

# **Proposals re: the Symbols of Revelation 17**

by Bob Pickle

The symbols of Revelation 17 are challenging. There are so many variables. How does one narrow the possibilities down, without excluding a correct interpretation in the process? And how does one do that in a biblically convincing way?

This paper presents some proposals in which there ought to be something of interest for just about everyone. We'll use a question and answer format, and cover easy-to-accept material first. Then we'll move into ideas that might require more analysis before accepting them.

## **A. "The Haughty See of Rome"**

### **1. Is the woman of Revelation 17 pagan Rome or papal Rome?**

Ellen White said the woman represents papal Rome. She wrote:

Babylon is further declared to be "that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." Revelation 17:4-6, 18. The power that for so many centuries maintained despotic sway over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the haughty see of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

After quoting Revelation 17:1-4, she wrote:

Thus is represented the papal power, which with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, by outside attraction and gorgeous display, deceives all nations .... The power which has the deepest inward corruption will make the greatest display, and will clothe itself with the most elaborate signs of power. The Bible plainly declares that this covers a corrupt and deceiving wickedness. "Upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."<sup>2</sup>

Note that these quotes are specifically identifying the woman rather than the scarlet beast as the papacy.

### **2. Is such an identification supportable from the Bible?**

The first quote above starts off by noting that Revelation 17:18 identifies the woman as a city that reigns over kings. Is this city Rome during pagan times, or during Christian times?

Revelation 18:2's use of Old Testament imagery of cities in ruins, such as found in Isaiah 34:10, 11 and Zephaniah 2:14, can only fit Rome in Christian times. Especially after the Ostrogothic siege of 537-538 AD, when the aqueducts were cut, Rome became a city of ruins, a physical fact that illustrated its spiritual degradation.

Repeatedly in Revelation 17, symbols depict physical realities that illustrate the more important spiritual realities.

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1. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, 382.

2. Ellen G. White to John H. Kellogg, Nov. 10, 1899, Letter 232, 1899.

### 3. In what ways did Rome become a city in ruins?

Rome is renowned for the ruins she contains, but that's not all:

- *Population*: “Rome had a population of more than a million around AD 200. It decreased to some 50,000 about 700, to around 35,000 in 1000, and to just about 15,000–20,000 in 1377.”<sup>3</sup>
- *The Disabitato's Large Size and Condition*: The inhabited part of the city was called the *abitato*, and the uninhabited part the *disabitato*. “According to a German soldier's narrative in the twelfth century, the *disabitato* was a malicious wasteland, filled with ancient ruins, disease-ridden swamps, highwaymen, and even dragons.”<sup>4</sup>

### 4. What does “see” in Ellen White's phrase “haughty see” mean?

“Holy See” is the official name for the papacy. “See” is derived from the Latin noun *sedes*, which means “seat.” “See” in “Holy See” specifically refers to the city of Rome, where the chair or throne of the popes is located in St. John Lateran.

When the pope is said to speak infallibly, he speaks *ex cathedra*, “from the chair.” “Cathedral” is a word that refers to the throne of a bishop.

### 5. Are there other meanings for “see”?

The *Oxford Latin Dictionary*<sup>5</sup> gives other relevant meanings for *sedes* and the corresponding verb *sedeo* (“to sit”).

*Sedeo*, number 2, is the sitting or perching of a bird or other creature, and *sedes*, number 1(b) is the perch of a bird. This calls to mind Revelation 18:2's declaration that Babylon is a cage of unclean and hateful birds.

*Sedes*, number 5 is a temple, dwelling of a god, or the heavenly abode of the gods. This fits with 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4's prophecy of the man of sin sitting in the temple of God as God, showing himself that he is God.

*Sedes*, number 6, is “the resting-place of the dead, the grave,” or “the place occupied by the spirits of the dead.” Revelation 18:2 pictures Babylon as the habitation of devils and hold of every foul spirit. Rome tells its members to pray to the dead; Leviticus 20:27 says talking to the dead is a capital crime.

Since cemeteries were forbidden within Rome's walls in ancient times,<sup>6</sup> many people were buried on the Vatican hill on the opposite side of the Tiber River. The result? “The entire 44 ha (110 acres) of the present Vatican City lies within a vast area once used as burial grounds for

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3. Luc-Normand Tellier, *Urban World History: An Economic and Geographical Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Springer, 2019), 185, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/urbanworldhistor0000tell/page/185/>. Others give different population estimates, but the conclusion remains the same, that Rome's population was drastically reduced throughout the Middle Ages.

4. Read Wilder (2020), “Introduction to the Disabitato,” *Carleton Guide to Medieval Rome* (v2.1), [https://omeka-dev-2022.carleton.edu/cgmr/exhibits/show/uninhabited\\_rome/item/234](https://omeka-dev-2022.carleton.edu/cgmr/exhibits/show/uninhabited_rome/item/234). The article begins with a map showing the large portion of Rome that comprised the *disabitato*. Also, see the c. 1870 photograph of the *disabitato*, with the Colosseum in the background, in Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City*, 312–1308 (Princeton University Press, 2000), 70, accessed April 30, 2025, [https://archive.org/details/bwb\\_W8-ARO-769/page/70](https://archive.org/details/bwb_W8-ARO-769/page/70).

5. *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 1968), 1724, 1725, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/oxford-latin-dictionary/page/1724/>.

6. XII Tables, 10.1, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/remainsfoldlati0003unse/page/497>.

ancient Rome. This sprawling zone, within which the Holy See is located, yields burials wherever excavations penetrate the earth.”<sup>7</sup>

*Sedes*, number 4, is a city, or one’s home or city of residence, and number 7(b) is the capital or seat of government.

*Sedeo*, number 3, is “to sit in an official capacity (as magistrate, judge, etc.).” This concept persists in American law today. A trial by a judge instead of a jury is a *bench* trial, and a judge’s oral decision during a hearing is a ruling from the *bench*.

## **6. Did the idea of a judgment seat originate with Rome?**

No, it didn’t. The Romans borrowed the concept of a judgment seat from a more ancient source. In Daniel 7:10 the judgment sits. Moses sat and judged in Exodus 18:13, 14. In Job 23:3, Job wanted to come to God’s seat to plead his cause, and Job himself sat in judgment in 29:7 ff.

## **7. How are “seats” important in Revelation?**

The dragon gave the beast his power, seat, and great authority. Revelation 13:2. Pagan Rome gave the popes their seat of authority in Rome. Only the judicial authority to enforce laws would have enabled the papacy to rule over the consciences of men for 1,260 years.

Satan’s seat is mentioned in 2:13, and the beast’s seat in 16:10.

On the opposing side, God’s throne and Christ’s throne are mentioned throughout Revelation. Revelation 20:4, 11, 12 ties the thrones of God and the redeemed to judgment.

Given how much relevance Adventist theology gives to judgment, the book of Daniel, and the great controversy theme, how “Daniel” means “God is my judge,” and how Protestantism historically identified the papacy as antichrist, it is of special interest that the “Holy See” is a judgment seat that is competing against Christ’s judgment seat.

## **8. Where does the woman sit in Revelation 17?**

In Revelation 17 the woman sits on many waters (17:1), on the scarlet beast (17:3), on seven mountains (17:9), and on waters (17:15). The one constant in all these verses is that she is sitting, which emphasizes Babylon’s asserted role as ruler and judge over the nations, despite her ruined condition.

## **9. How can Babylon simultaneously sit on mountains and many waters?**

It may sound contradictory, but it isn’t at all. Rome has literally sat on seven hills and many waters at the same time. The seven hills are well known, the many waters not so much.

a) *Tiber River*: Ancient Babylon had its Euphrates, and Rome has its Tiber. Revelation 16:12 combined with Isaiah 44:27-45:1 imports into Revelation a connection between the city of Babylon and its river.

b) *Sewers*: The Romans built a vast sewer system, the *Cloaca Maxima*, to drain the marshland Rome was built upon into the Tiber River.

c) *Aqueducts*: The same sewer system drained sewage into the Tiber. Eleven aqueducts completed between 312 BC and 226 AD brought better quality water to the city for drinking,

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7. Marshall Joseph Becker, review of *The Vatican Necropolies: Rome’s City of the Dead*, by Paolo Liverani and Giandomenico Spinola, *American Journal of Archaeology* 117, no. 2 (Apr. 2013), accessed April 15, 2025, <https://ajaonline.org/book-review/1538/>.

public baths, grain mills, and fountains. These aqueducts were largely underground.<sup>8</sup>

Rome's war spoils paid for at least two major aqueducts.<sup>9</sup> The spoils and tribute of conquered nations flowed into Rome, and the waters of the aqueducts flowed into Rome. For good reason, then, the waters of Revelation 17:15 represent peoples.

d) *Floods*: Rome has always had floods since it was built in a floodplain. Floods backed up the sewers and contaminated everything,<sup>10</sup> aptly illustrating that Babylon is "the Mother of Abominations of the Earth." Revelation 17:5.

The popes lost the Papal States and city of Rome in 1798, 1809, 1848, and, for the last time, in September 1870, just before the major flood of December 1870. Since then action has been taken to control the Tiber, something the Romans never did despite their engineering skills.

## 10. Why does Babylon say, "I sit a queen and am no widow" in Revelation 18:7?

Isaiah 47:5, 7, 8 also depicts Babylon, the queen of kingdoms, declaring herself to be a queen forever, who will not be a widow. This imagery is ancient. While the papacy was in Avignon, France, Dante said in his *Divine Comedy*:

Come and behold thy Rome, that is lamenting,  
Widowed, alone, and day and night exclaims,  
"My Caesar, why hast thou forsaken me?"<sup>11</sup>

When the papacy regains her lost supremacy over the consciences of men by becoming the moral authority of the New World Order through global Sunday legislation, she will sit in the judgment seat as a queen again, despite the corruption, decay, and atrocities of centuries.

## B. The Golden Cup, Wine, and Wilderness

### 11. Why is Revelation 17:4's cup golden?

Rome's general rule is that the chalice used in the sacrifice of the mass must be made of a precious metal. If it isn't made of gold, at least the bowl must be gilt with gold.<sup>12</sup>

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8. "Roughly 80% of the total distance of the city of Rome's aqueducts ran underground." Peter Aicher, *Guide to the Aqueducts of Ancient Rome* (Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1995) 11, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/guidetoaqueducts0000aich/page/11>. Being underground wasn't just true of the aqueducts between the sources and Rome. The aqueduct discovered on the Caelian hill in 2016, though about 73 ft. above sea level, was about 50 ft. beneath the ground's surface. Simona Morretta, Paola Palazzo, and Antonio Ferrandes, "Un tratto di acquedotto repubblicano rinvenuto negli scavi Metro C di Piazza Celimontana, Roma," in *Roma Medio Repubblicana: dalla conquista di Veio alla vittoria di Zama*, ed. Alessandro D'Alessio, et. al. (Edizioni Quasar, 2020), 51, accessed April 30, 2025, [https://iris.uniroma1.it/retrieve/e3835328-d9f9-15e8-e053-a505fe0a3de9/Morretta\\_Tratto\\_acquedotto\\_2020.pdf#page=6](https://iris.uniroma1.it/retrieve/e3835328-d9f9-15e8-e053-a505fe0a3de9/Morretta_Tratto_acquedotto_2020.pdf#page=6).

9. Esther Boise Van Deman, *The Building of the Roman Aqueducts* (Carnegie Inst. of Washington, 1934), 5-6, 29, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89077801355&seq=29>; John Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (John Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1988), 36, 37, accessed April 30, 2025, [https://archive.org/details/ancientromancity0000stam\\_j8j5/page/36/](https://archive.org/details/ancientromancity0000stam_j8j5/page/36/).

10. Salvatore Valenti, "Flood and Drought: The Challenges of Seasonality in the Operation of Rome's Sewers, 1870-1900," *Journal of Urban History* 51, no. 1 (2025): 39, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/00961442241260343>.

11. Dante Alighieri and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Purgatorio* (Ticknor and Fields, 1867), 6.112-114, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/divinecomedyofda672dant/page/36/>.

12. International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 3rd ed. (2002), no. 328 (Washington, DC: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), 111, accessed April 30, 2025,

The chalice is an important symbol to Rome. Every year from 1955 to 1965, Vatican City under Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI minted 100 lire coins with the goddess Fides holding a chalice on the back. Innocent XI minted a medal with the same in 1680. A medal with Clement VIII on the front has the same on the back, beneath which is the year 1602. Pius XI's 1929 medal has a prominent chalice on the back. Paintings and sculptures also feature the chalice.<sup>13</sup>

## **12. Why is the symbol of Babylon's wine especially problematic?**

After Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, God forbade the priests to drink alcohol when officiating in the sanctuary. Leviticus 10:8-11. In contradiction to this plain command, Cardinal Ratzinger stated: "Given the centrality of the celebration of the Eucharist in the life of a priest, one must proceed with great caution before admitting to Holy Orders those candidates unable to ingest gluten or alcohol without serious harm."<sup>14</sup>

## **13. How can we show that Babylon's wine is a symbol of false doctrine?**

Isaiah 28 and 29 portray God's professed people as drunk with wine, with 28:7 twice saying they are out of the way (*ta'ah*) through strong drink. But 29:9 says they aren't drunk with wine and strong drink. Thus, the wine and strong drink of these chapters must be symbolic.

Since the next verses, 29:10, 11, speak of a "spirit of deep sleep" that hinders one from correctly understanding the prophets' writings, the symbolic wine of vs. 9 must be preventing people from understanding truth.

In this context we have these two verses that, in the KJV, use the word "doctrine": "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts." "They also that erred [*ta'ah*] in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." Isaiah 28:9, 29:24.

By using the word *ta'ah*, 29:24 is tied to the drunkenness of 28:7, and by referring to "spirit" and "understanding," it is also tied to 29:10-11.

28:9 is more interesting still. If fresh grape juice is symbolic of truth, and intoxicating wine symbolic of falsehood, then the illustration makes perfect sense: Weaned babies, not old drunks, want fresh, pure grape juice. And it is new believers, or longtime churchgoers that have recently had a new experience in Jesus, that are most interested in hearing simple, Bible truth.

## **14. Is the woman of Revelation 17 the same as the woman of Revelation 12?**

Both women are in the wilderness. However, since the same symbol can mean different things in different passages, the wilderness of chapter 12 can mean something different than the wilderness of chapter 17.

The symbols of chapter 12 are largely taken from the story of the Exodus. Ezekiel 29:3

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<https://archive.org/details/generalinstructi0000cath/page/111>.

13. See the pictures of coins, medals, and other artwork at <https://www.biblelightinfo.com/vatican.htm>.

14. Joseph Ratzinger, "Circular Letter to all Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences concerning the use of low-gluten altar breads and mustum as matter for the celebration of the Eucharist," July 24, 2003, [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20030724\\_pane-senza-glutine\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030724_pane-senza-glutine_en.html). This statement applies only to those who can't consume any alcohol at all, since the same letter permits alcohol-sensitive priests to obtain special permission to use low-alcohol mustum. Mustum is grape juice in which the fermentation process has been arrested through freezing, resulting in an alcohol content less than 1%. "The Use of Mustum and Low-Gluten Hosts at Mass," *Newsletter: Committee on the Liturgy* 39, Nov. (2003), <https://web.archive.org/web/20110704184503/http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/innews/1103.shtml>.

calls Pharaoh a dragon, Pharaoh tried to kill Moses as soon as he was born, Moses was caught up to heaven, God brought Israel to Himself in the wilderness on eagle's wings (Exodus 19:4), Israel was fed manna in the wilderness, and the morning after the Egyptian army drowned in the Red Sea, Israel sang, "The earth swallowed them" (Exodus 15:12).

Revelation 17 lacks symbols drawn from the Exodus. Since the wilderness is instead connected to Babylon, it must be alluding to Isaiah 14:17, where the king of Babylon is said to have "made the world as a wilderness."<sup>15</sup>

### **C. Legend, Vespasian's Coin, and the Monument at Corinth**

#### **15. When did readers start recognizing that the woman of Revelation 17 is Rome?**

Even though the papacy had not yet formed, readers of Revelation 17 would have interpreted the woman as being Rome even before John wrote the chapter. Perhaps this is why there is less manuscript evidence for Revelation than the rest of the New Testament.

In 71 AD, the emperor Vespasian minted a coin that had his image on the front, and an image of the goddess Roma sitting on seven hills on the back.<sup>16</sup>

During the first half of the second century AD, the city of Corinth had a monument consisting of a statue of Roma sitting on a base shaped like rough rock, with eight inscriptions containing the names of Rome's seven hills, five of them being called *mons* (mountains), and two of them being called *collis* (hills).<sup>17</sup>

#### **16. Is Roma sitting on seven hills the only connection with Revelation 17?**

No, it isn't. Regarding Vespasian's coin, "the bare right breast of Dea Roma on this coin ... seems to add more substance to the label 'whore.'"<sup>18</sup> Such exposure went contrary to the modesty standards of Roman women, particularly the citizen class.<sup>19</sup>

On the left of the coin, beneath the seven hills, is a she-wolf suckling the twins, Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome. The Latin word for "she-wolf" also means a woman of loose character. Roman writers attributed the origin of the story of the she-wolf feeding the twins to the fact that their foster-mother, Larentia, was unchaste.<sup>20</sup> The same writers also relate the tale that the twins were conceived through rape, incest, or fornication.<sup>21</sup>

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15. That other parts of Isaiah 14 are also relevant to Revelation strengthens this point. Isaiah 14's boasts and fall of Lucifer explain Revelation 12's war in heaven. During the millennium and throughout eternity, "the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet" (Is. 14:7) because the real king of Babylon is vanquished. Less obvious is how Revelation 11:1's measuring the temple implies that the 1,260-year prophecy reign of the king of Babylon has ended, since the measuring of Zechariah 2:1-2 follows 1:11's assertion that Isaiah 14:7 has been fulfilled.

16. The British Museum has one displayed at [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C\\_1872-0709-477](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1872-0709-477), accessed April 30, 2025.

17. Henry Robinson, "A Monument of Roma at Corinth," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 43 (1974), 474, 477, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/uploads/media/hesperia/147494.pdf>.

18. Marius Heemstra, *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Ways* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 108.

19. Lillian Joyce, "Roma and the Virtuous Breast," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 59/60 (2014/2015): 1, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44981971>.

20. Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*, 4.3; Livy, *History of Rome* 1.4.7.

21. Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*, 3.2-3, 4.2; Livy, *History of Rome* 1.4.2.

## **D. The Scarlet Beast and the Significance of “The”**

### **17. What significance does the word “the” have when used with Revelation’s symbols?**

When John first sees something new, he tends to say that he saw “a” such and such. After that, he refers to the same thing as “the” such and such, because he is referring to what he has already seen.<sup>22</sup>

John saw “a sea of glass” in Revelation 4:6, and then “a sea of glass” in 15:2. The fact that 15:2 is missing “the” is important. It indicates that John had never seen 15:2’s sea of glass before, and that therefore the sea of glass in 15:2 is not the same as the sea of glass in 4:6.

### **18. Is the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit the papacy?**

When John sees the scarlet beast in Revelation 17, he says he saw “a” beast, indicating that he hadn’t seen it before. If the scarlet beast were the same as the papal beast of Revelation 13:1-10, John in 17:3 would have said that he saw “the beast.”

This conclusion harmonizes with Ellen White’s statement: “... ‘the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit.’ In many of the nations of Europe the powers that ruled in church and state had for centuries been controlled by Satan through the medium of the papacy. But here is brought to view a new manifestation of satanic power.”<sup>23</sup>

Since Christ said “the beast” in Revelation 11:7 when referring to the beast from the bottomless pit, the beast of that verse might be the angel-king of the bottomless pit of the fifth trumpet of chapter 9.

The second beast of chapter 13 is only called a “beast” once, in verse 11. Afterward it is called “the false prophet.” John has to avoid confusing the various beasts somehow.

We have the phrase “the beast” without any qualifiers in Revelation 16:10, 13, 19:19, 20. Nowhere in these verses does it say “the beast that ...” It’s just “the beast.” There is likely agreement that “the beast” in these verses is referring to the papacy.

And that gives us an interpretive principle outside of chapter 13, that when “the beast” is used without qualifiers it refers to the first beast of chapter 13.

In contrast, the four instances of “the beast” in 17:7, 8, and 11 have qualifiers. That Gabriel saw a need to qualify the phrase indicates that the scarlet beast is not the papacy.

## **E. Ten Protestant Horns Give Their Kingdom to the Beast**

### **19. How many kings are there in the end of time?**

In Daniel 2 there are ten kings represented by the ten toes, which are said to be in existence at the time God sets up His kingdom. Unless we want to propose that there are in reality twenty kings in the end of time, the ten kings of Daniel 2 and the ten kings of Revelation 17 must be the same.

### **20. How can this be if there are so many more nations today than ten?**

Jones argued in 1900 that the world at that time was made up of territories and allies of

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22. This is an oversimplification, since there is no “a” in Greek. Therefore, when this paper refers to “a” such and such, it is really referring to the absence of the Greek direct article.

23. White, *Great Controversy*, 268, 269

very few nations.<sup>24</sup> This idea is worthy of consideration, since it enables the ten toes and horns to take in the entire world if the rest of the world consists of territories and allies of the ten.

## **21. Must each of the ten kings today be the same as the ten kings in 476 AD?**

If the United Nations of 1945 still exists today, even though its present membership is not rigidly the same as it was in 1945, then the precise identity of the 10 kings of Daniel 2 in 476 AD does not have to be rigidly the same today.

“The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft is represented by the iron and the clay.”<sup>25</sup> This tells us that a common religion somewhat held together the broken iron pieces of Rome, similar to how the papal beast held together the ten horns. Since we’re not talking about ten unconnected nations not in confederacy with one another, the above comparison with the United Nations seems appropriate.

## **22. Are the ten kings Catholic powers, or Protestant powers?**

“What is it that gives its kingdom to this power? Protestantism, a power which while professing to have the temper and spirit of a lamb, and to be allied to heaven, speaks with the voice of a dragon. It is moved by a power from beneath.”<sup>26</sup>

## **23. If some of the ten kings today are Catholic countries, how can this be?**

A country whose laws guarantee liberty of conscience might be considered Protestant, even if the majority of its citizens profess to be Catholic. Thus, when Ellen White referred to the “Protestant world” from 1861 to the end of her ministry, she may at times be referring to the fact that even Catholic countries have espoused Protestant principles in these end times.

## **24. Is the kingdom given to the beast, or to the woman?**

After quoting Revelation 17:5 about what was written upon the woman’s forehead, Ellen White wrote: “What is it that gives its kingdom to this power?”<sup>27</sup> Thus, she appears to have believed that the kingdom is given to the woman in 17:13, 17.

We previously noted that “the beast” without qualifiers could be referring to the first beast of Revelation 13, and that Gabriel used qualifiers in 17:7, 8, 11. Four instances of “the beast” in chapter 17 remain:

*Verse 16:* “The ten horns which you saw upon the beast.” “Which you saw” is Gabriel’s signal in chapter 17 that he is referring to what John had seen in verses 3 to 6. Thus, he’s talking here about the horns of the scarlet beast. This observation shows that “the beast” in this verse does have a qualifier after all, and must refer to the scarlet beast.

But the word “upon” is uncertain, and the phrase may read “and the beast.” Since it doesn’t make sense to say that the papal beast will make desolate the papal woman, it must be the scarlet beast that attacks the papal woman. Thus, “the ten horns which you saw and the beast” must be equivalent to “the ten horns and the beast which you saw.”

*Verse 12:* “The ten horns ... receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” “The beast”

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24. Alonzo T. Jones, *The Marshaling of the Nations* (Pacific Press, 1900), 3-5.

25. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 63, 1899.

26. White, Letter 232, 1899.

27. White, Letter 232, 1899.



has no qualifiers, suggesting that it refers to the first beast of Revelation 13.

Probably no proposed interpretation has the “one hour” referring to actual length of time of their reign. A simple conclusion is that “one hour” means that the ten horns of Daniel 7 arose at the same time as the papacy. Odoacer’s Kingdom of Italy was uprooted in 493 AD, the first of the three horns to go. If the little horn was responsible, it had to be on the scene by 493. Thus, both the papacy and the nations of divided western Europe did arise about the same time.<sup>28</sup>

Could the ten kings receive power as kings more than once, and thus allow for a later reception of power too? If there is a time when they no longer have a kingdom, then perhaps, though that seems difficult to imagine today.

*Verses 13 and 17:* Both verses speak of the ten horns being in unity, and giving their power, authority, and kingdom to the beast, without the phrase “the beast” being qualified. Does the giving of power to the papacy happen more than once? It must.

How did the independent nations of the ten horns become part of the first beast of Revelation 13? At least some of their kings voluntarily chose to empower papal Rome, without which she could not have reigned. And that will certainly occur again.

But there may be a difference between past and future. In the past, there was no organized confederacy of all ten deciding to empower the papacy. The Holy Roman Empire certainly didn’t encompass all ten. If the future giving of their kingdom to the papacy is done as part of an organized confederacy, which appears realistic in today’s world, then that could explain why the scene John saw consisted of the woman, a symbol of the papacy, riding the scarlet beast, a symbol of that organized confederacy. In such a scenario, the ten horns would be giving their kingdom to the scarlet beast and the woman simultaneously.

## **25. When had the ten horns not received a kingdom yet?**

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet.” Revelation 17:12. If there are only ten kings in the end of time, and those are the ten of Daniel 2, then Gabriel must be making this statement prior to 476 AD, in John’s day, prior to when the ten horns rose to power out of the Roman Empire.

We continue delving into the time element of Gabriel’s conversation below.

### **F. The Time of the Sixth King of Revelation 17:10**

## **26. How is Revelation 17:7-18 different from most of the rest of the book?**

These verses are an extended conversation. They are not a continuation of the pictorial scenes of 17:3-6. The only other extended conversation in Revelation is in chapter 11, which is also the only other place where a beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit is explicitly mentioned.

Our goal is to determine the point in time at which the sixth king “is,” by using a principle derived from the Bible itself. We will find that principle in Revelation 11 by noting the differences in the time expressions between the pictorial scenes and the extended conversation.

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28. How the ten arose should be noted. Germanic tribes invaded Rome, which could no longer protect her borders. Rome then incorporated the invaders into Rome by making them “federates,” and paying them to guard the border. These nations then declared their independence. This is why they are described as horns arising out of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, rather than as new beasts conquering the fourth beast.

## **27. What is the time frame of the pictorial scenes of Revelation 10:10 to 11:1?**

The one part of Daniel explicitly said to be sealed is the 2,300 evening-morning of 8:14, according to Gabriel's words in 8:26. Given the similarity between Daniel 12:7 and Revelation 10:5, 6, we may conclude that Revelation 10:6 is announcing the end of the now unsealed 2,300 days, which resulted in John having the bitter-sweet experience of vs. 10.

In that context, then, Revelation 11:1 speaks of measuring the temple, altar, and worshippers. Matthew 7:2 uses "measure" to mean "judge." A measuring judgment is an investigative judgment. And the three things measured in Revelation 11:1 are the same three things cleansed in Leviticus 16.

The time frame of Revelation 11:1, therefore, must be post-1844.

## **28. What is the time frame of the extended conversation of Revelation 11:2b to 10?**

There is an interesting phenomenon in chapter 11. The chapter switches from the aorist tense (past tense) of "was given" in verses one and two, to the future tense of "shall tread," "will give," and "shall prophesy" in verses two and three. Then, after the future tense of "shall make war," "shall overcome," "shall see," "shall not suffer," "shall rejoice ... and make merry," and "shall send" in verses 7, 9, and 10, it switches back to consistently using past tense in verse 11.

10:10 and 11:1 are referring to the Great Disappointment of 1844 and the subsequent Investigative Judgment, and yet the 42 months and 1,260 days of 11:2b and 3 are spoken of as yet future. The simplest solution is to say that the time frame has shifted from 1844 in 11:1 to John's day in 11:2b, and then to 1797 and later in 11:11 ff.

## **29. Why does the time frame change within Revelation 11:2b and between vss. 10 and 11?**

For the change between vss. 10 and 11, the explanation is simple: John switches from recording what he is being told, to recording what he is seeing.

John consistently uses past tense to describe what he saw: "And I ... saw a beast rise up out of the sea" (Rev. 13:1). John doesn't say, "I shall see a beast arise out of the sea," because he had already seen it arise, even though the power it represented would not arise for centuries.

What happens within vs. 2 is a little more complex. Vs. 1 is a continuation of the scenes of chapter 10, and of a conversation John is experiencing within those scenes. But then within verse 2 the conversation switches from being within the scenes to being an extended conversation outside the scenes, as it were. For that reason, the tenses switch from past to future.

## **30. How does this explain when the sixth king of Revelation 17 "is"?**

We have the same sort of phenomenon in chapter 17. John saw the scarlet beast as if it was already in existence, while Gabriel said the beast "is not," and would arise in the future.

Put another way, (a) John is describing scenes of future events as if they have already occurred, because he has already seen them, and (b) John is recording speech about future events as if those events have not yet occurred.

Therefore, since Gabriel told John that the sixth king "is," the sixth king existed in John's day.

There are those who would prefer that the time of the sixth king be different. The challenge will be to find a biblical reason for that difference, while also explaining why the 42 months and 1,260 days of 11:2 and 3 are spoken of as future when the bitter-sweet

disappointment has already happened in 10:10 and the measuring judgment of 11:1 has already commenced.

## G. The Identity of the Seven Mountains of Revelation 17:9

### 31. How can Revelation 17:9 refer to Rome's seven hills when it says seven mountains?

The objection that the text says seven mountains, not seven hills, is a good argument for English speakers. But it isn't persuasive for Italian and Latin speakers.

Figure 1, an 1886 Italian map of Rome, in the already cited paper, "Flood and Drought," identifies the classic seven hills, plus the Vatican, Pincian, Janiculum, and Testaccio, as "Monte." Figure 3 from 1878 does as well, except that the Capitoline and Testaccio cannot be made out.<sup>29</sup>

The already cited report on the monument of Roma at Corinth states that the Roman poets used the terms *mons* (mountain) and *collis* (hill) interchangeably, but that officially five of the seven were called *mons* and two *collis*.<sup>30</sup>

Gabriel, therefore, used the majority term, "mountain" in verse 9.

### 32. Do Greek writers refer to Rome's seven hills as mountains or hills?

As with the Roman poets, Greek writers used both words when referring to Rome's seven hills. Here are examples of the use of ὄρος (mountain):

- Strabo referred to the Aventine and Caelian as mountains ("τὸ Ἀβεντῖνον ὄρος," "τὸ Καίλιον ὄρος").<sup>31</sup>
- Dionysius of Halicarnassus called the Caelian a mountain ("τὸ Καίλιον ὄρος").<sup>32</sup>
- Dio Cassius referred to the Palatine as a mountain ("τῷ Παλατίῳ ὄρει," "τό ... Παλάτιον τὸ ὄρος").<sup>33</sup> He calls part of the Capitoline "the sacred mountain" ("τὸ Καπιτώλιον ... καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ὄρος").<sup>34</sup>
- Reconstructions of Dio depend in part on Zonaras, who refers to the Capitoline as previously being called the Tarpeian mount ("τῷ Ταρπηίῳ ὄρει," "τὸ Ταρπήιον ὄρος").<sup>35</sup>

Also, Rome had an ancient festival called *septimontium* that Plutarch transliterates into Greek in his 69th Roman question ("Σεπτομουντίῳ," "Σεπτομόντιον"). Plutarch says the

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29. Valenti, "Flood and Drought," 37, 41.

30. Robinson, "A Monument of Roma," 479 n.12. For additional discussion and photographs of the inscriptions, see also Caroline Voit, *The Hills of Rome: Signature of an Eternal City* (Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2012), 131, 132; Benjamin D. Meritt, "Excavations at Corinth, 1927: Preliminary Report," *American Journal of Archaeology* 31 (1927): 452, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.2307/497866>; John Harvey Kent, *Corinth. The Inscriptions (1926-1950): Results of the Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens VIII*, 3 (Princeton, 1966), 139, accessed April 30, 2025, [https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/uploads/media/oa\\_ebooks/oa\\_corinth/Corinth\\_VIII\\_3.pdf#page=145](https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/uploads/media/oa_ebooks/oa_corinth/Corinth_VIII_3.pdf#page=145).

31. Strabo, *Geography*, 5.3.7.

32. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*, 2.50.1. (In the same passage, Dionysius uses both "mount" and "hill" to refer to the Caelian.) Biguzzi, from whom these references are borrowed, took the singular ὄρος of this phrase to refer to the Palatine as well. See Biguzzi Giancarlo, "Is the Babylon of Revelation Rome or Jerusalem?" *Biblica: The Pontifical Biblical Institute's Journal* 87 (2006): 384, n.46, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.bsw.org/biblica/vol-87-2006/is-the-babylon-of-revelation-rome-or-jerusalem/111/article-p384.html>.

33. Cassius Dio Cocceianus, *Historiae Romanae*, 53.27.5, 62b.18.2.

34. *Ibid.*, 44.25.3.

35. Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum*, 7.11.22, 30-31.

festival commemorates Rome becoming a city of seven hills,<sup>36</sup> thus showing that *septimontium* was commonly believed to mean “seven mountains” among even Greek speakers.

The significance of the map at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septimontium> is more clearly seen if one reads the Italian article at <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septimontium>. The encircling of hills labeled “montes” is said to be where the Latins lived, and the encircling of hills labeled “colles” is said to be where the Sabines lived. Thus, there is an added emphasis on the fact that the Latins lived on the mountains.

### **33. Why is this important if today’s seven hills aren’t the same as the original seven hills?**

The monument at Corinth shows which seven hills were the standard ones just after John wrote Revelation. That list is the same that Platner identified as of “little doubt” during “the Ciceronian epoch”: Aventine, Caelian, Capitoline, Esquiline, Palatine, Quirinal, and Viminal. These seven hills were the very ones encircled by the Servian Wall since the early fourth century BC.<sup>37</sup>

### **34. And yet there are eleven hills today within Rome’s old walls?**

Not until the third century AD was the Servian Wall superseded by the Aurelian Walls, built between 271 and 275 AD. The Aurelian Walls added the artificial mound called the Testaccio, and the Pincian hill. After Arabs raided Rome in 846 AD, the walls were extended around the Vatican hill. Lastly, in 1643 the Janiculum hill was encircled.

The bottom line is that in John’s day, the classic seven hills were the seven hills that were encircled by Rome’s walls. This is important because it was within the time context of John’s day that the angel said that the seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman “sits,” using a present tense, indicative mood, Greek verb.<sup>38</sup>

### **35. Given the Adventist interpretation of prophecy, shouldn’t the Vatican be included?**

Certainly the Vatican hill should be included. There’s the classic seven hills, and then there’s an eighth, the Vatican hill, on the opposite side of the Tiber River from the other seven, which Rome’s walls encircled centuries after John’s day.

This isn’t the only example of there being seven, and yet an eighth. Not so important as what shall follow is Platner’s discussion of Sextus Pompeius Festus’ confusing explanation of the word *septimontium* that includes a list of eight hills.<sup>39</sup>

## **H. The Identity of the Seven Kings of Revelation 17:10**

### **36. Could the seven kings be seven emperors?**

Some proposed lists begin with Claudius or Galba, but why exclude the earlier emperors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula? Some lists will begin with Julius Caesar, and yet he isn’t even considered an emperor.

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36. Plutarch, *Moralia*, 280.C.10-D.3.

37. Samuel Ball Platner, “The Septimontium and the Seven Hills,” *Classical Philology* 1 (1906): 70., accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/358908>.

38. The indicative mood retains the time aspect of the tense, unlike infinitives and participles.

39. Platner, “The Septimontium,” 73 ff.

If we want a good solid interpretation, we have to find good solid reasons for the list we choose. If there seems to be any hint of arbitrariness in our choice, the end result will be less convincing.

### **37. Could the seven kings be seven popes since 1929?**

Given that the ninth pope since 1929 will soon take the throne, it's not likely. But we'll address it because doing so may prompt the strengthening of other views.

The seven-popes-since-1929 view depends on 1929 being the healing of the deadly wound. If a wound was healed in 1929, it was the wound of 1870, not 1798. Thus far, the papacy's supremacy over the consciences of men has not been restored, even though he did regain the temporal power he lost in 1870 by becoming an absolute monarch reigning over a small bit of real estate.

Certainly this achievement is theologically important for the papacy, because if you are God on earth, you can't be politically under someone else. You have to be the top ruler of your own domain. But since the 3½ times of Daniel 7:25 was the time God's people were to be in the little horn's hand, the key to the healing of the wound is when he regains the power to compel the conscience.

Another problem is that if Gabriel is speaking to John in post-1929 times instead of in John's own day, it seems odd to say that the woman is sitting on seven mountains when the papacy has not owned Rome's seven hills since 1870.

The seven-popes theory also depends on the sixth king of Revelation 17:10 being John Paul II. There doesn't seem to be a solid biblical way to show that Gabriel told John that the sixth king "is" in the days of John Paul II. Why John Paul's day? Because the woman was already riding a beast in John Paul's day, even though that same beast had not yet risen from the bottomless pit, and was still "is not"?

### **38. Has Rome ever had seven kings?**

According to Rome's traditional history, Rome was ruled by seven kings from about 753 to about 509 BC, at which time the Roman Republic was founded. But there's an interesting detail: An eighth king named Titus Tatius or Tattius Sabinus ruled with the first king Romulus over a combined kingdom of Romans and Sabines. Thus, there were seven kings, but there was also an eighth.

### **39. Can the seven kings be seven kingdoms?**

It is intriguing that the first beast of Revelation 13 is composed of the parts of the four beasts of Daniel 7. Because of the leopard's three extra heads, there are a total of seven heads in Daniel 7, as well as ten horns, a lion, and a bear.

Of the competing theories regarding seven kingdoms, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome seem always to be included. One of the leopard's heads is Ptolemaic Egypt, which is a plus for those lists of the seven kings that begin with Egypt. But where does one go from there? Does Seleucid Syria correspond to Assyria, Macedonia to Greece, and Thrace to ... to what?

Those lists that begin with Babylon, there just isn't any way for the sixth king that "is" to be in John's day. And if that be the case, what do we do with Rev. 11:2b seemingly putting the 1,260 days after the end of the 2,300 days and the beginning of the investigative judgment?

If Rome's walls in John's day encircled only the classic seven hills, and later an important eighth, the Vatican, was added, and if Rome was originally ruled by seven legendary kings, but yet there is an eighth, then should we not search within Rome, and only within Rome, for the seven kings? And if so, how can the seven kings be seven kingdoms?

#### 40. What was Protestantism's and Adventism's original view on the seven kings?

The names of expositors are many. W. B. Godbey, Matthew Henry, John Gill, Adam Clarke, and William Miller all taught that the seven kings were seven offices serving as heads of state at different times in the history of Rome.<sup>40</sup>

Daniel 7 said the fourth beast would be different from the other beasts. Rome was a republic, unlike the monarchies of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. Another difference was that Rome repeatedly changed which office served as the head of state.

Uriah Smith's tract on the topic discusses how Elliot cites Osiander, Mede, Newton, Daubuz, King James, Pareus, Aretius, Napier, Brightman, and Fulco in support of the idea that the seven kings are seven offices that served as heads of state at different times.<sup>41</sup>

The sixth king, the office that was the head of state in John's day, would therefore be the Emperor. "Imperator," from which we derive the word "emperor," was originally a generic title for Roman commanders.<sup>42</sup>

#### 41. If the sixth king was the office of emperor, what were the first five?

A perusal of the various lists yields six main possibilities for the first five. Most lists begin with Rome's legendary kings.

Livy begins his sixth book with a summary of his first five books, which covered "the history of the Romans from the foundation of the City to its capture, first under kings, then under consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and consular tribunes."<sup>43</sup> To these can be added the later two triumvirates, the second of which was official.

We shall underline the offices Tacitus refers to at the beginning of his *Annals*:

Rome at the outset was a city state under the government of kings: liberty and the

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40. William Baxter Godbey, *Commentary on the New Testament* (Revivalist Office, 1896), 1:200, 206-208, 217, accessed April 30, 2025, [https://archive.org/details/commentaryonnewt0001godb\\_q1b6/page/2/](https://archive.org/details/commentaryonnewt0001godb_q1b6/page/2/); Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament* (Ed. Barrington & Geo. D. Haswell, n.d.), 6:922, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/matthew-henry-commentary-vol.-6/Matthew%20Henry%20Commentary%20%28Vol.%206%29/page/922/mode/2up>; John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament* (John Gill, 1748), 3:768, 769, accessed April 30, 2025, [https://archive.org/details/bim\\_eighteenth-century\\_an-exposition-of-the-new\\_1746\\_3/page/768/](https://archive.org/details/bim_eighteenth-century_an-exposition-of-the-new_1746_3/page/768/); Adam Clarke, *The New Testament ... with a Commentary and Critical Notes* (Lane & Scott, 1850), 2:1040, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/holybiblecontain06unse/page/1040>; William Miller, *Remarks on Revelations Thirteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth*, Second Advent Library, no. 47 (Joshua V. Himes, 1844), 5, 23, accessed April 25, 2025, <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p1335.2>; William Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ about the Year 1843*, (JB. B. Mussey, 1840), 80, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/evidencefromscri00millrich/page/80/>.

41. Uriah Smith, *The Seven Heads of Revelation 12, 13, and 17* (Uriah Smith, 1896), 38-40.

42. Arnaldo Momigliano, and Tim Cornell, "imperator," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (2015), <https://oxfordre.com/classics/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.001.0001/acrefore-9780199381135-e-3268>.

43. Livy, *History of Rome* 6.1.1.

consulate were institutions of Lucius Brutus. Dictatorships were always a temporary expedient: the decemviral office was dead within two years, nor was the consular authority of the military tribunes long-lived. ... Pompey and Crassus quickly forfeited their power to Caesar [1st triumvirate], and Lepidus and Antony their swords to Augustus [2nd triumvirate], who, under the style of “Prince,” [the emperor] gathered beneath his empire a world outworn by civil broils.<sup>44</sup>

Kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, consular tribunes, triumvirs, that’s one too many to have five before the emperors of John’s day. Why not commence Revelation 17’s seven kings with the founding of the Roman Republic, and remove the seven legendary kings from the list?

According to the legends, the Servian Wall didn’t even surround the seven hills until the reign of the sixth king. And modern scholarship claims that the Servian Wall wasn’t even built until 390 BC, long after the end of the seventh legendary king’s reign. Thus, equating the first five kings of Revelation 17 with the five different heads of state within the Roman Republic seems solid.

#### **42. Who would Revelation 17’s seventh king be?**

Two have been proposed: the Exarchate of Ravenna, and the papacy.

The Exarchate of Ravenna never ruled from the city of Rome, and seems a bit late, being established in 584 AD or later. What would be the point of including it in the list instead of the papacy if the papacy has already come to power?

Perhaps the fact that the exarchs weren’t really the heads of state is also a problem, since their role was to administer the Byzantine lands in the west. But the papacy hasn’t always been a head of state either ... unless we consider its dominion to be different from the rest of the powers of Daniel 7 because it claimed to be the head of a spiritual state. That it has always been.

The old Roman office that became the head of state under the papacy? Pontifex Maximus, the chief high priest of the College of Pontiffs.

#### **43. How could the papacy continue a short space (“ὀλίγον”) if it reigned for 1,260 years?**

Revelation 17:10 isn’t the only place in Revelation that mentions a short time. After the casting out and down of Satan, chapter 12:12 says, “The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (“ὀλίγον καιρὸν”). And this is before Satan persecutes the church through pagan Rome in verse 13, which began in the days of Nero,<sup>45</sup> and before the 1,260 days begin in verse 14.

Therefore, since Revelation 12:12 calls roughly 2,000 years “a short time,” the 1,260 days can be considered a short space too.

That is, unless “ὀλίγον” is too different from “ὀλίγον καιρὸν.” But abbreviated phrases sometimes are considered practically identical. Take for example “τὸ φρέαρ τῆς ἀβύσσου” of chapter 9, the bottomless pit. The Greek phrase occurs once in both verse 1 and 2, and then the word for pit alone, “φρέαρ,” appears twice in verse 2. But then in 9:11; 11:7; 17:7, 8; 20:1, 3, the only word present is “ἄβυσσος.” There is no separate word for “pit.”

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44. Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.1.1.

45. Cf. pages 40 and 438 of Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*.

## I. The Identity of the Scarlet Beast

### 44. If the scarlet is not the papacy, what might it be?

We earlier noted that Ellen White identifies the woman rather than the scarlet beast as the papacy,<sup>46</sup> and denies that the beast from the bottomless pit of chapter 11 is the papacy. What other options might there be?

*“The beast that was,”* denotes the ROMAN REPUBLIC, that was 1900 years ago. *“And is not.”* That is, it was not when John was having his vision in A. D. 96, because Imperial Rome was then the form of government, and continued to be until A. D. 538, when the seventh form of government came, viz: Papal Rome. *“Even he is the eighth.”* The eighth undoubtedly is, as we have shown, the two-horned beast with its image, a symbol of the people of Republican America, as they are and will be. *“And is of the seven.”* The eighth will cause all under his influence to worship the one that is called the seventh.<sup>47</sup>

Bates has put a lot of pieces together for us. But my proposal differs a little. For now, let’s consider his connection of the scarlet beast to republicanism, one of the two horns of the second beast of chapter 13.

### 45. How can we tie American republicanism to the scarlet beast?

There is an intriguing connection in the lack of crowns. The dragon had crowns on his heads, indicating a strong central government. The papal beast had crowns on his horns, indicating somewhat independent nations held together by a common religious system, as the iron pieces were held together by clay in Daniel 2. In contrast, the scarlet beast has no crowns, just like the second beast of Revelation 13, the American republic.

### 46. How can we tie the beast from the bottomless pit of chapter 11 to the scarlet beast?

Once the scarlet beast is tied to republicanism, it becomes tied to revolutionary France in chapter 11. Though France’s experiment with republicanism went awry, it greatly impacted the futures of many countries.

These revolutionary movements are important in Revelation. What year were the four angels told to hold the four winds until God’s people were sealed? 1848, the year of unexpected revolutions in Europe, which suddenly stopped, baffling many, right when Sabbath-keeping Adventists had become convicted that the Sabbath message was the sealing message which they had to take to the entire world.<sup>48</sup>

### 47. How can we tie the angel-king of chapter 9 to the scarlet beast?

Since the early days of the Reformation, expositors have connected the fifth and sixth trumpets to Islam. With that in mind, note this quote:

In Mecca despotism was impossible. The fierce, free-born Arabs of the desert would

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46. See questions 1 and 18 on pages 1 and 7.

47. Joseph Bates, “The Beast with Seven Heads,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 2 (1851): 4, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH18510805-V02-01.pdf#page=5>.

48. John Loughborough, *Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Review and Herald, 1905), 270-275, accessed April 30, 2025, [https://archive.org/details/greatsecondadven0000loug\\_z6r0/page/270/](https://archive.org/details/greatsecondadven0000loug_z6r0/page/270/).



tolerate no master, and their innate democracy had been sanctioned by the Prophet, who had explicitly declared that all Believers were Brothers. The Meccan caliphate was a theocratic democracy. Abu Bekr and Omar were elected by the people, and held themselves responsible to public opinion, subject to the divine law as revealed by Mohammed in the Koran.<sup>49</sup>

That's why, explains Stoddard, the seat of government was moved to Damascus and later to Baghdad. The Arabs just couldn't take how conquered peoples accustomed to despotism were importing despotic principles into Muslim society.

Such issues still divide the Muslim world today: "Sunni religious scholars, who are constrained by legal precedents, exert far less authority over their followers than their Shia counterparts."<sup>50</sup>

Some have written on the interaction between Islam and the French Revolution.<sup>51</sup> The extent to which Islamic philosophy influenced European political thinkers who promoted republicanism should be explored.<sup>52</sup>

#### **48. What is the bottomless pit?**

Adventism identifies the bottomless pit of Revelation 20 as the earth in a desolate condition. The fact that the deserts of Arabia give an idea of what that might be like provides a reason why the same bottomless pit symbol is used in both Revelation 9 and 20. If Islamic ideas of democracy influenced French thought in the French Revolution and republicanism beyond, then the use of the same symbol in Revelation 11 and 17 also makes sense.

### **Conclusion and Summary**

The scarlet beast is an end-time confederacy of republics and democracies that, under the leadership of the United States, installs the woman, the papacy, as the moral authority of the New World Order. Though the revolutions of 1848 suddenly ceased, since World War I republicanism and democracy have become the going thing, setting the stage for these final movements.

The woman's triumph will be short-lived. As the troops of Charles V, enemy of Luther, sacked Rome in 1527, so the confederacy will turn upon the woman and make her desolate.

In John's day: The ten horns had not yet received their kingdom because the Roman Empire had not yet divided, the scarlet beast was and is not because the Roman Republic was dead, five offices of old Rome were no longer heads of state, and Emperor now ruled the day. After Emperor came Pontifex Maximus, last of the seven kings, to be followed by the eighth, the scarlet beast, a revival of Roman republicanism.

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49. Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1921), 6, 7, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/cu31924028561300/page/n19/>.

50. "The Sunni-Shia Divide," Council on Foreign Relations (2023), accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.cfr.org/article/sunni-shia-divide>.

51. Ian Coller, "Islam and the Revolutionary Age," *Age of Revolutions*, January 27, 2020, accessed May 1, 2025, <https://ageofrevolutions.com/2020/01/27/islam-and-the-revolutionary-age/>.

52. History reveals additional links between Islam and France. The French Cardinal Fleury and Ambassador Villeneuve protected the Ottomans by mediating the disastrous treaty that ended the Turkish War of 1737-1739. Austria unnecessarily surrendered and Belgrade and agree to have its Austrian defenses destroyed. Karl Roider, *The Reluctant Ally; Austria's policy in the Austro-Turkish War, 1737-1739* (Louisiana State Univ. Pr., 1972), 121, 166-172, accessed May 1, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/reliantally00karl/page/121/>. For good reason, then, the Great Powers left France out of the picture when they seemingly resolved the Ottoman situation in 1840.