**The Climax of the End-Times:**

**A Hermeneutical and Thematic Look at Revelation 17**

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Revelation 17 Prophecy Conference 2025

September 2024

Abstract

This paper introduces a hermeneutical key, namely layers and climactic structures, for the interpretation of Rev 17. We argue that the harlot and the scarlet beast represent different entities through history, yet their climactic end-time representative is the actual harlot/beast. As we look at two main views of identities of the entities of Rev 17, we conclude that the hermeneutical key fits better into the view which starts from Babylon as the first head of the beast rather than the view starting from Egypt. We claim that a look at the bigger hermeneutical and thematic picture regarding the end-times reveals that the climactic Babylon power (the eighth head) controls the kings of the earth, causing chaos which leads to order via controlled opposition between the sixth and the seventh head. The view starting from Babylon is more aware of current events and global juxtapositions and the deceptions of Babylon than the “Egypt-view”. We also conclude that the climactic false gospel, namely justification/judgment on the basis of human merits/glory, is the foundation of the abomination of desolation; as the true gospel, in turn, is justification by the merits/glory of Christ in the climactic pre-advent judgment.

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# Introduction

Hermeneutical basis for interpretation of apocalyptic texts is important, because it gives a framework, a bigger picture, for exegesis. Exegeses of particular texts are equally important, as exegesis serves as a foundation of interpretation. Here we have a hermeneutical spiral. In this paper we concentrate on the bigger picture, even on systematic coherence, which belong to the hermeneutical spiral, namely exegetical and theological discussion—we might say—which ideally and hopefully is collectively fruitful generally speaking and also in the Revelation 17 Prophecy Conference.

Regarding hermeneutical basis, in this paper we offer a key for unlocking the prophecy of Revelation 17 and the entire body of apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible for that matter. I call this key climactic structure. A climactic structure entails layers in the text.

In the study I will firstly elaborate what I mean by layers and secondly what I mean by climactic structures. In order to unlock the hermeneutical key, in the first part of this paper we will take a look at the book of Daniel, John’s Revelation and the Olivet Discourse. In the second part of the research we assess Revelation 17 in terms of recapitulative structures and thematic climaxing. Clearly, a deeper exegetical analysis is needed in terms of the arguments of this paper, yet, again, in this paper we offer the bigger picture only.

In the second part of the paper we also compare and contrast two views of Rev 17 in terms of their hermeneutical and biblical-thematic coherence and applicability to current time. A certain view of Rev 17 seems to aptly explain a *climactic* deception of order via the juxtaposition of philosophical-political worldviews in societies all the way from the French Revolution and the founding of the USA until the present time. Moreover, we aim to show that systematically the end-time soteriology of both Babylon and the remnant church clash *climactically*, especially climactic-judgment-wise, as Babylon proclaims abominable gospel and the remnant proclaims the true gospel (the Loud Cry).

# Part One: Background

## Layers of Text

Regarding the book of Daniel, the little horn of Daniel 8 symbolizes both the Pagan and the Papal Rome. Samuel Nuñez explains that the little horn exists in three stages in the text, especially in verse 12, and thus it arises in three phases in history: (1) The Romans attack and destroy the temple of Jerusalem in AD 70; (2) the Papacy of the Middle Ages destroys God’s people, and replaces God’s truth (thus destroying it, as well), salvation, and the heavenly mediation of Jesus Christ with a settlement of an earthly mediation and salvation system; and (3) the Papacy continues its similar actions.[[1]](#footnote-1) Based on linguistic parallels between Dan 8:11–14 and 9:26 and 27,[[2]](#footnote-2) I would add that the abomination of desolation in Dan 9:26 and 27 points to the three stages, as well.

Thus, the book of Daniel gives an example of an apocalyptic text which consists of an entity or symbol (the little horn) that exists in different layers. These layers are different phases in history, although the entity stays the same (Rome), even though the entity does include different kingdoms, since Papal Rome is also classified as a separate kingdom in Daniel 8 (and in Revelation 17, as we argue in this paper). We may call this kind of a symbol metasymbol. Metasymbol means a symbol which is “above” historical succession, staying as the same symbol under which different kingdoms are represented, even though history goes by, being an example of the leveling of the text. Hence, Daniel 8 founds a precedent according to which an entity in an apocalyptic text can be applied to different phases in history, as long as the application stays inside of the parameters of Daniel 2 and 7 (and Rev 11—13) which point out the overall structure of history and the succession of world powers and their identities.

The little horn power is the dragon/sea beast of Revelation 12 and 13 (although the dragon is Satan as well) and the Antichrist. In fact, Revelation 12 and 13 follow the triple-layered historical structure of Daniel 8. Revelation 12:13 refers to the early church, which is the first stage; 12:14–15 speaks about the Dark Ages, which is the second stage; 12:16 is the transition from the Dark Ages to the time of eschatological remnant; and 12:17 depict the actual era of the eschatological remnant, which is the time when the church of the Dark Ages has made its return, which is the third stage. In Revelation 12 and 13 we see indications to the Roman beast’s/dragon’s reign in the phase of the Pagan Rome (12:3); in the phase of the Papal Rome during the Dark Ages (13:5); Papal Rome’s reign after its return (the healing of its mortal wound) (13:3a); and to both Papacy’s reign before and after the striking and healing of the mortal wound (13:1–2, 3b–5a, 6–10).[[3]](#footnote-3) Actually, Revelation 12:12–17 can be applied to the time after the healing of the beast’s wound, when God’s people are similarly persecuted and have to run away from centers of societies. Therefore, Revelation 12 and 13 give another example of the layered structure of a metasymbol.

As Jesus answered to His disciples’ question about the timing of the end of the world, He gave the so-called Olivet Discourse (Matt 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). In His speech, Jesus deals with the end-time scenario by using a similar layered approach as in the book of Daniel. Although Jesus does not refer to a symbol per se, He does allude to the happening of abomination of desolation mentioned by Daniel and getting its meaning from the Old Testament background. By the abomination of desolation, Jesus points to the destruction of Jerusalem, the rise of Papal Rome, and the rise of Papal Rome after the healing of its wound, exactly as Daniel did.

## Climactic Structures

We have aimed to establish that Daniel 8, Revelation 12 and 13, and the Olivet Discourse entail a triple-layered structure, referring to three phases of a metasymbol which is applied to Rome in history. Now, the third phase is the climactic phase. This can be seen from the wrath of the dragon in the third phase of its attacks (12:17) being the encapsulation of all of the three attack-phases (12:12–17). As was shown already, Revelation 12:12–17 can be applied to the time after the healing of the beast’s wound, when God’s people are similarly persecuted and have to run away from centers of societies. Hence, the tribulation of God’s people through Rome happens in three stages, as the last stage of persecution, namely against the remnant of God’s people, is the climax of the tribulation. As we have studied the layers of texts, let us concentrate on the climactic structures of texts. Again, deeper exegeses of texts have their place, but this paper aims to see the overall picture.

Among Adventists it is believed—and I believe as well—that the sixth seal’s description (Rev 6:12), which is in connection to Matthew 24:29, refers to the signs of Lisbon earthquake in 1755, to the supernatural Dark Day of May 19, 1780, including the bloody moon at the following night, and to the great meteor shower of November 13, 1833.[[4]](#footnote-4) The sixth seal of Revelation explains that these events indicate the beginning of the last end-time phase of history before the second coming of Christ (Rev 6:12–17). It appears that Matthew 24:29 serves as a marker, illustrating that 24:15–28 happens in the past but that the verses also happen in the future, because 24:15 depicts the healing of the sea beast’s wound, and because verses 15–28 are connected to verses 1–14 as well.[[5]](#footnote-5) In other words, tribulation of God’s people (vv. 15–28) is repeatable in history, because the Second Coming of Christ (vv. 30–31) has not happened yet. During the last phase of the end-times, the climactic tribulation takes place.

The layered structure of prophetic history and the last layer being a climactic unit explain the dilemma of the 144,000 (Rev 7:1–17). The question is: Does the 144,000 entail the sealed at the end of time or the sealed (saved) of all times? The answer seems to be: both. The meaning of the number is symbolic not literal, because it is not a time prophecy, and because it consists of people from all of the tribes of Israel (vv. 4–8). Moreover, John uses a literary device in which he first writes about hearing something and then states about seeing the same thing.[[6]](#footnote-6) In this example he first hears the number of the sealed and secondly sees the multitude of the saved (vv. 4, 9). The 144,000 are all of the saved through all ages, but the number also symbolizes the ones sealed during the last generation on earth before the coming of Christ. This final layer is the climax.

Moreover, in both phases of Babylon/sea beast, namely before and after the beast’s wound and healing of the wound, Babylon’s/the beast’s judgment comes after her persecution of God’s people (Rev 19:2). In both phases, this judgment is desolation/abyss (17:8, 16).[[7]](#footnote-7) Again, the latter judgment is the climax (in two phases, which means that her judgment has three phases in total), because in the latter phase she is desolated by burning with fire (17:16; 19:3; 20:9, 10; see 18:8, 9, 18, 19 which parallel desolation and burning with fire).[[8]](#footnote-8)

A significant structure in the book of Revelation is springboard passages,[[9]](#footnote-9) which can also serve as climactic structures. For example, the seventh seal climaxes the seals and introduces the trumpets[[10]](#footnote-10) or is the springboard passage to the introduction of the trumpets, which connects 8:1 to 8:2–5 so closely that the seventh seal might contain the introduction of the trumpets and the seven trumpets themselves, as Treiyer asserts.[[11]](#footnote-11) In any case, the septet-series have climaxes, and they have a parallel theme, namely the Day of the Lord. Firstly, the seventh message to a church is the message to the Laodiceans, namely to the ones living in the time of judgment (the pre-advent judgment) or the “concluding period of the world’s history,” as Stefanovic puts it.[[12]](#footnote-12) Secondly, the seventh seal is the waiting awe of God’s judgment.[[13]](#footnote-13) And, thirdly, the seventh trumpet (which is the third woe as well) refers to the pre-advent judgment or the Second Coming of Christ or to both (when the climax of the pre-advent judgment would be at the end of it, right after which the seven last plagues fall).[[14]](#footnote-14) In any case, both the pre-advent judgment and the Second Coming (and the seven last plagues) are the climactic Day of the Lord. Moreover, the hail in the theophany of 11:19 makes the seventh trumpet/the third woe the climax of the theophanies and the trumpets/woes.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Thus far we have seen that the biblical corpus of apocalyptic texts holds symbolism which includes layers, revealed as phases in history, and climactic layers, revealed as the climactic phase of history. Now let us proceed to investigate if Revelation 17 may entail similar structures and/or themes and/or symbolism.

# Part Two: Revelation 17

## The Climactic Rule of Babylon and the Scarlet Beast

Before analyzing structures, we state the identities of the harlot/Babylon and the scarlet beast in Rev 17. Revelation 17:9–11 introduces a historical succession of eight kings/kingdoms. A prominent view of the kingdoms’ identities in the succession is the following: (1) Egypt, (2) Assyria, (3) Babylon, (4) Medo-Persia, (5) Macedonia-Greece, (6) Pagan Rome, (7) Papal Rome of the Middle Ages, (8) the healed Papal Rome.[[16]](#footnote-16) The first six kingdoms are the same in Ekkehardt Müller’s view, but he continues the series as follows: (7) Papal Rome, (8) Satan.[[17]](#footnote-17) In turn, the first five kingdoms are the same in Edwin Reynolds’ view, but he continues: (6) Pagan and Papal Rome, (7) United States of America, (8) Satan.[[18]](#footnote-18) Let us call these three alternative views, which nevertheless all begin with Egypt and have the same first five kings, the Egypt-view, unless specified. In this paper, in turn, we hold the following succession: (1) Babylon, (2) Medo-Persia, (3) Macedonia-Greece, (4) Pagan Rome, (5) Papal Rome, (6) France of the Revolution/Atheistic Secularism, (7) United States of America, and (8) the revived Papacy[[19]](#footnote-19) which I would call the Papal New World Order. The reason for choosing this series, which is called the Babylon-view in this paper, will be elaborated below.

The harlot of Rev 17 includes layers. Reynolds thinks that the harlot represents “a corrupting influence… who reigns over, or exercises her dominance over, all of these earthly powers (17:18).”[[20]](#footnote-20) I agree with Reynolds. However, I would add that the harlot stands for the religious rulership of the earth. It appears to be coherent to separate the religious powers from the Atheistic/Secular powers of the world, as the end-time corpus of the Bible seems to do (Rev 11; Dan 11). (This will be further explained in this paper.) The harlot does not represent the Papacy only, because the harlot reigns over many historical kingdoms and kings (Rev 17:9, 10, 18). Yet, the harlot does represent a church, because a woman symbolizes a church/God’s people (Jer 6:2), and so the harlot symbolizes the *end-time* “apostate religious system,” as Stefanovic puts it.[[21]](#footnote-21) Therefore, we can detect layers in this text, as well.

The metasymbol of Babylon is represented by the metasymbol of the scarlet beast. The partial parallelism of the dragon (Rev 12) and the sea beast (Rev 13), and the partial parallelism of the dragon and the scarlet beast (Rev 17),[[22]](#footnote-22) means that the dragon is the metasymbol/metabeast, a.k.a. the scarlet beast, under which different kingdoms or political powers have their successive turns. Thus, it is like the king of the north of Daniel 11, as it is a metasymbol, under which different kingdoms or kings have their successive turns. Hence, a power in the succession, whenever it occurs, is the representative of the dragon in its own turn in history, which has a union with religious rulership which represents the harlot in its own time; thus, certain kinds of unions between the religious systems and the states of the world are represented by the picture of the woman riding the beast.

The Egypt-view suggests that Egypt would be the first king in the succession of the heads. Both Egypt and Babylon are depicted as a dragon (Isa 51:9–10; Jer 51:34; possibly Ps 87:4; compare Jer 51:55 with Rev 12:15). However, Babylon is the beginning of the king of the north, because Babylon is part of the sea beast, but Egypt is not. Although the scarlet beast illustrates the dragon in its phases through different kingdoms in history, the scarlet beast depicts the Papacy. The scarlet beast represents the totality of the kingdoms all the way from Babylon, because this is the case in Rev 13 (see verse 2; and compare the seven heads of Dan 7’s beasts with the seven heads of the sea beast). Indeed, the scarlet beast and its heads represent the climactic structure/themes discussed in this paper. As being the totality of all of the kingdoms, the Papacy itself is the climactic masterpiece of Satan. However, even the Papacy itself has a climax, since she returns even more powerfully,[[23]](#footnote-23) and since the eighth king is a climactic power.[[24]](#footnote-24) The Papacy is even “resurrected” from the “dead” (Rev 13:3), as Satan mimics Christ. If the Papacy is the climactic power, it makes sense that only the Papacy is pictured as the beast itself in Rev 17 (although being one of the seven kings), while the other kingdoms are pictured only as kings. Ellen White, as well, states that the prostitute on the scarlet beast is the Papacy, linking it to the beast of chapter 13.[[25]](#footnote-25) It is true that the religious leadership (the harlot) is distinguished from the state power (the beast) in Rev 17. However, they are also united, as Rev 13 makes clear, and since the harlot sits on the seven heads.

The end-time Babylon goes through the judgment or the Day of the Lord (Rev 17:1, 8, 11, 14, 16, 17; 18). Hence, Rev 17 follows the theme of the end-time judgment[[26]](#footnote-26) as the climax, similar to the climactic theme of the septets. The theme of climactic judgment can also be detected in the fact that Babylon is responsible for the murders of all of the prophets and saints in the world (Rev 18:14). Hence, the emphasis is on the end-time climactic power or the end-time Babylon which is similar to the typical Babylon or the first identity of the beast. The guilt in the climactic judgment is explained by that the guilt of persecution grows greater when one knows the historical evils of the murders but still does the same things (Matt 23:29–36).[[27]](#footnote-27) In this way the guilt and all the evil ways climax in the end-time Babylon. Moreover, Rev 17:8 refers to the book of life, paralleling 13:8, which is connected to the climaxing judgment, the pre-advent judgment (also called the investigative judgment), which deals with names of the heavenly records (Exod 32:32–33; Ps 69:28; Dan 7:10; Mal 3:16; Luke 10:20; Rev 13:7; 20:12). True, the book of life has been from the beginning. However, the climax of the judgment process dealing with the names happens at the investigative judgment, ironically happening at the same time when the beast’s climactic stand and fake judgment of the world happens, as Rev 13 makes clear. (More about the fake judgment below.) The book of life is from the creation, and the true climactic message to the world invites to worship the Creator (Rev 14:7). The fake gospel, in turn, calls to worship the beast (13:3, 4).

The book of Revelation includes recapitulative structures, namely structures in which series (such as the seven seals and the seven trumpets) repeat similar themes and happenings, yet bring cumulative information about the themes and happenings.[[28]](#footnote-28) Revelation 17 is no different. It further clarifies Revelation 12 and 13 which introduce the beast who suffers a mortal wound by referring to the kingdom which “was and is not, and is about to come” (Rev 17:8 NASB).[[29]](#footnote-29) The historical situation of the vision for John is the time when the Papacy “is not,” again, pointing to a theme of judgment, namely the judgment of the harlot, including layers of judgment and the climactic judgment of her (Rev 17:1, 8, 11, 16).[[30]](#footnote-30)

The USA is the kingdom arising after the one that “is” (the Revolutionary France), and this fits the Babylon-view with the theme of climax. This is explained by parallelism in Rev 13, where the land beast is part of the climactic power (Rev 13:11–18), yet the actual climactic power is the resurrected sea beast (vv. 3, 4, 8).[[31]](#footnote-31) Indeed, the land beast or the seventh king makes the world worship the sea beast or the beast which is resurrected, and which hence is the eighth king or the climactic king, yet one of the seven (13:8; 17:8).[[32]](#footnote-32) Of both the seventh and eighth kings are said that they come to their ends (17:10, 11).[[33]](#footnote-33) This might depict the close connection between the two beasts of Rev 13. They are so closely connected that when the world worships in the ways of the land beast, it worships the sea beast, since the sea beast has given all of its power to the land beast (Rev 13:12). Hence, the sea beast seems to be behind the scenes, yet visible (vv. 12, 14). Therefore, it would be consistent that the climactic power is like Satan: it is behind powers, yet it is the actual climactic power, being one of the seven, yet encompassing all of the seven, representing Satan himself on earth (13:2) and giving his power onto the land beast just like Satan gave his power to the sea beast, being the final deceptive religious-political-economic masterpiece of Satan, using the seventh king and the kings of the world.[[34]](#footnote-34) This is exactly what the Papacy has done in history and does today: it uses proxies.[[35]](#footnote-35) Let us then look more closely how Babylon controls the leaders of the world.

## Babylon’s Control of the Political Sides

The climactic attack of Satan in his war against God (Rev 12:12, 17) is the climactic battle of war between Babylon/the kings of the earth and God (16:14; 17:14). Satan’s war arises from his wrath against God (12:12), and so the wrath of Babylon includes the wrath of the nations, which intensifies at the end (11:18; 12:3–5; 12:13—13:16; 17:12–18; 18:1–3; 19:19; 20:7–9). This all elaborates that Babylon uses the kings of the earth in getting the world on his side. It is interesting that the very name of the harlot is Mystery, as if even by her name Revelation wants to hint that she reigns stealthily.[[36]](#footnote-36) “And the woman [the harlot, a.k.a. the Papacy] whom you saw is the great city [Babylon], which reigns over the kings of the earth.” (Rev 17:18 NASB) “These [kings of the world] have one purpose,[[37]](#footnote-37) and they give their power and authority to the beast.” (Rev 17:13 NASB) If Babylon is climactically the Papal New World Order, these verses suggest a clandestine rulership with one purpose, because the Papacy’s rulership over the leaders of the world is not fully visible.

Revelation 17:2 connects the kings of the earth directly to the end-time Babylon (Rev 18:3, 9). The end-time harlot church betrays God by not only uniting with the state but controlling the state, of which the riding on the beast[[38]](#footnote-38) and the union with and control of the kings of the earth are depictions (cf. Dan 7:24–27; 8:9, 23–26; 11:33, 38–45; Rev 13:1–10; 18). Since the eighth kingdom is the scarlet beast itself, and since the scarlet beast is controlled by the harlot, both the sixth power (Atheistic Secularism) and the seventh power (the USA and “Protestant” politics) are controlled by the union of the harlot and the eighth kingdom, that is the Papal New World Order.[[39]](#footnote-39) At the end of time, the Papacy controls/upholds both the kings of the earth and the economic leaders of the world (Rev 17:18; 18:3, 9, 11, 23), including the “Protestant” religious-political-economic leaders of the world (13:16–18). The end-game is about economic leadership of the globe through proxies (Dan 11:43), via hidden or semi-hidden agendas (v. 27 KJV, RSV, YLT),[[40]](#footnote-40) since the Papacy controls both sides.[[41]](#footnote-41)

The kingdom of Tyre typologically represents the economic power of the end-time Babylon.[[42]](#footnote-42) Tyre is “the bestower of crowns.” (Isa 23:8 NASB) How does the Papacy bestow crowns after its mortal wound and during today? Since she does not do it openly, the only possibility is that she does it secretly, if we believe that the Scarlet beast of Rev 17 is the Papacy, who “reigns over the kings of the earth” (Rev 17:18 NASB) by giving them economic power (18:15). The economic leaders of the world could not become rich through the “luxury” or the “excessive strength” of the Papacy (18:3), and the Papacy could not make the economic leaders of the world rich, if the world would be a perfectly open environment of free market Capitalism without corruption and brotherhoods which seek their own gain (while masking it as “common good”) and centralize land, wealth and power into the hands of the few. It is clear that the Papacy does not suddenly have the ability to hand out power to the kings of the earth when her wound is healed, but she grows her power little by little during the time when she is being wounded, and she does it secretly, through secret societies, as Ellen White alludes, as well (see her statements below).[[43]](#footnote-43)

Let me quote clear comments from the Spirit of Prophecy, which do not prove controlled opposition/Hegelian dialectic, but underline points about deception, secret organized rulership of the Papacy, secret organized rulership of world leaders under Babylon, and asecret organized plot with a shared aim.[[44]](#footnote-44)

God’s word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. *She is silently growing into power*. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. *She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses* of which her former persecutions will be repeated. *Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike*. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.[[45]](#footnote-45)

The Roman Church now *presents a fair front to the world*, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. *She has clothed herself in Christlike garments; but she is unchanged*. Every principle of the papacy that existed in past ages exists today. The doctrines devised in the darkest ages are still held. *Let none deceive themselves*. The papacy that Protestants are now so ready to honor is the same that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up, at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High.

The papacy is just what prophecy declared that she would be, the apostasy of the latter times. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. It is a part of her *policy* to *assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose*; *but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent*.[[46]](#footnote-46)

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.[[47]](#footnote-47)

God’s presentation of the detestable works of the inhabitants of *the ruling powers of the world who bind themselves into secret societies and confederacies*, not honoring the law of God, should enable the people who have the light of truth to keep clear of all these evils.[[48]](#footnote-48)

White also notes that the Great Babylon, namely the “*powers of the earth*”, give themselves for the service of evil *through secret societies in the final phase of history* (which is the present time), referring to Revelation 18 and the three angels’ messages.[[49]](#footnote-49)

All in all, it is coherent that the climactic power is the resurrected Papacy which comes into power stealthily, and that even her deceitful political and economic power is climaxing towards the end of time. This fits into the bigger picture of the end-times. Next, we aim to go deeper into the question why the climactic rulership of Babylon and the Babylon-view explain each other biblical-thematically and hermeneutically regarding the end-time apocalyptic scenario.

## Why Would the Babylon-View Be More Probable than the Egypt-View, and What Would It Contribute to Application of Prophecy to the Current World Situation?

The Egypt-view includes the ancient Egypt and Assyria as heads of the scarlet beast. If Egypt and Assyria would be a part of the scarlet beast, it might emphasize the typological characteristics of these powers in this beast. However, Revolutionary France, and Atheistic Secularism which came out of the French Revolution, is already the antitype of the ancient Egypt; and, Assyria is basically the pre-Babylon of biblical times. Placing Atheistic Secularism as the sixth kingdom, as the Babylon-view does, it would emphasize the end-time role of Atheistic Secularism in the dragon’s war against God and the remnant (Rev 11:7). Indeed, Atheistic Secularism has a role in the end-game, as Revelation 17 states that five kingdoms have fallen but does not say that the sixth kingdom (Atheistic Secularism) is fallen or would fall. It seems that this is coherent with the interpretation of Daniel 11, according to which Egypt stands for Atheistic Secularism in vv. 40–45. Daniel 11:42, 43 states that the king of the north stretches his hand to Egypt and snatches its riches, but it does not say that Egypt would be totally destroyed.[[50]](#footnote-50) It seems that the element of atheism or direct resistance against God and Christ and Christianity is under the metasymbol of dragon, under which, in turn, is Egypt/beast from abyss (Rev 11:7–10; 12:3–5, 7, 9, 12–17; 16:13–14; 17:8). Hence, atheism against God is a part of Babylon (Rev 11:8);[[51]](#footnote-51) yet, it is also separated from Babylon in the end-times, because during and after the sixth kingdom—that is during the last phase of the end-times— Egypt/the beast from the abyss as the entity of straight opposition to Christianity is distinguished from Babylon which *confesses Christianity*, Babylon being the mix of Christianity and religions and philosophies of the world. Hence, Atheism will exist and influence humanity until the end through the satanic trinity (Rev 16:13–14)[[52]](#footnote-52) and in a controlled opposition.[[53]](#footnote-53)

It would be coherent that the controlled opposition, namely the secular and atheistic totalitarianism, which we see in the world right now, leads to chaos in the world, as we also see in the world today,[[54]](#footnote-54) and that the chaos then leads to “Christian” authoritarianism/totalitarianism. In this view the seven heads of the beast of Rev 12, 13 and 17 picture the kingdoms of the Babylon-view, and the ten horns of the scarlet beast (Rev 17:3, 12) would be a metasymbol, as well, representing the climactic political-economic rulership of the beast, namely the kings of the earth or vassal kings/leaders and/or co-rulers of Rome who are “Christian” by name and are controlled by the Papacy/fallen Protestantism.[[55]](#footnote-55) Indeed, the original political-economic rulership under the climactic power, namely the Papal Rome, is depicted as the ten horns in Rev 13. Revelation 13 refers to the actual climactic Papal power, because the crowns are on the ten horns (13:1), as in Rev 12 the horns do not have the crowns yet. Daniel 7 explains this as well, because it refers to the history of the Papal power placing the ten horns under its rule (by defeating three horns). Obviously, the three horns are replaced by the rule of the Papacy and her underling-kings, since she takes the control of the totality of the kings of the earth in two phases: before and after the mortal wound and its healing. At the end of time, the original Papal religious world is being revived, since the ten kings rule again with the beast after the wound is healed. Since all the world wonders after the sea beast through the rule of the land beast, it makes sense that the false Protestant world has been revived politically at this point. Thus, at the final phase of the end-times, the ten kings represent the fallen Protestant political leaders of the world which give their power onto the beast,[[56]](#footnote-56) and perhaps also the secular rulers of the world, and all of the rest of the Babylonian kings from all cultures and societies, which give their loyalty to the beast, because the secular/Atheistic rulership (and all other rulership of the globe) surrenders to the even more powerful religious global elite ruled by the principles and policies of the religious Papacy (Dan 11:40, 42, 43). Then these secular/atheistic rulers (and people), at least, would be the ones who take the mark of the beast on their hands, picturing that they act according to the dictates of the beasts under compulsion, even though they would not believe like the beasts (Rev 13:16). Be it as it may, the controlled opposition and rule of the kings of the earth leads to chaos, out of which religious-political-economic global control arises, which is “Christian” by name but speaks (legislates and makes policies) like the dragon. How long the controlled opposition needs to incite chaos before the final control is implemented, and how much time will pass until the final order by the Sunday law will arise, I do not know. I only argue that the order out of chaos seems to be a coherent element of the Babylon-view.

The question of this section basically is what the Babylon-view brings for the bigger picture and for the application of the end-time prophecies to current time better than the Egypt-view. The notion that the historical situation of Revelation 17’s vision of John is the time when the Papacy “is not” and Atheistic Secularism “is”, is important because it adds up with the order of events in Daniel 11:40–45, which points out that Atheistic Secularism (the king of the south) is conquered by religious rulership (the king of the north), as was mentioned above. Again, an atheistic element will prevail until the end of time. The Egypt-view does include Egypt in the scarlet beast, but this interpretation does not seem to have a consistent role for the end-time Egypt in the end-time satanic trinity/Babylon. Yes, Egypt and Assyria were persecuting powers like the rest of the powers in the scarlet beast, as the Egypt-view brings up.[[57]](#footnote-57) However, is that all that these identities would contribute to a holistic identity of the scarlet beast, especially regarding the end-times? The Egypt-view does not seem to help to build the bigger picture, bringing something special into it, like Daniel 11 offers for the wider view of the book of Daniel, giving the succession of the apocalyptic powers, which leads to the climax of things.

Paulien defends the Egypt-view by saying that God meets people where they are,[[58]](#footnote-58) meaning that God approaches people in their language and at the time and place of their lives, which then would be the case regarding the lives of the prophets and the apostles. Therefore, the kingdom which “is” would be the kingdom of the time of John, namely the Pagan Rome. Paulien even says that the Babylon-view’s “major tension with the biblical evidence, however, is in its assumption that John would be given an explanation rooted in a time frame so far into his future.”[[59]](#footnote-59) Paulien continues: “The events of the vision are not necessarily located in the prophet’s time and place. But when the vision is explained to the prophet afterward, the explanation always comes in the time, place and circumstances of the visionary.”[[60]](#footnote-60)

In order to answer Paulien’s comments, firstly, it is true that God meets people where they are. However, this principle does not need to be applied to Rev 17 necessarily, because the chapter deals with the end-times. Secondly, God does consider the time and place of John and uses the language that he can understand, because Babylon includes the Pagan Rome, namely the phase of Rome in John’s time. Hence, an answer to Paulien’s problem appears to be found from the hermeneutic of layers. Thirdly, although the vision and the explanation does go into separate phases of the harlot and the beast, the main thing in the vision and the explanation is the totality and the climax of the harlot and the beast (Rev 17:7, 11), because the climax of the beast is the beast itself (v. 11), including the climactic judgment of the harlot, as was shown already. So, the issue of whether John was placed at his time or at the end-times in the vision and explanation of Rev 17, is not so crucial a thing, as Paulien appears to think it is, even though the Babylon-view answers to even this question better, in my estimation, considering the actual holistic and climactic nature of the vision and the explanation.

I have emphasized the importance of seeking the role of Atheistic Secularism or the end-time Egypt at the time of the end. So far, it seems to me, the Babylon-view has met this expectation better than the Egypt-view. The Egypt-view lacks the notion from the text of Rev 17, and the overall picture of the Bible in my estimation, of the clandestine political-economic union of the Papacy and the leaders of the world *today*. For example, Paulien’s,[[61]](#footnote-61) Stefanovic’s and Müller’s views make “a leap” from the Papal Middle Ages to the final days. If Rev 13 does not make it clear enough, Rev 17 elaborates that the Papacy controls all kinds of kings (leaders), even “Protestant” leaders, of the world to deceive the world, but the Egypt-view (except Reynolds’ view) “jumps over” the reign of the USA. Reynolds’ view does include the USA as one of the heads of the beast. Therefore, Reynolds’ view seems to be the most historicist of the Egypt-views, handling the totality of history.

However, as far as I am aware, not one of the mentioned proponents of the Egypt-view includes Atheistic Secularism into the beast. Why would it be important to know that Babylon controls both religious *and* atheistic/secular leaders, right-leaning *and* left-leaning leaders, of the world? We already showed that the text does not say that the sixth and the seventh kings would fall before the harlot and the beast themselves are destroyed, and that this fits Daniel 11. Moreover, due to this we might be more careful to watch the endeavors of the *current* powers. We might see *how* Babylon uses *political* *and* *economic* deceptions through proxies *even in secular politics* and not only religious deceptions.[[62]](#footnote-62) It is crucial to know that Babylon and the kings of the earth are a political-economic union (Rev 17; 18), and that they war against God by *hoax*, deceiving *the nations* (16:13–14; 18:23; cf. 2 Thess 2:1–12) *today*.

Granted that at the present time the Papacy and the leaders of the world are already in a relatively open union.[[63]](#footnote-63) However, I think we as individuals and as congregations would have been and would be more conscious about the deceptions of the powers of the world in current and important global issues if we would believe that the papacy deceitfully uses these powers in political and economic (and scientific) policies of the globe. Naturally, or at least we have seen in recent years, political, economic and scientific policies include medical and healthcare policies. Many Adventists do not pay almost any prophetic attention to the powers that be and their global policies. They think that the Sunday law is the only deception which we can surely detect, and that when it arrives, we will be ready for it. However, as was made clear, Babylon is a political and economic unity. The political deception and corruption of the Antichrist (Dan 8:25; 11:32; 2 Thess 2:1–12) is manifested in the beasts’ aim to take away basic civil and constitutional rights of the people (Rev 13:16, 17).[[64]](#footnote-64)

Even if we would be ready for the last great deception when it arrives, how about the rest of the people of the world? What kind of a picture do people have of us, Adventists, if we go along with all kinds of deceptive policies of the global elite, even when they suppress the basic rights of people? Through deceptions the mindset of the people is being shaped, leading them to be sympathetic for global policies, even totalitarian ones, because the policies *seem* to be for the common good, such as for the common security and/or sustainability and/or health. This might be how (some) people take sides even before the Sunday law because of their concern of the livelihoods of themselves and their families, and because of a concern of their reputation or fear of not being politically correct; and they might hold on to their totalitarian or authoritarian opinions because of their pride or fear during the Sunday law. We have to think of these people, as well. The climactic gospel proclamation includes liberty of conscience as a mindset, and the gospel of true inheritance of eternal life in the blood of Christ changes the mindset of an individual to repentance, humbleness, and open-heartedness for Truth in Christ. It is elementary to know the deceitful mindset of the Antichrist, which it aims to spread throughout the world. It is pivotal to know about its mindset of order out of chaos. And, it is vital to say *no* to the mindset of the New World Order, even to a “Christian” New World Order.

## The Pre-Advent Judgment and the Climax of the True and the False Gospel (the Abomination of Desolation)

I mentioned the climactic gospel proclamation. What do I mean by that and what does it have to do with Rev 17? As the climactic harlot spreads the false gospel, namely the cup full of “abominations and filthiness,” (Rev 17:4 KJV) which leads to the wrath of God (14:8), so God in turn proclaims the true gospel through the remnant congregation (14:7). Figuratively the being drunken of wine stands for, at least, being deceived into apostasy and spiritual sleeping.[[65]](#footnote-65) It also means an inability to see, when one is not able to understand true spirituality/doctrine (Isa 29:9–12). Wine pictures the covenant of love between God and the church (Sol 1:2, 4: 4:10; 5:1), and, therefore, it symbolizes the new covenant in the New Testament (Matt 9:17) on the basis of Jesus’ blood (26:28). Thus, wine represents the reality on which the covenant is based, which means that Babylon’s doctrine/proclamation/practice is based on false and deceitful covenant. Therefore, the climactic abomination of desolation is based on false covenant, and the true gospel is based on true covenant in the blood of Christ.

The abomination of desolation is tightly linked to the abominations and filthiness in the harlot’s cup. The false gospel is the uplifting of man’s glory, the idea that man can define the criteria of salvation or the inheritance of the world—namely that man can define divine law—and the idea that man can define the climax of salvation, that is justification. The Papacy has done both of these. She has argued in history that she can alter the divine law,[[66]](#footnote-66) and she has changed the ten commandments by changing the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, and by taking away the commandment against worshipping idols. When it comes to salvation and justification by faith, the Catholic Church believes that justification “is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man.”[[67]](#footnote-67) This is called infused righteousness.[[68]](#footnote-68) Infused righteousness consists of two important elements: (1) it “can bestow true merit on us;”[[69]](#footnote-69) and (2) infused righteousness works inside the human being.[[70]](#footnote-70) Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: “Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life.”[[71]](#footnote-71) Moreover, grace “ensures the supernatural quality of our acts and consequently their merit before God and before men.”[[72]](#footnote-72) For those who are “imperfectly purified,” Catholicism offers the purgatory, where “after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”[[73]](#footnote-73) The Eucharist (the Lord’s Supper) and the merits of the prayers and works of believers aid the souls in purgatory.[[74]](#footnote-74)

What can we understand from these two points and the quotations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church? The quotations repeated and elaborated refer to two points, namely that infused righteousness can give true merit for us, and that it works inside of us. These elements are linked together, and they are problematic, because, according to the Bible, our sanctification does not entail the meritorial quality which can stand before the perfect law and glory of God.[[75]](#footnote-75) Moreover, the purgatory belief entails that only Jesus’ merits do not make us sufficient to enter heaven. It cannot be emphasized enough that this is the crucial separation between true Protestantism’s and Catholicism’s justification doctrine. In authentic Protestantism, the quality that can stand in front of God’s judgment seat and glory is the perfect righteousness of Christ, which dwells only in Him in the heavenly sanctuary. This righteousness is not internal for the believer, but it is imputed to him/her.[[76]](#footnote-76) In Catholic teaching we are justified by our own “true” merits or by merits of other human beings, instead of being justified by Christ’s merits alone. This shifts the glory of God to human beings. This doctrine started to develop before AD 508,[[77]](#footnote-77) laying the ground for the ripening of the abomination of desolation, as the ripening happened AD 508–538 when the union of church and state politicized the theology of human glory, as will be explained below.

Therefore, the Catholic view of justification is the basis of the abomination of desolation.[[78]](#footnote-78) The abomination of desolation has to do with two things: judgment and covenant. The Roman Papacy united church and state, and, thus, corrupted “the temple”, i.e. the spiritual temple of Christ (the church), by making it a political and militaristic entity (Dan 12:11), which leads to persecutions (7:20–25; 8:24; 12:6).[[79]](#footnote-79) This is part of the false covenant (cf. Jdg 2:1–3) and judgment, and hence part and the ripening of the abomination of desolation. Thus, through their imaginary authority to determine who can inherit the earth or to whom certain rights to live on this earth are allowed and to whom they are not allowed—which means that some receive the death sentence—the beasts usurp the *judgment* of God which does not belong to them (Rev 13:7, 10, 15–17). As was stated already, in both Papal phases of the abomination of desolation, Babylon’s/the beast’s judgment comes after her persecution of God’s people (19:2). This judgment is desolation/abyss (17:8, 16).

When one justifies himself by the human standard of righteousness, it is an abomination to God (Luke 16:15). The Sabbath is a mark of rest in Jesus’ fulfilled work. Sunday, in turn, becomes a mark of righteousness by human works and merit, since it is the mark of the Papal authority to define the means of the covenant and the means of salvation (justificational and sanctificational rest).[[80]](#footnote-80) Moses makes it clear that the abomination of idol worship brings covenant curses and desolation (Deut 29:15–27; 32:16–29). The greatest idol is man himself, when he uplifts himself as the determiner of the law and the gospel, when he thinks that he can be justified before God through creature merit (cf. Gen 4:3–5). The *man* of lawlessness, and the little horn with *human* eyes, and the number of a *man*, all depict the Antichrist who takes the place of Christ, making humanity itself as God, as the ultimate idol. The abomination is the false covenant (wine) of being under the law, being cursed by the law, because it lacks the only merit, the imputed blood of Christ, that can atone us with God and give us the inheritance of eternal life.[[81]](#footnote-81)

The abomination of desolation includes both taking away the daily and uplifting the false yearly (Yom Kippur, the judgment) (Dan 11:31; 12:11), because the liberation from the abomination comes in the pre-advent judgment, the true yearly (8:13; 12:12). The Antichrist takes away the daily and stumps the host under its foot by the transgression of desolation (8:13).[[82]](#footnote-82) In addition to other meanings, the host stands for temple service as well (Num 8:24); and, the whole temple service can be summarized in one word: atonement (v. 19). Thus, the little horn tramples the atonement in both the daily and the yearly. Obviously, the Prince of the host (Josh 5:14, 15; cf. Exod 3:5) is trampled under feet with the host. Prince of the host is the Prince of the covenant (Dan 8:11; 11:22), the High Priest, the Head of the heavenly sanctuary service. Indeed, Jesus Christ is the atonement (Rom 3:25) and the eternal covenant Himself (Isa 42:5–7; see Isa 61:1–3; Luke 4:16–21), and this is the core of the antitypical Day of Atonement.

In order to apply the explanation above to the antitypical great controversy between the true and the false atonement, the Papacy tramples the atonement in both the antitypical daily and yearly. The daily depicts our relationship to God in our daily lives and assurance of salvation in Christ. The yearly pictures the judgment of the saints. The substitutionary blood of Christ is part of both the antitypical daily and yearly. Indeed, the imputed substitutionary blood of Christ—as He confirmed the covenant by His blood (Dan 9:27; Mark 14:22–31)—is the climax of the antitypical Day of Atonement, being the final justificational act of the heavenly High Priest (Dan 8:14; 12:1[[83]](#footnote-83)), which atones the sanctuary’s impurity (sinfulness) and the people (Lev 16:14–19). This is the climactic gospel message to the world; and the remnant church proclaims the true gospel *in judgment*, which gives the glory to God (Rev 14:7). Giving glory to God stands for both acknowledging God as the Creator and the giver and definer of the divine law or the standard of righteousness, which is established in the Sabbath commandment, and giving glory to Christ on the basis of His blood (5:12–13; 7:1–15[[84]](#footnote-84)). In the sealing of His people (Rev 7:1–8), God has the glory (v. 12), because the angels see the people in white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb and hear them shout that salvation comes from God and the Lamb (vv. 9–15). Christ’s blood and the sanctuary cover and protect the people (vv. 14–15), and this explains the meaning of the seal. The Loud Cry warns about the false gospel of Babylon (Rev 18:3), which leads to the mark of the beast; and, the Loud Cry exalts God’s glory (v. 1), namely the true gospel, which leads to the seal of God. Hence, the pre-advent judgment proclaims salvation through the merits of Christ alone, which is in the heart of the Loud Cry message.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Now, I am aware that imputed righteousness leads to imparted righteousness[[86]](#footnote-86) and to the receiving of the outpouring of the Spirit, and that the white robe can picture imparted righteousness as well,[[87]](#footnote-87) and that imparted righteousness is also included in the gospel and the Loud Cry message (according to Ellen White as well[[88]](#footnote-88)), and that the fruit of faith is shown in the pre-advent judgment as evidence. We are judged by the fruit and the deeds and by our relation to God’s Truth, and sanctification makes us fit to heaven. However, a systematic study of justification (and sanctification) in the Bible, for which we do not have the space here, reveals that the climax of the investigative judgment, and the heart of the gospel, is the imputed righteousness of Christ, as even our deepest faith and humbling before God—which is what the Spirit imparts in us as we humble ourselves in sanctification and in the records of the pre-advent judgment (Lev 16:29)—or the brightest fruit in our lives (even though produced by Jesus Himself through the Holy Spirit [Gal 2:20], yet having the human choice and cooperation element in it) does not have the merits needed to appease God’s wrath and fulfill God’s infinite law because of the element of human sinfulness in the cooperation,[[89]](#footnote-89) as Ellen White makes clear, as well.[[90]](#footnote-90) Christ’s own people have victory through faith (Rev 17:14), but imparted faith/faithfulness looks into imputed faith/faithfulness of Christ (Rom 3:22 KJV).[[91]](#footnote-91) In the end, at the climax of the judgment process, only Jesus’ imputed substitutionary righteousness can stand before the infinite glory of God’s throne in the heavenly court. The pre-advent judgment process reveals that the imparted righteousness and our inward being never had *justifying* quality in the first place, but it only had *sanctifying* quality as an *evidence* of having been justified through the imputation. Nevertheless, the process is needed, because God has an open court in heaven. He reveals for the whole universe where the true infinite glory dwells: in Jesus Christ alone.

In conclusion, it makes sense that the Papal New World Order is the climactic union (covenant) of the harlot and the beast, since the Loud Cry is the climactic message that warns about the wine (covenant) based on human glory and authority in judgment. Babylon goes through the climactic end-time judgment, which was elaborated above, and as she “represents the end-time religious counterfeit of God’s faithful remnant”[[92]](#footnote-92) with the counterfeit proclamation/religious service/gospel (cf. Dan 7:8, 25; 8:11–13, 11:28, 31, 36–37; Rev 13:5–6, 11, 13) based on the false covenant. In turn, the true remnant proclaims the true gospel in the time of the end-time judgment. Indeed, the Loud Cry is the climactic Day of the Lord message. (See above how the Day of the Lord is the climactic theme in the book of Revelation, and that the investigative judgment is truly the Day of the Lord.)

# Summary and the Final Words

In this paper we have aimed to see the bigger picture regarding the interpretation of Rev 17. We showed that the harlot and the scarlet beast are metasymbols, under which different kingdoms have their successive turns, just like in Daniel 8 and 11, and in Rev 12 and 13. Also the concept of the abomination of desolation has three phases in history. Revelation includes climactic structures and themes, such as the tribulation of the 144,000, working together with the Olivet Discourse, and the judgment of Babylon/ the sea beast. The septets have a special indication to the climax of the Day of the Lord. Similarly, the rule of Babylon has a climax, and even its guilt is climaxing.

As to the bigger picture, Rev 12 shows the attacks of the dragon in three phases, and Rev 13 deepens the view of the sea beast or the two Papal phases, bringing information about the land beast by showing characteristics and aims of the two beasts. Rev 17 points out the historical succession of kingdoms and their climactic Babylon, deepening the view of the union of church and state, namely the political union between Babylon and the kings of the earth. Rev 18, in turn, concentrates on the economic side of Babylon and the union. Rev 17 shows that the climactic attack of Satan is the climactic war of this union against God and His remnant. The climactic scarlet beast is the totality of the previous kingdoms, a final masterpiece of Satan, mastering even deceptions in a deeper level. The judgment of Babylon has layers, and it climaxes at the end of time, thus making sense that John is carried into a time of Babylon’s judgment (the desert), and he looks into the end of time in the vision, especially into the climactic rule and judgment of Babylon.

The Papal New World Order controls the kings of the earth behind the scenes, yet it is one of the seven kingdoms. Thus, it is coherent why the Papacy is pictured as the beast itself, yet one of the seven heads. Rev 17 is directly linked to Rev 18, and, thus, the end-time Babylon controls the economic powers of the world *today*. The Babylon-view does not “jump over” important phase(s) or counterforces of the end-times, like some versions of the Egypt-view does. The eighth kingdom/the beast itself especially controls the two sides or the two kingdoms or the two counterforces which last until the end, namely the “Protestant” right and the Atheistic/Secular left. Atheistic Secularism is a part of Babylon which includes fallen Christianity; yet, Atheism is against Christianity. Thus, Atheism is so called controlled opposition, as the harlot “pulls the strings” behind the scenes, leading to order out of chaos. A common enemy, namely Atheistic Secularism (and Islam), unites ecumenical Christians against this common foe. But, ultimately, the ecumenical union decides that anyone against their mark of unity (Sunday) is against them.

A crucial deception of the Papacy and the main point of the application of the Babylon-view in this paper is that the Papacy works behind the scenes. She hides behind different powers. Should not people be careful in their views of and relations with the powers of the earth? Have not history shown that power, and especially deceitful and authoritarian/totalitarian power, corrupts no matter how noble motivations, pleasant words and good intentions the leaders *seem to* have? Should we not peak behind the curtain and aim to see the real influence behind the powers? It is not healthy to see conspiracies everywhere without biblical basis and clear evidence—that is correct. Granted also that we should not be over skeptical about everything and always expect the worse about the leaders. There can also be good leaders in the world. Nevertheless, the Bible tells us that the leaders, which give their power onto the beast, prevail over the good leaders during the climax of the end times (until they fall). On the basis of the Bible (and also on the basis of the evil of human nature and history), and especially if we know that deceptive uniting-process is happening behind the scenes, it is often wise to evaluate the thoughts and acts and especially the great movements of the world elite critically, particularly when they greatly respect the harlot/the beast, applaud her and follow the beast on the basis of its philosophy, and notably when the media has largely abandoned its role as the watch dog of them, and when the situation has led to suppression of free speech in societies and even in churches. If we do not search the Scriptures, we will be deceived by Satan and receive false beliefs, attitudes and perhaps even authorities. Even the very elect can possibly be deceived by concentrating only on religious deceptions and ignoring the secular, political and economic (and scientific) ones. Equally important is to warn other people groups of the world—not only Adventists—of the hoaxes of Babylon, because the deceptive and totalitarian mindset of Babylon prepares them for the mark of the beast. This is a part of the way people are called out of Babylon.

The aim of Revelation 17 is to reveal the judgment of Satan’s climactic power, Babylon (vv. 1–2, 16–17); and, thus, Rev 17 looks forward to chapters 18 and 19, as well. Revelation 19:1–16 contrasts the fornication of the harlot (v. 2) with the honor (glory)/righteousness of Christ (vv. 7–9, 11–16). Revelation 17 and 18, together with the rest of the book of Revelation, explain further the end-time Babylon’s union and relationship with the kings of the earth in the false gospel, namely justification on the basis of human merits in judgment, which is the foundation of the abomination of desolation, the uplifting of human glory which leads to the union of church and state in the suppression of basic freedoms of certain people, and which thus leads to the ultimate loss/desolation of Babylon. The Papal New World Order aims to be the climactic power, securing the inheritance of the earth (including political and economic inheritance), when in reality the inheritance is based on Christ’s blood alone (cf. 19:13, 15), as the Loud Cry or the true gospel proclaims.

In the climactic clash between Christ and Satan, Jesus Christ will be the victor together with His faithful remnant. Even though other things like imparted righteousness are part of the pre-advent judgment, imputation of Christ’s merits is the climax of the investigative judgment. The remnant will have victory through close relationship to God in imparted faith, but imparted faith looks into imputed faith as the only ultimate salvation, as the only True reality before the Father in heaven. Christ is the “Faithful and True” (Rev 19:11 KJV). The climactic victory is the imputed infinitely perfect substitutionary faith/faithfulness of Christ, which only can stand in front of the infinite glory of God’s face in judgment. This is the core of the glorious message that the earth is lightened with (Rev 18:1).

1. Samuel Nuñez, “Narrative Structure of Daniel 8: A Text Linguistic Approach,” *JATS* 26.2 (2015): 88–110, https://www.atsjats.org/nunez-s-daniel-article-hasel-memorial-formatted.pdf. In his study, Nuñez uses the theoretical model of Text Linguistics, which includes looking at the Hebrew verbal forms and clause types, which define the stages in narration. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Nuñez, “Narrative Structure of Daniel 8,” 105n48. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Also, Ellen White applies Rev 13:4–18 to both before and after the deadly wound/the healing of the wound. Ellen G. White, “Ms 88, 1897: As It Was In The Days of Noah,” in *Letters and Manuscripts – Volume 12* *(1897)* (Ellen G. White Estate, 1897); Ellen G. White, “Ms 153, 1902: Calamities,” in *Letters and Manuscripts – Volume 17 (1902)* (Ellen G. White Estate, 1902). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 304–308, 333–334. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Matthew 24:4–14 and 15–26 have at least the following parallels: deception (vv. 4–5, 11, 23–28), the persecution of the saints (vv. 9–10, 15–22), and the perseverance of the saints in the time of trouble (vv. 13, 22). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Rev 20:3 explains that the abyss is also a kind of judgment: to be bound by circumstances, like being desolated and dead. The abyss will be further elaborated below. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Indeed, the battle of Armageddon has two phases at the end-times: before and after the Second Coming of Christ and Millennium (Rev 16:12–14; 19:19, 20; 20:7–10). Actually, the first phase has two phases: before the end of the time of probation and after it. Read more about the phases of Armageddon in Ville Suutarinen, *Global Deception and the Issue of Freedom: Apocalyptic Trumpets*, 2nd ed. (Finland: self-published, 2023), 85–86, https://a.co/d/3F9nCCr. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ranko Stefanovic, “Finding Meaning in the Literary Patterns of Revelation,” *JATS* 13.1 (2002), 27–28, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/jats/vol13/iss1/3/. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Richard Fredericks, “A Sequential Study of Revelation 1–14 Emphasizing the Judgment Motif: With Implications for Seventh-day Adventist Apocalyptic Pedagogy,” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 1987), 185–187, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/377. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Alberto Treiyer, *Apocalypse: Seals and Trumpets, Biblical and Historical Studies* (Alberto R. Treiyer, 2005), 24–25; cf. David E. Aune, *Revelation 1—5*, WBC 52a, ed. Bruce M. Metzger (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1997), xcv. Treiyer states that similarly the “seventh church introduces the vision of the throne which contains a book with seven seals (Rev 3:21; 4:1–2; 5:1).” Treiyer, *Apocalypse,* 22. And, he continues that the seventh church points to a time when the seven seals are reviewed before the heavenly court, not to a time span which would include the seven seals. Treiyer, *Apocalypse,* 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 155. Interestingly, the vision to be sent to the seven churches was revealed on the Lord’s Day (the climactic seventh day?) (Rev 1:10, 11). Moreover, the seventh church climactically encompasses themes from all of the preceding churches. A theme of the seven churches, which climaxes in the seventh church is, at least, faults of the churches, as was pointed out to me by Ales Modrijan. Laodicea, which is the seventh church, does not have the good characteristics of the other churches or it is worse in the bad characteristics than the other churches. For example, Ephesus should do the first works or else Jesus removes its lampstand (Rev 2:5), when it would be in darkness. Laodiceans are already blind, and thus in darkness (3:17). Ephesus has zeal (2:2–3; cf. 2 Cor 7:11; 9:2) but lacks the greatest zeal, love (Rev 2:4). Laodiceans are lukewarm and have not the zeal (3:19). They do not see evil, and thus do not correct it (v. 18), but Ephesians do (2:2, 6).

    Smyrna has poverty but is rich (2:9). Laodicea is poor without any riches (3:17).

    Pergamos has not denied Jesus’ name and faith (2:13), but Laodiceans need true faith tested in fire (3:18; 1 Pet 1:7), and they need to call on the name of the Lord, because that is how they will get through the test (Zech 13:19). But a bad thing in Pergamos is that is has not cast away those who hold on to the doctrine of Balaam (Rev 2:14), which includes idolatry and fornication. Laodiceans follow the same path, because they are depicted as naked, when Ezekiel talks about the “nakedness of thy whoredoms” (Ezek 23:29 KJV), “because thou art polluted with their idols” (v. 30 KJV).

    Thyatira has quite the same virtues as Ephesus, but it adds service (διακονία [*diakonia*]) as a virtue (Rev 2:19). It is interesting that Salomon’s temple had gold “for all instruments of all manner of service” (1 Chr 28:14 KJV). Acts of the Apostles mentions deaconhood (*diakonia*) as an important service (6:1–7). Paul speaks of ministry (*diakonia*) of righteousness (2 Cor 3:9) and ministry (*diakonia*) of reconciliation (5:18). All of these services need the faith of gold in order to take place. And Laodicea lacks this faith of gold.

    Sardis is dead (Rev 3:1), and so is Laodicea, because she is wretched (ταλαίπωρος [*talaiporos*]) (v. 17). “O wretched (*talaiporos*) man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom 7:24 KJV) This means that the Laodiceans are under the law, because God’s law shows our sinfulness (3:19–20; 7:7–11). This then means that the Laodiceans have not found the true gospel, which would release them from the curse or judgment of the law. They would need the pure gospel of the imputed righteousness of Christ (which leads to the imparted righteousness of Christ, as well [Gal 5:18]). Indeed, some in Sardis have not defiled their garments (Rev 3:4), but Laodiceans need that white garment (v. 18).

    Philadelphia has kept God’s word and has not denied His name, which is connected to God opening the door with the key of David (3:7). Laodiceans are given an exhortation to open the door when Jesus knocks (v. 20), which suggests that some have not opened the door. It seems, thus, that God has opened the door generally through Jesus, but individuals need to open the doors of their hearts in order for God to apply His general opening of the door for them. Whatever is the case, the Laodiceans need that faith of gold in order to keep God’s word and hold on to His name. Indeed, the remnant keeps the commandments of God and has the faith of Jesus (14:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The deep silence of the seventh seal symbolizes awful waiting of God’s judgment (Hab 2:20; Zeph 1:7; Zach 2:13 [17]). See Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 15, 16; SDABC 7 (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vols. 1–7, ed. Francis D. Nichol [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953–1957]), 787; Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 253. This seems to be a reason why the seventh seal depicts the last judgment and/or the awe and silence before the pronouncement of the judgment. Indeed, the contexts of Habakkuk and Zephaniah do not refer to the Second Coming only, but more generally to the Day of the Lord. Fredericks, “A Sequential Study of Revelation 1–14,” 185–187; cf. Ekkehardt Müller, *Microstructural Analysis of Revelation 4–11*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1994), 235n1. The Day of the Lord does not always depict the Second Coming, but it can refer to multiple happenings in the plan of salvation. Czarnitzki states: “In Zech 14 one discovers another ‘Day of YHWH’ text demonstrating that the concept of the ‘Day of YHWH’ is not a single event of history, but that of multiple events of history which are consecutive and arguably culminate in one unsurpassed, universal, and ultimate ‘Day of YHWH’ (cf. Isa 2:6–22; 13:1–21; Joel 2:1, 11; 3:4; 4:14; Obad 8, 11–13, 15). Ironically, although all these ‘Days of YHWH’ are ultimately manifestations of his actions, they either may be marked by his absence leading to doom or by his presence leading to salvation (Isa 2:6–22; Joel 1:15), thus underscoring the immense impact of YHWH taking sides.” Robert Czarnitzki, “Yom YHWH as a Biblical-Theological Theme,” (MA diss., Andrews University, 2010), 142, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/theses/33/. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The seventh trumpet seems to mark either Christ entering the Most Holy place in Heaven or the Second Coming of Christ or both, being concurrent with the sixth and the seventh seal, because the seventh trumpet refers to Christ receiving His kingdom and judging the dead (Rev 11:15–18). Both receiving the kingdom and judging the dead can be applied to both the pre-advent judgment and the execution of judgment. Moreover, Revelation 11:19, if it is included into the seventh trumpet, points to the Day of Atonement (the pre-advent judgment), because it says that the ark of the covenant is seen in the Holy of Holies. Indeed, the seventh trumpet is basically identical with Daniel 7:13–14 where Christ receives the kingdom from the Father, which Ellen White interprets as the beginning of the Investigative judgment. White, *Great Controversy*, 427, 479; White, *Early Writings*, 55, 280; SDABC 4, 829–830. SDABC holds that the “final phase of Christ’s work began in 1844 (see on Dan. 8:14). Accordingly, Seventh-day Adventists place the beginning of the seventh trumpet in that year.” SDABC 7, 805–806; cf. Norman R. Gulley, *The Church and the Last Things*, vol. 4 of *Systematic Theology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2016), 514. Additionally, the sixth trumpet ends before Jesus enters the Holy of Holies, because Rev 11:17 states that Christ has not yet come but is to come (KJV), and verse 19 informs that the time of judgment has started (KJV, YLT), and “voices” connect verse 19 to verse 15, making 15–19 a unified package. Therefore, the seventh trumpet appears to entail both the Second Advent of Jesus and the event when Christ entered the Holy of Holies in heaven, marking the continuity of the seventh trumpet after 1844 until the Second Coming. It is interesting that Ellen White suggests that Rev 11:15 points to the Second Coming of Christ, as well. White, *Great Controversy*, 301. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Rev 11:19 and 16:18–21 are theophanies which include hail. There are other theophanies in Revelation, depicted by the voice of thunder (4:5; 8:5), but they do not include the hail. Hail is connected to God’s wrath and judgment of the wicked in the Scriptures (e.g. Exod 9:18–34; Ps 78:47, 49; Isa 28:17; Rev 8:7). Hence, Rev 11:19 and 16:18 are judgment/wrath-theophanies, and judgment is clearly the climactic Day of the Lord in the Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Kenneth Strand, Ranko Stefanovic and Jon Paulien belong to the group which defends this view. Kenneth A. Strand, “The Seven Heads: Do They Represent Roman Emperors?” in *Symposium on Revelation – Book 2*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 7, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 191; Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 512; Jon Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” in Endtime Issues Newsletter No. 131: 37, http://www.anym.org/pdf/BP/BP\_131\_revelation\_17\_and\_the\_papacy.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ekkehardt Müller, “The Beast of Revelation 17: A Suggestion (Part II),” *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 10.2 (2007): 153-176. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Edwin E. Reynolds, “Is Babylon the Papacy in the Book of Revelation?” *JATS* 31.1–2 (2020): 63–81. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. For example, Jaques Doukhan, Hans LaRondelle and William Shea hold similar views. Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse Through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 161–164, as referred to in Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” 23, 35–36; William H. Shea, “The Identification of the Seven Heads of the Beast in Revelation 17,” unpublished paper, as referred to in Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 532; Hans LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies* (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 410–417, as referred to in Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 532. Alberto Treiyer does not define the first four kingdoms but only clearly agrees with the final four kingdoms. Alberto Treiyer, “Identifying Babylon as the Roman Catholic Church,” *Adventist Distinctive Messages*, Current objections and answers (March 2017), 7, https://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/articles/. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Reynolds, “Is Babylon the Papacy in the Book of Revelation?” 70. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 513. Paulien writes: “Clearly the Babylon of Revelation 17 has a Christian face.” Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See the many parallels in Ekkehardt Müller, “The Beast of Revelation 17: A Suggestion (Part I),” *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 10.1 (2007), 38–40. Müller thinks, similar to Reynolds, that the scarlet beast of Rev 17 is Satan. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Müller pens: “The heads of the sea beast contain blasphemous names (Rev 13:1), and the sea beast blasphemes God, his house, and those who dwell in heaven (Rev 13:5-6). However, the scarlet beast is completely covered with blasphemous names, suggesting some type of intensification.” Müller, “The Beast of Revelation 17: A Suggestion (Part II),” 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. SDABC 7, 856. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. White, “Lt 232, 1899,” par. 20–22; Don Leo M. Garilva, “The Development of Ellen G. White’s Concept of Babylon in *The Great Controversy*,” *JATS* 18.2 (Autumn 2007), 229. White also states that the symbol Babylon does not depict the Papacy alone but fallen Protestant churches, as well, being also a universal and eschatological entity. White, *The Great Controversy*, 383; Garilva, “The Development of Ellen G. White’s Concept of Babylon in *The Great Controversy*,” 236–237. Moreover, she thought that Babylon’s fall is complete in the final uniting of church and state (after the healing of the beast’s wound). Garilva, “The Development of Ellen G. White’s Concept of Babylon in *The Great Controversy*,” 232–234. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Müller states: “Rev 17:3, 8-12 must be interpreted in this end-time context of judgment. It is from the perspective of the judgment on Babylon, the judgment under the sixth and seventh plagues which points to the final destruction of Babylon in connection with Christ's second coming, that the events in Rev 17 must be understood.” Müller, “The Beast of Revelation 17: A Suggestion (Part I),” 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Treiyer calls this “cumulative liability for the prior generation.” Treiyer, “Identifying Babylon as the Roman Catholic Church,” 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Reynolds, “Is Babylon the Papacy in the Book of Revelation?” 73n29. Stefanovic puts it like this: “The application of the recapitulative principle can be very helpful to the interpreter of Revelation. The information and insight obtained from clear passages may unlock the theological meaning of the parallel difficult ones.” Stefanovic, “Finding Meaning in the Literary Patterns of Revelation,” 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Stefanovic sees this similarly (Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 523), although he holds that the seventh king of v. 10 is the same king as the king in v. 11 (Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Chris*, 525). However, I think it would be more consistent that the king which was, is not and will come, would be different than the seventh king, because the king which was, is not and will come, is already separated from the rest of the kings in v. 8. Moreover, it would also seem to be consistent that v. 10 emphasizes that one of the kings “is” precisely because the eighth king “is not”. This is well explained by the fact that during the French Revolution and the secular era the Papacy was not and is not the open political kingdom, since she is not wielding her authoritarian/totalitarian power openly (or at least not so openly as during the Dark Ages). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. An angel says to John that he will show the judgment of the harlot (Rev 17:1). Then John is taken into a wilderness or desert or a desolate place in the vision. It is a place of death and desolation, and the harlot is the mother of abominations. Hence, the judgment of her abominations is desolation: “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.” (17:16 NASB) This judgment of Babylon has background in Isa 21:1–10. G. K. Beale, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 355, as referred to in Vanderlei Dorneles, “The Eight Empire: New Hypotheses for the Symbols of Revelation 17,” *Andrews University Seminary Student Journal* 1.2 (Fall 2015), 24. It seems that the Papacy experienced her own “desert”, judgment, desolation, when she was “mortally wounded”. She will experience a similar judgment again, as she will be made desolate again yet finally this time. Regarding the desert, Treiyer states; “It is possible to understand the desert as a symbol of the place of death into which the beast was thrown after his period of supremacy (see Rev 17:7–11). John is transported to see the beast—that is, this kind of government represented by the union of church and state as in the Middle Ages—in the desert, waiting to be healed from the fatal wound (Rev 13:3, 12–15; 17:12–13).” Treiyer, *Apocalypse*, 149n130. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Dorneles argues that the eighth head of Rev 17 is the USA, and as evidence for this he presents, for example, that Rev 13 recapitulates Rev 12 by focusing on the Papacy, as Rev 17 would focus on the land beast as the eighth head. Dorneles, “The Eight Empire,” 23. However, Dorneles states that Rev 12:17 would depict the attack of the land beast. Dorneles, “The Eight Empire,” 27. I answer that Rev 13 focuses likewise on the land beast, not only on the sea beast; and Rev 12:17 pictures the attack of the resurrected sea beast, as well, because it will make war after its wound is healed (13:4; cf. 12:17), and because the patience of the saints and of the remnant are parallel expressions (13:10; 14:12), referring to the final phase of the end-times, when the Papacy persecutes the saints/the remnant. Granted that the Papacy uses the USA behind the scenes, which I even argue in this paper. However, the Papacy is still the one persecuting, even though she uses a proxy power to succeed in it. Moreover, Dorneles holds the Egypt-view, which is answered in this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Parallel statements of the book of life are used in both Rev 13:8 and 17:8. These verses refer to the time when the sea beast’s wound is healed (17:8). See also footnote 31 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The expression of the seventh king ruling only a short time (Rev 17:10) may stand for a relatively short time in terms of the context. However, the concept at least means that the power will come to its end. Ranko Stefanovic, “The Seven Heads of the Beast in Revelation 17,” *Ministry* (Dec 2013), 18. This would fit the interpretations of the seventh king being the United States of America, because its reign has not been the shortest in history when compared to other powers in question. For example, Neo-Babylonia reigned less than seventy years (or 87 years if we start from King Nabopolassar instead of Nebuchadnezzar), and Medo-Persia reigned about two hundred years. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. It seems that the resurrection of the beast from the abyss or from the “dead” in Rev 13 and 17 has similarities with the “resurrection” of Satan in Rev 20 precisely because the beast is the masterpiece of Satan’s power on earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Dan 8:24 may hint that the Papacy uses proxies, as Roy Gane concludes as well. “Sabbath Afternoon Meeting 2019-10-19: Scholars’ Roundtable Discussion: Part 3 — Anchor /Divergence Texts in Daniel 11 and Final Takeaways,” Daniel 11 Prophecy Conference (October 19, 2019), approx. 46:00, http://www.daniel11prophecy.com/video-presentations2.html. For example, in the age of the Renaissance, popes made alliances with the Turks against Christian monarchs of Europe. Roland H. Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1952), 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Her name is Mystery/Secret (μυστήριον [*musterion*]) (Rev 17:7). Yes, *musterion* in the context appears to mean “allegorical significance.” F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), s.v. “μυστήριον.” However, the word may have a double meaning, because the first thing that is explained about the mystery after v. 7 is the beast’s wound, the healing of the wound and it’s rise from the abyss (v. 8). The abyss is significant here, because in the Bible “abyss” means chaos (Gen 1:2; Rev 20:3; Gen 7:24; 8:3), and the bounded dimension of influence of the devil and his evil angels (Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6), and a “territory” of the kings of the world (Isa 24:21–22), including the ancestral kings, which in this case could depict the succession of the king of the north, Babylon (Ps 69:15; Ezek 31:15; 32), we might add. In sum, abyss means the legal consequence of the way of sin and pride (Rahab—depicting Satan and Egypt and Babylon—stands for pride, the beginning of sin), being under God’s condemnation and curse, being bound by circumstances (Rev 20:2–3), like being in a pit or a grave (*sheol*). Thus, it seems that the kings of the earth have their union with Babylon in secret, in the bounded area of influence, which they get from Babylon and the devil (Rev 16:13–14). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. γνώμη (*gnome*) can mean “purpose”. Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), s.v. “γνώμη.” [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 515. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. There was a time, when those, who warned the world about the coming New World Order, were called conspiracy theorists or “tin hats”. Today, the term New World Order is used more and more by the world leaders with the exact content or in the exact context which the “conspiracy theorists” warned of. For instance, thought leaders in World Government Summit 2022 stated that the New World Order (they used that term) would be cashless with common rules. “World Government Summit 2022 Livestream: Day 1,” World Government Summit in *Youtube* (Mar 29, 2022), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTTDzH2A1tM. Dr. Pippa Malmgren, former US presidential advisor, asserted that the order would be decentralized, yet talked about economic control through superpowers. The summit’s thought-leaders made clear that the economic structure is the key for implementing the New World Order, and that through the digital currency platform, the world order can more easily see every transaction in the economy. Digital currency order leads to punishing some through the order, as Frederick Kempe, President and CEO of Atlantic Council, states. Never before in world history have governments in unison frozen the assets of a central bank, as G7 (a coalition of seven countries) did recently. “World Government Summit 2022 Livestream.” The governments of the world are headed towards Economic Fascism, the economic system close to the Middle Ages. The economic philosophy of the Catholic Church is based on “common good” (which it defines) not on both common good and private property, because individual right to own property is not an intrinsic right of the people in the Papal system. Read more about Economic Fascism and the Catholic economic system (which are seen in the shared goals of WEF and UN, as well) in Suutarinen, *Global Deception and the Issue of Freedom*, 155–159, 175–182; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 7th article; Paul VI, Gaudium et Spes, #69, https://www.vatican.va/

    archive/hist\_councils/ii\_vatican\_council/documents/

    vat-ii\_const\_19651207\_gaudium-et-spes\_en.html; John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (1987), #42, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\_jp-ii\_enc\_30121987

    \_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html; Francis, Fratelli Tutti, #120; Walter Veith, “What Is the New World Order?” Total Onslaught, episode 21 (lecture presented at Canada, 2009), *Amazing Discoveries*, https://adtv.watch/

    total-onslaught/what-is-the-new-world-order. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Read more about the argument that Daniel 11:27 could refer to the hidden agenda of controlled opposition in Ville Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy: A Proposal for the Interpretation of Daniel 11,” Daniel 11 Prophecy Conference Documents (2023), 26–62, https://www.daniel11prophecy.com/documents.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. It is interesting that the modern left-right political spectrum has its roots in the French Revolution. “Left – right political spectrum,” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/

    Left–right\_political\_spectrum. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Tyre was located at north from Israel. Babylon and Tyre united when Babylon conquered Tyre (Jer 27:3–11; Ezek 26:7–14) (Gary Byers, “The Biblical Cities of Tyre and Sidon,” *Associates for Biblical Research*, https://biblearchaeology.org/research/topics/people-places-and-things-in-the-hebrew-bible/4180-the-biblical-cities-of-tyre-and-sidon.), uniting the economic element to the religious-political element. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See how Thyatira of the seven churches of Revelation may depict the religious-political-economic rule of the Papacy through secret societies in Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy,” 53–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. In order to read about the organized union of secret societies with a hidden agenda, see the whole paper Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy.” To read specifically about biblical evidence of the use of controlled opposition/Hegelian dialectic as an actual characteristic/sign/miracle of the Antichrist/Babylon, see Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy,” 10–19. For historical evidence about the controlled opposition/Hegelian dialectic, see Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy,” 2–11, 45–55. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. White, *The Great Controversy*, 581, emphases added. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. White, *Great Controversy*, 571, emphases added. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1904), 27, emphases added. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ellen G. White, “Ms 139, 1903: The Message of Revelation, October 23, 1903,” in *Letters and Manuscripts – Volume 18 (1903)* (Ellen G. White Estate, 1903), emphases added. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ellen G. White, “Ms 135, 1902,” in *Letters and Manuscripts – Volume 17 (1902)*, par. 6–14, emphasis added. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Even though Atheistic Secularism was conquered in the west in a way that the west still is largely Christian by name, Atheistic Secularism was not entirely conquered in the 18th and 19th centuries. The conquest of Atheistic Secularism has been a process, continuing in the 20th and 21th centuries, as atheistic-communistic states still exist in the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. The dead bodies of the two witnesses “shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” (Rev 11:8 KJV) This refers to both Rome and Jerusalem, where Christ was crucified. The mix of Rome and Jerusalem or Paganism and the Truth is Babylon the great or “that great city” (the Papacy) (18:2, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The dragon and the sea beast and the land beast are the climactic power (Babylon) as well as the satanic trinity (Rev 16:13, 14). Müller also says that there is a “relation between the satanic trinity and Babylon.” Müller “The Beast of Revelation 17: A Suggestion (Part I),” 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. I hold that the king of the south from Dan 11:40 forward is Atheistic Secularism, but that its ally is Islam, when in a way both of them are the king of the south which is used as a proxy enemy in order to bring order out of chaos. In order to read more about the role of Atheistic Secularism (and Islam) as the king of the south, see Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy,” 23–25, 38–44, 58–71. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. All around the western world people are rising against the western powers’ totalitarian policies, which claim to be for the common good and sustainability of the earth and health and security of the people, but which suppress free speech and other basic human rights. Things happen quickly, and we move rapidly from one global danger or “enemy” to another. The world seems to be a big mess, and the nations and the people are getting angry and are angry. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Cf. Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 521–522, 526. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ellen White states that the ten kings represent the Protestant rulership of the world. Ellen G. White, “Lt 232, 1899,” in *Letters and Manuscripts – Volume 14 (1899)* (Ellen G. White Estate, 1899), par. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Reynolds, “Is Babylon the Papacy in the Book of Revelation?” 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” 30–32. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Paulien writes: “I understand the ‘eighth head’ to be the beast of Revelation 17 itself, a world-wide political and military unity that is *yet to occur*. *In the final days* of earth’s history, a worldwide political confederacy functions in support of a worldwide religious unity (dragon, beast and false prophet– Rev 16:13-19) for a period of time (Rev 17:1-3).” Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” 37, emphases added. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Concentration on specific political and economic deceptions of Babylon and the kings of the world is a vast study, and would include investigative journalism; and, so it is out of the scope of this paper. You can read more about specific deceptions of Babylon and the leaders of the world in Suutarinen, *Global Deception and the Issue of Freedom;* Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy: A Proposal for the Interpretation of Daniel 11.” [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. For example, Pope Francis held the key note address on artificial intelligence in the 2024 G7 summit. “Francis was welcomed with warm applause by the heads of state when he entered in a wheelchair the Arena Hall where the working session was held…. Pope Francis knew many of the heads of state from private meetings at the Vatican or visits to their home countries. The body language revealed a warmth of relations between the leaders and great affection for the first pope from the Global South; encounters ranged from embraces and kisses with Argentina’s President Javier Milei, Brazil’s President Lula da Silva, India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jordan’s King Abdullah and Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to the forehead-to-forehead greeting of President Joe Biden and a warm handshake of Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.” Gerard O’Connell, “Analysis: Pope Francis makes history at the G7 summit,” *America* (June 18, 2024), https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2024/06/18/pope-francis-g7-historic-248173. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Alonzo Jones writes that “no religious despotism can ever be established over a free people.” Alonzo Trevier Jones, “The Third Angel’s Message: What Is It?” *The Advent Review*

    *and Sabbath Herald* 77 (July 10, 1900), 440, https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/1065.1626#1626. Jones wants to tell us that the exploitation of religious freedom happens after other freedoms are taken from the people first. This is why Jones, through the *Sentinel* magazine, discusses about civil freedoms of the time, not only about religious freedom. Jones, “The Third Angel’s Message,” 440. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 514; SDABC 7, 850. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Lucius Ferraris ”Papa”, art. 2, Prompta Bibliotheca (Venetiis [Venice]: Caspa Storti 1772), vol. 6, 26, 29, as trans. in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students’ Source Book*, vol. 9 of *Commentary Reference Series*, ed. Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1962), 680. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. General Council of Trent: Sixth Session, Decree on Justification, vii, *Papal Encyclicals Online*, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/trent/sixth-session.htm. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. General Council of Trent: Sixth Session, Decree on Justification, vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. See Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1987–2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1030. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. “Purgatory,” New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, https://

    www.newadvent.org/cathen/12575a.htm#VI. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Even the God-enabled good actions and service to God are not enough in front of God’s throne (Exod 28:38). When compared to Christ, neither our good deeds nor our sanctification is perfect, because we are sinful (Rom 7:13–25; 8:23–25). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Read more about the imputation doctrine in Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy,” 42n80, and in my MA thesis: Ville Suutarinen, “A Critical Evaluation of Tom Wright's and John Piper's Views of Criteria of Works and Climax in Judgment of the Righteous in Light of Ontological Quality and Adam-Christ Representative Headship,” (MA diss., Newbold College of Higher Education, 2021), 56–63, https://

    www.researchgate.net/publication/354022882\_A\_Critical

    \_Evaluation\_of\_Tom\_Wright's\_and\_John\_Piper's\_Views\_of

    \_Criteria\_of\_Works\_and\_Climax\_in\_Judgment\_of\_the\_Righteous\_in\_Light\_of

    \_Ontological\_Quality\_and\_Adam-Christ\_Representative\_Headship. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. For example, Augustine taught that in sanctification we can earn merit. Bernhard Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine: From the First Century to the Present* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1966), 115. Even if Lohse is mistaken by this conclusion on Augustine, it is clear that for Augustine, “[j]ustification is thus a process in the course of which man is actually made just.” Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, 115; cf. Michael Horton, *Justification*, vol. 1, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 88–91. This growing inward righteousness is the basis of the Catholic merit-system. “According to Catholic teaching then [during the Middle Ages] and now, man’s justification depends in part on a righteousness to be found in man, and for this righteousness works are of great significance.” Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*, 159. Horton concludes: “[A]s strongly and clearly as *salvation* was understood as by grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith rather than works, *justification* was understood in the Augustinian tradition as synonymous with the entire process of salvation.” Horton, *Justification*, 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Since, the abomination of desolation comes in three phases according to the Oliver Discourse—namely in the time of Jesus and the apostles, the Middle Ages and the time of the end—what commonalities can we find between the situation of the Jews at the time of the early church and the Papacy? The Jews of the first century abandoned Christ’s righteousness (Acts 7:52), mediation and authority. Christ’s righteousness and sacrifice are infinitely pure only if God’s law and character are infinitely pure. Thus, by abandoning Christ’s righteousness and mediation, these particular Jews abandoned God’s authority and covenant, since the abandoning of all of these are a crucial part of the abomination that causes desolation (Dan 9:24, 27; 11:31). The Papacy followed and follows in the same steps of abomination, meaning that the same principle is behind its actions, as it changed the authority in righteousness and inheritance to itself. Both the ancient Jews in question and the Papacy try to be justified by their own works, by human merits (Rom 9:30—10:4). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Heinz Schaidinger, “Historical Confirmation of Prophetic Periods,” *Biblical Research Institute Release* 7 (May 2010). The ripening of the abomination of desolation is when apostate church unites with the state, which in the Middle Ages happened from AD 508 to 538, as the three Arian powers were defeated by the union of the Papal ecclesiastical power and the state; and, this is why Clovis’ victory over the Visigoths (the first of the three uprooted horns [Dan 7:8]) in 508 (see Schaidinger, “Historical Confirmation of Prophetic Periods,” 11) marks the beginning of the ripening of the abomination of desolation (Dan 12:11). And, thus, the union of the apostate church and the state takes the judgment seat of judging consciences and religions of people from its own “merit system” or “system of the inheritance of the earth”, which ultimately leads to persecution of those, who do not believe like this union believes (Dan 7:25; Rev 13:5, 7). Judgment is about authority, and the mark of the apostate union’s authority will be Sunday, because it is the sign of the delusionary power of the Papacy to change God’s law. It is interesting that Dan 7 is very much about judgment and authority (vv. 9–14, 23–27). [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. It is interesting that Dan 9:27 appears to link the covenant, the cross and the abomination of desolation. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. God’s eternal law gives the infinite standard of righteousness, which, among human beings, has been perfectly fulfilled by Jesus alone, although He was and is fully God as well. The law shows that we are sinful, namely that in our nature and deeds we are under the law (Rom 3:20–23; 5:12; Gal 3, 4, 5). However, the law in itself is not against us and curse us, but sin does it through the law (Rom 7:17–18; Gal 2:19). “So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.” (Lev 18:5 NASB) “Life” here means inheritance, national inheritance in this case (Deut 27—33). God overrules the old covenant’s national inheritance by the new covenant’s inheritance (Heb 8:6), which is actually the eternal covenant in Christ’s righteousness alone. When we are hidden in Jesus’ imputed righteousness, we are saved in judgment (Rom 3—5; 8:33–34; 2 Cor 5:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Samuel Nuñez, Jr. explains that the Qal infinitive construct “*tet* is used 119 times in the entire OT; fourteen times it appears without a preposition, as in Daniel 8:13. This infinitive verb appears in Dan 8:13 after the phrase *happesha` shomem* indicating that *happesha`* causes a desolation by giving the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot.” Samuel L. Nuñez, “The Abomination of Desolation,” unpublished paper (March 15, 2022), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Dan 8:14 states that the sanctuary will be cleansed/justified (צָדַק [*tsadaq*]), and Dan 12:1 elaborates that everyone who is written in the book is delivered. Below it is explained that the seal of God has to do with the names of God’s people and one being justified by the substitutionary blood of Christ (cf. Rev 13:8 KJV). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The seal of God has to do with the names of the believers (Exod 28:21; Rev 22:4), and “names” mean also the characters of the believers. Song of Songs, the biblical book which poetically uses the love between a man and a woman to picture the relationship between God and the congregation, reveals in 8:6 that the seal is love towards God. The seal of God in the forehead symbolizes the faithfulness towards God and His law, which the Holy Spirit presses upon the heart of a believer in Christ (Ezek 18:31; 36:26; Jer 31:33; Exod 31:13). It is the mark of righteousness by faith (Rom 4:11), because being justified by faith leads to loving Christ and keeping His commandments (John 14:15). The Holy Spirit cultivates hate towards sin, and produces humbleness and sensitivity before God. Christ’s blood is the merit which seals the deliverance of His people, as was explained above. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Also Ellen White thought that Christ’s imputed righteousness is the heart of the Loud Cry, even though other things are included in it, as well. See Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy,” 75–76. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Imparted righteousness stands for the righteousness that the Holy Spirit gives to the “insides” of a person or his/her ontological being, as he/she is a follower of Jesus. To read more about the subject, see Ville Suutarinen, “The Postmodern ‘Sacramental and Experiential Presence’ Vs. Justification by Faith,” *Academia* (May, 2019), 7–19, https://www.academia.edu/40084632/The\_Postmodern\_Sacramental\_and

    \_Experiential\_Presence\_Vs\_Justification\_by\_Faith; Suutarinen, “A Critical Evaluation of Tom Wright's and John Piper's Views of Criteria of Works and Climax in Judgment of the Righteous in Light of Ontological Quality and Adam-Christ Representative Headship,” 74n324, 104n430. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. For example, “βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν (*bussinon ta dikaiomata ton hagion estin*)” (Rev 19:8 NA28) is translated in some of the following ways: “the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (KJV); “the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (NASB, NKJV, YLT); “the linen is the justification of the saints” (my own translation of the Finnish translation of 1933/38). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Suutarinen, “The Phases of Deceptive Confederacy,” 75–76. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. See footnote 74 above. To read about the systematic study of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness as the climax of the investigative judgment, see Suutarinen, “A Critical Evaluation of Tom Wright's and John Piper's Views of Criteria of Works and Climax in Judgment of the Righteous in Light of Ontological Quality and Adam-Christ Representative Headship.” [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. White pens: “The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin, ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the intercessor who is at God’s right hand presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censor of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censor the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ’s propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned. O, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving, must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ. The fragrance of this righteousness ascends like a cloud around the mercy seat.” Ellen G. White, “Christ Our High Priest,” Ms 50, March 28, 1900. True, White talks about the daily here, not the yearly. However, during the yearly (the investigative judgment), Christ’s blood is yet applied for the repentant sinners, as Lev 16 makes clear. Moreover, Ellen White states that the pre-advent judgment includes Christ pleading to his blood before God (White, *The Great Controversy*, 428) and forgiveness of sins (White, *The Great Controversy*, 429, 430; Ellen White, “Accepted in Christ,” *Signs of the Times* (July 4, 1892). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. This is explained by the fact that as Christ’s blood is applied (imputed) to the sinner, His life is applied (imputed), as well, since life is in the blood (Lev 17:11, 14; Deut 12:23; John 6:53, 54). And, when His life is applied (imputed), His obedience/faithfulness is applied (imputed) (Rom 5:17–19). It could be argued that I now confuse faith with faithfulness. Yes and no, I answer, because the empty-handed faith does not include works, that is true, but it does include human choice; and human choice in faith is active trust/believing in God. This is where the human element comes into play. And this is exactly why we need untainted and imputed faith/life/blood of Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Paulien, “Revelation 17 and the Papacy,” 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)