at the end of the Thirteenth Century. This is clearly seen in the fifth and sixth trumpets. Even the language of both trumpets is similar, because it has to do with the same theology which drove them. That very fact suggests that the dates of both trumpets be assembled.

In the fifth trumpet, the specification of five prophetic months or 150 days/years of torment appears twice, once at the beginning and once at the end. Protestants saw its initial fulfillment in Muhammad’s first inflammatory preaching against Christians in 612, and its culmination in the founding of Baghdad as *Dar es Salaam*, “House of Peace,” which took place in 762. Its fulfillment from a military perspective has also been seen in what William Shea called “sliding scale,” between the “first expansion of Islam” under Abu Bekr in 632, and the peace treaty made by Harun-ar-Rashid at the gates of Constantinople in 782. I document the historical facts in my book *The Seals and the Trumpets*.

In the second appearance of the five months, the *destroyer* character of the fifth trumpet is more prominent. This led to its fulfillment in the second Islamic expansion, now under the Ottoman Turks. This expansion began with the Battle of Bapheus that the contemporary historian Pachimeres places on July 27, 1299. Although that historian mentioned the day and the month, but not the year, a careful study of contemporary sources allows us to pinpoint the year in 1299, not the later date that some modern historians have presumed. See A. R. Treiyer, “The Chronology of Events in the History of Pachimeres related to the battle of Bapheus and the beginning of the Ottoman Empire,” in *International Journal of*

Humanities and Social Science, V. 7, Number 8, August 2017), 23-48. You can also read this study in full in both English and Spanish on my website:

In English: <http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Chronologypachymeres.pdf>

In Spanish: <http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Cronologiapachimeres.pdf>

The text of both trumpets seems to require that the two prophetic dates be united, just as in Dan 8 and 9 the text requires that the prophecy of the 2300 days/years be linked with that of the 70 weeks of years or 490 days/years. While the fifth trumpet points to the first invasion that was characterized by torture but not killing, the sixth trumpet would begin releasing the Ottoman Turks, this time to kill.

150 years after 1299 takes us to 1449, when the last emperor of Constantinople submitted to the Turkish sultan by asking for authorization to be named emperor. And this opens the doors to release the Ottoman Turks who are now preparing to “kill” according to the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:13-15). The time period indicated in that sixth trumpet is one hour, one day, one month, and one year, which gives 391 prophetic days or literal years and one prophetic hour or 15 literal days. Adding to the 150 years the 391 years and fifteen days, gives us 591 years and 15 days. Starting on July 27, 1299, that combined period of time brings us to August 11, 1840. On that exact day the Turkish sultan submitted to the high powers of Europe, and the harassment toward the West ceased.

The Protestants who assumed the “hour” as implying the total time of judgment, did so from the year 1453 when Constantinople fell, to reach 1844. In that year the Turkish sultan decreed that Christians converted from Islam would no longer be killed, thereby ceasing the time of freedom “to kill” under the sixth trumpet. The door to the Most Holy Place is also opened in that year at the beginning of the seventh trumpet (Rev 11:15,19; cf. Dan 8:14). Accepting the prophetic dates of the sixth trumpet requires accepting the experience of 1844 and the faith of the Adventist movement. In the same way, rejecting those prophetic dates implies a denial of the prophetic foundation of our faith.

In my book *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary* I deal carefully with both the exegetical and theological issues, as well as with the corresponding historical fulfillment. There I provide extensive documentation from historians which confirm the importance of those dates. There I likewise respond to all the basic objections that have been made to those dates in recent years. You can also see those answers on my website:

In English: The Prophetic Dates of the Trumpets of Revelation. A history of interpretation and the confirmatory role of E. G. White: <http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Trumpetsdates.pdf>

In Spanish: Las Fechas Proféticas de las Trompetas del Apocalipsis. Historia de la Interpretación y Papel Confirmativo de E. de White:

<http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fechastrompetas.pdf>

Denial of Trumpet Prophetic Dates Weakens Adventist Prophetic Message

Most historicist reformers from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century understood the temporal reference of Revelation 9:15 to apply to the prophetic principle of a day for a year. But under the influence of the Enlightenment and the subsequent appearance of “historical criticism” of the Bible, that approach has been dismissed by most current interpreters of Revelation, including now, openly, by the editors of Andrews’ new Bible commentary. On what grounds do they reject a prophetic dimension of time in Rev 9:15? On no grounds. The exegetical criticism used by such interpreters to deny a duration in time in Rev 9:15 is baseless. Several modern versions still maintain the meaning of duration in time.

“The four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of men” (NKJV, YLT, RV, ASB, NASB)

How then, according to this new interpretation, is the sixth trumpet fulfilled? The *Andrews Bible Commentary* says, literally: “The sixth trumpet brings us to the very time of the end...” (Rev 16:12-16). “The scene of the sixth trumpet describes the great gathering of Satan's army for the end time battle of Armageddon.”

How can they not realize that this new interpretation destroys the prophetic foundation of the Adventist Church that they pretend to represent, which also relates to the doctrine of the sanctuary? Just as E. G. White claimed that the fulfillment of the prophecy of the fifth and sixth trumpets on August 11, 1840, strengthened the faith of the Millerites who expected the fulfillment of the prophecy of the 2300 days/years shortly thereafter, so the denial of that date today weakens if not destroys our historicist understanding of the prophecy of Dan 8:14. And in locating the fulfillment of the sixth trumpet after 1844, they disregard the fact that the sixth trumpet is given in the context of Jesus’ ministry in the Holy Place (Rev 9:13).

E. G. White is clear in saying that in 1844 Jesus ceased His ministry in the Holy Place, and went on to officiate in the Most Holy Place. “When Christ entered the holy of holies to perform the closing work of the atonement, He ceased His ministration in the first apartment...” (GC 428). That is in keeping with the seventh trumpet that is fulfilled in the Holy of Holies, no longer in the Holy Place (Rev 11:19). But this very clear truth of the passage from the Holy Place to the Most Holy between the sixth and seventh trumpets, is completely nullified in this new commentary, because they place the sixth trumpet after the fulfillment of the 2300 days/years, that is, after 1844.

The most surprising thing is how they try to fix the literary structure of the book of Revelation so they can get away with it. In that structure, that follows not only Ranko Stefanovic, but also Ekkehard Mueller, as well as this new commentary of Andrews, they try to forcibly separate the opening to the Most Holy Place of Rev 11:19, from the seventh trumpet. They move that verse to chapter 12. Why? Because they want to link the seventh

trumpet solely to the very end itself at Armageddon, and the former sixth trumpet to the time of preparation for Armageddon. But if the seventh trumpet marks the opening to the Most Holy Place in Rev 11:19, then it is impossible for them to place the preceding sixth trumpet after 1844, because the sixth trumpet cannot be located within the period of the seventh. Anyway, as already seen, the sixth trumpet is framed in Jesus' ministry in the Holy Place (Rev 9:13), so it has to be placed before 1844.

Arguments Used to Reject the Fulfillment of the Dates in the Trumpets

The following arguments form the background to the propositions of Andrews University's new Bible commentary.

Argument 1. It has been argued that there is insufficient evidence for the historical fulfillment of the prophetic dates of the trumpets.

Answer: Today we can say more than ever that yes, we have enough historical evidence, that these people are not aware of because they don't want to be (see references above). Anyway, that objection is not an excuse. We have enough evidence in the Spirit of Prophecy not to dismiss what momentarily we cannot fully understand from currently available historical research.

In fact, evidences were likewise scarce to prove the accuracy of the fulfillment of October 22, 1844. But that didn't stop our church from believing in E. G. White's confirmatory testimony. How long did it take to be able to confirm more reliably that date as being the true one? Until the mid-twentieth century when the Elephantine papyri were discovered, and a few decades later with the data provided by astronomy. The same can be said of the other prophetic dates that were questioned in 1919 such as those of 1260 days/years and 1290 years. And the same thing is true with the dates of the trumpets. Instead of rejecting this testimony, our church grasped that it needed to do more comprehensive historical studies, and today we have definite evidence that confirms the historical analyses of other historians whom our pioneers read in their day.

Argument 2. They claim that the Spirit of Prophecy would not have confirmed the fulfillment of the prophetic dates which reach to 1840. She would simply have referred to what the Millerites then believed about them.

Answer: But in the same chapter 18 of the book *The Great Controversy*, she refers to the fall of the stars (meteors) on November 13, 1833, and the purification of the heavenly sanctuary on October 22, 1844. By what authority, then, could we affirm that on those other two founding dates for the Adventist prophetic faith, she referred not only to what the Millerites believed, but also to the fulfillment of Bible prophecy? Were those other dates also no more than a reference to what the Millerites believed?

What did E. G. White write? "In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest... The event exactly fulfilled the prediction" (GC 334-335).

Notice that she does not say that this was what the Millerites believed, but that “another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy” took place. By “another”, she is referring to the other two dates, 1833 and 1844. It puts its fulfillment on an equal footing.

Argument 3. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, former director of the General Conference *Biblical Research Institute*, and chief editor of the new *Andrews Bible Commentary* we are reviewing, wrote in the *Ministry* magazine in January 2012, that the fact that E. G. White mentions this prophecy only once should make us cautious about referring to the time of its fulfillment.

Answer: What? Does it mean then that because the 2300 days/years of Dan 8:14 are not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, we should be more cautious in interpreting that prophecy? That’s the same argument that we receive from some critics of our faith. How these new improvised ones get entangled in the hermeneutical rules they invent!

But that was not the only time E. G. White referred to the date of August 11, 1840. She confirmed in the book *The Great Controversy* published in 1888, what the Congress of the General Conference had affirmed in 1883 and 1884. She warned in two letters written to Uriah Smith in June 1884, that Satan was trying to change the interpretation of the trumpets with a presumable “new light,” something that the devil would try to do again in the future.

“When my brethren, as did Bro. Owen [on the trumpets] came up with new light, he almost made me have an ague chill, for I knew it was a device of Satan. It is a sure case that Satan throws a bewitching power into their new views they take with minds, although the arguments are as clear as mud, disjointed [and] out of harmony with the message.”

“From that which the Lord has been pleased to show me, there will arise just such ones all along and many more of them claiming to have new light which is a side issue, an entering wedge. The widening will increase until there is a breach made between those who accept these views and those who believe the third’s angel’s message.”

When E. G. White requested in the early twentieth century a review of the 1888 version of her book *The Great Controversy* for a new edition, there were some who wanted to eliminate several, if not all, the prophetic dates, among them W.W. Prescott. But she refused, and warned Prescott that Satan was trying to confuse him by undertaking a work for which God did not call him. She then reaffirmed in the 1911 version, more emphatically, the date of August 11, 1840, which Prescott required to be removed.

Argument 4. Gerhard Pfandl, former associate director of the *Biblical Research Institute*, has been invoking the 1919 biblical council where Prescott insisted on eliminating the prophetic dates, and sowed doubt about the inspiration of E. G. White, who had died a few years earlier. That’s what Prescott did for the rest of his life, and a few others followed him. But officially, the church never accepted his proposals. The church remained faithful to the testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy regarding the historical fulfillment of the trumpets and the other Bible prophecies.

The vindication now of that 1919 council by someone who was part of the *Biblical Research Institute*, and his effort to put that council at the same level of what our church believed and still officially believes, is a lack of responsibility that will not be without negative consequences for the Adventist faith. See the article of G. Pfandl, "The Seven Trumpets in Adventism," in *Perspective Digest*, V. 24, July 1, 2019. The new propositions now strengthen futurism and the multiplication of dissident movements which try to take advantage of the ravings of church leaders.

Argument 5. It is often argued that E. G. White admitted to not being an authority on history, as specified by her son.

Answer: But those who argue so, take that statement out of its true context. God revealed to E. G. White many historical issues which she wrote in her book *The Great Controversy*, but she was instructed to go to the history books in order to place them in time. She explains this in the introduction to the book *The Great Controversy*. That is why she wanted not to appear to be acting as an authority on history, but to confirm what God revealed to her by quoting historians, something she tried to do by herself. And today, thanks to subsequent studies, all the prophetic dates defended by our pioneers can still be confirmed, even astronomically.

This is what William White, the son of E. G. White, wrote in 1915, in response to W.W. Prescott's objections.

"I am hoping and expecting that a further study of history will develop confidence in the work which God has done through revelations given to Mother [and] in correcting those extravagant and fanatical views regarding her work which are injurious to Christian experience and to the advancement of the truth" (May 7, 1915)

Today we can affirm that this hope of William White has been fulfilled, even in relation to the prophetic dates of the trumpets. Too bad that we cannot see this hope in any way fulfilled in the interpretation of the trumpets of Revelation in the *Andrews Bible Commentary*!