

# SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT PROPHECY

by Heidi Heiks

Reviewed by Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer

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**WARNING:** This document requires a work of edition that I did not have time to do. Anyway, I tried to do my best to simplify it so the main issues could be easily understood.

The book of Heidi Heiks, *Satan's Counterfeit Prophecy*, came just yesterday from the press, and it is distributed by *Teach Services*. Since I master the subject, I could read it in few hours and I may begin to bring out its problems. Why do I do it? Because differing from other books that Heiks wrote, this is principally and specifically destructive. It required therefore, a clear and definite answer to save many believers from losing their faith in the historicist interpretation that our church always defended, inherited of Protestantism and the Millerite movement.

In the back cover Heiks states this: "This study is more about what the fifth and sixth trumpets of Revelation are not, rather than what they are. After all, it is premature to speak of what they are, when the generally-accepted view is built upon a platform of error. It is this fog of error that must first be lifted before we, as a church, can move forward..." The author believes then, that in order to offer an acceptable interpretation, it is necessary to destroy first what we have. However, after reading his book I ask myself: Is he sure that he will find such an acceptable approach apart from the legacy that we received from Protestant Reformation? In addition, did he prove really—as he presumes constantly to have it done—that the historicist interpretation of the trumpets on the fifth and sixth trumpets, is built upon a platform of error? My answer is not, he proved absolutely nothing!

Despite admitting that he does not intend to speak about what the trumpets are, but of what they are not, Heiks includes in his book a chapter of Pr. Stephen P. Bohr on the sixth trumpet, and affirms, textually, that "Pastor Bohr is the first to identify the symbols from the Scriptures, letting the Bible interpret itself." This shows that Heidi Heiks did not read anything on the matter, because several Seventh-day Adventist interpreters, including myself, dealt with the trumpets under the principle of letting the Bible interpret itself. (I have in my book a whole chapter dealing with the methodology of the trumpets...) In addition, after reading the chapter of Pr. Bohr, I cannot agree with Heiks that Bohr there lets the Bible to be its own interpreter. He assumes things that are out of context not only from a biblical viewpoint, but also from the Spirit of Prophecy. As a matter of fact, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy openly denies several assumptions of Pr. Bohr in this chapter, as we will see in our review of Heiks book.

Even worse, Heidi Heiks obtained the Imprimatur of the Biblical Research Institute in the version of Dr. Gerhard Pfandl, who in spite of being retired, continues signing as Associate Director of that institution. Probably, for having being several years in that center of research of the General Conference, Pfandl thinks he may speak ex-cathedra. And what is still worse is that this Imprimatur (excuse my irony!), is given on a destructive book which at the same time lacks serious foundation in the key areas under discussion, both biblically and historically.

I participated in the discussions of the Daniel and Revelation Committee 20 years ago, organized by the BRI at that time. Jon Paulien introduced a paper where he spiritualized the trumpets, which led to its rejection by the Committee. I remember when Dr. Gerhard Hasel told me in a recess, concerning the paper of Paulien: "The trumpets are not philosophies, but armies." Now, Gerhard Pfandl, representing the same institution (BRI), dares to revert the consensus found at that time, at least, on this principle. He supports the position of Paulien that was rejected at that time which, in turn, was adopted also by Ranko Stefanovic. He also commends the work of Heiks now, in his new attempt to destroy the foundation of historicism not only on the trumpets, but also on the rest of Revelation (as we will see later by the fact that no matter what position they may assume in other sections of Revelation, in essence they are destroying the historicism of the Apocalyptic books of the Bible).

Pfandl says, literally: "The traditional interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets in Revelation 9 is exegetically and historically not defensible... Litch himself abandoned his interpretation [on the dates]... It

is hoped that it will contribute to a better understanding as to why the traditional interpretation can no longer be defended and why a more spiritual interpretation of the trumpets in the book of Revelation is preferable."

Did you notice? The BRI rejected about 20 years ago a spiritualization of the trumpets. Now Pfandl, already retired, dares to promote such a spiritualization about which he did not dare to speak before. Litch abandoned not only the interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets, but also the date 1844. Why does Pfandl not do the same? In the book *Great Controversy*, in the same chapter 18, E. G. White showed how three dates helped the millerites to believe in the soon return of the Lord: 1833 (star falls), 1840 (Ottoman submission), and 1844 (cleansing of the sanctuary). Hanz LaRondelle, from Holland, once retired, rejected the interpretation of the date of 1833 as being valid; now Pfandl is rejecting the date of 1840 as being valid, and affirming that E. G. White did not intend to interpret the trumpets there, but just to tell what the Millerites believed. Go, go Gerhard! One more step! Repeat the same concerning the next date, 1844. Others have done it before! You are retired now, so you may say whatever you want!

It would have been preferable than before writing such a polemic book, these authors would have read at least two thesis that were defended this year on the trumpets. One of them is a doctoral dissertation by Gluder Quispe, and the other one few later is a Master thesis by Jón Fjörleifur Stefánsson. This would have helped them to be more humble at the time of criticizing the historicist interpretation of the trumpets, because they could have avoid to repeat many criticism which these authors answered, especially the last one.

In the following messages we will start to show the problems that Pfandl, Heiks, and at the end Bohr, reveal in what they wrote on the matter.

### **1. Purpose of the book under consideration**

We have already seen that Heiks intends to destroy what we have believed until today so that our church may move forward. Forward? Where? But if Heiks do not know yet where to go, does he know really what he is boastfully presuming to destroy?

Another clear purpose in the book that we are considering is to deny that the Muslims have some important role in the prophecy for these latter days. Good point, Heidi! We are, at least, in agreement on one point! How I would like to agree in everything!

Pfandl was requested to face an interpretation that put the Muslims in the forefront of the final crisis of the world, related to a particular interpretation of Dan 11 taken out of context, and without respecting the basic principles of prophetic interpretation that our church developed along the years. I also agree with Pfandl on this matter. But it is a very different think to look backward and try to wipe out the Muslims from the prophetic map. This fact conceals a greater problem that we will bring out in another message.

### **2. Papers that should have been read before writing such a polemic book**

I mentioned in the former message two theses on the trumpets that were defended this year 2013 at Andrews University, one for a doctoral degree, the other one for a master degree. After giving a general idea about the content of those two works of research, I will mention other papers that are lacking in the book of Heiks. If he had read all this before writing his book, it would have spared him, even Pfandl, of saying several things without a foundation.

The doctoral dissertation of Gluder Quispe, *The Apocalypse in Seventh-day Adventist Interpretation: Three Emphases*, is a historical study that compares three trends in the Apocalyptic interpretation of our church, (1) historical of C. M. Maxwell, (2) theological of H. K. LaRondelle, and (3) exegetical of J. Paulien. The Adventist University Press of Peru (UPeU) have just published this thesis in English. Gluder summarized his dissertation in the *X Simposio Bíblico-Teológico Sudamericano* that took place in Chile, from August 14 to 18 of this year 2013, which this time dealt with the book of Revelation.

Gluder shows how our church was born as a historicist movement. However, since the middle of the former century, some spiritualizing and *apotelesmatic* interpretations began to appear, timidly at the

beginning, but becoming stronger as the time went by. Then, Hanz LaRondelle broke the ice in 1997 (after retirement), with a theological approach that reveals few interest in history. He neglected the prophetic dates of the trumpets, and the remnant of Rev 12:17 is in his view, no more only the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The third approach is exegetical and started probably with Kenneth Strand and his structuralist method which, at that time, was appearing in the Christian theological world. Then, more definitely with Jon Paulien and Ranko Stefanovic, the exegetical approaches became prominent. All of them say that they are historicists, but history is mostly if not absolutely forgotten. We don't see anymore dates in those exegetical approaches. It seems that the authors do not dare to fix dates. Jon Paulien never put dates, and on the remnant he openly believes that it has to do not only with Adventism, but also with Muslims, Baptists..., etc. Neither Ranko Stefanovic put dates in his commentary on Revelation, though in his second edition he did it with the 1260 years (I don't know if Gluder knows that Ranko did it under the pressure of the BRI). But on the dates of the trumpets, "good by, my people!"

According to Gluder Quispe, that lost of interest in the prophetic and apocalyptic history which began in the second half of the 20th century, is accountable for the interpretative chaos that exists today in many theological centers of our church on the apocalyptic prophecies, especially on the first half of Revelation. Besides agreeing with Gluder in his historical analysis, I want to emphasize here something more. In order to offer to the world a clear and definite approach of our prophetic message, we are required to implement these three trends, (1) historical, (2) theological, and (3) exegetical. I will write more on this in another message about the trend to separate these different approaches, and how every one presumes to have the last word.

The Master thesis of Jón Fjörleifur Stefánsson defended also this year, just after Gluder, is entitled *From Clear Fulfillment to Complex Prophecy. The History of the Adventist Interpretation of Revelation 9, From 1833 to 1957*. The approach of Jón is conservative. He believes in the fulfillment of the prophetic dates of the fifth and sixth trumpets, including the date August 11, 1840. Differing from what Pfandl and Heiks pretend right now, this new Master thesis proves that the exegesis of the prophetic dates in both trumpets requires a temporal prophetic projection like the other prophetic dates of Daniel and Revelation.

Jón offers many definite answers both biblical and historical to the criticism raised to the Adventist historicist interpretation, some of them, in my view, by the first time. What does he believe on the current crisis of our church in connection with the interpretative chaos on the trumpets? He believes that our church kept the historicist interpretation of the trumpets during most of our denominational history, but without giving a definite answer to some of the criticism raised in the way.

### **3. The presumption of the "exegetes"**

No one throws oneself from a ship if he is not sure that another ship will come to pick him up. So the decision to throw the interpretative foundation of our church in prophetic matters under pretention to move afterward "forward," without knowing yet where to go, is not a wise decision! If we do not have anything else at hand, it would be preferable not to write on the matter. But to throw at once the house through the window is crazy, still more crazy when there is no exegetical, theological or historical reason to do that.

Heiks and Pfandl presume that there is no exegetical foundation to project prophetic dates in the trumpets that would be fulfilled in history. They believe that Uriah Smith took from Barnes, a protestant interpreter of Revelation, the idea of prophetic time in the formula "the hour, day, month, and year" in Rev 9:15. They believe, however, that modern exegesis has discarded that possibility. However, before Barnes, the majority of the Reformers of the last part of the Middle Ages and during the first part of the 18th century, understood that text in a prophetic dimension of day per year (see my book, *The Seals and the Trumpets. Biblical and Historical Studies* [2005]). But under the influence of French enlightenment and the succeeding Bible criticism, that approach ended by being eliminated by most of the interpreters of Revelation. On what basis? On no basis, because the exegetical criticism employed by those interpreters to deny a temporal projection in Rev 9:15 lacks foundation.

How much better would have been for Pfandl and Heiks to have read first not only the Master thesis of Stefánsson, but also two exegetical studies on Rev 9:15 written by Dr. Tarsee Lee, who at present teaches theology at Oawkood University! Stefánsson shows that if the apostle would have intended to refer to a point in time and not to a period of time, he would have written simply that the powers were prepared "for the hour," and period. Because it makes no sense to add "day, month, and year," enlarging the precise time intended to refer by the hour, if only a punctual time is involved. Something similar argues Lee, but with an impressive syntactic documentation, and with a wider scope.

Tarsee Lee wrote an article of five pages entitled "Revelation 9:15 and the Limits of Greek Syntax," in *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* (1997), 100-105. He proves there that there is no exegetical foundation to deny a prophetic period of time indicated by this quadruple expression "hour, day, month, and year." In a most recent study prepared this very year, 2013, he increased to 19 pages his manuscript. He shared with me his document not yet published, entitled, *The Hour, Day, Month, and Year in Revelation 9:15*.

What is the grammatical rule invoked by modern interpreters who do not believe that the book of Revelation predicts future in definite periods of time? It is called Granville Sharp, an auto self-educated layman who at the end of the 18th century wanted to strengthen the deity of Christ. He thought to find in the Greek of the NT a syntactic rule. When in a phrase, the first word has a definite article, the following word or words without definite articles that are linked by the conjunction *kai* ("and"), are related to the first word. That rule, applied to Rev 9:15 by skeptic interpreters, led several modern versions to translate the text in different ways, but with the idea of punctual time, as for instance, "the hour of the day of the month of the year." Other versions, however, understand this passage with the idea of preparation "for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year," giving place to extension in time.

Today that rule of Granville Sharp has been rejected in several Grammars of the New Testament. Those who try to keep it or resurrect it have to put many restrictions because it cannot be corroborated by many other passages of the New Testament (in Acts 23:7, for instance, Pharisees and Sadducees are connected but without referring to the same thing, because they had some dissension). The most complete study up to this day on the rule Granville Sharp is that of Wallace, *Granville Sharp's Canon*. This author reached the conclusion that the rule may be kept but with definite restrictions. In reference to Rev 9:15, Wallace affirmed that the Sharp rule does not apply because it doesn't deal with personal names.

I greatly regret to have to restrict myself as a theologian, in my desire of analyzing with more details all the biblical testimonies gathered by Dr. Tarsee Lee in his exegetical study of Rev 9:15. But let me share two or three of his conclusions. Even keeping the Sharp rule, we cannot deny in Rev 9:15 the idea of period of time. If John wanted to deny such a projection in time, he would have connected the words in Genitive, not in Accusative as they are. Neither the discussion has to do with a point in time (when) or a period of time (how long), because both criteria may reach the same conclusion. In the case that we want to interpret it as a point in time, it will not have to do with a moment limited by an hour or a day or a month or a year, but with the whole time implied in the sixth trumpet. And if we feel that the way chosen by God to determine an extension in time (a formula like day, month, and year), is not normal, it is because we forget that God chose a similar formula for the 1,260 days or 42 months, that is, "time, times, and half a time."

For practical purposes we may say that if we want to chose to see in the sixth trumpet an answer to "when," it would be in the specific time of 391 days/years. If we chose to see the text as an answer to "how long," the interpretation could be expressed as being for 391 days/years. In other words, the conclusion may be the same. In consequence, Dr. Lee concludes by saying that "one cannot use this text [Rev 9:15] as an argument against the historicist method of interpretation." No grammatical rule may be invoked to deny a prophetic time implied in the prophecy of the sixth trumpet. Contrary to what some want to make us believe, the historicist interpretation of the sixth trumpet is perfectly defensible exegetically.

**a) *The presumption's background of the "exegetes."*** What is, then, the presumption of those who consider themselves "exegetes" in our church, and who are trying to overthrow an interpretation that

counts on the support of the Spirit of Prophecy? That they are the ones who have the last word, not historians. That pride is greatly contrasted by the humble attitude of Dr. Lee who recognizes the limitations of biblical exegesis, and concludes by saying that in order to know what did John really mean with his prophecy, we have to resort to history.

In the confrontation that we had in 3 ABN on the trumpets, I could see my college Jon Paulien seated at my left hand, repeating again and again that we have to go to the Bible and remain in the Bible. This sounded good and even orthodox. But, in what context did he say this? At any time when historical dates were introduced to confirm the prophetic fulfillment of the trumpets. This is what Pfandl and Heiks are also doing now. Heiks, for instance, criticizes Amadon because that lady wrote that "history has assigned a beginning date" (70), and he add "not Scripture." But, where did Heiks obtain the years 508, 538, and 1798 in his other books? Those dates are given by history, not by Scripture.

This is the background of those who insist in spiritualizing the content of the trumpets. As a matter of fact, how will they convince others of not to spiritualizing also the apocalyptic beasts of Daniel and Revelation, the two contrasting mothers, and the other prophecies of Daniel and Revelation? May this kind of purely exegetical approach be considered historicist? No way! This is an empty idealism, because it does not make the heart to burn with the history of its fulfillment (see Luke 24:32). Paulien wrote a seminar on Revelation that was published in Australia, but which did not work because, according to what I was told by more than one evangelist there, people needs to see in history how those prophecies were fulfilled.

In the introduction of the book of Heiks, Pfandl gives the example of the twin towers' fall which led many to seek how to introduce Muslims in any imaginary prophecy. Then he compares this method with what Protestants also did in former centuries when they had the constant Muslim threat. They saw them in the fifth and sixth trumpets. What? This is to compare "chicken with truth." In that case, the apostles would not have been able to say like Jesus, "today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). Pfandl reveals here a problem of understanding on the purpose of the trumpets that we will address in the next point.

***b) Problems of a purely exegetical approach.*** Exegesis opens windows for more than one possibility that history has to fill. At this point the other sciences intervene, namely, theology and history. We need theology because otherwise, it will be harder for historians to find when and how the prophecy was or will be fulfilled. A right theology offers biblical guidelines to find the purpose of the prophecy, and under what contextual history should its fulfillment be placed. For instance, Protestants rightly understood in former centuries that the trumpets were judgments of God against Rome in her different phases, because this was the last apocalyptic empire depicted by Daniel and Revelation which would persecute the remnant of God. The problem began in our church when, beginning in the second half of the former century, several authors began to look for other candidates for this or the other trumpet.

Actually, Protestants reviewed history and found that the only significant threats for Rome hegemony were the Barbarian and Muslim invasions. The symbolism found in the trumpets led them not to spiritualize their fulfillment, but to place it in the right time and understand the purpose of the punishments of God there outlined. While the first six trumpets were partial judgments (a third), only the last and seventh trumpet was expected to be definitive in connection with the coming of the Lord (Rev 11:18: God's wrath outpoured in the seven plagues, 16:1).

But theology without history also means nothing. Theology and history have to work together to determine what exegetical possibility is valuable. It is necessary to understand God, and this is what systematic theology intends to do. Otherwise we will find, as I could see more than once, historicist interpretations that causes us think that God became crazy, because he punished anywhere. If we do not resort to history, a purely exegetical, chiasmic, grammatical approach goes nowhere in prophetic matters. Perhaps yes! It leads to the interpretative chaos and uncertainty that we find in our church today in these subjects.

**c) Necessary Berean attitude.** What Heidi Heiks do now, others did it before. They started with the decision to put to an end the historicist interpretation of Rev 9, and ended by departing from historicism in the rest of the Bible. They do not realize, at the beginning, that in order to destroy the historicist interpretation of Rev 9, they resort to the same kind of arguments employed by others to destroy their historicist approach in other places. As the Argentinean saying goes, they are kicking their own nest. This is why Jón Stefánsson answers many criticisms against the historical dates of the trumpets by asking why are our own critics not doing the same with the other prophecies. He insists in the need to respect the biblical parameters to understand the fulfillment of the prophetic message.

The Bereans did not go to the Bible to prove that Paul was wrong (as Heiks tries to do now in relation to the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation), but to see if what Paul said was true. Those who want to find historical and biblical proofs to deny the prophetic fulfillment, will find them. Those who want to find historical and biblical proofs to confirm the prophetic fulfillment, will also find them. Because the apocalyptic prophecies have a similar purpose of the parables, which many could understand, but others who hardened their hearts not (Matt 13:14-15).

Let us see another example. The critics of the Bible who do not believe in prophecies unless they are interpreted as being *Vaticinia Post Eventum*, offer a punctuation in the exegesis of Dan 9 that makes impossible to see its Messianic fulfillment as it was understood along the centuries. The problem is not in the Bible, but in an exegesis that took the wrong way from the beginning. Because the exegesis of a believer leads to confirm its Messianic fulfillment. There, the prophetic dates are corroborated by history. For this reason, a dialogue with history is required under clearly biblical parameters of faith.

**d) What we can do.** Gluder Quispe believes that the General Conference should organize another committee to study these prophecies. I believe that this would make many to waste their time, as we could see in a great measure in the discussions on women ordination. If a positive Berean attitude is not assumed, and the parameters given by the Bible are not respected, we waste our time. If we chose culture or secularism to determine what to believe, instead of the Bible, and are reluctant to go to history "trying to find out the time and circumstances" prophesied by the Lord in the prophecies (1 Pet 1:11), we arrive nowhere. This happened also with DARCOM, when they gathered liberal and conservative interpreters. The result was in a great measure a kind of bankruptcy for the interpretation of the first half of Revelation (as they recognized it in what they published), whose consequences are being paid worse today. My humble suggestion is to gather all those who believe or are willing to believe, to offer those who want to believe an interdisciplinary clear vision on the apocalyptic prophecies.

It is encouraging to see each time more studies that are being undertaken in historical matters in the University of Andrews, with scholars like Dr. Gerard Damsteegt, the editor of the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* A doctoral dissertation prepared there by Jean Carlos Zukowski in 2009, which tackles the relation of church and state from Constantine to Charlemagne, in relation to how the papacy did to reach supremacy in the Roman world, is really a great step "forward." It offers the church a wider vision in connection with key historical facts that were projected by God in prophecy.

Another book written in the same time by Heinz Sheidinger, and published by the BRI, offers a great historical spectrum of the prophecy of the 1290 and 1260 years. I had done it first in my book, *The Seals and the Trumpets*, on these periods of time, in the year 2005. More papers are prepared in this historical dimension, and under the prophetic principles that characterize us as a people; more our prophetic dimension that was traced us by God by divine inspiration will be strengthened.

**f) Worshipping "authorities."** Heidi says that he interviewed "Turkish authorities," and when he quotes some current Turkish books, he introduced them as if they were almost infallible and undisputable final authorities. But if we dig a little more in the sources, we may see that even those authorities he quotes are criticized also in Turkey. And what is more astounding, those really few authorities quoted by Heidi confirm the year 1299 as being crucial, a turning point in the foundation and consolidation of the Ottoman Empire.

I listened other brothers who became futurists to tell how they went to Turkish embassies (it seems quixotically), to ask them if the interpretation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the date August 11, 1840, is defensible. Ridiculous! Then they begin speaking like the famous pope Gregory the Great in the sixth century, the pope who began to tell stories about purgatory. That pope began saying: "I was told by an older man," or "a wiser man than me," or "a holier man than me..." He resorted to this device because he knew that he was not trustworthy. This is also the context of Jesus' warnings of not swearing for higher personalities and things because, by doing so, we mean that we are not reliable.

I remember when I went to the University of Strasbourg, France, to obtain my doctoral degree in theology. Since at the beginning, the scholar who was assigned to guide me in the preparation of my doctoral thesis was Dutch, I tried to introduce myself in his office as someone who knew theology, by speaking to him about the great and distinguished Dutch theologian Berkhouer. He looked at me indifferent. When I finished my speech he told me, simply: "Berkhouer can say what he wants to say. But we are here the ones who will determine what to say and what not!" I learned the lesson. No one is to be deprived of asking why.

We are required, paraphrasing E. G. White, to emancipate ourselves from the ideas and criteria of the world. It is good to consult presumable "authorities," as Heidi seems to have done, but not to dogmatically silence those who are not satisfied with everything they say. They may lead us to the historical sources for us to evaluate them by ourselves. And despite the boasting claims of Heidi of having resorted to those sources, I do not see practically Turkish or Arab sources, but simply some very few Turkish commentaries whom he called "authorities." Why did he not quote some of the key current Turkish historians that I quote in my book *The Seals and the Trumpets*, to confirm our interpretation of the trumpets? Because those statements could bother his attempt to destroy what he believes to be on a platform of error.

There are several historical encyclopedias, which interpret the world from different perspectives. There are Catholic encyclopedias, secular encyclopedias, materialistic and communist encyclopedias. When I began to study history to obtain a wider scope on matters related to the Apocalyptic prophecies, I asked myself: "Why we do not prepare also a historical encyclopedia under the vision we have of the *Great Controversy*? I thought this not because I believed that other historians were wrong, but because we have a vision that other historians do not have. The book *The Great Controversy* of E. G. White is not pure and simply a book of history, but of theology of history from the beginning to the end. It offers to the world the vision of the Great Controversy of all ages that God gives us to know where we are and where we are going.

Just one more thing on what to do. In addition to exegetical, theological, and historical studies, we need to offer those resources in a practical way. This is the task of the evangelists. But this is also a task that should be undertaken in some way by theologians. We should already offer, in every book, some practical and spiritual windows to help all who read us, what is the purpose of the prophetic knowledge. "The Bible was given for practical purposes" (1SM 20). Because this purpose is forgotten in many researches, the mind of many rambles without clear direction.

#### **4. Attempt to discredit the clear testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy**

Pfandl and Heiks believes that in chapter 18th of the book *The Great Controversy*, E. G. White did not intend to interpret Rev 9. She would there simply portray what the Millerites believed. Heiks goes farther and introduces a statement of E. G. White where she warns about the skeptic background of Gibbon in his works, because he wrote against the religion of Christ and the Bible. Then Heiks accuses those who are based on the historical dates offered by Gibbon, of not following her advice. Instead, Heidi seems to prefer von Hammer who wrote also fantasies on occultism as a deliberate strategy of disinformation to denigrate other people.

But if this is so, do we have to quote only Seventh-day Adventists to interpret the prophecies? Is this what Heiks do in other books to interpret the other prophecies of the Bible? Why is he also quoting

presumable Muslim "authorities" to silence those who quote an English writer? Now, Gibbon took the historical report from Possinus, whom Heiks also quotes. Was Possinus also an unbeliever?

Sometimes it is better to quote secular historians who unconsciously confirm our prophetic faith, because it proves that we are not adjusting history to our understanding of prophecy. Why then, E. G. White quoted at least 80 historians to write the book *The Great Controversy*? She explained that she did it not necessarily to give credit to those authors, but because they summarized in a convenient way certain historical facts (*GC* xii). Of course, in reading those authors, we have to be cautious as not to be influenced by their philosophy in what interferes with the Word of God.

Did really E. G. White not confirm the fulfillment of the prophecy of Rev 9 in her book *The Great Controversy*? Those who read without prejudices what she wrote will be never convinced of that. Since I have already carefully analyzed in another place the statement of E. G. White, here I will simply draw the key point in her statement, with the first part of our commentary. For details, see

<http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/articles.html>

Ellen G. White wrote: "In the year 1840 another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy excited widespread interest" (*GC* 334). Notice that at this level, she speaks of a remarkable fulfillment of prophecy, not about a fulfillment of Josiah Litch's prediction. Notice also that thus far in her statement she makes note of the year but not of a specific date in that year.

She also says "another remarkable fulfillment." What were the other remarkable fulfillments of prophecy? As expected, these are also referred to in the context of that same chapter of the book *Great Controversy*, and include the stellar signs of the sixth seal (especially the last one that took place in 1833), and the fulfillment of the seventh trumpet in connection with the prophecy of the 2300 days of Dan 8 that took place in 1844. So this begs the question, was she also depicting those other remarkable fulfillments of prophecy as mere descriptions of what the Millerites believed without actually intending to endorse them either, or was she instead referring to the fulfillment of prophecy in those events? No wonder that some in our church are now also neglecting these other fulfillments of prophecy.

Our church never viewed the statement of E. G. White under consideration in the way some are trying to see it in recent years. Because it is not necessary to have a higher IQ to see that she believed that the prophecy of the sixth trumpet was fulfilled in that year. So the presumption of Heiks of having also proved that E. G. White is misread in connection with the fulfillment of the prophecy in 1840, has no foundation at all.

If Pfandl and Heiks had read the Master thesis of Jón Stefánsson, they would have known that between the first edition of the book *The Great Controversy* in 1888, and the second one in 1911, E. G. White was interviewed by W. W. Prescott, who advised her to take out or correct these statements because, in his view, the sixth trumpet was not fulfilled in August 11, 1840. But he could not convince her. Instead, in her second edition, E. G. White was still more precise in her portrayal of the event that fulfilled the prophecy.

### **5. An attempt to discredit the starting point of the five months in the fifth trumpet: 1299.**

Heiks believes that the discussion concerning the year of the battle of Bapheum was settled long ago. It would not be in 1299 when presumably the prophecy of the five months of the fifth trumpet began, as the Millerites believed, but in 1301. Before showing how our friend passes over certain key historical facts to reject the year 1299, let us say that in these historical subjects which were confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy, we must be careful. Also the year 457 BC as the starting point of the prophecy of the 70 weeks and of the 2300 days, was in former years rejected by the majority of the biblical scholars who chose the year 458 BC. However, our church kept herself faithful to the confirmation of the Spirit of Prophecy concerning that date, which had a certain biblical support, and in spite that the majority oppose it. Not before the middle of the 20th century the last manuscripts of Elephantine appeared which brought an unsuspected support to prove that the year 457 BC was the right date. In addition, we may confirm this astronomically, so that date is irrefutable.

In order to understand the background of the discussion concerning the battle of Bapheum, let us say that Pachymeres, a contemporaneous Greek historian, depicted that battle and said that it took place in July 27, but without specifying the year. This gave room to many speculations because, in addition, the only source for the date of that battle till today is not a Turkey authority, but Pachymeres. Though Heiks boast to have Arabic documents unknown for many today, the only reference he offers for that battle is that which von Hammer gives, who suggested that Bapheum has to do with Kujunhissar (today Koyun-Hisar). Apart from the biased deductions of some isolated current historians brought by Heiks, I do not see an Arab source to confirm the date of von Hammer. And when I dig more in history, I find that the current Turkish "authorities" recognize that they do not have an Arab confirmation on the date of that battle.

Pachymeres, the only available source, is somewhat confuse sometimes in his historical report, as historians observed in several points of his narrative. The first one who was confronted to the decision of fixing a year for that July 27, was a historian called Possinus, who worked in 1669 with a complete chronology of the history of Pachymeres. He included eclipses of moon and sun, and compared the astronomical dates with the chronological dates he found in the Arab sources. Possinus dated the battle of Bapheum for July 27, 1299.

The English historian Edward Gibbon in the 18th century, took those dates of Possinus and placed the date of that battle also for the year 1299. But the Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer, in the first part of the following century, rejected the date of Possinus and Gibbon, and placed that battle in 1301. He did it comparing the description of Pachymeres with eastern chronologies. Many Turkish historians followed him from that time in his deduction.

Grace Amadon, a remarkable Adventist theologian got into the discussion and rejected the hypothesis of von Hammer. Her two articles were published in *Ministry* (June and July, 1944), one year before she passed away. Consequently, Heiks had to discredit Grace Amadon also to stay in his destructive mission regarding the prophetic interpretation of our church in this matter. I believe that Grace said some unnecessary statements that Heiks brings out to discredit her, but I also believe that in other points, Heiks misinterprets Grace, neglecting the strongest and most convincing arguments that for her were decisive to keep the year 1299 as the year of the battle of Bapheum.

All the artillery of Heiks against the historicist approach of the fifth trumpet is centered in the chronological charts of Hadschi Chalfa on what von Hammer and many others based their conclusions until today. Grace Amadon recognized also the value of that chronology, but she was not satisfied with those details. She resorted to astronomy and to certain facts that even today some historians use to neglect. Heiks brings out the arguments based on the chronological charts trying to prove that Amadon was wrong, but keep silence on the arguments that Amadon considered most decisive. This fact, in addition to how he misreads E. G. White, and how he misinterprets me and criticizes me superficially in other places, cause me to ask myself if he did not do the same with the rare presumable "authorities" he boast to have read. As a matter of fact, his research is not comprehensive, and it is evident that he was too selective in his historical data.

What are the most convincing facts that Grace Amadon gives and Heiks neglects? Basically two. The account of Pachymeres begins in February of the year 1299, an irrefutable date because it may be astronomically confirmed today. Possinus mentions a Friday February 6 when the Greek church celebrated a ceremony for the dead. According to astronomy that I could also confirm, that Friday in a February 6 could fall only in 1299, not in the other years proposed for the battle of Bapheum. Amadon concludes that this fact is more reliable than if Pachymeres himself would have given the year.

The second historical argument brought into consideration by Grace Amadon and that Heiks neglects again, is the description of the battle of Bapheum which may be related only to the year 1299, not to the year 1301. In other words, after giving a short chronological review of the facts, Pachymeres would have returned to the year 1299 to tell the battle of Bapheum, something that Heiks discards because he does not see the other "authorities" to do so. What are the historical evidences brought by Amadon to suggest that Pachymeres went back to the year 1299 to tell the story of Bapheum?

Pachimeres tells that in the year of the battle of Bapheum, the weather was unusually and excessively hard in winter and spring. The bad weather lasted to the summer and the harvest was delayed. River Sangaris overflowed three times destroying the defenses of the Byzantines, exposing their garrisons to the Persian attack. After changing three times its bed, the river returned to its original bed. But in so doing, it left the castle moat with so much silt and sand that the enemy could cross on foot. The bank of the river was still overflowed when Otman camped during the whole night. Then, the next day, he appeared "suddenly and unexpectedly" to deliver the battle of Bapheum when the people were gathering the harvest. The battle took place near an old bridge constructed by Justinian, when the people were still gathering the harvest. Otman took the harvest and the sheep and cattle of the Byzantines. This could happen only in 1299, because this was the recognized year of the flood. The date July 27 fits perfectly the description of that year.

Actually, Amadon rightly accuses von Hammer of being inconsistent in placing the battle of Bapheum in the year 1301. According to Pachimeres, the weather was in that year extremely dry. "The perennial springs and bubbling fountains" of the hills were dry, and the fields were covered with dust. This caused the harvest to be gathered earlier, which was lean and brief. It lasted only one month. Why does Heiks discredit Amadon without mentioning these facts that she considered the strongest argument to prove that the battle of Bapheum took place in 1299? Evidently, he does it because this could not help him to destroy the historicist interpretation of the fifth trumpet.

We cannot pass over the fact that the "authorities" quoted by Heiks confirm that the river grew up disproportionately in 1299. But he is careful as not to comment this fact. When we read some Turkish historians, they refer the year 1301 for the battle of Bapheum, but warn us that they do not have a historical confirmation for that date from the Muslim side. Heiks quotes von Hammer who tells that the river Sangaris was still overflowed at the time of the battle. It is evident that von Hammer and the Turkish historians did not realize that this abnormal weather was characteristic of the year 1299, not of the year 1301. Let us share how Joseph von Hammer, the referential historian idol of Heidi, portrays the occasion.

"The invasion Kópruhissar inspired Osman's lust for the conquest of other neighboring castles in the vicinity of Nicaea... He was further spurred by the poor circumstance of the garrisons and the flooding of the Sangaris... Since the Sangaris river had recently altered its course, with the help of a number of natural waterways, many of them left their castles, which had been robbed of one of their natural defenses; the river did eventually return to its usual bed, after flooding the region for a month, but in return it so filled its bed with slime that the shallower parts of the river could no longer be traversed".

When did this unusual overflow of the river happened, according to the "authorities" in the Ottoman history? Let us quote you one of them: "After the severe winter of 1298-1299 the Turks had crossed the Bizantine borders along the Maeander" (Dimitri Korobeinikov [Wolfson College, Oxford Bizantine Seminar 3], February 2006. An extended version of this paper was published in *Osmanskii mir i osmanistika. Sbornik statei k 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia A.S. Tveritinovoi (1910-1973)*, eds. I.V. Zaitsev and S.F.Oreshkova (Moscow, 2010), pp. 215-239.

The unilateral evaluation made by Heiks of the article of Amadon, where he conceals key data offered by her, causes me to ask myself once more on the seriousness of Heiks in considering the really few historical sources he brings to deal with this issue. He takes one argument and neglects the other, to discredit Amadon and the historicist interpretation of our church that was confirmed by E. G. White.

***The importance of the year 1299.*** So much tries Heiks to discredit July 27, 1299, as being the year for the battle of Bapheum, that he forgets to conceal the fundamental importance of the very year 1299. Though he does not bring out its importance and he does not offer other relevant information that the "authorities" he quotes do in part. For those whom like me, what matters more is the year 1299 (not necessarily the day and the month that are also important), I have to tell you that the year when Otman founded the Ottoman Empire which the very von Hammer confirms, is just the year 1299. At that time Otman was also nominated sultan, and he was committed to make war against the Byzantine Empire.

All the Turkish tourist guides to visit Sögüt, at 30 kilometers south of Bilecik, mention the foundation of the Ottoman Empire for the year 1299. In that year 1299, Otman I delivered also a battle in Bilecik against the Byzantine Empire. Something easier for you to verify is going to Wikipedia. You will see

there that Sögül is "a small town, where the Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299." See [Söğüt](#), and [Ottoman Empire](#).

Now, let us quote the Turkish "authority" consulted by Heidi, which confirms the importance of the year 1299 for the carrier of Otman I. It is Halil Inalcik. This author wrote: "The conquest of the Bilecik-Yenisehir region in 1299 signifies a definite development state in Osman's career" (p. 81 in the book of Heiks).

We conclude this review on the date 1299 affirming that the pretension of Heidi Heiks of destroying the foundation of the Adventist faith for the fulfillment of the prophecy of the fifth and sixth trumpets, is no more than an illusion. I began reading his book concerned only by the year 1299, but I concluded that the strongest evidences point out also to July 27, 1299, for the battle of Bapheum.

## **6. An attempt to discredit the year 1449 as the end of the fifth trumpet.**

From here onwards we will not need to refer, in principle, Heidi Heiks and his book, because I do not find anything new in his criticism to the historicist interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets. The starting point of the fifth trumpet required to be treated more carefully because Heiks is the only one in my knowledge, who openly criticized the article of Amadon. But now, we will answer the most common criticism that others before Heiks have already done. Since we have written two books giving abundant biblical and historical information, we will give here only short answers.

The five months or 150 days (years) of the fifth trumpet appear repeated twice (Rev 9:5,10), comprehending the two periods of Islamic invasion that are largely confirmed by history: under the Saracen Arabs and the Ottoman Turks subsequently. The 150 prophetic days (150 years) of the second invasion began, as already seen, in 1299, and should bring us to 1449. What happened then? At the end of 1448, the young emperor successor of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine) asked authorization to the Turkish sultan to be crowned, which was fulfilled in January 6, 1449. This act of submission to the Turkish authority by the last emperor stimulated the Muslim powers to give the final blow to the Byzantine Empire. So were released the four sultanates that had been bound before the apostate Roman world (the Euphrates: Babylon), in his mission of killing (Rev 9:14-15).

### *Objections and answers*

#### **a. Five months is the time of life of a locust. There would be no need of interpreting it as a prophetic time for the fifth trumpet.**

**Answer:** Stefánsson rightly replies that such a proposition is too simple because it reduces the symbols to their allusions and nullifies in this way any historic fulfillment. This would be the first case in an apocalyptic prophecy when a numerated time would not project a definite prophetic time. Keep in mind that other prophecies speak of 42 months and require a prophetic fulfillment. The same criteria works for the five months.

#### **b) The Byzantines would have lost their independence before 1448/9, with similar acts of submission.**

**Answer:** Jón Steffánson, in his aforementioned Master thesis, brings into consideration the fact that if the emperors were already vassals, why did the Turks continue fighting to conquer them? No one discusses the fact that the Byzantines strength was decreasing long before, while the Ottoman power was increasing. According to Jón, the increasing weakness of the Byzantines would fit the announcement of the prophecy which said that during those days (150 years), the people would be tortured (Rev 9:10), and in their affliction, they would "seek death but" without finding it; "they will long to die, but death will elude them" (Rev 9:6).

I add here that Constantine XI was the last Roman emperor to be crowned. His submission to the sultan pointed out the end of the empire. Those who in our church look for other former dates to show the weakness of former Eastern emperors, seem not to realize that this is what our detractors do also with the dates we offer for the beginning of papal supremacy. There are antecedents and consequences. But we do not have to lose sight of the big picture comprehended in prophecy.

**c) The sultan gave authorization for Constantine XI to be crowned at the end of the year 1448, not in 1449.**

**Answer:** It is true, but this does not deny the fact that the authorization came the following year and Constantine XI was crowned then in fulfillment of that permission, in January 6, 1449. Since the prophecy had to fall on the last prophesied year, like in the other prophetic dates of the Bible, and the year 150th of the prophecy comprehended the last part of 1448 and the first half of 1449, there is no need to discuss this point.

Stefánsson reminds us similar examples. Artaxerxes, for example, gave authorization for the reconstruction of Jerusalem in Spring (Ezra 7), but the decree was issued in the fall (Ezra 8), starting the prophecy of the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days of Dan 8 and 9. Justinian I issued a decree of supremacy for the papacy in the year 533 which was not in force until the Ostrogoths (the third of the kingdoms that had to fall according to the prophecy), were definitively expelled from Rome in the year 538.

**d) The date 1453 would be more important than the submission of the new and last Byzantine emperor to the Ottoman sultan, because Constantinople fell down in that year.**

**Answer:** Again, Stefánsson reminds us that the end of the Israelite submission to the Egyptians took place in the Passover evening, not when they crossed the Red Sea under Egyptian persecution, even if the Egyptian threat ended when the Egyptians died in the sea (Exod 12:41). The 70 years of Israelite captivity would have started in the year 605 BC, not when Jerusalem was destroyed (I add here that this argument is valid if we do not neglect the principle of sliding scale that may be seen in this prophecy, as I will show in my next book, *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary*).

Also the prophecy of 70 weeks ended when the Jews stoned Stephen, not when they crucified the Son of God in the year 31, or when Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70 and the Jewish nation reached to an end. Stephen was the last divine messenger to deliver a message to the Jewish nation as the former prophets had done it under the old regime. From that point onward God would never more address a direct message to the Jewish nation as such, but to the Gentiles.

## **7. Attempts to discredit the year 1840.**

The prophecy of Rev 9:15, as already seen, adds 391 days, which are biblically interpreted as years. For some like me, the "hour" may be interpreted as referring to the whole time of judgment of the sixth trumpet. Rev 14:7 is referred to the hour of judgment which, in its proclamation, would correspond to the whole time of the seventh trumpet where the mystery of God (that Daniel could not understand about the time of the end) is accomplished (Rev 10:7). That final trumpet culminates in the Second Coming of Christ (1 Cor 15:52). In relation to the judgment of the sixth trumpet, Rev 9:15 could be translated: "for the hour [of judgment], that is day and month and year" or, if we take into account that the majority of the manuscripts have a definite article in the two first words: "for the hour, that is the day and month and year." For simplification purposes: "for the hour [of the judgment of the sixth trumpet], that is [or even], 391 days/years."

Others prefer to keep the interpretation of Josiah Litch which gives "the hour" a prophetic value of 15 days, something that other Protestant interpreters had done already before him. In that case we are required to start the prophecy on an exact day, which for Litch was July 27, 1299. Just as the year 1449 marked the time of definitive submission of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottoman sultanate, so also the

year 1840 was characterized by the definitive submission of the Ottoman Empire to the western high powers of Europe, closing the time of hostility of the Muslim world. The reactions of extremist Muslims today have to do with furious radical and fanatical manifestations which cause troubles in the world, but are powerless to break the yoke imposed by the leading nations over them.

The 391 years start in 1449 and bring us to 1840 (or in a sliding scale, from 1453 with the fall of Constantinople, to March 21, 1844, with the law of apostasy which cancelled the death sentence for apostate Muslims). I have to reply Heiks who accuses me of moving dates, that this is not what I do. I simply show how the same powers and epochs may be related by different dates covering the same span of time indicated in the prophecy. I did not invent this principle, as Heiks ignorantly believes, but I took it from Dr. William Shea, something that I could corroborate in connection with almost all the dated prophecies.

On the importance of the year 1840 which marked a decisive point in the history of the Ottoman Empire, I wrote extensively in my two books on the trumpets, with a significant Western and Turkish historical documentation. Consequently, I will not deal with this matter here again, excepting to answer some criticism that were raised in the past, some of which Heidi Heiks tries to bring out again. As we will see, the greatest questioning has to do not necessarily with the year (which is easier to answer), but with the day of August 11, 1840, where the "hour" is given a prophetic value of 15 days.

### *Objections and answers*

**a) There would be no reason to link the fifth and sixth trumpets to obtain 541 years 15 days, because both prophecies are different.**

**Answer:** The link of both dates suggested by Litch adds 541 years and 15 days (150 plus 391 and 15 days). Starting on July 27, 1299, we reach to August 11, 1840. He and Müller rightly saw that the terminology and images of the two trumpets are similar, and thought fitting to link them. Concerning the historic perspective, I bring out in my two books on the trumpets how there are historians that speak about the two waves of Muslim expansion with a similar style of war, due to the fact that they were united by a same theology.

In confirmation of what Litch did, Jón Stefánsson stands out that the text seems to require to link the two dates. While the fifth trumpet says that the Muslims would torture but without killing, the sixth one specifies that they would be released to kill. When torture without being able to die finished, the release for killing should start. Would we wonder by the union of the two prophecies when other prophecies like those of the 2300 days/years and the 70 weeks were also linked, because the text also implied it? (Dan 8-9). We may say the same with the prophecies of 1260, 1290, 1335, and 2300 days.

**b) Why to chose July 27, 1449, to start the time for the sixth trumpet when the prophecy was fulfilled on January 6, when Constantine XI was crowned under sultan authorization? Nothing important happened in July 27 of that year.**

**Answer:** This criticism is not valid for those who like me believe that it is not necessary to give the "hour" a prophetic value, although we cannot deny that option either. For me, that discussion will be always open. Let me share with you the answers given from the perspective of the 541 years and 15 days, which several Protestant authors before Litch propose it also (see my book, *The Seals and the Trumpets...*, the excursus on the history of interpretation).

The prophecy of five yearly months (150 years), according to what we saw, was fulfilled on January 6, 1449. Other dated prophecies like that of the 1260 days/years were fulfilled in the year, according to Stefánsson, not necessarily in the last day of the year. In relation to the 1260 years, it would have started in March and ended in February.

Why we should not expect anything for July 27, 1449? Because if we are going to link the two prophecies, according to Jón, we are not required to find a fulfillment in the same date of depart 150 years

later, but at the conclusion of the 541 years and 15 days. While the separate prophecy of five months is fulfilled in January 6 of 1449, the linked prophecies of 541 years and 15 days would be fulfilled in August 11 of 1840.

**c) The change of the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar in 1582 meant a correction of ten days that the Millerites would not have had into account.**

**Answer:** In the colonies of the USA, the Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1752, some decades before the birth of Josiah Litch. Since the Millerites had to calculate the prophecy of the 2300 days and of the 70 weeks, it is hard to suppose that they didn't know the change of calendar. Several nations delayed its acceptance. Turkey adopted the Gregorian calendar for taxes purposes in 1917, and in 1926 they abandoned the Muslim calendar.

In other words, the Millerites did not see a reason for including the correction of the calendar in the prophetic calculation. God could have taken into account the Gregorian correction as He did with the old regular corrections of the Hebrew calendar. If the Millerites would have attempted to make their prophetic calculations by taking into account the days involved in the Gregorian correction, they would have been criticized today as not knowing that the prophecies of the Bible are not based necessarily in an astronomic year. Actually, we have today a leap year every four years, but that correction every four years do not change the reckoning of the year. Should the Millerites have added all the days of the leap years according to the astronomical data, to date the prophecy? A God who may predict centuries and millenniums of history, would not know that a change would take place also in the calendar?

Other cultures had systems which also required to correct regularly the yearly reckoning. The Babylonians and the Hebrews fixed their calendar every two or three years adding a thirteenth month. But this fact did not change the reckoning of the prophecies which could have in one year less than 365 astronomic days, and in other years more. In order to avoid these problems God simplified the reckoning in 360 thematic days, as a base for the prophetic calculation. For this reason, the Millerites and later the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, did not feel that the Gregorian correction of the calendar could affect the prophetic reckoning.

**d. In connection with the European ultimatum, the representatives of the high powers of Europe could meet with the Pasha of Egypt not before August 17, 1840.**

**Answer:** We may discuss when exactly the ultimatum was put into the hands of the Pasha of Egypt. But according to the London Morning Chronicle (Sep 18, 1840, dated, Constantinople, Aug. 27th, 1840), the Pasha was notified on the arrival day about the mission of the convoy from Constantinople. The European threat was there, and this was the reason why he immediately left Alexandria for some few days. He did not want to meet them. Though the ultimatum was delivered to the Pasha in person when he returned, it does not mean that the document was not in force when the ships from Constantinople arrived to Alexandria. As a matter of fact, the ships that reached Beirut the same day August 11, did not wait for the answer of the Pasha in order to proceed. They ousted the Pasha's governor there.

A negative answer from the Pasha would have brought upon him the consequences of the contempt for the current international authorities who were now imposing their will upon him. The same happens today when a law is issued by a government. It is not necessary to wait for the reaction of the people to be in force. The Pasha finally rejected the ultimatum, but had to end by submitting to the European authorities before the end of the year. See the 3 ABN interview of Ron in [www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com](http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com)

**e) The events of 1840 would be insignificant because the Ottoman Empire was weakening already prior to that year, and it was disintegrated not before 1922.**

**Answer:** We find again in this questioning the same problem that some have regarding the date 1449, which could be contemplated within the warnings of Jesus in relation to the parables (see Matt 13:10-17).

Those who want understand may read the testimonies of a good number of secular historians who bring out the importance of the ultimatum of 1840 in terms similar to those of E. G. White. In addition, as already seen, it is obvious that an empire does not fall at once. The gradual weakness of the Bizantine Empire first, and then the increasing weakness of the Ottoman Empire, reached finally a decisive moment. In the case of 1840, the turning point was marked by the ultimatum of submission of the higher powers of Europe that the Ottoman and Muslim authorities had to accept.

The Ottoman Empire did not lose its independence before 1840. In my book *The Seals and the Trumpets* I give many historic references of modern historians, even Turkish ones published in the 21th century, who confirm the importance of what happened in 1840. At that time Turkey began to give up its characteristic predominant Muslim state by the adoption of secular principles of government, in order to be accepted within the system of the European nations. Differing from what some of our critics believe, one century and a half later historians continue recognizing the importance of what happened in the year 1844, in a similar way as E. G. White did it 70 years after that date.

Anyway, let us keep in mind that many secular historians do not see the year 538 as being relevant for history. In the religious world today, Christians do not see relevant either the year 1844. The year 31 means nothing for others who do not believe even in the existence of Jesus. But for the divine purpose projected in prophecy, those three dates are supremely important.

**f) The Adventist Church would have never had an official interpretation on the trumpets.**

**Answer:** This is what Angel M. Rodríguez introduced in an article of *Ministry* published in January 2012. But he is wrong. No person would have dared to say this some years ago. Because since the very beginnings of the Adventist movement, even before Uriah Smith, the Millerite approach on the dates were kept. In 1848, the Adventist Bible or Sabbath Conferences affirmed that the prophecies of the sixth seal in Rev 6, of the sixth trumpet in Rev 9, and of the following vision between the sixth and seventh trumpets, were fulfilled in 1833 (the last stellar sign), 1840, and 1844 respectively. This view was again confirmed by a book on the trumpets of James White in 1859, and a little later by Uriah Smith in his book on Revelation.

In the General Conference session of 1883, in Nov 11, Rodney S. Owen proposed an end-time interpretation for the trumpets. But the General Conference officially rejected his views by stating that they saw "no occasion to change from the views we have formerly entertained, especially as the proposed view is... unscriptural, and would unsettle some of *the most important and fundamental points of our faith*" (General Conference Bulletin). The next year some rumored that the General Conference did not reject the new proposition. But this rumor was refuted in the next congress in these terms. "It was introduced in open meeting and endorsed by the Conference, and the Secretary gave the report just as it was furnished him. The matter was disposed of exactly as appears in the report of the Conference proceedings." "The Seven Trumpets," *Review and Herald*, July 8, 1884, 448.

E. G. White was informed on the General Conference decision on the trumpets. She confirmed that official interpretation of our church in the first edition of her book *The Great Controversy*, which was published four years later, in 1888. When W. W. Prescott advised her to change or eliminate what she had written for the next edition of 1911, she kept what she had written and was still more emphatic.

In the thirty-fourth session of the GC, S. N. Haskell, in April 4, 1901, at 10:45 am, stated: "It is the truth contained in these words [Rev 11:19], developed by other portions of Scripture, that lies at the very foundation of our existence as a denomination." He mentioned the dates 1833 for the fulfillment of the sixth seal (Rev 6), 1840 for the fulfillment of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9), and 1844 in connection with the great disappointment (Rev 10). In other subsequent sessions of the GC, the dates 1840 and 1844 were considered as "landmarks in Adventist History." See references in my book, *The Mystery of the Apocalyptic Trumpets Unraveled* (2012), 36.

Other attempts to change the interpretation of the trumpets that Heidi Heiks brings into consideration were never accepted by our church. Our church never relinquished officially the historicist interpretation on the trumpets that had been adopted from the beginning, with the support of E. G. White. I guess that

the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church should be careful as not to put foxes to take care of the henhouse in these matters and other ones related to our prophetic view. Otherwise, the whole system of prophetic interpretation that we received as a legacy and foundation for our world mission, will be unsettled.

Let us keep in mind the statement of the Spirit of Prophecy. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history... We are handling the mighty truths of the word of God" (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, 24; 3 *SM* 162). Again, in 1907 she wrote: "The church is to increase in activity and to enlarge her bounds. . . . While there have been fierce contentions in the effort to maintain our distinctive character, yet we have as Bible Christians ever been on gaining ground" (*Letter* 170, 1907; 2 *SM*, 396-7).

**Conclusion on the arrival dates.** The questions and answers that we have just summarized do not need to be final in the discussion. There are always things that may be improved and even to be corrected. An argument of Stefánsson, for instance, is not for me as strong as others. For instance, from the perspective of the year of fulfillment, we could discuss if it is necessary to fix the years of the prophetic dates within the day or month of the year of departure, or within the year of the current calendar. Up to this day we used to argue on the base of a current calendar year.

The only prophecy in conflict with a year based on a current calendar is that of the 2300 days because it started with a Hebrew calendar and it was fulfilled under a Gregorian calendar. In addition, that prophecy had to fall in the time corresponding to the Day of Atonement. Since the prophecy of the 1335 days is giving within a Julian-Gregorian calendar, its arrival point would reach the year 2300 which is comprehended within a Hebrew calendar. Anyway, these are points that may give room to a healthy discussion. The points that we brought into consideration here purpose to broaden the range of discussions within a perspective of faith in our prophetic legacy.

In my view, the key answers given by Jón to the hardest points about the conjunction of the two prophetic dates are worthy of consideration and perfectly defensible. While the five months were fulfilled on January 6 1449, what is important there is the year of fulfillment. The union of the time of torment without killing, with the year to release the horsemen to kill, lead us directly to the end of the 541 years. Even so, I believe that the interpretation of "the hour" as referring to the whole time of judgment of the sixth trumpet (391 years), agrees with the statement of E. G. White who put the emphasis in the year 1840. When she referred to the prediction of Litch she mentioned the day he chose, and stated that his prediction was exactly fulfilled. This did not imply that she endorsed all what at different moments Litch thought on the prophecy, but principally the submission of Turkey to the European rulers, a real turning point in history.

Other facts that took place in Turkey toward the end of 1839 and beginning of 1840, even after August 11 in the same year, could be also interpreted as a preparation or confirmation of the prophecy of the sixth trumpet, as I show in my books. Yet we may keep standing the prediction of the fulfillment of August 11, 1840. But in emphasizing what was expected to happen in the year, confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy, we do not need to be too dogmatic with the exact day for those whose logic is too stuck to an Aristotelian syllogism. We may insist in these precise moments without imposing them as absolute or exclusive, and make outstanding the facts that took place that year. After all, this is what we do also with other prophetic dates.

It will be perhaps convenient to clarify here that no one denies there are symbols in the book of Revelation. What we reject 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 in the countries that adopted their secular principles. 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 or ideologies. 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.

Concerning the biblical theology of the trumpets, as well as the theology of the historical fulfillment and the astounding way they fulfilled their symbols, I recommend you to read my two books on the trumpets, *The Seals and the Trumpets. Biblical and Historical Studies* (2005); *The Mystery of the Apocalyptic Trumpets* (2012). [www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com](http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com)

## **8. The problems of the interpretation of Pr. Stephen Bohr on the sixth trumpet**

I remember when I lived in Chile in my fourteenth year of age, and a friend of us asked us if we knew the difference between a piano and a pig. On mistrusting a ruse in that ridiculous question we replied: "No, we do not know it!" Then, he warned us: "If you do not know the difference between a piano and a pig, please, take care when you go to buy a piano because they may sell you a pig."

Heidi Heiks intended to destroy the official historicist interpretation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church without knowing where to go. In a hurry, he took a proposition of Pr. Stephen Bohr for the sixth trumpet and included it in his book. But he did not realize that this proposition has several contradictions, as well as a series of theological concepts that are contrary to the testimony of the Bible and of the Spirit of Prophecy. Gerhard Pfandl supported Heiks in his destructive mission, and in another place supported the interpretation of Dr. Ranko Stefanovic, who followed Dr. Jon Paulien in the interpretation of the trumpets. Do you want to know what these new horsemen of the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation are offering in replacement of what our church believed from the beginning?

I will not introduce the problems of LaRondelle, Paulien, and Stefanovic in their apocalyptic interpretations of the trumpets. As I show in some of my books, they lost sight of the prophetic picture which always characterized us as Seventh-day Adventists in relation to what was expected to happen before the time of the end, and then during the time of the end. Read, for instance, our critical remarks in my book *The Seals and the Trumpets...*, 264. Let me simply bring out how Stefanovic wanders in the fantasy in relation to the fifth trumpet, just for choosing a wrong picture. "It is uncertain whether John intended every detail of this description to be interpreted" (*Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 304). In his second edition he repeats the same.

On the other hand, the Pacific Press published last year (2012) a futurist book of Erwin R. Gane (father), whose critical review may be found in my web page <http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Trumpetaftertrumpetgane.pdf> What is Pr. Gane proposing in his book? That the trumpets have a double fulfillment. The only one without double fulfillment would be the last one, because it is fulfilled in the very time of the end. But, what is the need for looking another fulfillment of those prophecies that were already fulfilled?

Pr. Stephen Bohr compares a lion with a table (this is my own illustration about his proposition), and find that both have four legs, reason enough for him to relate them. Thus, he thinks that the four "evil" angels that are bounded in the sixth trumpet, are released when the time of probation is over, and the winds of the human passions are released by the four "good" angels of Rev 7:1-3. But since he believes that the sixth trumpet begins in 1844 (pp. 165-166, etc), then he deduces that these angels are released in 1844, though their final release takes place at the conclusion of the time of probation, because in spite of the fact that the evil angels were released in 1844, the good angels continue stopping them until that final moment (???)

Another problem found by Stephen is that the sixth trumpet is linked to the holy place, to the horns of the golden altar, not to the most holy place. In order to solve this problem, he tries at any cost to affirm that after all Jesus in the sixth trumpet is in the most holy. But Rev 11:19 contradicts his view because it states that the temple is opened to the most holy place only during the seventh trumpet, not before. When I argue in my books that in the sixth trumpet we are still in the holy place, before the investigative

judgment (see Rev 9:13; 11:15,18-19), Heiks replies "no" (p. 133). Why? Because Stephen Bohr says that He is already in the most holy.

Frankly I do not have time to waste with so much ridiculous things. I do not have time to repeat here all what I wrote on the sanctuary and the trumpets in a good number of books. See [www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com](http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com) But for the sake of those who did not have time to study the subject in depth and may be deceived, I will summarize briefly some wrong assumptions of Stephen.

1) It is not clear in the approach of Stephen when the four evil angels are released in Rev 9:13-14, if in 1844 as he affirms in a certain moment, or at the end of the time of probation as he implies with several statements of E. G. White that are based not in Rev 9:14-15, but in Rev 7:1-3.

- If those evil angels of the sixth trumpet are released in 1844, why the good angels of Rev 7:1-3 hold them back till the end of the time of probation?

2) If Stephen links the golden altar of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:13) to the most holy place, why the most holy place is opened later? Actually, the ark of the covenant is opened in 1844, in connection to the seventh trumpet, Rev 11:19; see 10:7; not with the sixth trumpet).

3) He believes that Rev 8:3 reveals the holy place with the altar of incense, but not Rev 9:13 despite the fact that the latter continues revealing the golden altar (???)

4) In order to keep his view of the sixth trumpet as being related to the most holy, Stephen affirms that "the first-apartment ministry does not stop when the second apartment ministry begins in 1844. Otherwise, nobody could be saved after 1844" (p. 145).

- Let E. G. White reply: "In the service of the earthly sanctuary, which... is a figure of the service in the heavenly, when the high priest on the Day of Atonement entered the most holy place, *the ministration in the first apartment ceased*. God commanded: 'There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he comes out.' Leviticus 16:17. So when Christ entered the holy of holies to perform the closing work of the atonement, *He ceased His ministration in the first apartment*. But when *the ministration in the first apartment ended*, the ministration in the second apartment began" (GC 428).

"But clearer light came with the investigation of the sanctuary question. They now saw that they were correct in believing that the end of the 2300 days in 1844 marked an important crisis. But while it was true that that door of hope and mercy by which men had for eighteen hundred years found access to God, was closed, another door was opened, and *forgiveness of sins was offered to men through the intercession of Christ in the most holy*. One part of His ministration had closed, only to give place to another. There was still an 'open door' to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ was ministering in the sinner's behalf" (GC 429).

5) Stephen says: "In Leviticus 16, the daily [service] was performed before and after the special services of the Day of Atonement in the earthly sanctuary, in preparation for the New year's services" (p. 145).

- Notice that he says "before and after the special services of the Day of Atonement," but not during the special services of that day. Let E. G. White reply:

- "Before the veil of the most holy place was *an altar of perpetual intercession*, before the holy, *an altar of continual atonement*" (PP 353). "On the one day of the year appointed for ministry in the most holy place..., *no priests ministered at the altars*" (8 T 284-5). See more statements in point 4.

- In my doctoral dissertation on the Day of Atonement, I bring out the fact that the same blood which cleansed the people and the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, marked the last opportunity for the people to repent, before being expelled from the midst of Israel (*The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Sanctuary*, 188-192, especially 191).

6) Stephen says: "The anointment of the horns takes place on the Day of Atonement" (p. 145).

- No reference is given, because no biblical reference exists to affirm this. The anointment of the sanctuary took place at the inauguration, not at the conclusion of its ministry (Exod 29; Lev 8). Also the anointment of the High Priest and of the priests took place at the inauguration, not on the Day of Atonement.

7) Stephen quotes Exod 30:10 in p. 143, to prove that on the Day of Atonement there was a service on the altar of incense.

- But the high priest went on that day to the altar of incense to cleanse it from the records of the confessed sins of the year, only when he concluded his ministry of intercession in the Most Holy Place (Lev 16:16-19), no more to intercede for the people of God. However, in the sixth trumpet, the altar is revealed before the opening of the Most Holy to reveal the ark of the covenant in connection with the seventh trumpet (Rev 9:13; 11:19). And this cleansing of the golden altar on the Day of Atonement was not considered a "daily" service because it took place only once a year.

- In the sixth trumpet the altar of the holy place is revealed before the opening of the most holy.

8) He adopts an *apotelesmatic* principle for the apocalyptic prophecies (multiple fulfillments):

"Certain texts... have a double application or even multiple future applications" (p. 144).

- Our church rejected long ago that view. See my criticism with statements of E. G. White to the book of Gane quoted above. It is evident that Bohr does not know the distinction that our church made through a careful study between the conditional prophecies and the apocalyptic prophecies, the latter ones without multiple fulfillments.

9) In p. 142 Stephen supposes that E. G. White placed the vision of Rev 4 and 5 in the holy place, misinterpreting her writings. If she mentioned the candelabrum of Rev 4:5 in front of the throne, it is because, (as Sara Peck, the secretary of E. de White explained it in her book *The Path to the Throne of God*), the door that separated the holy from the most holy was open (Rev 4:1).

- E. G. White identified the door of Rev 4:5 as being that of the most holy, and saw the rainbow above the throne, and under the throne the mercy seat of the ark (I deal with these details in my book *The Apocalyptic Expectations of the Sanctuary*. I will not repeat here those statements).

- The view of E. G. White of Jesus in the most holy agrees with a careful study of the vision of Rev 4 & 5 from the biblical perspective, as I proved it in several of my books on the sanctuary.

10) Stephen places the scene of Rev 4 & 5, as many Adventists do today at the inauguration of the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary (most of our writers did not do it formerly: see my book *The Final Crisis in Rev 4 & 5*). Many place this vision at the inauguration of the ministry of Jesus because she quotes in the book *Desire of Ages* one of the songs of the angels in Rev 5 for that occasion. But a song may be sung several times and for several occasions. Many do not know that she also quotes those songs for the end of the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and for the end of the millennium. But the song of Rev 5:9-10 is quoted for her more than once, only and exclusively for the end of the ministry of Jesus in the most holy. She never saw thrones in the holy place, but only in the holy of holiest (when she saw the transference of ministry of Jesus from the holy to the most holy). After portraying Jesus in the holy place, she saw thrones in the most holy which she had never seen before (and which she never saw in the holy place).

Is this what Heidi Heiks and Gerhard Pfandl want to offer to our church, in compensation of the historicist interpretation of our church? Actually, when Heiks introduces the article of Bohr on the sixth trumpet he wrote: "Pastor Bohr is the first to identify the symbols from the Scriptures, letting the Bible interpret itself" (p. 139). This is blatant ignorance!!!

Forgive me! But I have to stop here and do a more useful task, though I could bring out many more unscriptural assumptions. Anyway, I want to finish my review of the book of Heidi Heiks on the fifth and sixth trumpets with some remarks. In the cases of Pfandl, Heiks, and Bohr, I found good materials in

other issues. But concerning the trumpets, what they wrote is awful. I believe that we have to be merciful when we find some few mistakes in the books we read, because we are all humans. But when some assume an openly mission of destruction that touches our faith as a church, like we find in this book of Heiks, and offers instead such amount of fantasy, it is necessary to speak like Paul did with Peter and the other apostles at a certain moment, without mincing words.

Let me call you with a similar call that Jesus addressed to his disciples, in a moment when many were withdrawing His ranks. Jesus asked them what the people believed on the Messiah to come. They replied that some said this, others that... "Who do you say I am?," asked them Jesus. Peter received a divine revelation which confirmed his faith (Matt 16:13-17). This is what I long for you and my church. The Lord gave us the Spirit of Prophecy. "Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in his prophets, and you will succeed" (2 Chr 20:20).