

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

Abstract

This paper offers a detailed, prophetic interpretation of Revelation 17 through the lens of Seventh-day Adventist theology and historicist principles, fully integrating the Book of Daniel, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, the Olivet Discourse, and the Book of Revelation. It will be shown that Revelation 17 reveals Satan's final strategy using a counterfeit church-state power led by the Roman Catholic Church and its popes and joined by apostate so-called Protestant religions against God's law. Drawing from interpretations of symbolic beasts, heads, horns, and prophetic timelines, the "seven heads" of the scarlet beast represent seven papal name lines since 1798. The paper shows that Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger) will be resurrected and assume a new papal name, becoming the prophesied "eighth" whose identity completes the count of 666. This event provides Satan *the key of the bottomless pit* introduced in Revelation 9:1. The "ten horns" are linked to apostate Protestant churches in alliance with the United States to enforce Sunday "rest" laws, forming a global religious-political union. Ellen G. White's visions validate these conclusions and warn of a coming "strong delusion" sent by God preceding Christ's return. Emphasizing that God reveals prophetic secrets to the faithful, this paper calls for vigilance and preparation among believers to resist deception and uphold seventh-day Sabbath truth in the face of end-time persecution.

Introduction

The Apocalypse of John has enthralled and perplexed scholars and theologians for centuries, initiating a myriad of suggested interpretations of the various scenes described throughout the book. Predominant among these interpretive speculations are those of the beast with seven heads and ten horns of Revelation 12, 13, and 17. The scarlet beast with its seven heads and ten horns described in chapter 17 is positioned in Revelation as revealing the culmination of all the major strategies Satan has crafted since sin entered the world through Adam nearly six thousand years ago as chapters 18 and 19 deal with the judgment and fall of Babylon and the return of Jesus. This paper relies on consistent application and rigorous reconciliation of interpretive methods developed from fulfilled and/or consistent interpretations of each of the prophecies in the book of Daniel, the Olivet Discourse, 2

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

Thessalonians 2:3-12 with its explicit clarifications, as well as in the book of Revelation¹ to determine the identity of the scarlet beast, its seven heads and ten horns, the harlot woman, as well as the “eighth.” It will be shown that all these prophecies interrelate and must fully integrate with one another. Scripture, as translated into various languages in use throughout the world, is emphasized under the assumption that God has provided adequate resources from the original languages to convey truth to all able to read or hear the spoken word. This paper takes the position that the King James Version provides the most overall accurate translation from these languages into English. This writer’s approach to the prophetic portions of scripture include contextual analysis to determine whether to render a particular passage as using literal or symbolic terms and if symbolic, definitions are applied from the nearest adjacent source of explanation in the Bible including discussion of similar subject matter in other books of the Bible. While the conclusions are able to be derived from the Bible alone, this paper adds the considerable discipline of reconciling related statements sourced in the writings of Ellen G. White, prophet and co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,² ratifying that her dreams and visions were from the Source of all truth, Jesus (Jhn 14:6). Further, this author accepts all of Ellen G. White’s writings as having divinely inspired application for the final generation to live on earth. Most of these references are included by footnote.

Absorption of the extensive scope of apocalyptic prophecies covered by this paper is predicated on a wide familiarity of scripture in general and particularly that of the prophets. The reason for the absence of a lengthy bibliography comes from the abundance of interpretive variations, with few scholars coming to consensus on almost any aspect of Daniel

¹ “The books of Daniel and the Revelation are one. One is a prophecy, the other a revelation; one a book sealed, the other a book opened.” www.egwwritings.org. {Ms 59, 1900, par. 23}. “As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures.” {PK 547.2} 1917.

² FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS #17, (1981), “One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth, which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 12:17; 19:10.)” <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/930.4#4> (accessed 03/30/2025).

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

and Revelation in general, let alone Revelation 13 and 17. The interpretations illuminated by this paper are based on inspired authors of the Bible.

This paper assumes God's communications to His prophets relates to the future from the time the visions or dreams were given for the benefit of His people, particularly the final generation living on earth when Jesus returns. Therefore a vital understanding and conclusion is that the mix of types, symbols, and literal language used, as recorded by the apostle John on Patmos, primarily relate to powers and events *future* to the first century Christian church according the words of Jesus recorded in Revelation 4:1. As Inspiration guided each prophets' writings it follows that *every* word is intentional, has bearing on prophetic interpretation, and has purpose and application for today's reader.³ Therefore, attempts made to "spiritualize" portions of the prophecies or to force explanations in order to achieve reconciliation of other popular interpretations are set aside by this paper. Amos 3:7 is accepted literally, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." The notion that prophecy can only be ratified *after* its fulfillment is rejected based on confidence in our Most High God and the faith *of* Jesus.

Revelation 17, then, is to be understood by the final generation living on earth as a summary and pinnacle of every apocalyptic prophecy into a single mosaic that must have application to and affect the whole earth,⁴ providing the reader an overview of Satan's masterful delusions beginning with his original lie, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen 3:4), spoken to Eve through the medium of a serpent. The Divine intervention of ancient Babel (Gen 11:1-9), the precursor to the Chaldeans of Babylon, may have been a physical failure for Satan however these seeds of rebellion and false religion have flourished and extended throughout all history and will culminate at the return of Christ, coming to an end at His third

³ "We are to take our position in the school of Christ as humble learners. He speaks as one having authority, and he affirms that all that is written in the law and the prophets is the word of the living God. It is the inspiration of One infallible, the divine communication to holy men of old, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." www.egwwritings.org, {RH October 3, 1899, par. 7}.

"The Lord has been greatly dishonored in our institutions of learning when His Word has been made only a book among books. The very Book that contains infallible wisdom has scarcely been opened as a study book. Daniel's life contains a history that as yet has been but feebly appreciated." www.egwwritings.org, {Ms 55, 1898, par. 18}.

⁴ Criticism of the reconciliation of all eschatological prophecies of scripture as some grand theological system are encouraged to take into account the fact that Inspiration must be entirely consistent with all the dreams and visions provided to God's prophets throughout earth's history. Otherwise, Isaiah 8:20 should be prayerfully considered.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

coming one thousand years later, the final *literal* time prophecy, according to Revelation 20. God likely used symbols and riddles to mask this prophecy in order to preserve scripture and simply because prior generations did not have a need to understand the minute level of detail conveyed that will confirm unwavering belief in our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ among the sealed saints of the final generation of earth.

Revelation 17: Key Interpretive Vectors

- 1) The symbolic powers of Revelation 17, and all of the Book of Revelation, apply and occur future to when John was given the Revelation of Jesus Christ in about A.D. 96 while imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos. The angel instructs this in Revelation 4:1, “I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.”
- 2) Accurate identification of every power depicted in Revelation must fit into the framework of the Daniel 2 image, the only symbolic prophecy in these two eschatological books representing a chronology of events and powers that includes the return of Christ.
- 3) Understanding that the continuum of time is represented by the structure of prophetic powers depicted as animals of Daniel 7, 8; Rev 12, 13, 17 and the images of Daniel 2 and the woman of Revelation 12. The animal portrayed three times with 7 heads and 10 horns is illustrating manifestations of power at various points in its ongoing development.
- 4) Each symbol of various powers in Daniel and Revelation represent either political or religious powers, however these powers are never mixed in a single symbolic creature.
- 5) Seeing Revelation 13:1-10 has two fulfillments: a past, localized fulfillment triggered by Sunday “rest” legislation as mandated by the Third Council of Orléans in 538, culminating in 1798 when Pope Pius VI was taken captive in the French Revolution, and a global fulfillment beginning with the initiation of global Sunday “rest” legislation in the very near future.
- 6) Seeing the relationship of the application of the number 666 between Revelation 13:18, 17:9, and Luke 14:28, Daniel 12:10, and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. These references must be integrated into the interpretation of Revelation 17:8-11 as they all relate to the papal church and its popes.
- 7) Understanding of the relationship of the word “mystery” between Revelation 17:5, 7 and the prophetic mystery of Revelation 10:7 placing most of the events of Revelation 17 as

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

following the Day of Atonement for 1844, the initiation of Investigative Judgment according to Daniel 7 and 8.

8) Recognizing the relationship of the term “bottomless pit” (abyssos [G12]) to the first death of “sleep”¹ in Revelation 17:8 to Revelation 9:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 11, and the first “lie” in Genesis 3:4.⁵

9) Every word in scripture has meaning and even the lack of a word that might naturally be expected, has significance, is deliberate and therefore must be addressed.

10) Belief that the writings of Ellen White, qualified by all scriptural tests of a prophet, have divine authority applying to God’s people to the end. Comments relating to these passages must be integrated into their interpretation.⁶

Essential Understanding from Daniel the Prophet

The book of Daniel provides a foundational template of interpretive guidelines and principles crucial to accurate understanding and therefore must be consistently applied to the “beasts” of Revelation without exception. (See footnote 1).

1. Daniel 2 provides a visual representation of an image made of various metals declining in value and purity⁷ from head to feet representing the decline in spirituality as well as the continuum of time.⁸ These materials represent powers actively engaged as enemies of God’s people and the principles of His kingdom from Daniel’s day to Christ’s return, however the feet and toes have a mixture of iron and clay; the clay having two distinct consistencies. The iron of the feet and toes, an extension of

⁵ Note the resurrections of Jairus’ daughter (Mat 9:24; Mar 5:39; Luk 8:52), the widow’s son (Luk 7:11-17), Lazarus (Jhn 11:39-44), Tabitha/Dorcas (Act 9:36-42), and Eutychus (Act 20:7-12), as well as the resurrection of select wicked in Daniel 12:2 and Revelation 1:7.

⁶ “Ignorance is no excuse now for the transgression of law. The light shines clearly, and none need be ignorant, for the great God Himself is man’s instructor. All are bound by the most sacred obligations to God to heed the sound philosophy and genuine experience which He is now giving them in reference to health reform. He designs that the great subject of health reform shall be agitated and the public mind deeply stirred to investigate; for it is impossible for men and women, with all their sinful, health-destroying, brain-enervating habits, to discern sacred truth, through which they are to be sanctified, refined, elevated, and made fit for the society of heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory.” www.egwwritings.org, {3T 162.1}. (emphasis supplied).

⁷ “The metals in the image, symbolizing the different kingdoms, became less and less pure and valuable, from the head down. The head of the image was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the sides of brass, and the feet and toes iron mingled with clay. So the kingdoms represented by them deteriorated in value.” www.egwwritings.org, {RH February 6, 1900, par. 4}.

⁸ It may interest the reader that the pure woman of Revelation 12:1 also represents the continuum of time of God’s people, His true “church,” however time is shown progressing in the opposite direction; from feet to head.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

Imperial Rome represented by the legs of iron shows the evolution to contemporary nations and may be referred to as “statecraft.” The *miry* clay of the feet and the *brittle* clay of the toes is readily deduced as referring to “churchcraft”⁹ and is well represented in scriptures referencing Jesus as the “Potter.”¹⁰ This distinction shows a separation of materials used to differentiate political state powers from ecclesiastical powers in prophecy, both of which are unveiled to persecute the saints of God, at times in an adulterous church-state consortium. The “miry” clay of the feet primarily represents the papal power in its centuries long intimate, secretive relationships with the nations of Europe, represented as the iron of the *feet*, while the “brittle” clay of “the toes of the feet,” clearly differentiated in Daniel 2:42, is primarily indicative of the historically more distant relationship between Protestant religions and the United States of America represented by the iron of the *toes*. This careful delineation between feet and toes, along with two differing clay consistencies, is vital and often ignored.

In addition, the kingdom of God is represented symbolically by a mountain (Isa 2:2-3; Dan 2:35, 45). The prophet Ezekiel refers to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as “stones of fire” (Eze 28:14) where Lucifer once served as a covering angel in the presence of God. It is appropriately deduced that this symbolic mountain representing God is comprised of the “stones of fire” from which a “stone” (Jesus) was carved “without hands.” (Dan 2:34), ultimately establishing God’s universal kingdom on earth.¹¹

Vitality, it is understood that the interpretation of *all subsequent apocalyptic prophecies in scripture must fully reconcile with every aspect of the image of Daniel 2.*

2. Daniel 7 introduces “four great beasts” representing the same political kingdoms as does the Daniel 2 image,¹² however these beasts were animated to show exacting

⁹ “The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft is represented by the iron and the clay. This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the State will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God’s forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy.” www.egwwritings.org, {Ms 63, 1899, par. 31}.

¹⁰ Isa 41:25; 64:8; Jer 18:4, 6; Lam 4:2; Rom 9:21; Rev 2:27.

¹¹ God’s kingdom on earth will be established with the passage of 1,000 years following Christ’s second coming, removing the living and resurrected saints from earth and taking them to Heaven according to Rev 20 and 21.

¹² Winged lion = Babylon, bear = Medo-Persia, four-winged leopard with four heads = Greece and its subsequent division in 301 B.C., dreadful and terrible beast = Rome, ten horns = subsequent barbarian tribal kings. Without question, these symbols all represent historic political powers.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

detail representing events and precise actions *in advance* of their occurrence. We notice the leopard is shown with four heads and history confirms that the original power of Greece (represented by the body of the leopard) that was coalesced under Alexander the Great was divided as a result of conflict and ratified by a treaty between four generals following the Battle of Ipsus¹³ in 301 B.C. Historically, each of the four heads represented lines of kings that reigned in each of the four provinces with two kingdoms (Thrace and Macedonia) falling within a brief time period, leaving the Ptolomies and Seleucus's as antagonists until Rome conquered them both.¹⁴

“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth,” (Daniel 7:17). History indicates the word “kings” represents *lines of kings* who reign over a particular power, be it a political kingdom or ecclesiastical order. This principle must be consistently applied to the phrase “...the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings...” Revelation 17:9-10 ESV. Here, the term “mountains” is contextually grouped within symbolic language however many mistakenly apply it literally to the city of Rome, a convenient but inconsistent interpretation as the underlying Greek work, *oros* ^[G3735] is clearly associated with devotion to the great harlot governing by virtue of these heads/mountains/kings. Further, the seat of the papal church is the Vatican, a distinct, uniquely independent city-state granted permanent observer status at the United Nations, including the U.N. Security Council.¹⁵

A fourth beast was shown having “ten horns,” three of which were “plucked up by the roots” by a “little horn” (Dan 7:8) that established itself *separately* from the “exceedingly dreadful” beast commonly identified as Rome (republic and imperial state)(Dan 7:19, 20), *as well as the symbolic (10) horn political* powers assuming control of the territory subsequent to the fall of Imperial Rome. Though beginning to arise during the reign of Imperial Rome, this “little horn” power described as “the

¹³ “The Battle of Ipsus was fought between some of the Diadochi (the successors of Alexander the Great),” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ipsus#:~:text=The%20Battle%20of%20Ipsus%20%28%20Ancient%20Greek%3A%20Iw6c%29,pitted%20against%20the%20coalition%20of%20three%20other%20companions

¹⁴ Some stress that “seven” heads appear in Daniel 7, endeavoring to create a parallel with the seven-headed beast in Revelation. This introduces confusion and is incompatible with established Daniel 2 image symbolism.

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_See_and_the_United_Nations

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

other which came up” is distinguished from the “ten horns” “*in* his head,” setting it apart as an ecclesiastic order exercising kingly power¹⁶ with its origins not from Rome, but devolving from the early Christian church described in the book of Acts and further illustrated by the character traits described in the accounts of the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3. Further, this little horn does not wield state-backed authority until *after* the western Roman Empire collapsed in 476, and *after* the “ten” horns achieve power as Daniel 7:8 says, “...there came up *among them* another little horn...” with verse 20 clarifying, “And of the ten horns that were *in his head*, and of *the other which came up*, and before whom three fell...”¹⁷ (*emphases added*). The sequencing of rising and falling powers here illustrated is of vital importance in consistent application to the seven-headed beast of Revelation 12, 13, and 17.

Of the “ten” horns of this “dreadful and terrible” beast, it is crucial to understand that the number “ten” represented not a literal number but several dozen barbarian tribes that wrested regional control, many of which established rule with kings within the former geographic areas once controlled by Imperial/pagan Rome.¹⁸ Therefore, to represent the “ten horns” as limited to ten countries or nations promotes interpretive doubt among scholars and historians when compared to literal history. This same principle must be applied when interpreting the identity of the “ten” horns introduced in Revelation 12, with their expanded trait of the added crowns in Revelation 13:1 and finally identified via their actions after receiving political enforcement powers described in 17:12-17. The principle of the Bible being self-interpretive is vital to employ and apply here.

¹⁶ “God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men.” www.egwwritings.org, {8T 236.3}.

“All of God’s servants have a work to do in His vineyard. In the church of God no one is to set himself up in kingly power and authority. “All ye are brethren.” [Matthew 23:8.]” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt 170, 1902, par. 12}.

¹⁷ The three horn Arian powers opposed by the papal church are likely to be the combination of the Vandals and Alans under one king, the Ostrogoths, and the Rugians, each qualifying as horn powers as they had ruling kings.

¹⁸ <https://amazingfiction.org/little-horn.shtml#:~:text=Since%20the%20fourth%20beast%20just%20so%20happens%20to,represent%20the%20tribes%20that%20conquered%20the%20fourth%20beast>

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

The Daniel 7 beasts representing state powers show historical progression beginning at the back or body of the beast, continuing to the heads, and ending with the horns, each representing the continuum of time. Out of many global people groups and empires existing at each of those points in history, these four are called “beasts” as they share in common the persecution of God’s chosen people (literal followed by spiritual Israel) during the historical eras they occupied. Our definition of “beast” as used in apocalyptic prophecy, refers to state sanctioned persecution of God’s people either enforced directly or implicitly encouraged by ecclesiastical organizations for matters pertaining to individual conscience.

3. Daniel 8 initially seems to provide repetition in respect to the nations symbolized in Daniel 7, however it is vitally linked to Daniel 9 and 11 and addresses “the time of the end.” For the purposes of this study, we limit analysis of these chapters to the principle of the progression of powers evident in detail provided of both the symbolic ram and the goat. In a literal reading of scripture, the angel Gabriel confirms these two animals followed by their respective horns as representing nations and kings. (Dan 8:20-22). The observation that these were animals used in God’s sacred sanctuary services that pointed forward to the cross and that investigative judgment of all the earth was initiated in 1844 is at the heart of Daniel 8, pointing the Bible student to the importance of this chapter at the *time of the end* as affirmed by Gabriel in Daniel 8:17 and 19. This fact should raise questions about the popular notion that animals used in the sacrificial services (ram and goat) are to exclusively represent the empires of Medo-Persia and Greece as well as Gabriel’s explanation to Daniel, “...Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.” Dan 8:17.
4. Daniel 11:30b-36 [“Much of the history that has taken place in fulfilment of this prophecy will be repeated.”].¹⁹ This, and a number of other statements made by Ellen G. White,²⁰ indicate that several prophecies that may have had past, partial or

¹⁹ www.egwritings.org, {Lt103-1904.17-20}. Ellen G. White quotes this passage indicating its repetition (meaning *after* the letter was written in 1904) when the papal church will once again exercise persecutory power provided by *all* nations (Rev 13:3, 8) in the enforcement of Sunday “rest.”

²⁰ E.g. www.egwritings.org, {7BC 982.7}(1890), {Ms88-1897.15-17}, {Ms 163, 1897, par. 5}, {Ms153-1902.8-9}, {19MR 282.1}(1902).

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

“shadow” fulfillments will be repeated on a global basis in direct opposition of the plan of salvation being offered to all (Jhn 3:16). “... thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2Ti 3:15. Indeed, Daniel 12:3 and 12:10 describe a wise people to be granted discernment at the time when the “abomination that maketh desolate” is set up. They that instruct and “turn many to righteousness” are known as the *maskilim*.²¹ Contextually, the event referred to as the abomination here likely points to man’s overturning of the second of “twin institutions for the glory of God”²² established in Eden, the seventh-day Sabbath “rest” by legislation when enforced by every nation on earth stipulating Sunday “rest” accompanied by civil penalties.²³

Powers with Regional Influence			
Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Power	Dates of Rule
Gold	Lion	Babylon	609-539 BC
Silver	Bear	Medo-Persia	539-331 BC
Brass	Leopard	Greece	331-168 BC
Iron of Legs	Dreadful Beast	Imperial Rome	168 BC - AD 476
Iron of Feet	"Ten" Horns	European Nations	476 - 202x
Miry Clay of Feet	Little Horn	Papal Church	538 - 1798

Apocalyptic Prophecy of Paul

Paul’s second letter to the believers in Thessalonica gives conclusive evidence of his receiving a highly detailed vision containing vital clues revealing the final strategies of Satan. As yet unfulfilled, these soon will be executed globally via a religious power described as the “man of sin” (2Th 2:3) and then more specifically as “that wicked” (2Th 2:8), referring to the individual at the head of a monolithical ecclesiastical power, “whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” (2Th 2:9). The information Paul was given as recorded in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 *must be fully integrated with the interpretation of Revelation 17* as this passage provides a vital facit of the identical

²¹ Steven Thompson, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234108819.pdf>; Hugo Leon, http://www.daniel11prophecy.com/uploads/1/1/3/7/113721993/hugo_leon_end_time_maskilim_paper_new.pdf

²² www.egwwritings.org, {MB 63.2}. The first institution was marriage between a man and a woman. <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ228/PLAW-117/publ228.pdf>, December 13, 2022.

²³ “...when it shall have become a law that the transgression of the first day of the week shall be met with punishment, then their cup will be full.” www.egwwritings.org, {RH March 9, 1886, par. 21-22} {7BC 910.5}

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

ecclesiastical power that craves and finally compels reverence for its dogmas, especially its establishment of Sunday rest.²⁴

Three Distinct Beasts of Revelation

God reveals three powers that will co-exist to persecute His end time people, explicitly called “beasts” via the apocalyptic prophecy of John.

1. “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit ^[G12] shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.” Revelation 11:7. Linguistically, the term *abyssos* [G12]²⁵ is introduced to John initially in Revelation 9:1, 2 and 11 and is consistently applied to death or the state of the dead in conjunction with Satan finally in Revelation 20:1-3. We might refer to *abyssos* as the “receptacle of the dead.” This key word is used in the riddle of Revelation 17:8-11 and was also associated with the demon-possessed man in Gadarenes. “And they [demons] besought him [Jesus] that he would not command them to go out into the *deep*.” ^[G12] Luke 8:31. In addition, while some consider Revelation 11 as exclusively referring to the historical revolution of France (1789-1799), a growing number acknowledge a future *global* fulfillment of the scenes there depicted, at the very least in the cities of the world, “spiritually ... called Sodom and Egypt.”²⁶ The “beast” of the bottomless pit, the receptacle of the dead, will torment the whole earth during the time of God’s sealing process of the living (Rev 9:4; 7:2-3), placing the trumpet judgments of Revelation 8 and 9 in future tense, while embracing their partial historical fulfillment.²⁷

²⁴ “From Sabbath to Sunday,” Catholic Answers, JAMES P. GUZEK, 1999, <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/from-sabbath-to-sunday> (accessed 03/30/2025). “When Did the Catholic Church Change the Sabbath to Sunday? Historical Insights Revealed!,” Saint Jerome Church Magazine, January 17, 2023, <https://www.saintjeromechurch.org/churches/when-did-the-catholic-church-change-the-sabbath-to-sunday-historical-insights-revealed/> (accessed 03/30/2025).

²⁵ “of Orcus, a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons” <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g12/kjv/tr/0-1/>

²⁶ “Let all who would understand the meaning of these things read the eleventh chapter of Revelation. Read every verse, and learn the things that are yet to take place in the cities.” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt158-1906.6-8}. See Revelation 11:8.

²⁷ “At the very time specified, Turkey, through her ambassadors, accepted the protection of the allied powers of Europe, and thus placed herself under the control of Christian nations. The event exactly fulfilled the prediction.” www.egwwritings.org, {GC88 334.5}. “Trumpet after trumpet *is to be* sounded...” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt 112, 1890, par. 13} {7BC 982.7}, (*emphasis added*).

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

2. “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.” Revelation 13:1. This second (sea) “beast” is configured with seven heads and ten horns as was the dragon of Revelation 12:3. The dragon is identified as the “old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” (Rev 12:9). Revelation 12 provides context to the activation of the plan of salvation, not at creation but at the fall of humanity in Eden following a war casting down Satan and his angels. Satan was barred from heaven following the crucifixion of Christ in another “casting out” event. Revelation 14:1-5 describes the character traits of a pure woman representing the true church of God who will keep all God’s commandments and testify of Christ’s righteousness, imputed to all who express their love for Jesus through obedience of His word and claiming the faith *of* Jesus (Rev 14:12). A significant strategy of Satan was to create a counterfeit “Christian” church that ultimately will establish itself globally by receiving homage from every nation on earth via Sunday “rest” legislation honoring a tradition it created, entirely devoid of scriptural support. As of the time of this writing the transference of sacred rest from the seventh day to the first day has yet to be globally fulfilled, but many signs now point to its imminent adoption. This sea beast of Revelation 13:1-10 represents the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) with its seven heads and ten horns. This paper takes the position that the puppeteer behind earthly powers that persecute God’s people is Satan (Rev 12:17) who rebelliously claims and exercises authority to bestow power, symbolized by crowns provided to the seven “heads” (Rev 12:3) and subsequently removed, then provided to the “horns” (Rev 13:1). This movement of crowns signifies the demise of the “seven heads” who had transparently blasphemed God by claiming to be God on earth (“...and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.” Rev 13:1), as well as the power to forgive sins. This is an important interpretive feature as never in history has any political power or civil authority made such claims.
3. “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” Revelation 13:11. The third distinct “beast” of Revelation originates, not from populous areas represented by the sea (Rev 17:15), but

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

from the earth, consistent to how the word “wilderness” ^[G2048] is used in Rev 12:6, 14; 17:3, masquerading as the symbolic lamb of so-called Protestant Christianity but speaking, via legislative orders and policies coercing or compelling acts contrary to heaven’s established ideology of choice according to individual conscience. This “false prophet” will enter its “beast” mode by persecuting those who give the third angels’ *warning* message following the establishment of Sunday “rest” legislation in the United States of America, and then to every nation.²⁸

These three “beasts” represent a three-pronged strategy of Satan in a bid to deceive every nation on earth today along with a vast percentage of individuals in every religion, tribe, and people numbering about 8.2 billion.²⁹

Powers with Regional Influence					
Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Rev 9:11, 11:7	Rev 12, 13, 17	Power	Dates of Rule
Gold	Lion			Babylon	609-539 BC
Silver	Bear			Medo-Persia	539-331 BC
Brass	Leopard			Greece	331-168 BC
Iron of Legs	Dreadful Beast			Imperial Rome	168 BC - AD 476
Iron of Feet	"Ten" Horns			European Nations	476 - 202x
Miry Clay of Feet	Little Horn		Beast/7 Heads	Papal Church	538 - 1798
Powers with Global Influence					
Iron of Toes			Earth Beast	United States	1776 - 202x
Brittle Clay of Toes			Beast/10 Horns	Protestant Churches	202x - 202x
			The Eighth: 666	Final Pope	202x - 202x
		Bottomless Pit Beast		Gross Spiritualism	202x - 202x
Stone carved from Mountain of God			Lamb of God	Godhead	Infinity Past and Future

Revelation 17 Overview

Revelation 17 exposes Satan’s final strategies describing vital elements that the final generation of earth will witness, confirming that some will escape deception by being written in the book of life (Rev 17:8) and numbered among the 144,000 (Rev 14:1-5), finally getting “victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.” Rev 15:2. Revelation 17:1-2 moves the reader back in time from when the seven

²⁸ “When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery; it will be nothing else than giving life to the tyranny which has long been eagerly watching its opportunity to spring again into active despotism.” www.egwwritings.org, {5T 711.4}.

“...when it shall have become a law that the transgression of the first day of the week shall be met with punishment, then their cup will be full.” www.egwwritings.org, {RH March 9, 1886, par. 22}.

²⁹ <https://www.worldometers.info>, accessed 05/01/2025.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

plagues described in Revelation 16 are poured out as they follow the close of judgment and intercession of Jesus in the Most Holy Place of the temple in heaven.³⁰

Rev 17:1-2 “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: ²With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

It is evident John was transported in vision between earth and heaven as well as to different time periods future to his imprisonment on the Isle of Patmos (Rev 1:9), likely during the reigns of Roman emperors Domitian and Nerva in about A.D. 96. These future views given to John occur within the chapter of Revelation 17 as is evident beginning in verse 1, “...Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” Waters, defined as “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” in verse 15, is juxtaposed with “wilderness” (a “lonely region” or even “a woman neglected by her husband”)³¹ referring to the “great whore” losing authority the papal church had previously enjoyed via its illicit relations in consortium with the nations of Europe, removed on February 15, 1798 by decree proclaiming the Roman Republic.³² This was followed five days later by the imprisonment of Pope Pius VI on February 20.³³ Having been involuntarily thrust into a emblematic “wilderness”³⁴ on that date, the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet is clarified thereafter to be seated on “seven heads” (v.9-10), *synonymous* with seven mountains and seven kings. The terms heads, mountains, and kings, clearly symbolic in nature, are employed and must consistently be applied as is done in the prophecies of Daniel. The power to persecute sanctioned by nations was removed from the RCC by decree in 1798, therefore the blasphemous body of the “beast” passed into history, leaving the woman to rule via the heads/mountains/kings, representing the popes leading the papal church following the 1798

³⁰ The culmination of the process of judgment is elucidated in Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; 12:1; Revelation 14:14-16.

³¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2048/kjv/tr/0-1/>

³² <https://www.britannica.com/event/French-revolutionary-wars/Formation-of-the-Second-Coalition>.

³³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_VI

³⁴ Some claim this wilderness [G2048] to be synonymous with the bottomless pit [G12], however the obvious linguistic linkage is convincingly associated with Revelation 12:6, 14 where the pure woman, representing God’s true people, is forced into the wilderness by persecution for matters of conscience.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

decree.³⁵ This interpretive key will be developed later in this paper. To summarize, verses 1 and 2 provide a retrospective view of the activities of the papal church (great whore) directly seated “upon many waters” (the nations she claimed authority over until 1798). These verses provide the transition to the great change the RCC experienced in 1798 (as being seated on the seven heads/mountains/kings),

Rev 17:3 “[So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness:](#)”

That an angel having one of the seven vials is unveiling additional prophetic detail to John points the reader to the ultimate war (Armageddon) to occur during the sixth and seventh plagues (Rev 16:12-21), where scripture indicates the final scenes in Revelation 17 will be fulfilled.

The “great whore” was identified by the reformers in centuries past as the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), a monolithical religion claiming Christ as having “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2Ti 3:5) through its non-biblical traditions and by incorporating pagan practices and so called holy days into its rituals while systematically adulterating Biblical memorials of creation and the plan of salvation.³⁶ Revelation 17:18 makes a clear distinction between this woman of ill repute and the kings of the earth yet the connection of her reigning over the nations shows that all political powers on earth will finally become subservient to the RCC in the near future, fulfilling Nahum 3:4, “Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.” This ecclesiastical ruling power, the initial component of and synonymous with *spiritual* Babylon, is Satan’s counterpoint to *spiritual* Zion, the New Jerusalem, capitol of God’s universal

³⁵ A careful analysis of apocalyptic expositors whom identify the harlot woman as the Roman Catholic Church who also advance a plethora of theories as to the identity of the seven heads as various nations and/or ecclesiastical powers universally fail to adequately explain how the papal church would have ruled over these empires that preceded it by upwards of 1,000 years. On that basis alone these various theories must be set aside in spite of their popularity. Significant caution must be exercised as new theories are being advanced that seek to “spiritualize” the literal words of Bible prophecy rather than following the counsel of Isaiah 28:10, 13.

³⁶ “Historicist interpreters commonly used the phrase “Whore of Babylon” to refer to the Catholic Church. Reformation writers Martin Luther (1483–1546, author of *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*), John Calvin (1509–1564), and John Knox (1510–1572, author of *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstruous Regiment of Women*) taught this association. Most early Protestant Reformers believed, and the modern Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches, that in Bible prophecy a woman represents a church. The connection noted on the seven hills of Rome is argued to locate the church.”
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whore_of_Babylon (accessed 03/16/2025).

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

kingdom. The papal church has always claimed to honor Christ but in reality honors the dead and is the “mother of harlots.” The second component of spiritual Babylon (17:18) is comprised of these harlot daughters, initially estranged, who have reconciled to their “mother”³⁷ and are engaged in the pursuit of worldwide Christian unity described in Revelation 17:12-15.³⁸ These apostate Protestant churches are rising to power and will be fully joined to symbolic Babylon when policing authority is granted through nations enforcing Sunday “rest” legislation. This point is evident in Jeremiah 51:7, “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.” (also Rev 14:8; 18:3).

Identifying characteristics of the papal church symbolized by the “great whore” are described by John as follows:

Rev 17:3-5 “...and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: ⁵And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

The “names of blasphemy” indicates persecution of God’s people under the guise of ecclesiastical claim of authority over individual conscience, believed and enforced by political powers. The word “MYSTERY” is written on the great whore’s forehead causing John to be confused.

Rev 17:6 “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. ⁷And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.”

³⁷ “Catholics and Lutherans mark 500th anniversary of Reformation” Vatican News, October 31, 2017, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2017-10/catholics-and-lutherans-mark-500th-anniversary-of-reformation.html>

³⁸ “In the seventeenth of Revelation is foretold the destruction of *all the churches* who corrupt themselves by idolatrous devotion to the service of the Papacy, those who have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt 232, 1899, par. 20}. (emphasis added).

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

John was perplexed as his default understanding of the word *mystery* was likely that of the kingdom of God (Mat 13:11) and of Christ (Col 2:2; 4:3), however the immediate context of its use within the Book of Revelation points to chapter 10. This is the unveiling of a prophetic “mystery” initially introduced in Revelation 10:7, “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery ^[G3466] of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” The Greek word “mystērion” [G3466] can be defined as, “a hidden purpose or counsel of God: the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly”³⁹ confirmed by the angel to Daniel; “none of the wicked shall understand” (Dan 12:10).

Revelation 12 and 13

This study concludes that the configuration of the “great red dragon” in Revelation 12 and that of the beast from the sea of Revelation 13:1-10 represent the same earthly ecclesiastical power as that of the scarlet beast in Revelation 17:1-18, acting under the influence of Satan and his demons. Each of the three iterations of this uniquely configured beast having seven heads and ten horns unfolds additional attributes of Satan’s strategies in directing the RCC, as well as all churches claiming Christ but denying His transformative power, to persecute and suppress God’s word. However, God has always protected faithful followers according to Revelation 12:6, “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days” emphasizing, “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness...” (12:14).⁴⁰ In order to explain the riddle contained in Revelation 17:8-11, key attributes of the RCC must be drawn from Revelation 12 and 13. Consistent with the beasts of Daniel, the dragon, the sea beast, and the scarlet beast represent apostate ecclesiastical powers, initially introduced in Daniel 2 as the two types of clay, miry and potters’ (brittle following the curing process); powers that progress historically from “tail” to “body” to “heads” and finally to “horns.” These parallel symbols are summarized in the chart below:

³⁹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3466/kjv/tr/0-1/>

⁴⁰ “Wilderness” is symbolic of the removal of earthly power, applicable to Rev 17:3.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

Ecclesiastical Powers of Symbolic Babylon, City of Harlots					
Symbolic Power	Reference	Tail (Isa 9:14)	Body Waters	7 Heads Wilderness	"10" Horns
		Satan	Papacy	Lines of Popes	Apostate Protestants
	Dan 2:41-42		Miry Clay-Feet		Brittle Clay-Toes
		< Creation	538 - 1798	1798 - 2022	Sunday Rest Law>
Great Red Dragon	Rev 12:3-4	War in Heaven	Persecution	Wounded	Persecution
Sea Beast	Rev 13:1-10, 18		Persecution	Wounded	Persecution
Scarlet Beast	Rev 17:1-11, 18		"Was"	"Is Not"	"Yet Is"
"Eighth," of the 7	Rev 17:11				"Yet Is"

It is no coincidence that Satan, the great Deceiver behind these beasts and the father of lies (Jhn 8:44) is represented by the dragon and specifically its “tail” as we read, “The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.” Isa 9:15. Care is given in these passages to include specific details that would describe a once pure church as it entered into a wilderness for 1,260 years of ecclesiastical and state sponsored persecution as a result of the RCC fornicating with and ruling over the nations of Europe. It is noteworthy that this period was initiated by the abominable decree of the Third Council of Orléans⁴¹ mandating Sunday “rest” in 538. The individual behind fornicating ecclesiastical and state entities is identified as “...the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...” Rev 12:9. Further, it is clear that specific prophetic animals represent identifiable entities with dated, specific phases illustrated by notable changes that correlate to treaties, decrees, or outcomes of conflicts. It is Satan who invented and grants kingly power to the seven heads/mountains/kings denoted as “crowns” (Rev 12:3) during the wilderness experience the RCC entered in 1798.⁴² Next to receive kingly powers on the world stage are the “ten” horns (Rev 12:3; 13:1; 17:12-14, 16-17). It can be seen that Revelation 12 is expanded on in Revelation 13:1-10, 18 and further elaborated on in Revelation 17 in order for God to fulfill His covenant to reveal future events and powers *before* they occur to the “wise”, those earnestly praying and studying in order to

⁴¹ https://www.detailedpedia.com/wiki-Third_Council_of_Orléans;

<https://www.sundaylaw.net/books/other/andrews/hos/hos20.htm>

⁴² “But the great apostate says, ‘I will work at cross-purposes with God. I will empower my delegate, the man of sin, to take down God’s memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus I will show the world that the day sanctified and blessed by God has been changed. That day shall not live in the minds of the people. I will obliterate the memory of it. I will place in its stead a day bearing not the credentials of God, a day that cannot be a sign between God and His people. I will lead the people who accept this day to place upon it the sanctity that God placed upon the seventh day. Through my vicegerent I will exalt myself. The first day will be extolled, and the Protestant world will receive this spurious sabbath as genuine.’” www.egw writings.org, {Ms 82, 1899, par. 20}.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

understand. To summarize Revelation 12 and 13:1-10, 18, the “body” of the seven-headed, ten-horned beast represents the activities of the RCC from 538-1798. The seven heads represent lines of popes whom have taken names they have chosen (as opposed to God providing new names [Isa 62:2; Rev 2:17; 3:12])⁴³ representing the activities of the RCC from 1798 to present. The “ten” horns represent the Protestant churches at a time when by national decree, *de facto* authority is granted by the enforcement of any form of Sunday “rest.” The overall form of the dragon merely points to Satan as the great deceiver and instigator of all the prophesied evils leveled against God and His people.

Riddle of Revelation 17:8-11

This passage has been a challenge to understand ever since John recorded it late in the first century. Today, there are a plethora of interpretations including some who hold that the heads represent various caesars and Uriah Smith’s speculation that these represented seven forms of Roman government. The most popular theme today includes a plethora of various civil/political powers as well as ecclesiastical powers being assigned to the seven heads beginning with empires existing prior to John’s prophecy.⁴⁴ However, Revelation 4:1 plainly states, “Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be *hereafter*,” consistent with the overriding purpose of prophecy as a future glimpse from when the revelation occurred. Reading Revelation 13:1-10 the logical question arises, how can the papal church be associated, let alone rule over historical, civil powers predating its rise following apostolic times? And, what role might these empires perform within this prophecy centuries *before* the

⁴³ Isa 4:1 “And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.”

⁴⁴ “When a new view is presented, the question is often asked, “Who are its advocates? What is the position or influence of the one who would teach us, who have been students of the Bible for many years?” God will send His words of warning by whom He will send. And the question to be settled is not what person is it who brings the message; this does not in any way affect the word spoken. ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’

If we are to bear a part in this work to its close, we must recognize the fact that there are good things to come to the people of God in a way that we had not discerned and that there will be resistance from the very ones we least expected to engage in such a work.” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt19d-1892.18, 22}.

“Those to whom the message of truth is spoken seldom ask, “Is it true?” but, “By whom is it advocated?” Multitudes estimate it by the numbers who accept it; and the question is still asked, “Have any of the learned men or religious leaders believed?” Men are no more favorable to real godliness now than in the days of Christ. They are just as intently seeking earthly good, to the neglect of eternal riches; and it is not an argument against the truth, that large numbers are not ready to accept it, or that it is not received by the world’s great men, or even by the religious leaders.” www.egwwritings.org, {DA 459.5}.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

papal church existed? Conversely, if one head represents the papal church with others assigned as empires, nations, or other ecclesiastical powers, how can that theory be reconciled to the sequence of symbolic metals of the image of Daniel 2 or the process used to interpret the four heads following the “body” of the Daniel 7 leopard? How can a fulfillment be ascribed to Revelation 13:3, “and *all the world* wondered after the beast” which includes all seven heads? Some erroneously go on to equate “the eighth” as a final kingdom, however scripture clearly indicates this will be an individual man; “...he ^[Greek masculine pronoun] is the eighth” and must also be “of the seven.” Notice, “the eighth” is not designated a “head” as many suppose. Generally, the absence of wording that we might otherwise expect, such as the second angel message missing the phrase “loud voice,” is significant and a principle necessary to be applied in Rev 17:11.

Rev 17:8-11 “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the **bottomless pit**,^[G12] and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. ⁹And here is the **mind** ^[G3563] which hath **wisdom**.^[G4678] The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. ¹⁰And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. ¹¹And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”

Many have missed the understanding developed in Daniel 7 of the progression of powers from “body” to “head,” and similar progression of the “horns” of the ram and goat in Daniel 8, clearly pointing to a progression of the RCC after its initial “beast” phase ended in 1798. Further, the command of Revelation 13:18 specifically calling those with understanding to perform a calculation is widely ignored and treated as a standalone thought or relegated solely to the “image” beast:

Rev 13:18 “Here is **wisdom**.^[G4678] Let him that hath **understanding** ^[G3563] **count** ^[G5585] the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore *and* six.”

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

The Greek word *sophia* ^[G4678] is used only four times in Revelation and calls for “broad and full intelligence.”⁴⁵ This type of wisdom is attributed to God in Revelation 5:12 and 7:12. When the phrase “here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count...” (13:18) reappears in Revelation 17:9, “And here is the mind which hath wisdom,” contextually associated with the “heads” of the papal beast, the correlation is remarkable and unmistakable.⁴⁶ Further, both of these texts use the Greek word *nous* ^[G3563], interpreted as understanding (13:18) and mind (17:9), a word meaning to employ thoughtful perception, reasoning, judging, and to determine. The application of Revelation 13:18 unmistakably points directly to 17:9-10 and this is one of several vital keys opening the interpretive mystery of the riddle of Revelation 17. The numbers that must be calculated and associated with “Six hundred threescore and six” point to the “seven heads” because the harlot woman was specifically and explicitly shown to John as sitting on the seven heads (not on the beast’s “body”) and *the sources of numbers are identifiable only when and where the ecclesiastical symbol (the woman) of the great city Babylon is visible*. When this ecclesiastical component (the harlot mother) of symbolic Babylon was seated “upon many waters” (*before 1798*, Rev 17:1), then it was not possible to identify the source of the numbers to calculate. Her change in seated (ruling) position, moving from waters to the seven heads literally points to which fraudulent, delusive men blasphemously claimed to be gods. These men have the numbers that are to be counted and added up to ultimately yield 666 at Christ’s return – the seven heads, synonymous with lines of kings, are the source of the identifiable “count” numbers.

In addition, a call to “count,” *psēphizō* ^[G5585], is found in only one other place in scripture, Luke 14:28, with Jesus asking, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth^[G5585], the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?” Jesus’ application calls for a complex, comprehensive, and precise calculation to occur, the same type of process required to calculate 666. Contextually, we are directed to apply the calculation of the number 666 to the “seven heads” that “are seven mountains on which the woman (the papal church) is seated; they are also seven kings...” Rev 17:9-10 ESV. Having lost its ability to coerce and compel the “seas” of nations and peoples to adhere to the

⁴⁵ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4678/kjv/tr/0-1/>

⁴⁶ THE DANIELIC BACKGROUND FOR REVELATION 13:18 AND 17:9, Gregory K. Beale, 1980. <https://www.tyndalebulletin.org/article/30601>

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

liturgical traditions of its own devising, the RCC has been sitting as “a queen” (18:8) via its “kings” ever since the seemingly deadly wound it suffered in 1798. And these seven kings, like the four heads of the Daniel 7 leopard that each represented lines of kings, can be grouped into *symbolic mountains of gods* for the purpose of performing the calculation of the number 666.

A common protest is often made that the terms “man” and “his” in the phrase “...the number of a *man*; and *his* number...” can and should be rendered as generic. However, when appropriately aligned with the “man of sin” (2Th 2:3), described as “that Wicked be revealed” (2Th 2:8) specifically at the Second Coming of Christ, coupled with the obvious linkage within Revelation (17:9), a compelling case is made that the number does indeed identify an individual man serving as pope at the parousia.

As the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) boldly claims its popes are the Vicar of Christ, the RCC itself provides documentation asserting this by maintaining listings of both legitimate popes and antipopes (42+) the RCC has declared heretics, *some posthumously*.⁴⁷ The identity of the man whose number is 666 is imbedded in the prophetic mystery of discovering the method of calculating the number of the beast, namely, an individual man who personifies the end time beast. The clue and method of calculating (counting) the number (666) of the beast is directly related to identifying the seven heads on the scarlet beast clarified as precisely where the harlot woman is seated. Calculating the number 666 correctly will lead to the identification of the end time persecuting beast as a system under the leadership of an individual man the Bible calls the “man of sin” and “that Wicked,” “whose coming is after the working of Satan.” (2Th 2:3-9).

To properly conduct the calculation, the symbolism of the “mountain” of Daniel 2 from which a stone was “cut out without hands” (Dan 2:34, 45) from the “mountain,” must be applied. Just as this mountain is a symbol for the Triune Godhead ruling the Universal Kingdom, with the Stone representing Jesus, Babylon is Satan’s proxy and is referred to as a “destroying mountain” (Jer 51:25), taking orders from the enemy of souls. The harlot woman

⁴⁷ <https://www.ecatholic2000.com/list-of-popes/>, <https://ucatholic.com/resources/list-of-the-popes-of-the-catholic-church/>, <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12272b.htm>, <https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en/holy-father.html>, <https://vaticancatholic.com/list-of-antipopes-in-history/>

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

is identified as “that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (Rev 17:18), a diagnosis of the spiritual condition of Babylon, a confederacy of the papal church, apostate Protestantism, and gross spiritualism represented as three frogs (Rev 16:13). Symbolic Babylon is empowered by corrupt nations, and the duplicitous “merchants of the earth” (Rev 18:11). Historically, literal Babylon contained an enormous seven-tiered ziggurat (representing a *single* symbolic mountain) for the purpose of worshipping multiple false gods.⁴⁸ Revelation 17 contains the detailed description of the end time manifestation of this elaborate deceptive religious system symbolized as seven mountains or groupings of false gods, which correspond to seven *lines of kings*. For each mountain or group of gods/kings, one must count the gods in each of the seven mountains and sum the total of each “mountain” in the process to arrive at the sum of 666. The command in Revelation 13:18 enlists those who have been granted wisdom and understanding to “count the number of the beast.” The method of counting can be summarized as follows: Count and sum up all the gods/kings in each of the seven symbolic mountains (papal name lines). Sum the totals for each of the seven mountains to calculate the total count. As God provided the time and place for the Messiah at the first advent, He has provided the precise events leading up to Jesus’ return, to be understood by the final generation living at the time of the second coming, ushering in a jubilee of peace for God’s people and a one-thousand-year rest for the land.⁴⁹

Babylonian Culture and Practice

But what mathematical system should be used to perform this “count”? The ancient Babylonian sun worship system identified thirty-six (36) constellation gods,⁵⁰ referred to as

⁴⁸ https://www.bible-history.com/babylonia/babyloniathe_ziggurat.htm; “The Romans had a large building in Rome called the Septizonium, the 7 zones and the Latin word Seps is a “venomous serpent.” --Harper, op. cit. A common title of Rome was Septimontium, “Seven Mountains” --id. Harper also gives “the 7 planets” as a definition for Septizonium, and it would appear definite that the 7-zone building was dedicated to the worship of the 7 planets, just as the 7 mountains were name[d] originally after the planets (Latin literature speaks of the Hill of Saturn, the Hill of Jupiter, etc., in Rome).

But the 7-planet city of Rome was only a copy of the city of Babylon. The Babylonians also had a massive 7-zoned or stepped temple tower dedicated to the worship of the 7 planets. --Seven Great Monarchies, Rawlinson, ii, p. 191. This temple, curiously enough, was known as the “mountain house,” “house of the 7 divisions of the world,” “house of seven zones,” and “temple of the seven lights.” The Trail of the Serpent, pg. 14, Murl Vance.

⁴⁹ “Then commenced the jubilee, when the land should rest.” www.egwwritings.org, {Broadside3 April 7, 1847, par. 7}. Corresponds with Rev 20:1-3.

⁵⁰ <https://hackya.com/us/babylonian-sun-seal-square/>;

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

“Mazzaroth”⁵¹ in Job 38:32. One of these, the god associated with the sun, was supreme over all the other gods.⁵² The number 666 can be traced to the worship practices of ancient Egypt, which Babylon completely integrated into its religious exercises, incorporating the twelve divisions of the zodiac with 36 decans⁵³.⁵⁴ The number “8” is highly significant in the occult as adding the integers of 1 through 8 aggregates to 36, a mathematical triangular number; itself the triangular form of 666.⁵⁵ To illustrate how 666 comes from the method the Babylonians used to calculate this supreme occult number, pagan priests counted 36 constellation gods,⁵⁶ adding up the integers of 1 through 36 equaling 666. Nebuchadnezzar’s city of Babylon contained one ziggurat⁵⁷ (symbolic mountain) dedicated primarily to the

⁵¹ Strong’s H4216, “the 12 signs of the Zodiac and their 36 associated constellations.”

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4216/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

⁵² “The Babylonians divided each of the 12 houses in the zodiac into three rooms, making 36 in all. They then divided the entire remainder of the sky into 36 constellations, and appointed the ruling god of each constellation to rule over one of the 36 rooms of the zodiac. Since the spirits of the departed were believed to go to and dwell in the stars --a teaching still much alive today, there was therefore not a spirit in the heavens, not a star in the sky which was not represented in the 36 rooms of the zodiac, and to swear by the number 36 was to swear by every god in the heavens above, as well as by all the spirits of the departed. The 36 gods were called decans because each ruled over 10 degrees of the zodiacal circle and over 10 days of the 360-day year.” The Trail of the Serpent, Oriental Watchman Publishing House, Salisbury Park, Post Box 35, Pune 411 011, India, 1991, pg. 27, Murl Vance.

⁵³ “The decans are 36 groups of stars used in the ancient Egyptian astronomy to conveniently divide the 360 degree ecliptic into 36 parts of 10 degrees each, both for theurgical and heliacal horological purposes,”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decan>, (accessed 03/31/2025).

⁵⁴ <http://www.666numberofthebeast.com/666numberofthebeast.html#:~:text=In%20this%20system%20of%20worship%2C%20they%20had%2036,so%20that%20they%20could%20have%20power%20over%20them.>

⁵⁵ “A triangular number or triangle number counts objects arranged in an equilateral triangle.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangular_number

⁵⁶ “...the Medieval Church was very number conscious, that it was well-acquainted with the principle of triangular or summary numbers, and that it studied pagan literature to learn the significance of sacred numbers. The Church could not have been ignorant of the significance of 8 and of the summary or triangular form of 8 (36) mentioned by Plutarch as the most sacred numbers in the mysteries. [Vance shows pagan religions added numbers together in triangular number form in such a way to designate sacred numbers, for example, adding 1 through 36 equals 666.] Nor could the church have been ignorant of the summary number of 36, the number 666 assigned from early days to the worship of the sun god as the ruler of the 36 rooms of the zodiac circle. There are far too many ‘seals of the sun’ with Latin inscriptions to admit of such ignorance, when the 36 rooms are numbered and laid out in a 6 x 6 square with the numbers so arranged that each column adds up the same no matter in which direction the adding is done. The Church could not have been ignorant of the fact that the ‘36 heavens’ which they mention refer to the 36 rooms of the zodiac and the 36 constellation gods assigned to these rooms.” The Trail of the Serpent, pg. 96-97, Murl Vance.

⁵⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etemenanki>

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

worship of Marduk⁵⁸ and surely incorporating these 36 constellation gods.⁵⁹ The number 666 was calculated by adding up the count number of each god, $(36+35+34 \dots 3+2+1) = 666$.⁶⁰

Pagan worship methods were known to ancient Israel witnessed throughout scripture. Reading in 2 Kings 23:5,

“And he (Josiah) put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets ^[H4208],⁶¹ and to all the host of heaven.”

Since symbolic Babylon represents the system arrayed against God during the time of the end, the mathematical system used to perform the calculation should follow the pattern set by ancient literal Babylon.

Seven Heads: The Popes⁶²

At the date of this writing, the RCC claims there have been 266 deceased popes beginning with Peter and continuing through Pope Francis (Died 04/21/2025).⁶³ When a pope selects his name he usually chooses to honor a predecessor or someone he admires.⁶⁴ Of the 82 different names taken by popes of the RCC as of this writing, 46 are unique meaning only one pope has used the name (including Peter & Francis). The remaining 36 pope-names ($82 - 46 = 36$) have been taken by two or more *legitimate* popes, qualifying them as symbolic

⁵⁸ “Marduk, in Mesopotamian religion, the chief god of the city of Babylon and the national god of Babylonia; as such, he was eventually called simply Bel, or Lord. Marduk was later known as Bel, a name derived from the Semitic word baal, or ‘lord.’” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marduk>

⁵⁹ “As early as the 14th century BC a complete list of the 36 Egyptian decans was placed among the hieroglyphs adorning the tomb of Seti I; they figured again in the temple of Ramesses II, and characterize every Egyptian astrological monument... The division of the ecliptic into the zodiacal signs originates in Babylonian astronomy during the first half of the 1st millennium BC.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zodiac>, (accessed 03/31/2025).

⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/666_%28number%29

⁶¹ Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon: Planets [H4208] “The Hebrews gave this name to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, called in Arab the circle of palaces; these were imagined to be the lodging places of the sun during the twelve months, and they rendered to them a superstitious worship, 2Ki 23:5.” <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h4208/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

⁶² Some have sought to show that when Vatican City was established by the Lateran Treaty of 1929 that the “deadly wound” was healed. Each individual pope is counted since 1929 with Pope Francis being the eighth. This theory is rendered inaccurate by the death of Pope Francis (04/21/2025). The healing of the deadly wound is the reconstitution of the persecuting “beast” by legislation transferring God’s day of rest from the seventh day to the first day, accompanied by civil penalties.

⁶³ <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12272b.htm>, (accessed 05/13/2025)

⁶⁴ <https://www.catholic.com/qa/what-are-the-criteria-for-a-pope-in-choosing-his-new-name>, (accessed 07/19/2024)

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

“mountains of gods” (or lines of kings), just as the Triune Godhead makes up the “Mountain” of God in Daniel 2:35, 45.⁶⁵ Of the 36 pope-names or lines of popes (mountains of gods) taken by two or more popes, only six lines of popes (kings) originating in church history continued in use following 1798 and the seventh line, John Paul, was added in 1978, “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings...” (Rev 17:9-10). The seven names are:

Name, (# of popes taking the name), inaugural and final year used:

1. Gregory (16), 590-1846
2. Leo (13), 440-1903 + Leo XIV (14), 2025-202x
3. Benedict (14),⁶⁶ 575-1922 + Benedict XVI (15), 2005-2022⁶⁷
4. Pius (12), 140-1958⁶⁸
5. John (21), 523-1963⁶⁹
6. Paul (6), 757-1978
7. John Paul (2), 1978-2005

Francis (1), 2013-2025

The following calculation is made according to the Babylonian mathematical system:

1. Gregory (16) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16 = \underline{136}$
2. Leo (13) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13 = \underline{91}$
3. Benedict (14) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15 = \underline{120}$
4. Pius (12) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12 = \underline{78}$
5. John (21) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16+17+18+19+20+21 = \underline{231}$

⁶⁵ Interestingly, in Ellen Gould’s (White) first vision she records, “Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains...” www.egwwritings.org, {EW 18.2}.

⁶⁶ The Papacy declared Benedict X an antipope (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipope_Benedict_X). Benedict IX was elected and served 3 different terms; counted as 1 pope. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Benedict_IX, (accessed 07/19/2024).

⁶⁷ A pope name is counted by the Vatican *if* in good standing, *after* death. Pope Benedict XVI died 12/31/2022.

⁶⁸ “That afternoon he had us accompany him to the cathedral and look upon the bust of Pius VI who was noted in prophecy, who was led into captivity and died in captivity. Here was the one marked in history who received the deadly wound. His heart is encased in the marble monument beneath where the bust is placed. We felt rather solemn as we looked upon the monument of this man noted in prophecy.” {Lt 110, 1886, par. 5}, *emphasis added*.

“We looked upon the bust of Pius VI. The marble statue beneath the bust contained the heart of the pope. This is the pope specified in prophecy, which received the deadly wound. He was carried captive to Valence, and we looked upon the tower where he was confined and where he died. From this tower he could look upon the beautiful waters of the Rhone, and this gave him much delight. It was a gratification to look upon this representation of the pope which prophecy has so faithfully described.” www.egwwritings.org, {Ms 70, 1886, par. 25}, *emphasis added*.

⁶⁹ The papacy designated the man claiming to be John XVI as an antipope (AD 997-998, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipope_John_XVI, accessed 07/19/2024) and the name “John XX” was skipped, so there are actually only 21 popes who used the name “John” even though the last pope using the name “John” was designated as John XXIII.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

6. Paul (6) $1+2+3+4+5+6 = \underline{21}$

7. John Paul (2) $1+2 = \underline{3}$

Francis ⁷⁰ = 1

Total = 681

The source of the number 666 (“number of a man”) is derived from identifying the seven heads as shown above. The current total of 681 obviously exceeds the prophetic number identifying “the eighth” however a particular set of circumstances will be shown of how the number 666 is able to be arrived at. The complete identity of the seven heads was unable to be made until the appearance of the line of popes called John Paul (the seventh line of popes, Rev 17:10) arising in 1978 with Albino Luciani taking a unique new name, John Paul I (who died mysteriously 33 days into his pontificate).⁷¹ This seventh head/mountain/king line of names ended in 2005 at the death of John Paul II, the second pope taking the name, establishing it as a symbolic mountain of gods. The connection between 666 and the seven heads of the Scarlet Beast is not coincidental—but God ordained the use of symbols to hide the source (seven heads = lines of popes) of these numbers until the final generation, when the symbol of the seven heads could be combined to calculate a number in order to fulfill the command to those who have been granted wisdom and understanding to “count the number of the beast.” This wisdom and understanding will distinguish genuine seventh-day sacred rest from the abominable counterfeit “rest,” the spurious sabbath designated as Sunday⁷² by the RCC.

Solving the Riddle

To solve the riddle, Revelation 17:10 provides another clue, the understanding of which is predicated on realizing that John was taken forward in time, past 1798, as only six of the seven papal name lines had been established at that point in history.

Rev 17:10 “*And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.*”

⁷⁰ A pope name is counted by the Vatican *if maintained* in good standing, *after* death.

“‘He Will Have to Account for the Crimes He Has Committed’ – Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò Publishes Scathing Response to News of Pope Francis’s Death,” Apr. 21, 2025.

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2025/04/he-will-have-account-crimes-he-has-committed/>

⁷¹ <https://allthatsinteresting.com/pope-john-paul-i> This short tenure demonstrates that circumstances can be manipulated by divine order to fulfill prophecy at whichever time Jesus returns.

⁷² A significant clue of the identity of the man numbered 666 is found in Ezra 2:13, “The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.” The Hebrew name “Adonikam [H140] means “my lord arose” clearly linking 666 with Sunday, the day Jesus arose out of the tomb.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

The table below will only be able to be ratified after “...the eighth, and is of the seven...” becomes known by the whole world.

Seven Papal Heads/Mountains/Kings			First	Final	Span of years each papal	Total years papal office was	Actual	"Counted"
Names used since 1798 (Rev 17:9-11)			Year	Year	name was in use	held by each line of popes	Popes	and added
1	Gregory I - XVI	"fallen"	590	1846	1256	140	(16)	136
2	Leo I - XIII	"fallen"	440	1903	1463	99	(13)	91
3	Benedict I - XV	"fallen"	575	1922	1347	89	(15)	105
4	Pius I - XII	"fallen"	140	1958	1818	159	(12)	78
5	John I - XXIII	"fallen"	523	1963	1440	123	(21)	231
6	Paul I - VI	"is"	757	1978	1221	67	(6)	21
7	John Paul I - II	"not yet come"	1978	2005	27	27	(2)	3

The purpose of the riddle in verse 10 was to announce the seventh papal name line, John Paul, that would uniquely “continue a short space,” indeed distinctly shorter at 27 years than any of the other six papal name lines. In summary,

- ✓ The seven “kings” represent ruling popes segregated by assumed name, *ecclesiastical* authorities recognized by the whole world, synonymous with the seven “mountains” (representing lines of “gods”) and the seven “heads” (lines of popes) from Rev 17:9-10.⁷³
- ✓ The “Five have fallen” (name last used in [year]) are: Gregory [1846], **Leo [1903]**, **Benedict [1922]**,⁷⁴ Pius [1958], John [1963].
- ✓ “One is”: John is being shown this vision *as his present tense...as if he was shown the vision during the reign* of the sixth head/mountain/king, Pope Paul VI during his reign (1963-1978). (The name “Paul” was last previously used from 1605-1621).
- ✓ “the other is not yet come...continue a short space”: Popes John Paul I & II reigned a total of 27 years (1978-2005), by far the shortest time a pope name was in use in comparison with the other six names used since 1798 as well as in the history of the

⁷³ “It is indeed worthy of note that John the Revelator declares that the seven heads on which the fallen church was to sit are seven hills or mountains and that both branches of Catholicism, the Eastern and Western Churches, should each be ruled or directed from cities founded on seven hills. The doctrines of the two branches of the great mother church are essentially the same and the pope of Rome has from the beginning claimed jurisdiction over both Eastern and Western Catholicism.” The Trail of the Serpent, pg. 71, Murl Vance.

⁷⁴ Pope Benedict XVI is not included in the count (04/16/1927 – 12/31/2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Benedict_XVI), nor is Pope Francis (12/17/1936 – 04/21/2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis), nor is Pope Leo XIV (09/14/1955 - ____, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Leo_XIV) for the purpose of identifying the seventh head as explained later in this paper.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

other 29 lines of names used by two or more popes *before* 1798 (Appendix A) making up the total of 36 pope “mountains” or “lines” (John was shown this seventh “head/mountain/king” as future to the era that he was taken in vision).

God’s Strong Delusion

The prophecy of Paul recorded in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 must be integrated into the interpretation of Revelation 17 as the subject matter addresses the Roman Catholic Church and its popes. The introduction of the “man of sin” can be appropriately defined as a corrupt religious power or the individual leading that power, or both. The man of sin, synonymous with “that Wicked” is identified as one “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” 2Th 2:4. This “man of sin” can represent an ecclesiastical system with some speculating this as a reference to Satan, however, 2Th 2:9 clearly identifies an individual to come, “whose coming is *after* the working of Satan.” The popes have claimed to be the Vicar of Christ on earth, uniquely fulfilling this verse. In what sequence of events will these prophecies take place? Following Sunday “rest” legislation, the abomination of desolation (Mat 24:15; Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11),⁷⁵ the “mystery of iniquity” will be revealed.⁷⁶

2Th 2:8-11 “*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this*

⁷⁵ Interestingly, the Hebrew word *peša* ‘translated transgression’ [H6588] in “Dan 8:13 “... How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the *transgression of desolation*, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” is defined as “a revolt (national, moral or religious):—rebellion, sin, transgression, trespass.” <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h6588/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

⁷⁶ “The mystery of iniquity, which had already begun to work in Paul’s day, will continue its work until it be taken out of the way at our Lord’s second coming. The climax of the working of iniquity will soon be reached. When the land which the Lord provided as an asylum for his people, that they might worship him according to the dictates of their own consciences, the land over which for long years the shield of Omnipotence has been spread, the land which God has favored by making it the depository of the pure religion of Christ,—when that land shall, through its legislators, abjure the principles of Protestantism, and give countenance to Romish apostasy in tampering with God’s law,—it is then that the final work of the man of sin will be revealed. Protestants will throw their whole influence and strength on the side of the Papacy; by a national act enforcing the false Sabbath, they will give life and vigor to the corrupt faith of Rome, reviving her tyranny and oppression of conscience. Then it will be time for God to work in mighty power for the vindication of his truth.” www.egwwritings.org, {ST June 12, 1893, par. 12}.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (emphasis supplied).

God is confident that all who love the truth and believe Jesus without question or doubt will not be deceived by a delusion so stunning, so incontrovertible that every nation and people group, indeed every individual that dwells on the earth will wonder after the beast (Rev 13:3). Similar to the reference of God hardening “Pharaoh’s heart” (Exo 7:3) via plagues, God will use this act to determine who is faithfully connected fully to Jesus, a true separation of the wheat and tares (Mat 13:30).

What type of event or disaster could rivet the attention of every person on earth?⁷⁷

What might be this “strong delusion” that only God is able to perform? What circumstances will exist for God to change the way He deals with the earth?⁷⁸ Following devastating judgments affecting the whole earth triggered by Sunday “rest” legislation⁷⁹ described in Revelation 8:6-13, Revelation 9 prefigures the unleashing of demonic forces to such an extent that the sun and air are plunged into darkness, presaging mass religious confusion regarding the true biblical position of the state of the dead.

Rev 9:1-2 “*And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless ^[G12] pit. ²And he opened the bottomless ^[G12] pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.*”

⁷⁷ “A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies. Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect.

Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt141-1902.20-21}.

⁷⁸ “Do you believe that the Lord is coming, and that the last great crisis is about to break upon the world? There will soon be a sudden change in God’s dealings. The world in its perversity is being visited by casualties, by floods, storms, fires, earthquakes, famines, wars, and bloodshed. The Lord is slow to answer, and greater in power, yet he will not at all acquit the wicked. ...his forbearance will not always continue. Who is prepared for the sudden change that will take place in God’s dealing with sinful men?” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt 47, 1895, par. 64-65}.

⁷⁹ “The substitution of the false for the true is the last act in the drama. When this substitution becomes universal, God will reveal Himself. When the laws of men are exalted above the laws of God, when the first day of the week is exalted above the seventh, know that the time has come for God to work. He will arise in His majesty to shake terribly the earth. He will come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, the transgression of His law. And the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.” www.egwwritings.org, {Ms 27, 1899, par. 7}.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

Confirming the identity of the “star” fallen from heaven, verse 11 names this fallen angel “the destroyer.”

Rev 9:11 “And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit,
[G12] whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his
name Apollyon.”

Without question the “key” of the prison-house of the dead resides with God,⁸⁰ the only life-giver⁸¹ and Revelation 9:1 plainly indicates that a “key” will be given to Satan. In history, God has granted Satan access to specific righteous men such as Job. Might this “key” come in the form of a wicked man *resurrected by God* to demonstrate to the universe a people who cannot be moved and whose characters have been fully transformed to reflect that of Christ? The Bible accounts for many resurrections in history with more predicted in the future, including those who “pierced him” (Rev 1:7) *before* Jesus returns (see Footnote #5). Why would God send a “strong delusion” to people He wants to save? Might it be to separate those who love truth from those determined to take “pleasure in unrighteousness?” God does reserve the prerogative to kill people He created for His own purposes and demonstrated that with Israel as recorded in Numbers 11:31-34, while the “flesh was yet between their teeth.” God will bring about a complete fulfillment of all prophecies, including the man numbered 666.⁸² Overcoming this “strong delusion” will provide incontrovertible proof to the whole universe that, through the “faith of Jesus,” man can become perfected in Jesus, and will uniquely get “...the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name...” Rev 15:2 *before* earth’s probation is closed.

⁸⁰ Rev 1:18 “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” [G2288] Rev 13:3 “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; [G2288] and his deadly [G2288] wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.”

Jhn 5:21 “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”

⁸¹ 1Sa 2:6 “The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave [H7585], and bringeth up.” Strong’s defines [H7585] as “hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates:—grave, hell, pit.” <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7585/kjv/wlc/0-1/>, see also Jhn 1:3-4; 1Ti 6:13).

⁸² “The Lord is regarded as cruel, by many, in requiring his people to make war with other nations. They say that it is contrary to his benevolent character. *But he who made the world, and formed man to dwell upon the earth, has unlimited control over all the works of his hands; and it is his right to do as he pleases, and what he pleases, with the work of his hands.* Man has no right to say to his Maker, Why doest thou thus? There is no injustice in his character. He is the ruler of the world, and a large portion of his subjects have rebelled against his authority, and have trampled upon his law.” www.egwwritings.org, {1SP 328.1} {2SM 333.1}. (*emphasis added*).

The Resurrected Beast: The Eighth

Rev 17:11 “[And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.](#)”

This text contains nearly identical language as the beast that “was, is not, yet is” (17:8) which refers to the healing of the deadly wound and the reappearance of the persecuting beast. But Revelation 17:11 is more specific. It refers to a specific individual as the “eighth.” It does not refer to a group of symbolic gods/mountains or a line of kings/kingdoms. The count of 666 will be completed by an individual according to the Bible, not a *symbolic mountain* (a group of gods) nor a line of individual kings, nor a collective “head” but a single man, the “eighth.” And this man must be uniquely qualified as having previously been “of the seven.” All the previous count numbers, except for that of *the eighth*, were calculated by counting the individual seven mountains of gods/seven lines of kings. The “eighth” is the final pope, fully healed from a seemingly “deadly wound,” reigning over an ecclesiastical power clothed with enforcement prerogatives granted by *all nations* via recognition of Sunday “rest”, hence the reemergence of the “beast” designation. The Bible is defining him as the final pope and as the leader of the fornicating church-state beast. Revelation 13:18 plainly states that the number 666 is the number of a man who is *individually* a persecuting beast, fulfilling both required elements of the prophecy, because the “eighth” will be a single individual, not a line of kings. The word “king” which appears in the NIV is not found in the Greek, however the masculine form of “eighth” implies it. The passage cannot refer to an eighth “head,” since the word for “head” is rendered in the feminine form in the original language.

The Benedictine line of popes was one of the seven heads/mountains/kings, and Pope Benedict XVI died on December 31, 2022, while continuing to maintain his status as a legitimate pope. Benedict XVI is one of the seven, so the count of seven papal lines stood at 680 until Pope Francis died April 21, 2025, adding a count of “1.” Having resigned, while retaining seniority as “Pope Emeritus,” Benedict XVI was able to resume the office as Supreme Pontiff at any time. It is interesting to note that former Pope Benedict XVI is reported to have said he resigned after “God told me to” during what he called a “mystical

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

experience.”⁸³ This paper posits that this final beast, now identified as an individual man (claiming to be God on earth), is Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) who will be resurrected by God and return to the papal throne as summarized below:

1. “Was”: *Past tense*, referring to Pope Benedict XVI (2005 - 2022)
2. “is not”:⁸⁴ Refers to Benedicts’ death, currently lying in the tomb (12/31/2022 - 202x)
3. “even he is the eighth”: Refers to Pope Benedict XVI, being “*of the seven*,” returning to office. Further, *he will change his taken name*, from Benedict to a new, unique name. (Note the prophecy of Jesus recorded in John 5:43).

The table below provides the calculation result:

Seven Papal Heads/Mountains/Kings			First	Final	Span of years each papal name was in use	Total years papal office was held by each line of popes	Legitimate	"Counted"
Names used since 1798 (Rev 17:9-11)			Year	Year			Popes	and added
1	Gregory I - XVI	"fallen"	590	1846	1256	140	✔ (16)	136
2	Leo I - XIII	"fallen"	440	1903	1463	99	✔ (13)	91
3	Benedict I - XV	"fallen"	575	1922	1347	89	✔ (15)	105
4	Pius I - XII	"fallen"	140	1958	1818	159	✔ (12)	78
5	John I - XXIII	"fallen"	523	1963	1440	123	✔ (21)	231
6	Paul I - VI	"is"	757	1978	1221	67	✔ (6)	21
7	John Paul I - II	"not yet come"	1978	2005	27	27	✔ (2)	3
8	Francis I and Leo XIV (2Th 2:6-7) are antipopes. "Of the seven," (Rev 17:11) Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger)					becomes the "eighth" (Jhn 5:43).	✔ (1)	1
Notes: Taking a new papal name, "the number of a man," (Rev 13:18) Ratzinger will be enthroned again on the persecuting beast:								666

The reason *all* “they that dwell on the earth shall wonder” (Rev 17:8) is because a resurrection of such a globally well-known figure is unprecedented in modern history. Would not this action give legitimacy to spiritualism and open the way for Satan to unleash impersonating demons throughout the world? Every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people will then be faced with a choice: worship God according to His word by resting on the seventh day or wonder after the beast or his image through tacit approval of “first day” rest by failing to take a public stand against it. (Rev 13:3, 15). A thorough understanding of scripture is essential⁸⁵ to avoid God’s *strong delusion* making it possible for Satan to deceive even the

⁸³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-benedict-idUSBRE97K0F920130821#:~:text=VATICAN%20CITY%20%28Reuters%29%20-%20Former%20Pope%20Benedict%20has,Peter%27s%20Square%20at%20the%20Vatican%20February%2027%2C%202013.>

⁸⁴ The phrase “is not” is used in scripture as an omen of death. (Gen 42:13, 32, 36; Job 27:19).

⁸⁵ “I saw that the saints must get a thorough understanding of present truth, which they will be obliged to maintain from the Scriptures. They must understand the state of the dead; for the spirits of devils will yet appear to them, professing to be beloved friends and relatives, who will declare to them that the Sabbath has been changed, also other unscriptural doctrines. They will do all in their power to excite sympathy and will work

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

very elect (Mat 24:24). In contrast to “Noah the eighth,” “a preacher of righteousness,” (2Pe 2:5) Joseph Ratzinger will become the eighth, a vicar of delusion. Then the prophecy of Revelation 13:4 will meet its complete, global fulfillment; “...Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

Popes Francis I and Leo XIV – Legitimate Pontiffs?

Pope Francis presided over an increasingly divided church. He acknowledged schism⁸⁶ publicly in 2019 and, based on the consistent application of the prophecies outlined in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 13, and 17, he gradually moved to adopt changes in church doctrine,⁸⁷ opening the way for him to ultimately be declared a heretic and an antipope.⁸⁸ Likewise, Pope Leo XIV is also viewed as “progressive” and a “MARXIST POPE!”⁸⁹ and will finally be judged an antipope. Imagine Pope Benedict XVI restored to life and once again to be known as the only “Supreme Pontiff!”⁹⁰ Certainly nearly all the world will wonder after and worship the beast (Rev 13:3-4). Joseph Ratzinger’s (Benedict XVI)

miracles before them to confirm what they declare. The people of God must be prepared to withstand these spirits with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who appear to them are the spirits of devils. Our minds must not be taken up with things around us, but must be occupied with the present truth and a preparation to give a reason of our hope with meekness and fear. We must seek wisdom from on high that we may stand in this day of error and delusion.” www.egwwritings.org, {EW 87.2}.

⁸⁶ <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/pope-francis-defends-himself-and-discusses-schism>

⁸⁷ <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/pope-francis-put-woman-top-vatican-role-it-shows-how-ncna1119661>

⁸⁸ “Nothing done by the antipope has the slightest value. Everything will have to be nullified: from cardinal appointments, to encyclicals, to liturgical reforms, to canonizations... Nothing Bergoglio has done in ten years is valid, as he is not the Pope, since Benedict XVI has never abdicated.” “If the next conclave includes even one of the false Bergoglian cardinals, another antipope will be elected, lacking the munus and consequent assistance of the Holy Spirit. The antipapal line of succession will continue, as when antipope Anacletus II was succeeded in 1138 by antipope Victor IV. Then the visible canonical church will be finished: the situation can be recovered only as long as there are three real cardinals of pre-2013 appointment, the minimum number to form a conclave.”

<https://popehead.substack.com/p/my-interview-with-andrea-cionci>

“**Archbishop Viganò’s Warning on the Usurper of the Throne of St. Peter**,” March, 1, 2025, “The “Catholic Spring” has made use of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, a corrupt and maneuverable character, fraudulently imposed upon the Catholic Church as “pope”. We ask the Authorities of the United States of America and Argentina to provide documents and evidence of these facts. This will prove that Jorge Mario Bergoglio has never been pope of the Catholic Church: all his acts of government and teaching are null and void, and all his appointments are null and void, including those of the Cardinals who will elect his successor.”

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2025/03/archbishop-viganos-warning-usurper-throne-st-peter/>

⁸⁹ <https://www.btimesonline.com/articles/174184/20250509/steve-bannon-predicted-leo-xiv-s-rise-slamed-the-new-pope-as-too-progressive.htm>; <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/08/leo-american-pope-worldview-00337247>; <https://2paragraphs.com/2025/05/maga-catholic-steve-bannon-slams-new-pope-with-3-words/>

⁹⁰ <https://abyssum.org/2019/12/11/the-renunciation-of-pope-benedict-did-not-effect-the-loss-of-the-papal-office-he-remains-the-pope-the-successor-of-saint-peter-the-vicar-of-christ-the-supreme-pontiff-and-the-roman-pontiff-with-al/>

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

seniority would enable him to declare Francis (Bergoglio), Leo XIV (Prevost), and any subsequent pope, as either antipopes or having never been a legitimate pope, as popes are elected for life.⁹¹ Even the most liberal Cardinals will join in with the current conservative minority exercising influence,⁹² and will promote Pope Benedict XVI to reclaim the papal throne to heal the internal schism that currently exists within the church.⁹³ Soon after Benedict reclaims the papal throne, prophecy foretells that all nations (Rev 13:12, 15), all apostate churches and individuals who claim Christ (Rev 17:13), and all ecclesiastical orders will honor the healed, persecutory beast by enforcing the false papal doctrine of Sunday “rest” as law in every nation. We might anticipate Satan personating Christ at this time to falsely claim that it was he who raised Pope Benedict,⁹⁴ supposedly making good on his original claim “...Ye shall not surely die.” Gen 3:4.

“Ten” Horns are “Ten” Kings

The beasts in Daniel, including the symbolism associated with their bodies, heads, and horns, represented civil/political powers that persecuted God’s people on earth during their eras of rule. At no time in scripture does a prophetic beast symbolically represent a mixture of political powers and ecclesiastical powers between its body, heads, and horns.⁹⁵ Following

⁹¹ <https://canonlawmadeeasy.com/2013/01/03/can-a-pope-everresign/>

⁹² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/19/two-popes-plotting-cardinals-francis-benedict-celibacy-rules>

⁹³ <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/standingonmyhead/2017/03/schism-catholic-church.html#:~:text=In%20fact%2C%20the%20modern%20Catholic%20Church%20is%20already,speak%20of%20it.%20The%20divide%20runs%20between%20cardinals;https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2019/10/08/pope-francis-and-schism/;https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1330435/pope-francis-news-split-catholic-church-feud-pope-benedict-vatican-spt>

⁹⁴ “He proclaims himself Christ, and he is believed to be Christ, a beautiful, majestic being clothed with majesty and, with soft voice with pleasant words, with glory unsurpassed by anything their mortal eyes had yet beheld. These, his deceived, deluded followers, set up a shout of victory, ‘Christ has come the second time! Christ has come! He has lifted up His hands just as He did when He was upon the earth, and blessed us.’” www.egwwritings.org, {Ms 16, 1884, par. 2}.

⁹⁵ A careful study of the “little horn” is warranted. Noteworthy is the wording in Daniel 7:8, “I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn...” and Daniel 7:24, “And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.” The identity of the “little horn” of Daniel 7 is accepted by this writer as the ecclesiastical power known as the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). Note this religious power arose separately, distinctively set apart from the civil powers represented by “ten” horns that were initially seen on the “fourth beast” identified as the civil power of pagan/Imperial Rome. The RCC power gradually grew via several notable moves such as the promotion of unity of church and state by Constantine I (306-337) and by Theodosius I making Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in 380. (<https://calvarychapel.com/posts/a-thousand-year-tug-of-war-the-marriage-of-church-and-state/>). The religious “little horn” power did not achieve legal authority from pagan/Imperial (western) Rome, which fell in AD486. Instead, the papacy was enabled by

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

the end of the dominion of the seven heads of Revelation 12, 13, and 17, shown to represent the popes of the RCC during its wilderness experience beginning in 1798, the “ten” horns will arise to power and will advance to ultimately establishing earthly authority to kill for matters of individual conscience via a death decree against those unwilling to compromise. The identity of the “ten” horns of Revelation parallels and elucidates the earth beast of Revelation 13:12. The United States of America, deriving power and strength via its Constitution and Bill of Rights based on the principles of republicanism and Protestantism, begins to speak (legislate) like a dragon with the urging of apostate Protestant religions and their proxies.

It was shown earlier the “ten” horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 represented several dozen barbarian tribes, many of which qualified as genuine civil/political powers with established kings and governmental structures. In the same manner the “ten” horns of Revelation 12, 13, and 17, are positioned to come into power following the seven heads of the blasphemous ecclesiastical beast (Rev 13:6; 17:3) and represent the apostate Protestant churches, many of which are based in the United States of America.

Rev 17:12-13 “[And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.](#)

[¹³These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”](#)

Continuing,

Rev 17:16-17 “[And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.](#) ¹⁷For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”

It is so-called Protestantism will ultimately give its power, likely developed initially by a non-religiously based Sunday “rest” law, accompanied with penalties for non-compliance,⁹⁶ to the

the Code of Justinian, the Eastern Roman emperor of Constantinople (527-565). The ultimate power, that of determining life and death, was exercised via Emperor Justinian who “made apostasy punishable by death” and declaring John II the Bishop of Rome (the religious power) in 533.

(<http://moellerhaus.com/studies/JUS533.HTM>).

⁹⁶ Ellen G. White irrefutably identifies the ten horns of Rev 17:12-13 as Protestantism/the harlot daughters directly associated with the earth beast of Rev 13:11-17. “In the seventeenth of Revelation is foretold the destruction of all the churches who corrupt themselves by idolatrous devotion to the service of the papacy, those who have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. [Revelation 17:1-4 quoted].

Thus is represented the papal power, which with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, by outside attraction and gorgeous display, deceives all nations; promising them, as did Satan our first parents, all good to those who

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

globally dominant Roman Catholic Church. Too late apostate, compromising “Protestants” claiming Christ will realize they have been deceived. This exercise and transfer of “power” was typically demonstrated by Pilate...“Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power ^[G1849] to crucify thee, and have power ^[G1849] to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power ^[G1849] at all against me, except it were given thee from above...” Jhn 19:10-11.

Conclusion? The Great Harlot Reigns Again

Joseph Ratzinger will be resurrected and change his name from Benedict XVI to a new, unique name.⁹⁷ Jorge Mario Bergoglio, (Pope Francis), Robert Francis Prevost (Pope Leo XIV) and all subsequent popes will be declared heretical and designated antipopes. When Benedict, who “is of the seven” (Rev 17:11), changes the name he selected for his first pontificate to a new unique name then the riddle of Revelation 17:8-11 will be recognized and the persecuting church fornicating in state alliances will rise onto the world’s stage representing the ultimate rebellion against God’s law. “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Rev 17:18. Joseph Ratzinger’s new papal name will add a count of “1” and he will become the 666 man at Christ’s second coming when he will be “...cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Rev 19:20.⁹⁸

receive its mark, and all harm to those who oppose its fallacies. 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.”

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 (Letter 232, 1899).” www.egwwritings.org, {7BC 983.3-5}, *emphasis supplied*. “In Revelation 17, Babylon is represented as a woman, a figure which is used in the Scriptures as the symbol of a church. A virtuous woman represents a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church. Babylon is said to be a harlot; and the prophet beheld her drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs. The Babylon thus described represents Rome, that apostate church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. But Babylon the harlot is the mother of daughters who follow her example of corruption. Thus are represented those churches that cling to the doctrines and traditions of Rome and follow her worldly practices, and whose fall is announced in the second angel’s message.” www.egwwritings.org, {4SP 233.1}.

⁹⁷ If Benedict XVI were to remain dead as the fifteenth legitimate pope taking the name “Benedict,” the current count of the seven papal names of 680, plus a count of “1” for Pope Francis, would not be reduced by 16 and would therefore be incompatible with the prophetic conclusion of 666.

Joseph Ratzinger (the given name of Benedict XVI) may assume his second pontificate by using his own name. If so, the prophecy of Jesus, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” Jhn 5:43, may be applicable.

⁹⁸ For those that, when presented with linkages throughout scripture and the writings of Ellen G. White, level the all too often abused charge of “soft date setting” in order to cast doubt on this interpretation, this understanding

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

Why this extreme level of prophetic detail? God foreordained that the wise will not be surprised at any development and be enabled to share the comprehensive message of the third angel as a loud cry to all the world with absolute confidence *in advance* of it coming to pass because, “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7. Readers, please examine, criticize and validate each point to determine the truth of the matter for yourselves.⁹⁹

Rev 17:14 “*These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*”

May you be “called, and chosen, and faithful.”

does not imply in any way the year of the second coming, let alone “that day and hour.” We are warned: “The preaching of definite time called forth great opposition from all classes, from the minister in the pulpit down to the most reckless, heaven-daring sinner. ‘No man knoweth the day nor the hour,’ was heard from the hypocritical minister and the bold scoffer. Neither would be instructed and corrected by those who were pointing to the year when they believed the prophetic periods would run out, and to the signs which showed Christ near, even at the doors. Many shepherds of the flock, who professed to love Jesus, said that they had no opposition to the preaching of Christ’s coming, but they objected to the definite time. God’s all-seeing eye read their hearts. They did not love Jesus near. They knew that their unchristian lives would not stand the test, for they were not walking in the humble path marked out by Him. These false shepherds stood in the way of the work of God. The truth spoken in its convincing power aroused the people, and like the jailer, they began to inquire, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ But these shepherds stepped in between the truth and the people, and preached smooth things to lead them from the truth. They united with Satan and his angels, crying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there was no peace. Those who loved their ease and were content with their distance from God would not be aroused from their carnal security. I saw that angels of God marked it all; the garments of those unconsecrated shepherds were covered with the blood of souls.” www.egwwritings.org, {EW 233.2}.

A challenge to giving careful, unbiased consideration to this interpretation of Revelation 17 is the neglect of the fully transparent teaching of the warning component of the message of the third angel, publically identifying the beast as the Roman Catholic Church, his image as the apostate Protestant churches and likeminded leaders in union with the United States, and the mark received by all who compromise conscience in order to continue receiving financial and medical support from various organizations and governments. Coupled with failure to adopt all aspects of the “right arm” of the third angel, (health reform particularly in diet), Seventh-day Adventists may be unable to discern truth as shown to Ellen G. White. “He [God] designs that the great subject of health reform shall be agitated and the public mind deeply stirred to investigate; for *it is impossible for men and women, with all their sinful, health-destroying, brain-enervating habits, to discern sacred truth*, through which they are to be sanctified, refined, elevated, and made fit for the society of heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory.” www.egwwritings.org, {3T 162.1}, (emphasis added).

⁹⁹ “If every idea we have entertained in doctrines is truth, will not the truth bear to be investigated? Will it totter and fall if criticized? If so, let it fall, the sooner the better. The spirit that would close the door to investigation of points of truth in a Christlike manner is not the Spirit from above.” www.egwwritings.org, {Lt 7, 1888, par. 3}.

Revelation 17 – Mysterious Beast Prophecy: Truth in a New Setting?

By Mark E. LaRose

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

The following table provides an audit of the calculation totaling 666:

#1	Term	Count	#2	Term	Count	#3	Term	Count	#4	Term	Count	#5	Term	Count	#6	Term	Count	#7	Term	Count	"Eighth"	Count		
Pius			Leo			Gregory			Benedict			John			Paul			John Paul			New Name			
I	140-155	1	I	440-461	1	I	590-604	1	I	575-579	1	I	523-526	1	I	757-767	1	I	1978	1	I	202x-202x	1	
II	1458-1464	2	II	682-683	2	II	715-731	2	II	684-685	2	II	533-535	2	II	1464-1471	2	II	1978-2005	2				
III	1503	3	III	795-816	3	III	731-741	3	III	855-858	3	III	561-574	3	III	1534-1549	3							
IV	1559-1565	4	IV	847-855	4	IV	827-844	4	IV	900-903	4	IV	640-642	4	IV	1555-1559	4							
V	1566-1572	5	V	903	5	V	996-999	5	V	964	5	V	685-686	5	V	1605-1621	5							
VI	1775-1799	6	VI	928	6	VI	1045-1046	6	VI	973-974	6	VI	701-705	6	VI	1963-1978	6							
VII	1800-1823	7	VII	936-939	7	VII	1073-1085	7	VII	974-983	7	VII	705-707	7										
VIII	1829-1830	8	VIII	963-964	8	VIII	1187	8	VIII	1012-1024	8	VIII	872-882	8										
IX	1846-1878	9	IX	1049-1054	9	IX	1227-1241	9	IX	1032-1048	9	IX	898-900	9										
X	1903-1914	10	X	1513-1521	10	X	1271-1276	10	XI	1303-1304	10	X	914-928	10										
XI	1922-1939	11	XI	1605	11	XI	1370-1378	11	XII	1334-1342	11	XI	931-935	11										
XII	1939-1958	12	XII	1823-1829	12	XII	1406-1415	12	XIII	1724-1730	12	XII	955-963	12										
			XIII	1878-1903	13	XIII	1572-1585	13	XIV	1740-1758	13	XIII	965-972	13										
			XIV	2025-202x	14	XIV	1590-1591	14	XV	1914-1922	14	XIV	983-984	14										
						XV	1621-1623	15	XVI	2005-2022	15	XV	985-996	15										
						XVI	1831-1846	16				XVII	1003	16										
												XVIII	1003-1009	17										
												XIX	1024-1032	18										
												XXI	1276-1277	19										
												XXII	1316-1334	20										
												XXIII	1958-1963	21										
		78			105			136			120			231			21			3			1	
			XIV		-14				XVI		-15													
Total		78			91			136			105			231			21			3			1	
Popes below dotted lines served after Pius VI removed 02/20/1798, dying as a prisoner (Rev 13:3) 08/29/1799.																							File: AtWorlds-End-Table 2	666

Popes below dotted lines served after Pius VI removed 02/20/1798, dying as a prisoner (Rev 13:3) 08/29/1799.

File: ATWorldsEnd-Table 2

666

Verse by verse notes reconciling the Book of Daniel, 2 Thessalonians 2, the Book of Revelation, and relevant inspiration from Ellen G. White can be accessed at www.danielandrevelationrevealed.com.

May 1, 2025, Revised September 14, 2025

40