

DIALOGUES ON THE TRUMPETS OF REVELATION

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2024

From its inception, the Seventh-day Adventist Church inherited from Protestants a historicist interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. But today, some are being drawn towards either futuristic fantasies or the indifference of historical idealism, by following the methodologies that they find in the current theological world. The resulting confusion in the trumpets of Revelation is so great that in a good number of Adventist theological centers, there are professors who leave this very important section of biblical prophecy untreated. It is for this reason that in this study, I have decided to thoroughly address these topics without ignoring our prophetic heritage and the biblical and historical analyses required.

I am greatly thankful to my two sons, Daniel and Roy, for helping me present these profound and comprehensive topics in an engaging and simple manner, so that they can be easily understood even by people without extensive theological and historical training. We can assure that those seeking answers to the many questions that arise when studying the trumpets' biblical and historical perspective will find precise commentary here. And above all, they will be able to appreciate the great value that these topics have for our mission as a church in this final time of humanity. Therefore, I encourage those who believe in our prophetic heritage to share the links to these dialogues which are associated with my YouTube channel, Adventist Distinctive Messages:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdi7VMIEWyRIPo36lvZD0Jw>

I. HOW DID CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND THE TRUMPETS OF THE APOCALYPSE?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFL7Mr9OY7k>

Have you ever wondered God dedicates so much space in the book of Revelation to the war trumpets that would sound in Christianity until the coming of the Lord? Would God dedicate four entire chapters to describe these divine judgments if this theme were not important for His church and the world? Are you confused by the many divergent interpretations that have arisen in recent years about these prophecies? Do you really want to find answers to the questions that many have asked throughout history about its content, and continue to ask even today?

In this series of ten dialogues that I have with my sons, Daniel (a physician) and Roy (a psychologist and concert pianist), we aim to answer over 300 questions that many have been asking about the meaning of the trumpets. And we earnestly hope that this important section of the Apocalypse will be preached again with all freedom and power. To achieve this, we consider it of supreme importance to begin this first dialogue by studying how Christians understood these divine judgments from the time the Apocalypse was written until today. And due to its importance, we will also dedicate a second dialogue to a more extensive study of the history of the interpretation of the trumpets in the Adventist Church.

Let's think for a moment: what would Christianity be like if the Apocalypse had not been written? This last book of the Bible sustained the faith of millions of Christians throughout the centuries of the worst period of Roman intolerance and persecution in its different stages. Its understanding was gradual as its predictions were fulfilled. We can be thankful that almost all its prophetic series have been fulfilled. We can know today that we are in the final part of the conflict of the ages between good and evil, between Christ and the rebellious angel. We need to know this conflict well to understand the nature of the final crisis in which we will soon find ourselves involved.

“By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days” (2 SM 105). “None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict” (GC 593). “Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive” (GC 625).

II. HOW DID ADVENTISTS FROM THE 19TH TO THE 21TH CENTURIES UNDERSTAND THE TRUMPETS OF THE APOCALYPSE?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGpp3MGntc0&t=8s>

God announced the name of the emperor Cyrus 100 years in advance (Isa 45:4). He also foresaw the blasphemous title par excellence of the future Roman Antichrist, simplifying it through a number that could be deciphered in the right time, using the numerical value of its letters (Rev 13:17-18). He even specified the address of this Antichrist to come by mentioning that he would sit on seven hills (Rev 17:9). Should it then surprise us that, to facilitate the fixation of prophetic dates in memory in a time when computers did not exist, God identified them using a mnemonic method as well?

As a matter of fact, from the mid-19th century and throughout the 20th century, Seventh-day Adventists were able to decode the prophetic dates encrypted by God with a numeric value of “time, times, and half a time” (Dan 7:25), and “hour, and day, and month, and year” (Rev 9:15). Under the biblical “day- year” principle recognized initially for centuries by both Jews and Christians, they could understand that those encrypted references meant 1260 years and 391 years respectively. They studied the history associated with the Roman antichrist, and the history foretold in the fifth and sixth trumpets, and found the amazing fulfillment of those dates in the correct historical context. Still more impressive, they could be witness to the fulfillment of the sixth trumpet in their own days, which led to the Adventist movement that emerged in the 19th Century.

Unfortunately, towards the end of the 20th Century more specifically, and during the first quarter of the 21st Century, some theologians are attempting to turn the page and bury the foundation of the Adventist faith that our church has always defended regarding the study of these prophecies, in a midway between belief and skepticism. Instead, they propose a spiritualized approach to the trumpets that in some ways resembles the medieval interpretations that buried historicism. They invoke philosophies that cannot satisfactorily explain the defined specifications of that crucial part of the last book of the Bible.

What is the reason for this current departure from our prophetic legacy? What role did E. G. White play in confirming the understanding that our pioneers had of Revelation 8 to 11? What were her warnings about the “new light” that many would try to introduce in the future regarding these prophecies, in an attempt by the rebel angel to disrupt our prophetic mission? Did the Spirit of Prophecy support the entire interpretation of our pioneers, or only some of their approaches?

We will study the details of the trumpets of the book of Revelation in the following *Dialogues*. For now, it is important that we are clear about the importance of this subject to our history. Some are now trying to convince us that our church never reached an agreement on the interpretation of the trumpets. They are promoting dissenting views on the role of the Spirit of Prophecy and the prophetic dates that were developed since the *Bible Council of 1919*. Therefore, we need to understand why there is such a radical departure today from a clearly defined prophetic understanding of those who preceded us in the Adventist movement. Many are unaware that, along with the prophetic legacy of our pioneers, these newly improvised interpretations are weakening, if not burying, the gift of prophecy that God granted to our church.

We can here mention in advance at least two reasons for such a departure from the SDA legacy regarding the trumpets of Revelation. In recent years, the topic was addressed by biblical theologians who could not or would not take time to investigate the history more deeply and thereby confirm its fulfillment. They then tried to compensate for that lack of interest in history with exegetic analysis and literary structural constructions that lack a clear goal and further cloud its message and purpose...

See: <https://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/CritiquetrumpetsAndrewsBibleCommentary.pdf>

III. DIVINE OBSTRUCTIONS TO UNIVERSAL IMPERIALISM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHduLxnPRXg&t=4s>

There are those who become enthusiastic in their Islamic studies and believe that the angels of God fought alongside Muslim armies to combat the imperialism of the Holy Roman Empire. But can we say the same of the barbarian armies that massacred so many entire peoples during the pagan Roman Empire? What role did God and the devil play in those wars? Were they holy wars determined by God or Satan? Do the angels of God intervene in human wars and decide the battles fought here on earth?

The war trumpets of the book of Revelation come from the heavenly temple. They are sounded by the angels of God. What does that mean? Do they sound on earth or in heaven or in both places? To what extent is God involved in such wars, and what role does He play in the successes and failures of such conflicts?

How can we understand the trumpets of the Apocalypse in the context of the conflict of the ages between good and evil? What does the Bible and history tell us about the invisible agents hiding behind the formation of the great empires of this world, and their purposes? And what does God determine must happen to prevent the complete domination of the rebellious angel over this world? How long will this millennia-old confrontation continue, which has brought so much misery and pain to humanity? All this and much more are discussed in this third dialogue.

IV. IN RESPONSE TO THE OUTCRY OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND IN FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S COVENANT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ool43uZEOxU>

In the light of the age-old controversy between good and evil as revealed in the Bible, how does God reveal Himself to the world? What does the devil do to prevent God from revealing Himself to humanity? And what resources does God use to thwart the plans of the rebellious angel?

God promises to protect those who obey Him and puts His honor at stake by ensuring through a covenant that He will fulfill His promise of protection. However, we often see that the righteous suffer, and the wicked seem to prosper as they oppress the people of God. Does God forget His faithful children in their tribulations? What is the cry of the martyrs in their distress, and how does God respond to their plea? What role do the trumpets of the Apocalypse play in this divine covenant?

If we do not understand the purpose of the war trumpets revealed in the Bible amid the struggles of God's people, we will also be unable to grasp the purpose of the trumpets of the book of Revelation. As a result, we will be adrift in trying to find their fulfillment in history. In the context of what we have considered and will now expand upon in this dialogue, we will be able to start analyzing in detail each trumpet of the Apocalypse in the following dialogues for the remainder of this series.

V. THE CRUELTY OF ROMAN PAGANISM PUNISHED

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx9tRyJtmjE&list=PLmxWqtqjgJx5ZI1e87LJt82rUesT8FLM&index=5>

We saw that the trumpets of war are divine brakes to thwart the devil's attempts to unite the world in a universal rebellious empire. We also confirmed the fact that these war trumpets are a response to the cry of the righteous, in fulfillment of the covenant that God made with His people. God will not allow the devil to completely destroy the light of the gospel of salvation until its consummation. But what else do these trumpets of Revelation reveal about the character of God? Are they part of the gospel of salvation, as the apostle Paul warned when he said, "for *the wrath of God* is revealed from

heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”? (Rom 1:18).

Against whom is God angry in the Apocalypse? Who was the devil’s primary agent in the early centuries of Christianity? Under whom were the Christians and John himself suffering when he received the divine command to write the last book of the Bible? This is supremely important so as not to deviate from the study of the first trumpets of Revelation from the outset. Because if we start off on the wrong foot, the whole harmonious picture that was fulfilled in history begins to fade. And by not taking this fact into account, some are now spiritualizing the content of God’s judgments as many did during the Middle Ages, making their purpose and message vague and indefinite.

How are some destabilizing the prophetic foundation of the Adventist movement that gave power and compass to the mission of that church? How may we respond to those who are now laying aside the prophetic legacy of our pioneers regarding the trumpets? The figures and symbols of the trumpets were used in the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament in the context of war. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the meaning that those prophets gave to such illustrations, in order to more easily find the fulfillment of the apocalyptic trumpets in history. That is the purpose of this fifth dialogue, especially regarding the first tribulation that the pagan Roman empire produced in Christianity.

VI. AGAINST THE CRUELTY OF THE ROMAN ANTICHRIST

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=silhivgrYsM&list=PLmxWqtqjgJx5Zl1e87Ljt82rUesT8FL_M&index=6&t=52s

The old story of Rome against the Christians was dramatic, and it was evidenced by the crosses that crucified and wild beasts that tore apart and devoured thousands of Christians for their faith. Through the barbarian invasions that fell upon that empire in the west, God allowed that Caesarean system of government to collapse forever in ancient Rome, and announced its collapse in the first four war trumpets of the Apocalypse. But from the ruins of the pagan imperial system, the Antichrist was to arise with an even crueler system of government, for he was to evangelize the pagan world with the cross and the sword, and relentlessly persecute all Christians who put the Bible before his blasphemous and authoritarian requirements. Prominent in this bloodthirsty era are the papal crusades, the tortures of the Inquisition, and the stake.

It was then that the Muslims unexpectedly appeared, first preventing the union of the Caesars of Constantinople with the popes of ancient Rome. Worse still, the Islamic invasions were to forever end the Eastern Roman Empire and keep papal supremacy in check for more than a millennium. This scenario appears remarkably portrayed in the fifth and sixth trumpets of the Apocalypse. Because of its importance, the Apostle John dedicated an entire chapter to them. In this dialogue, we will begin to analyze point by point this entire history in the light of divine revelation. The accuracy of biblical prediction regarding Islam is astonishing...

VII. GOD’S SCOURGE ON THE APOSTATE ROMAN CHRISTIANITY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_40av4wCrw&t=181s

In the fifth trumpet, the instruments of divine punishment torment, but do not destroy those who do not have the seal of God. Some have interpreted that those without the seal of God here are not Christians and, therefore, divine punishment would not fall upon Christian Rome. Is that so? Do apostates of Christianity have the seal of God? Did the inquisitors who later became popes have the seal of God?

Others who have been tempted by futurism argue that the seal of God in Revelation is related to the final crisis and, therefore, the fifth trumpet should also be placed at the end. Again, is that so? Does the fifth trumpet really refer to those who have the seal of God? And if not, why does that prophecy, which is fulfilled in the Middle Ages, already speak of those who do not have that seal? What does history tell us? What other details are given in the fifth trumpet that were notably fulfilled

in the expansion of Islam? For example, did Muslims go to war with golden crowns on their heads? What was their armor as anticipated by John in that prophecy?

VIII. THE SECOND MUSLIM INVASION PREDICTED

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD1w3ISl1q8>

The biblical and historical analyses of Protestants regarding the fifth and sixth trumpets of Revelation are very interesting. They traced the course of history and were amazed at how God anticipated even the colors with which the Turks would go to war in the sixth trumpet. They also grasped that the four angels to be released for killing corresponded on Earth with the four most important sultanates, which before the conquest of Constantinople, were ruled by Turkish leaders who converted to Islam and initially fought against the Mongols. Eventually, those sultanates became provinces of the Ottoman Empire. With the conquest of the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, the Turkish-Muslims were then free to invade the Holy Roman Empire in the West.

Some futurist brothers have tried to connect these four angels of Rev 9:13-14 with the four angels of Rev 7:1-4. But they neglect the differences in both descriptions which show a completely different picture. In Rev 7 the angels are released, while in the sixth trumpet the winds, not the angels, are released. In the sixth trumpet the angels are related to the altar of the Holy Place, that is, before the time of the end corresponding to the seventh trumpet in the Most Holy (Rev 10:7; 11:15,19). This is how the Millerites and Adventists of the 19th century understood things, as we will see in the final two dialogues. They inherited the basic approaches of historicism from Protestantism.

But there are intriguing things that require deeper investigation of biblical passages and history. For example, John seems to assert in the description of the sixth trumpet that the number of soldiers in the Ottoman army would be 200 million. Some futurists have recently argued that there has never been an army of such size and think that army could be formed in the future, at the end times. But what does John say in Greek? Is he really speaking of 200 million literal soldiers? What meaning does the number offer when compared with other numerical values in the Bible, and even with history?

Let us pay attention to another striking fact. If we compare the fifth trumpet with the sixth, we observe significant similarities that confirm a common ideology of religion and war, but we also note significant differences that were admirably fulfilled in history. Among these differences, we see that while the fifth trumpet emphasizes divine punishment against violators of the fourth commandment, the sixth highlights ultimately the violation of the second commandment. The fifth trumpet does not mention the harassment of a third of men, because Muslims would inflict terror on both the Eastern and Western Roman empires. But in the sixth trumpet, the Turks would annihilate only the Eastern Roman Empire... In addition, gunpowder was not employed before the time corresponding to the sixth trumpet.

IX. THE APOCALYPTIC TIMES OF THE TRUMPETS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQJl99QmvSA&t=493s>

After watching the first dialogue of this series, a “liberal” colleague wrote to me saying that the interpretation of our pioneers confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy regarding the trumpets of Revelation was “a lost battle.” My response: truth is never a lost battle. Error or lies at times may seem to prevail, but ultimately truth always triumphs. “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8). One of the problems of those who reject our prophetic legacy on the trumpets is that they introduce unnecessary rules to interpret the prophecy that neither the Bible nor history require.

What do some new interpreters of our church want to offer us instead? An abandonment of the Protestant historicist legacy we inherited to return to the Middle Ages with its typical spiritualization of the Apocalypse (!!!). Let’s compare the recent Andrews Bible Commentary on the trumpets (p. 1961) to some medieval approaches that we saw in the first dialogue. The similarities of these interpretations are notable for their vagueness and spiritualization in several trumpets.

Medieval interpretations

1. Punishment for the wicked
 - The pure church
 - The blindness of Jews
2. Punishment for the heretics
 - The pagans
 - The preaching of the Gentiles
3. Punishment for apostates
 - Heretics or false brothers
4. Punishment of “evil people”
 - Hypocrites
 - Apostate members
5. Bad heretic
 - Tribulation of the Antichrist
 - Fall of Satan and doctrines of the Antichrist
6. Tribulation by the Antichrist
 - Control of secular princes by Satan
7. The final judgment
 - Conclusion of preaching and eternal rest

Andrews Bible views

1. Fall of Jerusalem
2. Christians martyred
3. Truth compromised
4. Sources restricted
5. Secularist movements
6. Atheist philosophies
7. Wicked destroyed

On the other hand, a futurist friend recently accused me of being a Jesuit infiltrator. He deduced that I had studied at a Jesuit Catholic University when I could have studied at Adventist theological centers. But I never studied at a Jesuit educational center; I always studied in Adventist institutions until I went to France and obtained a doctorate degree in theology at the Protestant Faculty of the University of Strasbourg. I went there following advice from E. G. White to church members well-grounded in the Adventist faith, to try to share our message in the highest intellectual spheres of the world (2 T 337-8; *Mss* 22^a, 1895). As a result, the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference published some of my studies because they considered that I substantiated our distinctive sanctuary message in a constructive way.

Some futurist brethren bring up a quote from E. G. White where she affirms that “trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded,” in relation to events still in the future (3 *SM* 426). But in that statement, she is not talking about the seven trumpets and the seven vials of the Apocalypse; instead, she uses the figure of trumpets and vials to refer to wars, calamities and pestilences that would multiply as we approach the end (see Luke 21:11). And that is in harmony with the words of Christ who warned that in the end times there would be “wars and rumors of wars” (Matt 24:6). These futurist brethren ignore the clear warnings of the Spirit of Prophecy against placing the trumpets beyond their rightly defined application of the fifth and sixth trumpets to the Turkish-Ottoman invasions. We saw this in the second dialogue, and we will see it again, with more biblical and historical foundation, in this current YouTube presentation.

If you want to know how important these issues are for the history and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, watch this ninth dialogue on the distinctive characteristic of historicism that some are now losing, which has to do with the apocalyptic times of the trumpets. In this way, you will be able to appreciate the surety of the historicist legacy of the trumpets left to us by our Protestant predecessors, as well as by the pioneers of the Adventist movement. You will also know how to respond to idealistic skeptics and futurist dreamers who want to dazzle you with unsubstantiated “new light.” Indeed, there is no need to explore uncertain and imaginary paths but to deepen the

understanding of what has already been fulfilled and confirmed by God through the Spirit of Prophecy.

X. THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET OF JUDGMENT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozl_OcSPsc0&t=682s

Welcome to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the church that emerged with the sound of the seventh trumpet (Rev 10:7; 11:15). It is the last remnant church of Christ which keep the commandments of God and follow the Lord in His priestly ministry before the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly temple (Rev 11:19; 12:17; 14:12). They don't boast to be perfect but trust the Lord who purifies them in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 5:9; 22:14). They also know that the Lord will burn their worldliness in the fire of the last tribulation, so that the whole universe may see in them the perfect character of His Son (Rev 7:14; 14:5; 19:8; 22:11; cf. Mal 3:3; Isa 1:25). It is the church of the final judgment which culminates in the Second Coming of Christ, as portrayed in the book of Revelation in the context of the seventh and last trumpet (Rev 11:18; 14:6-12).

Some are arguing today that we are living in the time of the sixth trumpet, bringing confusion on the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. This is wrong. Because the sixth trumpet is related to His ministry in the Holy Place (Rev 9:13), and the seventh trumpet to His ministry in the Most Holy (Rev 11:15,19). We will see more biblical evidence in this tenth and last dialogue that we are living in the time of the seventh trumpet, not during the sixth trumpet. Let us read the following message of the Spirit of Prophecy:

“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* 428-9).

Others have proposed to give a double fulfillment to the trumpets of Revelation, one historical and another future, and even try to offer dates for presumably future fulfillments. Again, this is wrong, and we will find in this dialogue biblical evidence denying this assertion. Let us here share some statements of the Spirit of Prophecy on these points.

“Some will take the truth applicable to their time, and place it in the future. Events in the train of prophecy that had their fulfillment away in the past are made future, and thus by these theories the faith of some is undermined. From the light that the Lord has been pleased to give me, you are in danger of doing the same work, presenting before others truths which have had their place and done their specific work for the time, in the history of the faith of the people of God. You recognize these facts in Bible history as true, but apply them to the future. They have their force still in their proper place, in the chain of events that have made us as a people what we are today, and as such, they are to be presented to those who are in the darkness of error” (*2 SM* 102-3).

“The Lord had been pleased to show me that there would be no definite time in the message given of God since 1844” (*2 SM* 73). “Again and again have I been warned in regard to time setting. There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ” (*1 SM* 188). “Time will never be a test again. I saw that some were getting a false excitement, arising from preaching time, that the third angel’s message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen it, and that it will go with mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness” (*1 SM* 188).

Let us enjoy the study of the seventh trumpet which projects the glorious mission of the last remnant until the last battle and the coming of the Lord.