

# Notice About Benedict XVI's Death

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INTRODUCTION .....	1
HOW THE PAPAL COUNT METHOD OF INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION 17 CAME TO BE .....	3
TABLE OF THE PAPAL COUNT OF THE SEVEN KINGS FROM 1798 TO 2005 .....	11
OTHER ISSUES WITH RALPH .....	15
WHAT WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF REV. 17:11 BEFORE JOHN PAUL II DIED IN 2005? .....	18
WHAT DID WE BELIEVE FROM 2005 WHEN BENEDICT ARRIVED UNTIL HIS RESIGNATION IN 2013? .....	23
NOW THAT BENEDICT IS DEAD, WHAT SHOULD WE DO? .....	33
PROBLEMS WITH BENEDICT'S DEATH .....	38
POPE FRANCIS .....	39
WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH MAY DO BECAUSE OF THE THREAT BENEDICT POSED TO FRANCIS .....	47
WHAT POSSIBILITIES HAVE WE IDENTIFIED THAT MAY FIX THE PROBLEM WITH BENEDICT? .....	49
THE FILTER EFFECT – A DEEPER EXPLANATION .....	60
FILTER EFFECT OBJECTIONS.....	75
IS THERE A BIBLICAL WARNING THAT THE LAST POPE IS HERE BEFORE HE CHANGES HIS NAME? .....	81
CONCLUSION .....	102

## Introduction

To use the table of contents above, in MS Word, hold down the control button and left click on the topic you want to go to. If in a PDF reader, simply click on the line for the topic and it should take you directly to the topic you want to read. If you are on a small device, I assume you merely tap the line.

If you have followed our web site at 666man.net, you should be aware that our Revelation 17 study group has been studying Revelation 17 for years and, since 2013, we have been predicting that Pope Benedict XVI would someday return to be pope and later he would change his papal throne name of Benedict to a new name never used before in papal history. This last action would make him the eighth, for he would do this in response to receiving authority from political leaders in Europe to persecute people for their refusal to obey his authority.

Just so you know as you read this document, I may sometimes refer to Benedict XVI merely as “Benedict” in this document, but the intended meaning should be clear from the context.

But how and why did we come to this conclusion about him? And what is our response to the death of Benedict XVI on December 31, 2022? What do we now think may happen that will bring in the eighth? I will endeavor to explain the answers to these questions in this document. I will also go over a short history of how this study developed from the beginning.

Here are the goals of this document. In this document I will explain the following things:

1. How and when and by whom was this study found?
2. What was our understanding of Revelation 17:10-11 from the beginning?
3. What was our understanding of Rev. 17:10-11 from 2005 with the arrival of Benedict XVI until he resigned in 2013?
4. What was our understanding of Rev. 17:10-11 from the time Benedict resigned in 2013 until his death in 2022?
5. Why did we conclude that Benedict XVI was going return to be pope someday and later become the eighth?

6. As I will explain in this document, there are several ways in which the problems posed by the death of Benedict XVI can be fixed. I will also explain what I believe to be the most likely correct understanding of Revelation 17:10-11 that has been named the Filter Effect. In the later parts of this document, I will go into deeper detail of the Filter Effect explanation.

## How the Papal Count Method of Interpretation of Revelation 17 Came to be

Now, the author would like to explain several things which may help you understand the history of how we arrived to where we are now. The first thing that may help you is to know how the study of Revelation, as we have presented it, originated.

When the original discoverer of the papal count (Ralph Myers, of the state of Colorado, USA, deceased in August of 2021) discovered it, he told me it happened as described next. Hopefully I have accurately reproduced what he told me over the phone and in some e-mail messages about his discovery.

The first step was that one day in 1994, he had the thought that there might be a connection between the numbers attached to the papal names of many popes and the number 666. This was the key idea that got it started for him, but it did not happen right away. He said he did nothing with this idea until 1997, at which time new discoveries led him to sit down and work out the basic understanding of it.

Not doing anything with this idea of the pope numbers being connected to the number 666 is easy to do. The author knows this from personal experience because in the time frame of 1989-1990, about 4-5

years before Ralph came across this concept, repeatedly I had the exact same thought, that there was a connection between the number 666 and the numbers attached to the names of many popes. But I was busy then and, though the thought of this connection repeatedly came to me and there was a desire on my part to gather together the information necessary to study this and understand it, I never got around to doing the necessary research to work out the connection. Eventually the thoughts about this just stopped and I forgot about it for the time being.

Thus, for me, the idea was in mind for a while, but nothing was done and, consequently, I never made the discovery that Ralph made later. It is good that he got it done, for it is clear it needed done. It is important because it is the loud cry message that will wake up the Adventist Church in the near future, the message that will be brought by the angel of Revelation 18 and is also related to Matthew 25 in the story of the parable of the 10 virgins. We are told this message must come before the end, so its arrival signals that the end is near.

I have wondered why I had those thoughts years before him, but I think it was because God wanted to prepare me to accept it later when Ralph came to me with his discovery. Or, maybe God was trying to get me to work it out and I just never got it done and he gave up (I doubt this as he would have foreknowledge of what I would actually do). I do not know the real reason. But it was eventually worked out, which is what is important. I also have to wonder if there were others who ever had the same thought, but I do not know the answer to this question. I know of one other person who may have worked it out before Ralph or I ever had thoughts of the connection between the papal numbers and 666, but I have never been able to contact him to find out whether he did or did not find this on his own. I do not have his phone number or address, but more recently a way to contact him may have opened up recently. Hopefully someday I will be able to talk to him and learn what, if anything, he discovered.

Ralph took the connection between the pope numbers and 666 and later worked it all out in 1997. He began sharing it on the Internet. But he did not contact me until March of 1999 and present his discovery to me. We were friends during our high school time in an Adventist high school and later for a year in an Adventist College, but after that we lost contact with one another. When Ralph contacted me in 1999, he told me that God had told him to find me and tell me about his discovery. If I recall correctly, he said he had been looking for me for quite a long time (I seem to recall that he told me was looking for me for 2 years, which would match the time frame of 1997 for when he began to share this around, but I am not sure I remember the amount of time correctly). His statement about this was a very big surprise to me!

So, what happened when he worked it out? Well, after a 3 year delay, he took the next step one day in 1997 when he was reading Revelation 13 and came across verse 18, which says this:

Rev 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six.

Then a few days later he was reading Revelation 17 and came across this verse:

Rev 17:9 And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

Upon reading this verse, he immediately noticed that both verses began with the idea of "wisdom." He began to think about this because he realized that both verses are about "the beast," symbolic beasts in both chapters which represent the papacy of the Catholic Church. He also realized that the time period presented for the number 666 to happen in Rev. 13:18 and the 7 heads of Rev. 17:9 is the same time period. He did not

see the full implications of the connection then, but he knew it was important to work this out, else it would not say there is wisdom in understanding it. So, he began to work out the questions surrounding this. He began to realize much more of the significance as he worked things out.

There is knowledge in life, but without wisdom, a person may not know what to do with it. I recall an illustration of this on Facebook not long ago. It showed a picture of a chimp, if I recall correctly, in Africa that had a large stick in its hand. It was approaching the back end of a full-grown sleeping Africa lion. Now, wisdom says, do not hit the lion on the rear end with the stick. But knowledge says that if you do this, it will wake up the lion and does not likely inform you that it is not wise to do this as you might get killed for it. No, it may say, do it, because you want to annoy the lion, and not inform you of the lack of wisdom in doing it. So, wisdom is in knowing what to do or not do with the knowledge you have. The same is true of Revelation 13:18 and 17:9. Knowing what to do with it is where the wisdom is at.

The first thing he did is obtain a list of all papal names from a 1980 Almanac. Using the list of popes therein (which you can be sure originally came from the Vatican information sources), he converted the Roman numerals of the popes to Arabic numbers that we use. For the purpose of counting the popes and adding up the result, he assumed that any pope which did not have a number by it had a count value of one, for there was just one of each such name. Once he completed this, then he added up all of the numbers. He said it come to a total that was well over 1,300. So, he thought, there is a problem because obviously it is too big. But what is the source of the problem?

He decided to think about it for a few days. A day or two later, he remembered that there was a change in the power of the Catholic Church in 1798. So, he thought, the count total would be reduced if I use only the popes from 1798 onward. So, he went back to his pope list and worked it

out, which took only a few minutes. Indeed, it did reduce the count total, but this time it was reduced by too much! It added up to significantly less than 666. So, he still had a problem. How to fix it?

At this point he studied the list of popes and looked at the list of popes that were there after 1798. When he did this, then he noticed something interesting. He saw that after 1798 there were 15 men in the list (in 1997 John Paul II was in power in the Vatican) but only 7 papal name lines. Some of the names after 1798 were repeatedly used. For example, the popes Leo line had more than one man after 1798. This gave him the clue that all popes with a given name, such as Benedict, would be considered as one name without regard to the number after his name. Such a name is a name line because there are a number of men with the same name but a different number after their name and they form a line of popes by name. The line is not actually continuously existing, but exists through time with other popes in between. The British king line has some names like this, such as the King George line. However, for the purposes of the Rev. 17 study, we know that God considers the lines to exist continuously until they “fall.” I will explain what that means later. Then the head falls and does not stay up.

Once he saw this, then he also saw that the seven names were the 7 heads. So, with the count total too small on his last calculation and knowing that the seven names were the 7 heads, he realized that he needed to go back to the very beginning of each name line. So, that is what he did next and added up all the numbers from them.

The next thing he saw was this. By connecting the seven name lines with the seven heads and having the connection of the number 666 to the 7 heads, then he knew that the number 666 had to be found within the 7 kings and nowhere else.

When he added up the numbers of the seven name lines, the seven kings, this time it came out much closer to 666, but it was still a small amount over 666, over enough to be significant so that he knew there was still a problem remaining. Yet he knew he was almost there because the total was much nearer to 666 than any previous attempt. So, at this point he had only to find the last remaining problem(s) and fix it (them). Then he would have the correct count total.

So, he studied the list of names and their associated numbers some more, examining all the popes of each name line from the beginning. He finally discovered that Benedict X was deposed, John XVI was deposed and John XX was skipped for unknown reasons. No matter the reason, these were popes who effectively were not to be counted because they are not legitimate popes.

When he found this information, then he added up the count numbers while leaving out the count of the deposed popes. This effectively corrected the Benedict and John lines to a true count of the men who actually were popes. For the Benedict line, in 1997, this meant that Benedict XV was actually Benedict XIV. For the John line, this meant that John XXIII was actually John XXI. All other pope lines of the 7 name lines remained with the count being the same because no changes were needed. When he corrected these two lines, then the count total came to 665. Then he knew he had found the problem and had fixed it.

This is simple and yet the only way one will discover this is through trial and error just as Ralph did. Without some research, it would not be obvious how to fix the problem.

Now, some will say, this counting method to 666 is not in the Bible. Well, consider this evidence that it actually is there, though it is not obvious.



The Bible in Rev. 13:18 tells you to count the number of the (first) beast. Because beasts are defined as kings in Daniel 7:17, then it stands to reason that when God says, “count the number of the beast,” in Rev. 13:18, he is actually telling you to count the number of the beast, which is the king that the beast represents. So, you must count the number of the king that is the beast.

Now, for the next step. The number 666 is mentioned near the end of verse 18 of Rev. 13, which means it comes to 666 very near to the end of the world because we know that the mark of the beast happens near the end of the world. We know from prophecy that the body of the beast has power given to it over God’s people for 1260 prophetic days. What follows the 1260 days prophecy, which ended in 1798? The answer is that the 7 heads fit into the time period after 1798 until the return of the church-state beast of the 1260 prophetic days. In other words, from 1798 until the eighth has come, during which time the 7 heads exist, is the time of counting to 666. It does not exist before this time period. So, this limits the number 666 to no earlier than 1798, which does away with any other count methods. That the number is placed in Rev. 13:18 instead of before Rev. 13:11 tells you that the number cannot exist during the years 538-1798.

So, in the time period involved, the time of the 7 heads/7 kings beginning in 1798, the number 666 is connected directly to the 7 heads, which are the 7 kings. This is a fact that can be deduced from the prophecy and the facts of history.

I have used the facts of history and the placement of the number 666 in Rev. 13 to connect the number 666 with the 7 heads. But the Bible makes that connection of 666 to the 7 heads for us through connecting Rev. 13:18 with Rev. 17:9 with the word wisdom and the obvious connection to the same time period to be sure we get the point without fail.

So, what does this mean? Well, instead of deriving the number from a papal title, such as Vicarius Filii Dei (understand that God used this to point to the papal beast, but ultimately it is not the true meaning of the number), you are being instructed to count the number 666 from the kings of the 7 heads. Thus, it is giving you instruction to count the numbers of the 7 kings very nearly in precisely the way that Ralph Myers discovered using the papal names which ruled the papacy after 1798.

It is interesting that in giving the instruction to count the number of the beast, it does not say to leave out deposed popes. That you must do this can only be known by experimenting with it until you come out to the right number. This means that you could not have discovered the things that Ralph found until the number was nearly complete. You would have been unable to find it because you would not know what the count should be at an earlier time.

Once Ralph understood the correction to be done, he corrected the count of the John and Benedict lines to a true count of the legitimate popes. The result was that he was no longer counting the deposed popes or using a higher count because of a skipped count, unlike how he had done it before where he used the numbers assigned to the popes by the Vatican to count them. This meant that the John line, which officially ends with John XXIII actually ended with pope number 21. And in 1922 the Benedict line ended with Benedict XV, but the true count of the Benedicts would show there were actually only 14 of them by 1997 when Ralph was adding up the pope numbers. Once the count was corrected, then he added up the count numbers to see what it came out to. Perhaps it was to his surprise, but this time it came to 665 when he added all the count numbers for all seven lines, all the way through to John Paul II. He knew then that he had his answer. I know this answer got him excited because he knew that there had to be a pope yet to come with a count of one to complete the count total to 666.

Now, one more thing. Once Ralph connected the number 666 to the 7 heads, then he had to figure out what they were. But we can know from the definition of a king in Daniel 7:17 that a king is a line of individual kings. Had he known that up front, he could have known that the 7 kings are 7 lines of popes and then figured out some other way that they are divided by name.

But what this means is that when Rev. 13:18 tells you to count the number of the beast, once you understand the definitions, it should be clear that you are being told to add up the numbers of the 7 lines of papal kings. This means add the number of each pope just as Ralph did by trial and error.

## Table of the Papal Count of the Seven Kings from 1798 to 2005

So that you can see how the papal count actually works out, here is a table of it that I have prepared for you to help you understand it.

Count of the Seven Kings of Rev. 17:10 by Name to 665													
Gregory Line	Actual Count	Leo Line	Actual Count	Benedict Line	Actual Count	Pius Line	Actual Count	John Line	Actual Count	Paul Line	Actual Count	John Paul Line	Actual Count
Gregory I	1	Leo I	1	Benedict I	1	Pius I	1	John I	1	Paul I	1	John Paul I	1
Gregory II	2	Leo II	2	Benedict II	2	Pius II	2	John II	2	Paul II	2	John Paul II	2
Gregory III	3	Leo III	3	Benedict III	3	Pius III	3	John III	3	Paul III	3		
Gregory IV	4	Leo IV	4	Benedict IV	4	Pius IV	4	John IV	4	Paul IV	4		
Gregory V	5	Leo V	5	Benedict V	5	Pius V	5	John V	5	Paul V	5		
Gregory VI	6	Leo VI	6	Benedict VI	6	Pius VI	6	John VI	6	Paul VI	6		
Gregory VII	7	Leo VII	7	Benedict VII	7	Pius VII	7	John VII	7				
Gregory VIII	8	Leo VIII	8	Benedict VIII	8	Pius VIII	8	John VIII	8				
Gregory IX	9	Leo IX	9	Benedict IX	9	Pius IX	9	John IX	9				
Gregory X	10	Leo X	10	Benedict X	Skip*	Pius X	10	John X	10				
Gregory XI	11	Leo XI	11	Benedict XI	10	Pius XI	11	John XI	11				
Gregory XII	12	Leo XII	12	Benedict XII	11	Pius XII	12	John XII	12				
Gregory XIII	13	Leo XIII	13	Benedict XIII	12			John XIII	13				
Gregory XIV	14			Benedict XIV	13			John XIV	14				
Gregory XV	15			Benedict XV	14			John XV	15				
Gregory XVI	16							John XVI	Skip*				
								John XVII	16				
								John XVIII	17				
								John XIX	18				
								John XX	Skip*				
								John XXI	19				
								John XXII	20				
								John XXIII	21				
Column Totals	136		91		105		78		231		21		3
Grand Total	665												
* highlighted in yellow means that you do not count this pope													

The table should help you understand what Ralph worked out in 1997. Note the skipped popes in the Benedict and John name lines. Also note what was done with the actual count numbers because of the skipped popes. Take a look at the column totals at the bottom and just below that, the total of all the columns, which is 665. I did this in a spreadsheet, so the totals should be accurate.

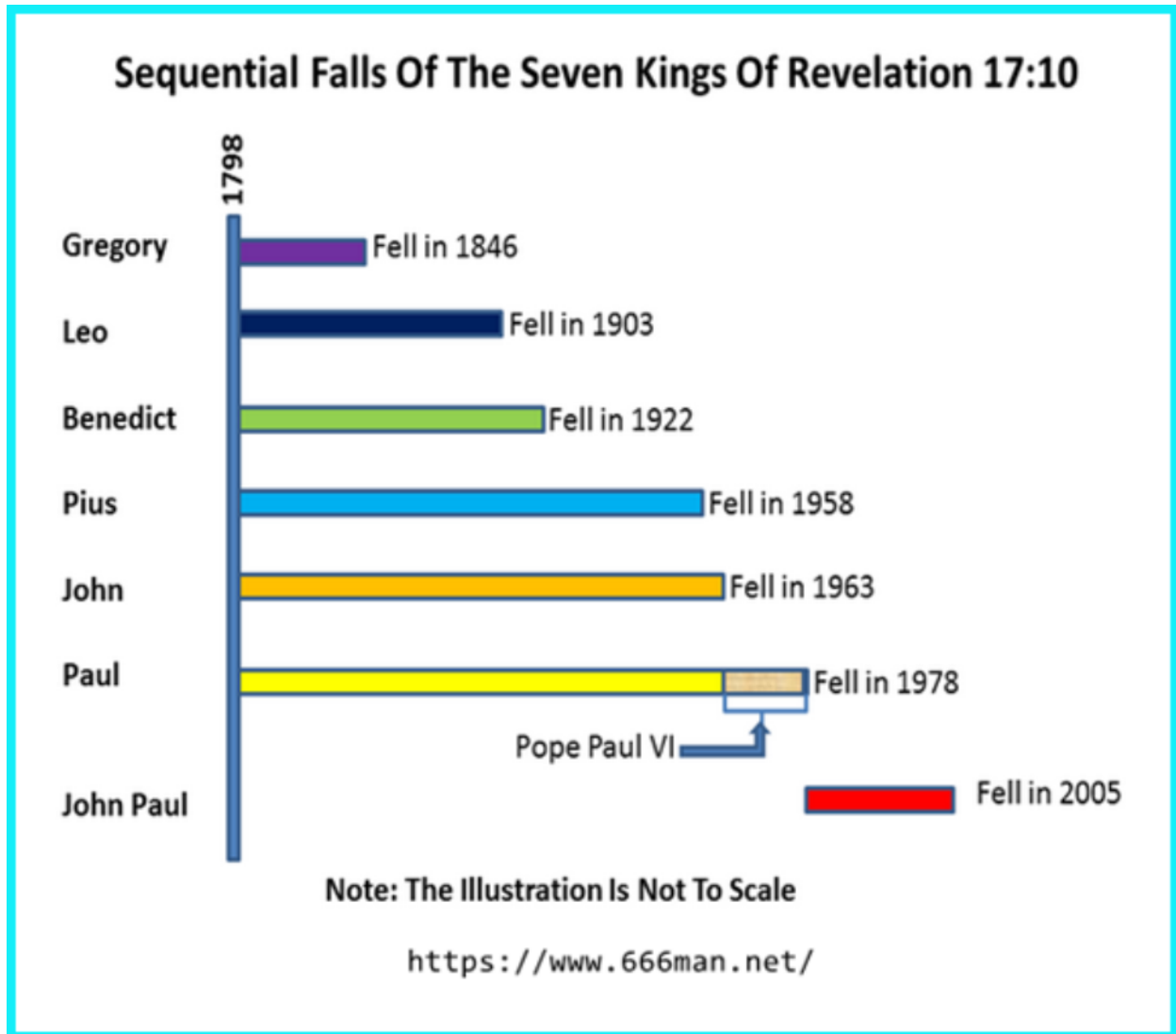
Next, closely related to the 7 kings is their fall as mentioned in Rev. 17:10. Below I have a list of the fall dates of each of the seven kings and below that I have a graphic which shows the same information, but which may be easier for some people to understand:

1. Gregory line (fell in 1846 and last member was Gregory XVI)
2. Leo line (fell in 1903 and last member was Leo XIII)
3. Benedict line (officially fell in 1922 and the last member then was Benedict XV, but there are problems with Benedict XVI as will be explained in this document so that he does not necessarily have to

be included, meaning he died, but the line fell in 1922 rather than 2022)

4. Pius line (officially fell in 1958 and last member was Pius XII)
5. John line (officially fell in 1963 and last member was John XXIII)
6. Paul line (officially fell in 1978 and the last member was Paul VI, he was the last of the six to fall)
7. John Paul line was the seventh line and he first came up after the previous six had fallen, the last of which was the Popes Paul line (Pope Paul VI). The seventh line officially fell in 2005 and the last member was John Paul II)

(scroll down)



Then he looked at verse 11, which says this:

Rev 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Because the count total as of John Paul II came to 665, he knew that the count total needed only a count of 1 to complete it to 666. He found the answer to complete the count to 666 in verse 11 because it told him

that the eighth would be the last pope (there are none mentioned after him) and he knew he had to have a count value of 1, which meant he had to be a single, individual pope as indicated by the new name not used before in their history. The fact that the eighth name is not said to be a king is enough to know he is a single individual rather than a group, else he would have been shown as an eighth head and an eighth king. That he is not a head or a king and has a name never used before, then it has to be a single individual pope.

The eighth is said to go to perdition, which it does not say about previous popes, though many of them will end up in hell for the things they have done. In 2 Thess. 2 it mentions the son of perdition, and in verse 8 in that chapter, it mentions what happens to the last pope – he is destroyed by the brightness of the coming of Jesus. To go to perdition means to be destroyed. Since this is not said about any other pope in Revelation, then we know that many of them are destroyed in hell. In contrast, the eighth of Revelation 17 is destroyed by the Second Coming of Jesus. This tells us that the eighth being said to go to perdition means he not only goes to hell someday, but also he will be destroyed by the brightness of the coming of Jesus.

Thus, by this method, Ralph Myers worked out all the popes which are to be counted in the papal name lines to add to 665 in verse 10 and explained the eighth so that it completes the count to 666 in verse 11 for the last pope ever. He was excited because he knew then that the coming of Jesus was very near.

## Other Issues with Ralph Myers

As much as Ralph understood from his discovery, he never did understand that the eighth must come from one of the seven names and

change it to a new name not used before. He never did accept that idea, even to the day he died. This tells the author that he never fully understood that all of the count must come from the seven heads/seven kings because of the linkage of the number 666 with the 7 heads/7 kings.

Based on what he understood about the eighth, in about 2003 Ralph personally told me on the phone that the next pope after John Paul II would be either an old name, which pope he thought would be deposed because the count would be too high, or else the next pope would be an entirely new name right from the first day of arrival as pope. When Benedict XVI came along, Ralph said he would be deposed (there is a small chance he might actually turn out right about that). Later when Pope Francis came along, he often taught that he was to be the last pope, though for a while he said that the devil would be the last pope if Francis was not it. At a later date he dropped the idea that the devil would be the eighth, or at least, this idea disappeared from his web site.

The Bible makes it clear that the devil cannot be the last pope because 2 Thess. 2:8 is all about the last pope, who is said to be the “man of sin.” If it will be the devil, then God would have said he will be the “devil of sin” rather than the “man of sin.” One can be sure God knows the difference between a man and a devil and would not make the mistake of confusing them. Therefore, the last pope will not be a devil. There will be no faked resurrection of any pope by a devil pretending to be the dead pope so that he can get on the papal throne. Satan knows what will happen to the person who sits on the papal throne when Jesus comes again, so you can be very sure he is not wanting to be anywhere near it!

Ralph disagreed with our group about the eighth in several ways. Prior to Benedict’s arrival in 2005, our group often taught that the next pope would be the eighth. But sometimes we added that it could turn out to be an old name because we knew there was some chance for an old name also. Mostly we thought it was the eighth that was the most likely



name that was to come. Because of this we were very surprised when the old name of Benedict was the name that was announced on April 19, 2005. Of course, we knew that an old name was possible, but prior to Benedict's arrival it just seemed so unlikely to us.

As already mentioned, the second thing that Ralph never actually understood about the eighth is that he must come directly from the seven. He thought that the eighth being of the seven meant only that he must come from among the seven. But if this were true, then it means the name the eighth would have at the beginning could be any name, not just one of the seven names. Thus, Ralph thought that Francis is to be the eighth. The truth is that it really means that the eighth must come from one of the seven names, not just from among them. How do I know this? Well, let me explain how.

The word translated as "of" in the phrase, "eighth and is of the seven," of Rev. 17:11, can in theory be translated as "from among them." But is this the right usage? The author believes it is not correct to interpret it that way. Why? Because the number 666 in Rev. 13:18 is directly connected with the 7 heads in Rev. 17:9. This tells us that all of the count, even the last count number of 1, must originate from the 7 heads/7 kings and clearly cannot mean that it comes merely from among them. The one who becomes the eighth will come directly from one of the seven names because he will change his papal throne name from one of the seven papal names to a new name never used before in papal history. This means even the eighth must come from the seven names as his starting point. Thus, it is true that the direct connection between those two verses eliminates such an interpretation as Ralph had about Pope Francis.

Ralph somehow failed to understand this and we had our disagreements over this too. Nevertheless, we are thankful that he worked out the basic details of the Revelation 17 study upon which we were able to build. He accomplished a lot in the time he had available to do it.

We have historical proof that the seven name lines as the 7 heads took place between 1798 and 2005 so that there is no question about what and who they are. The phrase, “eighth and is of the seven,” actually means he will change his papal throne name from one of the 7 names to a new name and that act will make him the last pope and the one that completes the count to 666.

In summary, the entire count total, 666, every last bit of it, is derived **only** from the seven mentioned in Rev. 17:9 -11 and all others are by definition automatically excluded. This means that the following pope name possibilities are excluded from the count:

1. any pope coming with a new name is excluded (such as Pope Francis)
2. any pope coming with an old name that is not one of the seven is excluded (such as, for example, Pope Sylvester IV – and yes, there was a pope Sylvester – 3 of them so far if I recall correctly)
3. Any pope who comes after the death of John Paul II with one of the seven names who does not ever change his name to a new name is excluded (this also excludes Benedict XVI, which will become clearer as you read on later and learn more about the filter effect, which you are learning here).

I hope this is clear.

## What Was Our Understanding of Rev. 17:11 Before John Paul II Died in 2005?

From the time the study was discovered by Ralph Myers until the death of John Paul II, we did not fully understand the meaning of verse 11. I recall that in about 2002 or maybe 2003, I worked out the relationship between verses 8 and 11, which showed us that the two verses explain the

same 3 phases of the power of the papacy to persecute from 538 until the return of the persecuting power that is still in our future. Each gives different details, but the time frame of both verses is the same. Verse 11 is different in another way because it tells us what event will mark the transition to the “yet is” time of the beast.

Subsequent to this research, we believed that the “beast that was” of verse 11 applied to the time period from 538 until 1798.

You can see how I was looking at the two verses in the following table:

Rev. 17:8	The beast that you saw “was”	The beast “is not”	The beast “yet is”
Rev. 17:11	The beast “was”	The beast “is not”	The beast is the eighth and is of the seven (he changes his name)

Now, as you look at the table above, you should see three phases of the beast in the two verses. There is a “was” phase, an “is not” phase and a “yet is” phase. In verse 11, the yet is phase is expressed as the coming of the eighth out of one of the seven names, which means the eighth name arrives when the name of that pope is changed to a new name.

Persecuting power will be given back to the papacy and as a result, the pope will change his papal name to a new name never used before in their history. This is something that is yet future to us in 2023.

There is one more thing which shows that the two verses, 8 and 11, are talking about the same thing. In both verses 8 and 11, the beast is said to go to perdition. This indicates both end at the same time and dwell upon the same subject, the eighth.

However, until Benedict XVI arrived in 2005, we were puzzled by the phrase, "...eighth and is of the seven...." People have puzzled over this phrase for centuries and we did our own puzzlement over it. It is very difficult to understand. We knew that in the end, one that is referred to as the eighth (because he will have the eighth name of the series of names, counting the 7 kings as seven of those names, followed by the next one, a new name, the eighth name).

With the count standing at 665 with the presence of John Paul II in 1997, Ralph Myers concluded that when John Paul II died, he would be followed by either an old name, specifically one of the seven names that already existed, or a new name, the one that would be the eighth name. If we got an old name, then as he saw it, the count would be too high and this pope would have to be deposed and the eighth would come after him.

The two of us then working on this with Ralph concluded that we were more likely to get a new name rather than an old name when John Paul II died. Of course, in time, John Paul II did die. What happened then was interesting. I will soon explain the events that happened when Benedict XVI came.

Ralph contacted me about his discovery in March of 1999, but I did not study into it deeply until about October of 1999. At first, I was not sure about his discovery, but I soon concluded that it was right.

From that point forward until John Paul II died in 2005, I and several others believed that upon the death of John Paul II, we would very likely see a new name. That changed, of course, when Benedict XVI arrived.

Ralph usually said we might get an old name, but we were not convinced that it was very likely that this would happen.

The reason we thought there would not be an old name is because, as we saw it, when the 7 kings were done, that is, when John Paul II died, then we believed that the “is not” time of Revelation 17:11 was finished, so the name change should come next because we did not think there was any kind of time gap between the two events.

Now, one more thing before I explain what happened when Benedict XVI came. Several pages back, I showed a table with a comparison of Rev. 17:8 with verse 11. As you saw there, both verses follow the same pattern of having a beast that “was”, followed by “is not,” and then later, “yet is.” In verse 8, it says that, “and the beast that you saw was...,” and in verse 11, it says, “And the beast that was....” So, in both verses, it refers you to a “beast that was.” What beast is it talking about in both verses?

The answer to this question is found in verse 3. In verse 3, John was shown a woman that he described in deep detail. The woman was said to be sitting upon a beast with 7 heads and 10 horns. But note this: both of them were in the wilderness. The woman represents the Catholic Church as a whole (church members, church government, and their church laws and beliefs that make them Catholic constitute the woman). The heads represent the 7 kings of the Catholic Church after 1798, which we call popes, who are the head of their church government. The body of the beast represents both the church and its leadership and its laws combined with the kings of the earth. Thus, the beast and the woman, while similar in their definitions, are not identical symbols so that the woman can sit on the beast. Many try to say that I am telling them that the woman is the Catholic Church and the beast is the Catholic Church, so she sits on herself. They use this as a means of not believing it or not even listening to it. But their claim is not true because the symbols are not identical.

Further, the woman is said by the angel to sit on the 7 heads. These 7 heads are the 7 lines of popes by name. So, the woman, who is the whole church, its government and its beliefs and laws, sits on the leaders of the church, the popes. Again, these are different symbols, though clearly related, so the woman can indeed sit on the 7 heads.

The wilderness represents a time or condition of a power being under restraint or, in other words, the power of the woman and beast is being held in what might be called a prison of sorts. The woman and the beast have no persecuting authority when they are in the wilderness.

In verse 8, when the angel said that “the beast that you saw was,” he is referring back to the beast John saw in verse 3. It is very important to understand that he is not referring to the time period in which the beast is seen in verse 3 when it is in the wilderness, that is, under restraint, but rather to an earlier time when the beast had persecuting authority over God’s people. Thus, when the angel says, “the beast that you saw was”, he is saying that the beast as John saw it in verse 3 when it is under restraint, once was BEFORE it is put under restraint. What this means is that saying that the beast “was” is the same as saying it had power during the 1260 days which ran from 538 until 1798, or in other words, the 1260 prophetic days of Daniel 7:25.

In other words, John saw the beast in the wilderness when it was under restraint and could not exercise its persecuting power after 1798. So, because of the lack of persecuting authority, it can be said to be “is not” when it is in the wilderness with the woman. And further, during this same time, the beast “was” because its persecuting authority once was before 1798. Does this help you understand the reference to the “beast that was” or the “beast that you saw was?”

Said another way, when the angel tells John in verse 11 that “the beast that was,” he is again referring back to the beast in verse 3 as it was

before it lost power. This means he is talking about when it had power during the 1260 prophetic days of Daniel 7:25.

Logically, then, both verses 8 and 11 begin their “was” period in 538. It runs until 1798 and then the persecuting authority of the beast is taken away from it and its persecuting authority then becomes “is not.” The “is not” time runs from 1798 until the eighth name comes, which event is clearly yet future to us.

## What Did We Believe From 2005 when Benedict Arrived Until His Resignation in 2013?

As you should know from history, after John Paul II died, several weeks later the cardinals of the Catholic Church met in a conclave (this is the name for their gathering where they elect a new pope) and they elected Benedict XVI, who was elected on April 19, 2005. But two of us had thought it more likely that we would get the eighth. Consequently, we were a little puzzled about this turn of events. In fact, when they announced the new name, I was listening. I was sure I did not hear the name correctly, so I turned to my wife and said, “What was that name?” She then informed me it was Benedict XVI. Then I knew we did not get a new name after all. This was rather unexpected.

That same evening, perhaps a little after sunset my time (about 7:30 or so), three of us got together on the phone and had a conversation about this. We said, “We got an old name, but we thought we were to get a new name. What happened? Why did we not get a new name?”

Now, you should understand that when this happened, we believe that the new name could come before he received authority to persecute in Europe. Later we concluded that it would be impossible for the new

name and the persecuting authority to come at different times. Thus, we came to the conclusion that the new name came as a result of the Catholic Church receiving authority to persecute. This remains our belief today, though conditions are not quite where they need to be for this to happen. Sunday closing laws are in some countries of Europe, but Sunday laws that go further by stepping on the conscience have not yet arrived and will not until conditions are right. I do not think those conditions are far away, for there will be developments that will create those conditions and thus bring about the Sunday laws that step on the conscience in Europe.

Anyway, to continue about the phone call on the evening of April 19, 2005, we discussed our question about why we did not get a new name at length. But finally, one of the two other people on the phone with me asked a question. At this point the other two people began talking to each other about the question, but my mind wandered off to deal with the central question of, why did we not get a new name?

At this point I began to think about Revelation 17:11, especially dealing with the translation of the word “of” in the phrase, “eighth and is of the seven.” I kept thinking, we got an old name but we should have gotten a new name. Then I remembered having run across information which showed that the word often translated as “of” means “to come out from a time or space.” I thought about this for a few moments and then I began to think, the eighth is of the seven, which must mean, the eighth is from or out of the seven.” It dawned on me that the eighth and the seven he comes from means this is one and the same man. I also realized that the phrase, “of the seven,” refers to an old name while the eighth refers to a new name, which kept going around in my thinking during this process. At this point I put it all together to realize that since the two, the “eighth” and “the seven” being one and the same person, could only be this way if this person were to change his papal name from one of the seven names to the eighth name, or in other words, changed it from an old name to a new name.



At this point, I realized, I have the solution. I knew that we got Benedict XVI that day. I also knew that I had just discovered that the eighth will first come as one of the seven names and later he will change his papal name to a new name never used before. So, it was logical that with the count at 665 and we were expecting that the eighth would add 1 to the papal count to total 666, then Benedict XVI must come first as Benedict and later he will change his papal name to a new name never used before in papal history. We realized that he will not contribute his count number to the total as Benedict because that name will be dropped, so we thought, he will die with the new name and that is the one that counts and thus completes the total to 666.

I interrupted the discussion the other two people were having and, once I had their attention, I explained this to them. After they understood this, they both agreed that this was a very satisfactory answer for them. The phone call ended shortly thereafter. This idea was the origin of the teaching that Benedict XVI would someday change his papal throne name to a new name.

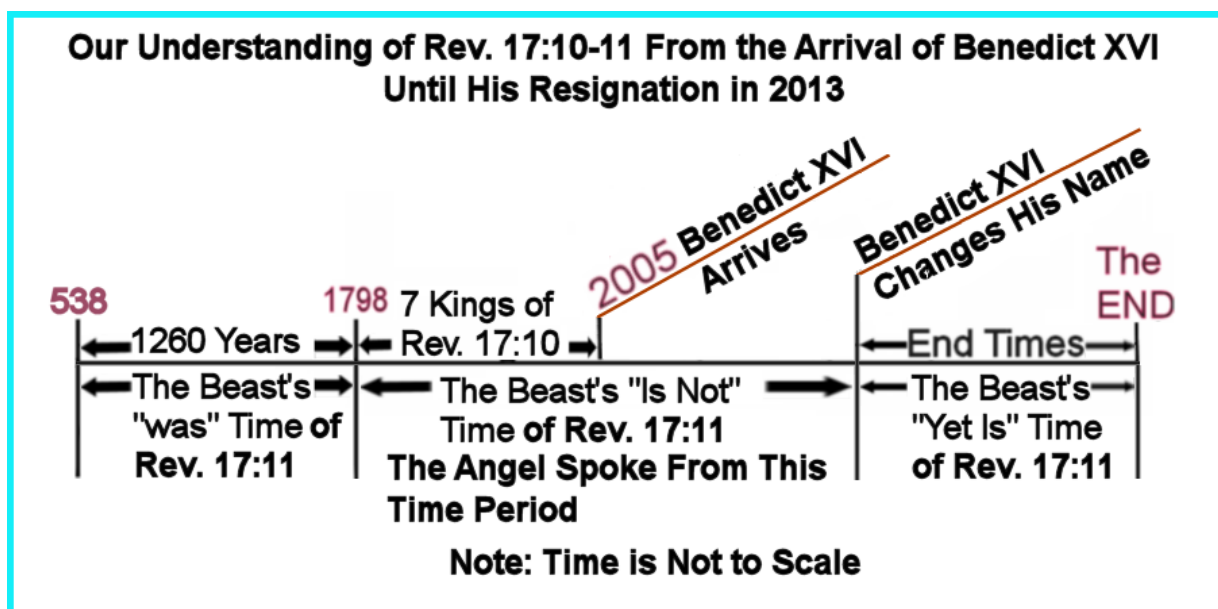
The idea was logical because he came right after the 7 kings were finished just as verse 11 appeared to say he would. Also, he would add 1 to the count, to bring the count total to 666, just as we expected with the final pope. Thus, we had every reason to believe he would be the one who would change his papal name someday to a new name. This belief was set by conditions from the first day that Benedict XVI became pope.

Ralph Myers would have nothing to do with this idea and insisted that Benedict XVI would be deposed and that he would never change his papal name. He may turn out right about him being deposed, but it is impossible for them to do that now as things stand in the Catholic Church. If things change, then it might become possible, though the probability will be low.

The idea that Benedict XVI would someday change his papal name to a new name became the basis for our teaching from then on that the eighth will come with one of the seven names and will later change his papal name to a new name never used before in their history. We taught that Benedict XVI was the pope we believed would do this. It is certain that a pope will someday change his papal name from one of the seven to a new name. It is certain to be fulfilled someday soon, though how soon, we do not actually know. But I have every reason to believe that it will not be Benedict XVI who will fulfill this prophecy.

From 2005 until 2013 when Benedict resigned, we believed that he would eventually change his papal name and then the end would begin in earnest. During those years, I did a lot of research into various topics related to this question as well as research into other Bible topics. I also rewrote the home page of the web site early in 2006 to reflect the new understanding.

Below is an illustration to help you understand what we understood about Rev. 17:10-11 during the years from 2005 until 2013. I think you will find this helpful.



## What Did We Believe from the Resignation of Benedict XVI in 2013 Until His Death on December 31, 2022?

In February of 2013, Benedict XVI resigned from his office. Afterward there were all sorts of rumors going around about why he resigned, most of them not likely true at all. We do know that his health was not that good then, so no doubt that factored into his decision. But it seems there were several reasons he gave for it. First, was his health. Second, he said he had some kind of supernatural experience in which he thought that God told him to resign. And finally, the one reason which we were told was his main reason for resigning, he hated being in the office of pope. He was an academic by training (he had a Ph.D.) and preferred to teach. He hated the politics of being pope and wanted out of it. Before he became pope, reportedly John Paul II kept him in Rome against his own personal wishes and he would rather have gone back to Germany and to his teaching. Being pope prolonged the situation, so, he wanted out of the whole situation.

When Benedict decided to quit, one can be sure it was not without a big sigh of relief on his part.

But we were not expecting this to happen. People got rather upset with us for not predicting the resignation. But we are not God and could not have known unless we knew then what we know now. Even now I realize it would not have been possible for us to know that he was going to resign, given what he knew, and there is a good reason why that is true.

Prior to his resignation, we were thinking, this man has to change his name someday, so he has to stay in office. But then he resigned and then

we thought, well, he has to change his papal name someday and doing that after he resigned and is no longer pope is irrelevant. So, we concluded that he had to return to be pope someday. Thus, it was that we carefully looked again at Rev. 17:11 and we found reason to believe that he would return someday to be pope and then later change his name. Here is verse 11:

Rev 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

We looked at it and finally, after careful study, we thought, “Aha! We have the answer in that verse! The “beast that was” is Benedict from 2005 to 2013, the “is not” time is when he will be gone, and then later still he will become the eighth, which is the “yet is” time and we knew that the eighth would go to perdition, same as it does in verse 8. So, everything seemed to line up and, along with additional reasons we had learned previously, we had our solution to the problem. We dropped what we already knew about “the beast that was” being the time from 538 to 1798 because this new information seemed to fit perfectly.

Of course, we got even more reasons why Benedict was “it” than we had in 2005. We learned in 2011 that he told his workers under him that he wanted to change his papal name. So, we knew that he came right after the death of the last of the 7 kings, he wanted to change his papal name just as the eighth was to do. So, we believed he was to change his papal name someday because of the prophecy.

People said to us, he is too old! Well, they were right. But people are sometimes living these days to 110 years of age, so since he died at 95, then if God had wanted him to be the eighth, there certainly was room for it to happen and God could have preserved his life. But such was not to be.

Here is a summary of what we concluded about Benedict XVI after his resignation:

1. Benedict would be here a while (2005-2013), which we saw as the “was” period of his reign of verse 11
2. Benedict would resign and the time he was here before then “was”
3. When he was not pope after the resignation and before his future return (as we saw it), he was in the “is not” time of verse 11
4. Benedict would return as Benedict rather than as the new name of the pope
5. At a later date when authority was going to be offered to him to persecute, Benedict would change his papal name to a new name never used before in papal history, thus becoming the eighth name.

During these years, we learned a great deal more. It was worth it to go through this time because of the things that we learned. But it also is frustrating because we have had to reevaluate everything AND now nobody believes a word we say. I guess I do not blame them. But that does not change the fact that the name change of a future pope will happen. That is certain to take place – it just won’t be Benedict, of that we can be virtually certain of it.

Much more recently, the last few days of December of 2022, Benedict XVI was reported by the public press to be ill. Then early morning on Saturday, December 31, 2022, Benedict XVI reportedly suddenly sat up in bed during the night and said something to the effect of “I love you God” and then laid back and died. That was the end for him.

And now that he is dead, I think it very likely he will stay dead, though I know there are some who think he will be resurrected. And so will our understanding almost certainly stay dead that he would return to be pope someday and change his name to become the eighth name. That idea is almost certainly as dead as it can be. It is not what I had very good reason to believe would happen, but reality is what it is. He is dead. The end of his life has come.

When Benedict resigned in 2013, we soon concluded that he was the “beast that was” of Rev. 17:11. We saw the “is not” time as the time when he would stay gone, at least, for a while. We expected that he would someday return to be pope again.

But in order for Benedict to be pope again, we realized he would have to have a reason to return. We soon found that his successor, Pope Francis, was naming cardinals more consistently than other popes have. We also eventually realized that Francis, from a religious standpoint was very liberal, more so than any pope they have ever had before. And we saw that Francis was apparently planning to make some major doctrinal changes to the Catholic Church. These became the reasons for why Benedict would return someday. They were good reasons. But not good enough as Benedict never acted to stop Francis and have him removed. Perhaps he made up his mind he never would do that?

We knew that many wanted Benedict to return, but we realized that were they to depose Francis and reelect Benedict, it would never stick. Unless he had a very good reason to come back to be pope again, Benedict would just quickly resign again. But in the changes that Francis has been making in the church, we saw multiple reasons for why Benedict could decide to return. And that, we knew, would stick if it was his own decision to come back. So, we waited.

But if we were right, then how would he return? Well, we found an answer for that too. We discovered that Benedict IX set things up so that Benedict XVI could return very easily. Benedict IX was pope 3 times. Here is one story about what happened to him. The first time he was elected, he was young. He met a young woman that he was attracted to and wanted to marry her, but being married and being pope did not go together then, so he talked to his uncle about his dilemma. Reportedly his uncle suggested that he resign. So, he did just that and then went off to court the young woman. But it turned out she was not interested. Perhaps she was

interested in what was not available before, but now that he was available, he was not so interesting? So, he decided, I need something to do, so he decided he would ask for his throne back. But while he was gone, they had already elected a new pope. But that was not going to stop him. No, he was going to return if at all possible.

He went to the cardinals and asked that the papal throne be returned to him. The cardinals debated about what to do. Nobody had ever asked for this before, so it took them a while to figure out what they should do about it. They finally decided that since he was elected first and they always elect them for life, then he had prior claim on the throne. So, they deposed his successor and put Benedict IX back on the throne. Later he left the throne again and was again replaced. Finally, a third time he forced his way back on the throne, but some time later they brought a mob in to chase him out of Rome. He was never heard from again. And that ended the matter of Benedict IX.

But the principle that a prior elected pope could remove his successor so far remains unchanged. We knew this was how Benedict could come back when he decided to do so. We believed he would return because we believed he would eventually become upset with the doctrinal changes that Francis was making, with more yet to come, and would demand reinstatement for himself in order to reverse the changes Francis had made which we believed would prove very odious to Benedict XVI. Benedict could force the removal of Francis.

But Benedict never did this. He went to his grave and, except for firing verbal warning “shots,” at Francis for the things he said and did, he never did anything to remove him. Apparently, he valued retirement more than fixing the problems of the church created by Francis, which has surprised all of us because we had very good reasons to expect just the opposite.

It is clear it also surprised many conservative Catholics as well. Why do I say this? Well, we were not the only ones who thought he would return. After his death, we learned that many conservative Catholics had long thought he would return to the papal throne. They were desperate for relief from the many things Francis was doing, but they never got their wish.

We had good reasons to expect his return. Let me summarize the points he checked off:

1. He said he wanted to change his papal throne name, which we learned about in 2011
2. He ran the office that used to be called the Inquisition, which today is responsible for dealing with misbehaving nuns and priests and other workers the church has, so we saw that he would likely have an attitude that everything is black and white, as we might say, which means he would insist upon following their teachings no matter what.
3. He resigned in 2013, which made it seem as though he fulfilled the prediction of being here a while and then gone a while, (which we saw in, "and the beast that was, and is not....") No other pope had resigned in nearly 600 years when he resigned and none others were predicted to resign in Rev. 17, so we thought, this a very good indication of how we should interpret Revelation 17:11!
4. Verse 11 seems to be continuous with verse 10, which ended in 2005. This added to our reasons to think he would return someday and later change his papal name to a new name never used before and thus become the eighth papal name after 1798 among those who are counted toward 666.

We began teaching it this way: "Benedict will return and he will change his papal name to a new name never used before. This will return the count to 666 at the end because the name Benedict is not the name he

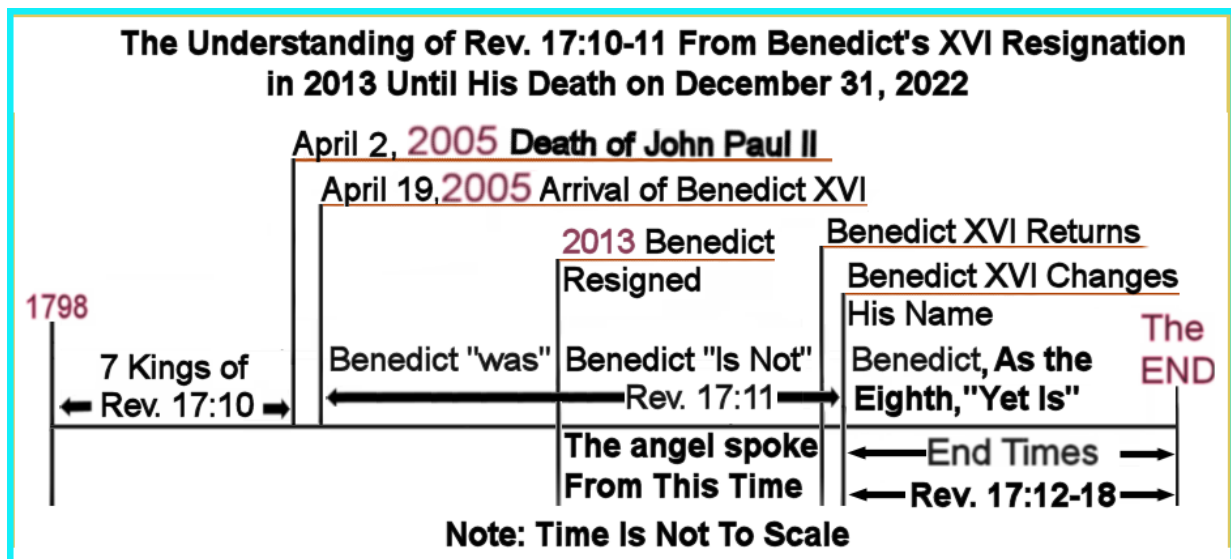


will die with.” We presented tables of numbers showing how the count could work out.

So, it seemed as though we had everything very well understood. Almost nobody believed it, of course, but hey, it fit, so we thought it would happen. And as he got older, people began to say, he is too old! But we saw that he fit, so he had to come back. Right? But, such was not the case, though we did not know it then.

We waited almost 10 years from his resignation in February of 2013 until his death in December 2022 to learn that he was not ever to be the eighth papal name after 1798.

Now, to help you better understand our beliefs about Benedict XVI from his resignation in 2013 to his death on December 31, 2022, I have embedded an illustration below:



Now that Benedict is Dead, What Should We do?

So, where do we turn from here? Do we drop the entire study altogether? Do we merely regroup and reinvent a new reason to keep it going? Do we study until we find out what the correct explanation is from the Bible?

The correct answer is not to drop the study until we have checked to be sure it is correct, except that we know the part about Benedict returning is not at all likely to come true since he is dead as can be. And neither is merely regrouping and reinventing a new reason to keep this going a wise plan. We must not just reinvent a new reason to keep it going, for without backing from the Bible that we should continue onward due to a better understanding, that is dishonest. People accuse the Millerites of doing this after the events of October 22, 1844, because they found the sanctuary doctrine afterward and eventually became the Adventist Church. The claim is false, of course.

The right response to this event is to study Rev. 17 very carefully. Why? To find out what went wrong and also to find out what is correct and find out what direction the prophecy actually points. I know we should be able to perceive things we had not seen before and that has proved true. Truth is often not perceived the first time one sees it and must be studied repeatedly until it is correctly understood. The same is true of the Revelation 17 study we have. Experience has been a great teacher.

If you go back to the history of the Millerites, in some sense they were wrong three times. Consider that when Miller began to preach his message, he thought that the coming of Jesus would be in 1843, possibly extending into sometime in 1844. But that was wrong. Why? Because he forgot to account for the fact that there is no zero year in the BC-AD dating system, so one has to add one year to the final math result of subtracting the dates one from another to get the right answer. Thus, 1844 was the right result. Someone finally found this error and then it was corrected to the spring of 1844 that they thought Jesus was coming. But that too was

wrong. People waited for a while and finally a fellow by the name of Samuel Snow realized that the date had to be the day of atonement in the autumn, so he presented this and it was accepted. This was important because it focused the people into studying the sanctuary teaching, which was a preparatory step to what was yet to come after the disappointment then yet to come in October of 1844, after which much deeper study of the sanctuary began. Anyway, soon after Snow presented his thoughts on this, someone finally found the right date and this was accepted. Snow's message along with the right date became the midnight cry message of the summer-fall of 1844.

The midnight cry message had the effect of causing large numbers of people to go out to tell the world around them that Jesus was coming soon. And by soon, they meant very, very soon, as in just a couple of months! Of course, Jesus did not come then, but the important point I want you to understand is what the midnight cry caused the believers to do. They dropped everything and got to work! Time was very short!

Like the midnight cry message of 1844, which told people that Jesus was coming very, very soon, but then with a specific date, the message we have of Rev. 17 will also be the midnight cry of the end time message as a part of the loud cry message of the third angel. The midnight cry is the hidden message of the angel of Revelation 18, for it has a message that gives great power and authority to the three angels' messages of Rev. 14. The difference this time around is that we will have a very old pope whose date of death is not known except that he will die on the day that Jesus comes again. We will not know ahead of time when that is to take place, so time will not be the test. Yet, people will know that there is very little time left. This will have a dramatic effect upon people who will then go out to tell the world. Most of the world will refuse to believe it, but the prophecy will turn out to be true, for Jesus will come and take his people home with him. Earth's history as we know it will end on the day this happens.

The point of this history being, of course, that prophecy study sometimes has some twists and turns to it until the correct understanding is found.

After careful study, I have concluded that the basics of the Revelation 17 study are correct. While Benedict obviously will not return from retirement and become pope again because he is very much dead, there remains the name change of a future pope that is yet to happen. The prophecy of a name change is something which I know is certain to happen. We also know that the definitions are all correct. What I now know is that we were not correct to change our understanding of “the beast that was” of verse 11 in 2013 to fit Benedict XVI even though he appeared to fit it perfectly. We should have stayed with our understanding that verse 11 is patterned after verse 8 and we should have left it as we understood it originally. But we did not know that changing it was a mistake because Benedict seemed to fit perfectly. We have a corrected understanding now and, aside from someday learning the identity of the final pope, I do not see any likelihood of needing to make significant future changes to it.

Permit me to summarize the points relevant to the question of what we know to be true at this point:

- We know that the definitions of the symbols in Revelation 17 are correct, for they come directly from the Bible. These are very unlikely to change unless we find we can improve the definitions in some way.
- We know for certain that the kings of the earth are the political kings.
- We know that the 7 kings of Rev. 17 are the religious kings of the Catholic Church that God noted because they, as the 7 heads, rose to power between 1798 and 2005.

- I will add this for you, the 10 kings are the leaders of Protestant Churches of America which will follow the arrival of the eighth papal name.
- We know that the 7 heads/7 kings of Rev. 17:10 are the 7 name lines of the popes, six of which rose to power in 1798 and the last came after all six had fallen. The last came in 1978 and ended in 2005. These 7 heads/7 kings are to be used to help generate the papal count, counting to 665. The prophecy about the 7 kings is absolutely correct, for it was already very accurately fulfilled and was completed in 2005. The prophecy moved on to the ending time of the “is not” period of verse 11 in 2005 with the death of John Paul II, which was followed by the arrival of Benedict XVI.
- We know that we understand everything of Revelation 17 from verse 1 through 10 with good accuracy.
- We know that we understand the outline of history as predicted in Rev. 17:12-18, a history that will take place after verse 11 is completed.
- We know that in Rev. 17:11, the eighth will indeed come out of one of the seven name lines. We thought Benedict was the one who would do this, but with his apparent death, it appears it will be a later pope that completes the count total to 666.

We do not know for certain about the following things:

- The Benedict line should have been fallen in 1922 with the death of Benedict XV. But the death of Benedict XVI makes it appear that the Benedict line fell in 2022. Yet, God said of the Benedict line (one of the 7 kings) that it was fallen before 2005. So, how can this be fixed? Or does it really need fixing after all?

- Now that there appears there is an extra Benedict in the Benedict line, it appears to change the count total to 680 (he was the fifteenth Benedict). We know the papal count will end at 666, but presently it appears to be standing at 680. So, how will it arrive at the correct number, 666? Or does it need to be fixed after all?

Soon I will explain what I now believe to be the correct understanding of Rev. 17:10-11. And later I will give a deeper explanation of it.

## Problems With Benedict's Death

There are two major problems for the understanding of Rev. 17:11 we had from 2013 until Benedict's death. First, his death was out of order because his death appears to add another pope to the Benedict line, a line that is supposed to have fallen in 1922. Because of his death it now seems to have fallen in 2022. But that contradicts what we have understood in the past about Rev. 17:10 that the 7 kings have all fallen. Revelation 17:10 makes it clear the 7 kings all fall and experience shows that so far as we knew, all seven of them were fallen at the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005. I will explain what this means later. Second, it also appears to permanently add 15 to the papal count, apparently leaving it standing at 680. That being the case, then how is it going to end at 666? We know it will end at 666, but exactly how that could happen may seem impossible to some at present in light of recent events.

Further, his death will allow Pope Francis to remain in office and to change the Catholic Church administration and any of the church's teachings that he wishes to change. With Benedict gone and Francis having named about 2/3 of the cardinals, most of them liberals who think like himself, there is nobody in the Catholic Church that can stop Francis from

making any major changes that he wants to, except either he (Francis) changes his mind about doing this or else his own death occurs before he gets around to making the changes he plans to make. He has made some changes, but we have hints from past statements that more changes are coming. Yet, he has never outright said he will do this, so maybe we misunderstand his intent? We do not know the answer to that, but likely we are correct about this given the things he has said and did which hinted at such changes coming in the future.

The big problem is, how are these problems to be fixed in a way that fits the prophecy? For it to fit the prophecy means the name line of Benedict must have fallen in 1922, rather than 2022, and the count must end at 666 when the eighth comes rather than 681 (665 for the 7 kings and then include adding 15 for Benedict XVI plus 1 for the Francis as the eight as we thought we should do in the past, thought that was not correct – we just did not then know it was incorrect to add in Francis). How will these problems be fixed? I will explore possible solutions shortly.

## Pope Francis

Before explaining the solutions, permit me to explain more about Francis and how and why he came to be pope. I think this will interest you and it will explain a great deal about what is going on with him and it may help you understand our thinking about him. The author believes the changes he apparently wants to make could forever alter the Catholic Church as it has been for centuries. This could also change what happens in the near-term future of their church.

After Francis arrived as pope in 2013, we later learned that from some years before his election, Pope Francis (originally as Cardinal Bergolio in Argentina) felt the Catholic Church needed to experience some big

changes. But the conservative cardinals and Pope Benedict himself stood in the way of the changes he very much hoped to see implemented. This frustrated him a great deal. We do not have the details of the changes he wanted to make, but an online article several years ago made it clear that this was his desire and the frustration of that desire led to his intent to resign in 2012. And yes, you read that right. He planned to resign. Why did he not resign?

When he notified Benedict that he wanted to resign, Benedict invited him to Rome for a one-on-one conversation to discuss this. He went to Rome and when their conversation was over, Francis did not resign. Instead, he stayed around. We believe that this was because he had a very good reason to do so. But what was his reason for not resigning?

As near as the author can determine, the only thing that stopped Francis from going ahead with his plan to resign was that during his conversation with Benedict, he learned from Benedict XVI himself that he planned to resign early in 2013. This must have been critical information for Francis because it apparently changed the course of his life.

Why? Think about it. Francis wanted to see changes happen in the church and could not get anyone to agree to this, so he wanted to quit altogether. But once he knew Benedict XVI was planning to resign in 2013, you can imagine that immediately he must have known he had a chance to become pope. I think hope sprang up in his mind that here was his chance to change the church, the very thing he desperately wanted! I believe he decided that he was not going to let this opportunity escape his grasp. All he had to do was stay around for a while and wait to see whether he became pope or not to replace Benedict XVI after his resignation.

So, he did not resign and, so far as the author can determine, he secretly concocted a very well laid out plan of changes for the church. There are several good reasons to believe that he made plans while



waiting, but he never said he did so and yet the evidence certainly supports that he did so. His history as pope since 2013 shows that when he made changes, he did so with deliberate intent to avoid problems with his enemies. He seemed always to be several steps ahead of those who opposed the things he did. You can do that IF you have a very well laid out plan that only you know about and your enemies can only guess at, which is why it is almost certain he had such plans.

But in the meantime, until he was elected pope, all he could do was wait for his chance to act upon it.

There are supposed to be 120 voting cardinals in their group in what is often called the college of cardinals (in the past it has often been below that number, sometimes by a significant number of cardinals), and it would appear he stood only a relatively small chance at the papacy because of this fact. So, why did he think he could win at this if the chance of becoming pope was small?

Well, the author is not sure the following is true, but it makes sense and probably explains why Francis thought he stood a good chance of becoming pope. A friend informed the author, perhaps about a year ago early in 2022, that Francis apparently had been the second runner-up in the papal election in 2005. If not for Benedict winning it, Francis probably would have become pope instead of Benedict XVI in 2005. If this is true, then when Francis learned of Benedict's plan to resign, he must have known that he stood a good chance of becoming pope in 2013. It appears that, as a direct result, Francis, hoping to become pope, stayed on and did not resign. And he laid out his plans to change the church while he waited, doing it all very secretly.

His wish was granted in March of 2013 when he was elected. When they announced that he had won, they turned to him and asked if he accepted the election (they do this to all popes upon election). He first

accepted the election, which they are required to do, else the cardinals have to elect someone else. Then he reportedly turned to his fellow cardinals and said, "May God forgive you for what you have done!"

Why would he say that unless he already had plans to do something he knew they would not approve of if they knew? I am sure it was a shock to them when he said this, for they had no idea why he said it and he did not explain it. By then it was too late to reverse their decision because he had accepted the election. Then he told them he chose the name Francis. And that made him pope. He got his wish. And they had no idea what he was going to do.

Soon thereafter he quietly began to change his church. He moved church officials all over the world. He fired a few for various reasons. He moved a significant number of officials out of the curia (their church government apparatus in Rome) and into various places all over the world. It appears he was trying to downsize and decentralize the church government and put more of the church officials in pastoral or other outlying positions. He tried to fix the problems at the Vatican Bank, but it was so corrupt and he had such strong opposition to fixing it that he reportedly finally gave up on reforming it, though I seem to recall reading that he did achieve some modest improvements.

But more disconcerting to his fellow cardinals, particularly the very conservative ones, he began making strange statements about ideas of what they could consider doing, and the things he said were always something that Catholics considered heretical to varying degrees. When church officials came forward and objected to what he said, reportedly some of them ended up being moved into positions in which they had a lot less power and less visibility in the church and in the world. In other words, speak out and you got punished for it and put where you could not be heard.

In retrospect, we can see that by the statements he was making, he apparently was using the reaction within the church to identify those who would oppose his efforts to change the church at a later date. But, for now, he took action to reduce their ability to oppose anything he wanted to do.

His strange statements are useful to us because very likely they identify just what changes to their beliefs he wants to make someday soon. These things consisted of a more tolerant attitude toward homosexuality and giving divorced couples who were not divorced by the church the right to take mass, which is a definite no-no in the Catholic Church. There were several other things beyond these two items which many will oppose changing.

And this is interesting. Francis made a consistent effort each year to name new cardinals to replace those who died, resigned or simply aged out. Cardinals after the age of 79 cannot vote for pope in the papal elections (which they call a conclave). It appears they often retire soon after they reach 80 and have a lot less power. Because they cannot vote for a pope, they have to be replaced to keep the number of voting cardinals somewhere near to 120. Most popes are not diligent about replacing the cardinals quickly and often let it go for long periods of time, perhaps 2 or 3 years before doing anything about it.

But the consistent effort Francis has made has paid off because, as of this next autumn in 2023 when it is expected that he will name a few more cardinals, he will have named a little more than 2/3 of the cardinals, most of whom are men who think as he does. He also will replace about 2/3 of the curia cardinals in that cardinal naming event. The curia cardinals are called cardinal-bishops and apparently, they have more power than other cardinals because they run the curia, which has authority over the whole church. If he is still around in 2024, he will likely do this again in the late summer or early autumn and then he will have named about 75% of the cardinals. This will give him great power within the church to change it as

he wishes. By naming new cardinals on a regular basis, it has shifted the balance of power between the religious liberals and conservatives strongly in favor of the liberals. Benedict was considered a religious conservative, while Francis is considered a religious liberal. They are polar opposites of one another.

His plan to make doctrinal changes is that which in the past we thought would likely cause Benedict to return to be pope once the changes were implemented by Francis. We thought that these changes in their doctrines would cause a serious threat of a schism in their church and that Benedict XVI would not stand for that to happen and would force his own return and remove Francis in the process. But given that Benedict is now dead so far as we know, that is very unlikely, if not impossible.

During the summer of 2022, meetings were held in Rome with many cardinals in attendance. It never was announced what was discussed so far as the author knows. We suspect he privately announced what he actually intended to do soon. But that is speculation and we really do not know for sure what was going on. Whatever it was must have been important. Yet they still wanted to keep it secret for the time being. Perhaps someday we will learn the details.

Up until the death of Benedict, we believe Francis has been afraid to go ahead with most of the really big changes he appears to have planned to make. Several times he hinted of considering major changes and each time Benedict and/or one (or more) of the conservative cardinals would issue warnings about it and Francis would back away from his plan.

Benedict was a major threat to Francis because, as prior pope, he had prior claim on the papal throne. So, if Benedict wanted to remove Francis, all he had to do was demand that the throne be returned to him. We saw some evidence that Francis held back and did not implement the really big changes he wanted to impose on the church and that the threat

Benedict posed was behind that decision. Francis could not just remove Benedict to some far off place, unlike some other officials to whom he apparently did this. As a direct result, he had to hold off on his planned changes of their doctrines.

One thing that happened was that there was a conference with Brazilian church officials at which they discussed what to do about the lack of priests in that area. They were asked to vote on whether they would approve converting some of their married deacons to priests. But these deacons are nearly all married and that was something many conservative Catholics would not approve of to be done. But the vote by the bishops and other officials was in favor of doing this anyway, probably because they have such a severe need for them.

Francis was to issue a report about the things voted on, including this issue. But when it came to this particular issue, he said nothing except to put a footnote about the vote in his document. He never approved it and never disapproved it either. This means no change was implemented by him. This we believe happened because several conservative cardinals issued threats about it and even threatened to split their church over it. Benedict also issued warnings about it. So, Francis effectively backed away from it and did not change anything about this. The issue remains unresolved for them.

With the death of Benedict, Francis now should have a free hand to do whatever major changes he actually plans to implement. Francis has said he is not afraid of a schism, so it is possible that he will make major changes to the Catholic Church doctrines and, as a direct result, their church could split into two churches. He has pointed out that they have had schisms before in their history and they survived, so he said he is not afraid of it should it happen. But will he actually go ahead and do this?

All we can do now is wait to see what he actually does and what the actual results will be. As I write this in March of 2023, it appears he may not do anything for a while, but we expect that eventually he will make his move to change some of their doctrines. If he waits too long, he risks dying before he can get it done. He is not so young anymore, so the threat of death grows the longer he waits. I believe he wants to do this, not just because of the hints he has dropped, but also his whole purpose of staying on rather than resigning as planned in 2012, staying while hoping to become pope, was to change the Catholic Church into what he thought it needed to become. Thus, it seems unlikely that he will leave the office of pope by resignation without eventually making major changes of some kind beyond what we have seen so far (of course, if he died in the meantime, then he may not get any of it done). Much of what he wanted to do has been done, but some changes, probably mostly that relating to doctrinal issues, remain.

After writing the paragraphs above, there is news from the Catholic Church to add. On about day 14 of the month of March of 2023, I saw a news notice on a television news show which said that there is a growing push in the Catholic Church to eliminate the celibacy rule that requires the priests to be celibate. We have long expected that Francis would likely eventually move to do this, but did not know whether he would go ahead with it or not.

Why did we think this might happen? Because shortly after Francis was elected pope, in my local newspaper they ran an article that was an interview of a woman in Argentina that was close friends of Cardinal Bergolio. It stated that years before this woman's husband (deceased before the article was written) had been a Catholic priest. This priest resigned from the priesthood so that he could marry this woman. She and her husband both were close friends of the then cardinal. After her husband passed away, the woman said that Bergolio regularly contacted her by phone for a short visit on a weekly basis and I seem to recall that he

sometimes visited her in her home. She reported that they sometimes discussed the issue of the celibacy rule and that one day Bergolio told her that if he ever got a chance to get rid of it, he would do so. Reportedly, since his election as pope, he has said he supports the rule. But does he really? Well, we do not know for sure. The woman is now deceased herself, so nobody can follow up on that question with her. Even a pope, Francis often contacted her for short visits over the phone until she passed away. So, will he or will he not support removing it? This was an issue over which several conservative cardinals threatened a schism, but since Francis has said he is not afraid of a schism, he just might go ahead with it. Then we will see what he does and what the results are. Will their church split or not?

Nothing may happen, but my guess is that it is likely Francis will move to change the rule now that Benedict is gone.

Francis has far left leaning political views regarding religion as well that have been implemented in their church. The Catholic Church has long taught left leaning political ideas even beyond religion, delving into the political realm, so this is nothing new except that Francis is doing it with much greater fervor than any other pope before him. He certainly is unique among popes.

## What the Catholic Church May do Because of the Threat Benedict Posed to Francis

The Catholic Church has rarely had two living popes. They do not have systematic, premade plans in place on how to effectively deal with the problems posed by this. But that may soon change.

You may ask, "Well, so, they had two popes at the same time! One was the official pope and the other was an ex-pope, so why is there a

problem because only one can be in charge at a time, right?” Well, as I suggested before, Francis appears to have plans to change the church, but he has had to hold back because Benedict could have unseated him if he got unhappy with the way Francis was leading their church. Church officials also had problems because they did not know how to relate to two popes alive at the same time? What if one says one thing and the other says the opposite, so then what do you do? You may think, that isn’t a problem as one is in charge. But there is a real problem with it. The problem with such a simplistic view is that they see popes as God, so if they say opposite things, this poses a real problem for them. Thus, not just because of doctrinal questions that this can create, but it also is a question of authority. One pope can become a real threat to the other under such circumstances.

During the dark ages, it was not unknown for popes to be killed. Perhaps there was a time when such a situation as exists today might have been settled by killing the prior pope, but today they are very unlikely to do that as it would almost certainly readily be detected and reported world-wide. So, they do not do that today. But having two popes alive at the same time still leaves a problem for them.

But I think they have formulated a potential solution to this. Shortly after the death of Benedict, the author was informed by a friend that there was some speculation in Catholic news sources which suggested officials of the church were considering passing a church law which would force popes who resign to return to the level of a cardinal or some other position appropriate for them, one that is no longer the office of pope, though retired. We believe they are considering doing this because Benedict constantly posed a threat to Francis. They do not want this to happen again where there are two popes living at the same time, with the previous pope remaining a threat to his successor and splitting the church over differences in their respective viewpoints. This was a problem because many Catholic officials have said that there are now two Catholic Churches,



those aligned with Benedict and those aligned with Francis. If this proposed church law is done, then it would forever preclude any pope from removing his successor as was done by Benedict IX about a thousand years ago.

We do not know that they will go ahead with this proposal, but if they do, then it will certainly put some limits on what may happen in the future. A former living pope would find his power reduced to that of a normal Catholic official in the church. Of course, I have to ask, if I were looking at doing this from a Catholic perspective, how do you reduce God to something less? Because they see the popes as God, then will this question not eventually arise? I suspect it will. That ought to be interesting to watch how they solve it!

## What Possibilities Have We Identified that May Fix the Problem with Benedict?

There is a solution which probably best fixes the problems with the death of Benedict, a solution which I call the Filter Effect (for good reasons). There are several other possibilities which may also happen.

Below I will list and explain the different ways in which the problems with Benedict appear to be fixed. Note that I am going to list ALL theoretical possibilities we were able to think of, even ones that appear impossible, for I must account for every possible way, likely or not.

Below is the list with an explanation of each one. Note that they are not in order of probability of occurrence. Note also that in some cases there is a possibility of several of them coming true so that the combination of them may appear to clear up the problems presented by Benedict's death.

First, here is the Filter Effect solution to the problem:

1. **The Filter Effect** (a friend gave it this name)– I consider this to be the best solution to the problems. But it is by no means the only way in which the problems may appear to be corrected.

The Filter Effect is a little more complicated to explain than the other solutions, so I have added an additional explanation later in this document where you can gain a deeper understanding of this method. But here you can read a basic description of how it works.

In this scenario, the 7 lines of popes of Rev. 17:10 are established by 2005. The basic ideas behind this are these: (1) the 7 kings and the individual popes within each of the 7 kings are known and locked in by history ending in 2005, and (2) this also locks in the count at 665 and no pope can add to it after that.

Because of the direct link between the number 666 and the 7 heads (7 kings), then after 1798 ALL popes EXCEPT the seven name lines, are to be ignored. This means that any pope after the death of John Paul II in 2005 with a name other than any of the seven name is to be ignored. Of the seven, count only the popes with any of the 7 names up to and including the death of John Paul II in 2005. After 2005, the only pope who counts is the one with one of the seven names who changes it to a new name. This means that after 2005, we are to ignore Benedict XVI, Francis and any other names of popes except for the pope who changes his papal name from one of the seven names to a new name, which pope will be the last pope.

Along with the Filter Effect, other things may also happen, which possibilities are as follows:

1. **Benedict XVI is resurrected** – In theory this is not impossible because God certainly can resurrect Benedict XVI. But will he actually do so? And why would he given that he has never resurrected a pope in the past?

While possible in theory, as I see it the chances of a resurrection of Benedict are extremely slim, though I don't know what God will actually do. If Benedict were actually to be resurrected, then this would make it so that the prophecy we have understood to apply to him in Rev. 17:11 would continue just as if he had never died. So long as they have not first made it so that he is forced to be a cardinal upon resurrection, then if he is resurrected, he could depose Francis because of the changes he (Francis) will almost certainly have made by the time the resurrection of Benedict happens. If Benedict is resurrected and subsequently deposes Francis, he will do so by demanding and getting his throne back. Later he (Benedict) will change his papal name to a new name and the count will end at 666. Benedict will then become the eighth. But all of this is contingent upon him being resurrected, which, while extremely unlikely, might indeed happen. God can do anything and if he deems this the right way to bring about the end, then he will do this.

Now, what would a resurrection do with the problems we have right now with Benedict's death? Well, it would restore the Benedict line to have fallen in 1922 and the count would no longer be permanently set to 680. Instead, we could consider that the count would remain at 680 until Benedict changed his papal throne name to a new name. This would reset the total because the old name, Benedict XVI, would then effectively be removed and the new name would have a value of one. With the count at 665 as of John Paul II, then this would complete the count to  $665+1=666$ . The name of Benedict XVI would no longer add to the count because it would effectively be gone.

The argument in favor of a resurrection is that Benedict XVI certainly fits the description of the one who will become the eighth, so logically, it seems he must complete it by returning to be pope, which means it appears he has to be resurrected. And if he is resurrected, then everything will work out according to the prophecy as if he had never died.

This certainly could solve all of our problems at present. The argument could also be made that a resurrection certainly would be a massive shock to the world, for a true resurrection would be very hard to argue against. There is some sense of logic and appeal to this approach, but we should also look at the arguments which say this will not happen.

What things suggest a resurrection of Benedict XVI will not happen? Well, first, it does not say that Benedict for sure is, "the beast that was," of Rev. 17:11. Beginning in 2013, we believed that "the beast that was" was him, but there is another interpretation of that phrase. "The beast that was" of verse 11 much more likely lines up with, "the beast that you saw was," at the beginning of verse 8, which changes the outcome considerably because then the "beast that was" of verse 11 is the church-state beast of the 1260 prophetic days. Second, where else does the prophecy specifically say he will be resurrected? I know of no other place in the Bible which says he will be resurrected. One person has said that there are some hints of it elsewhere in the Bible, but no direct proof of it exists that I am aware of. Third, one would think that since God has never resurrected a pope, then this would be so unusual that it would be noted in the prophecy. But other than the fact that Benedict fits the description of the eighth and it seems he ought to have been the one to become the eighth, the fact is it is virtually certain he is dead. Further, there is another interpretation possible so that a resurrection is not the only possibility, which removes the absolute requirement that he be

resurrected. It would appear to be an optional thing for God to do this. Fourth, we know that if he were resurrected, he would go on to do great evil. God has never shown a tendency in this world to resurrect people who go on to do great evil. All recorded resurrections in the Bible involve people who did not do evil. So, why would he do this for Benedict XVI, given what he would do afterward?

I also have learned that Benedict questioned evolution, which the Catholic Church, as I recall, has endorsed. But he began to question it. It would seem as though in some respects he was honest in heart about this. Would God resurrect such a man to do great evil later? Have we misjudged what he might do if he were put into the position to become the eighth? I do not know the answer, but it does raise questions about what might actually happen were he to be resurrected and certainly raises the possibility that God would not resurrect him because of the state of mind he had before his death.

So, can we prove he will be resurrected? The author does not believe it can be proven until it actually happens, though the suggestion of it can be seen in the prophecy because it seems he should be the one to complete the prophecy of Rev. 17:11. But in spite of this fact, it seems to the author that this scenario is very unlikely to happen. However, this scenario cannot be said to be impossible because God can do anything he wants to do except to do evil, so the author has to say that, in theory, indeed, it could happen. Time will reveal whether God will actually do it.

If God does resurrect Benedict, the author believes it wise NOT to say to God, "Hey! What are you doing? You cannot do that!" It would be best to accept it once proof has been given that it really is Benedict that was resurrected and go on from there. But until then, I am not going to hold my breath waiting for it to happen. The man is

dead as a rock, so I will go on to the possibilities that are more realistic.

2. **Benedict XVI is deposed** - If Francis goes ahead with his planned changes, which seems very likely because the changes he wanted to make were the whole reason he stayed around until 2013, hoping to become pope. So, it is possible that the conservatives in the Catholic Church will leave it when he makes the changes he is planning. In other words, they might schism their church into a liberal church and a conservative Catholic Church.

This is not at all certain to happen. At present, early in 2023, so long as they stay together the author has very good reason to believe it is impossible that they would depose Benedict. But because of the death of Benedict, which pope the conservatives had placed their hopes in, hoping that he would come back as pope and remove Francis and reverse all the changes they hate, then the situation could change. Because of Benedict's death, now it becomes theoretically possible that they could actually schism their church and then it could happen that they would depose Benedict XVI under such circumstances.

How does the impossible deposing of Benedict XVI suddenly now become possible? Here is how. If a schism takes place between the liberals and conservatives in the Catholic Church, it might end with bitterness between the two groups and, if so, then it could happen that the liberals might decide to depose Benedict as a means of spiting the conservatives as they leave. They might do this because Benedict was the leader of the conservatives in the Catholic Church and they saw him as their hope to restore the church to what it once was. For the liberals to remove him would symbolically be a big slap in the face of the conservatives as a form of punishment for splitting the church and leaving. Hence, they might propose to do this as, or

soon after, a split has taken place and then actually carry it out. And then again, they might not decide to do this, so this is not certain to be done.

If they schism, then the liberal part of their church would retain Rome and would be the Catholic Church as we know it in prophecy. The conservatives are believed to constitute about one fourth of the Catholic Church. The liberals and moderates therefore are the majority of their church. It is uncertain which side the moderates would choose, but possibly the majority of them would side with the liberals.

Now, how does this help answer the questions we have? Well, IF a schism happens and if they subsequently depose Benedict, then Benedict's out of order death and count number would effectively be erased because they will have effectively removed his papacy. Then the count would go back to 665 while the Benedict line would be restored so that it fell in 1922. His name and number would remain so they don't have gaps in their record, but he is effectively nullified as a pope when this happens.

Now, how likely is it that they will depose Benedict XVI? The probability of it happening following a schism would no longer be zero, but would rise to some finite number, which I am going to guess is perhaps about 10% probability of it happening, though I really have no idea how likely it would be under such circumstances. I do not think the probability is very high. I believe the probability of it to be higher than the resurrection idea. But, we shall have to wait and see what they do in response to the changes Francis plans to make.

If they depose Benedict XVI, then this will answer the question about Benedict's out of order death and count number, for it would

effectively remove his papacy from their church, though his name and number would remain to fill the gap. If this results in Benedict XVI being deposed, then we can only wait for the eighth to arrive.

3. **Benedict XVI faked his own death and is hiding out somewhere,** waiting for Francis to make his planned changes and then Benedict will reappear and remove him. This one is also very unlikely.

If Benedict has faked his own death and is hiding out, then while he is in hiding, he will be watching to find out just what changes Francis is actually going to implement. Once he knows the answer to that question, then he will return if the changes are drastic enough that it really upsets him, especially, I would suppose, if their church were to start to schism over the changes that will likely be coming due to the changes Francis is very likely planning to implement.

Upon his return, Benedict could then depose Francis by demanding his throne be returned to him. Once done, then he would be back on the papal throne, which certainly would fulfill the interpretation of Rev. 17:11 we have been using beginning in 2013 and continuing until Benedict's death on December 31 of 2022.

But why would Benedict ever think of doing something like this? What possible reason could he have for carrying out such a strange plan?

We know that Francis has said he would never retire so long as Benedict was alive and it was obvious he also would never do all of the changes he wanted to do so long as things continued as they were until after Benedict's death. Therefore, the doctrinal changes that Francis wanted to make could be a motive for Benedict to have done this precisely because Francis will not do the major doctrinal changes until Benedict is dead. So, Benedict could have decided it



would be wise to make it look as though he is dead and then allow Francis to carry out his plan and then see what he has done and see what the results are. Then he could decide what he wants to do about it, if anything. Likely it would result in Benedict XVI demanding his throne be returned to him.

But could Benedict actually have done this?

Well, I seriously doubt it. Faking one's own death is not easy to do! People in the past have, on very rare occasions, successfully faked their own deaths because of personal reasons they had (often having to do with a crime they have committed in the past). Today it is getting harder to do this because DNA testing, if applied, can reveal that it is a fake death. But if Benedict arranged for DNA tests to be faked, then he might get away with it.

So, though it would be very difficult for Benedict to do something like this, it is not impossible because it can be done. It would require the cooperation of a small group of people to get this done and would still not be easy to do. If it were done, there are dangers to it that could unravel the whole plan. There is the risk Benedict might be spotted by someone or, somebody might leak out what is going on and that would ruin the whole plan. So, even if successfully done up front, it is a risky move as it could backfire on him and there is a risk it could be discovered and he would be revealed.

Because of his age, doing something like this would have been very difficult for Benedict to make it work successfully. How would they get him out of the Vatican without him being spotted or someone noticing something strange going on? And would he actually do this in spite of what he might gain from it? The answer to the last question is unknown, but at present, with no evidence that he actually did this, we have no reason to believe he actually has done

it. And that is what probably really counts. In addition to the difficulty of sneaking Benedict out of the Vatican without being spotted, there also is the difficulty of sneaking in the replacement body, which would not be easy. Oh, and the body would have to be warm too, for they called Francis when he died and he was there within a short time. You can be sure he put his hands on Benedict's body and, if it was cold, he would have known something was not right. Also, the body would have to look like Benedict, which would not be easy. Such a discovery could have unraveled the whole plan. This makes it all very difficult to carry out a faked death. So, it is very unlikely to have been done. Consequently, I think Benedict is dead and buried and will stay there!

In the very unlikely chance that he did this and reappears later, then the count will remain where it is until Benedict changes his papal name to a new name someday. His death in 2022 and the appearance that the count is permanently fixed at 680 then would not be an issue if he is actually alive somewhere, hiding out, just waiting for things to develop.

Again, understand that this is only a theoretical possibility and **we have absolutely no evidence** that he has faked his own death. So, I think the chance of this one turning out to be true is very, very miniscule. I would rate the probability that he did this as just a little above the chance that he will be resurrected. But if he did it, then we will probably know eventually. I rank the probability that he will be deposed as much higher than either a resurrection or a faked death, though still relatively low overall.

4. **Benedict V is deposed** – A few years ago the author happened across a Catholic web site which mentioned that there had been some talk among Catholic leaders of deposing Benedict V. If this were done, it would force the count down by 15, taking it back to 665. So, it would

correct the count problem with Benedict XVI, but it would not erase Benedict's out of order death. Therefore this would be a partial solution, but not a complete solution to the problems with Benedict's death. I strongly doubt this happens as it is not a complete solution. And I have heard no further talk of them doing this, so its very unlikely to happen.

I do hope that giving you the explanations of what may happen will help you understand our thinking on this.

The least likely solutions are that Benedict XVI is hiding out and waiting for Francis to act or for Benedict XVI to be resurrected. I do not believe that either of these solutions is at all likely to happen.

The deposition of Benedict V is not really a solution, for it only fixes part of the problem. So, I do not see this as a viable solution.

The one most likely to happen of those listed just above (except for the Filter Effect) is that Benedict XVI will be deposed. At the moment this is impossible, but if the Catholic Church schisms in the future, then the odds change and the probability becomes a non-zero number, the value of which I can only guess at. I don't know that this will or will not happen, but it just might. I would be watching to see what happens in the next few years because I think there is a realistic possibility that this one might actually come true. And it would solve the problems with Benedict XVI.

Now, if we get several popes after Francis and all of them have names from the seven kings, then all but the last of them must be deposed for the deposition of Benedict XVI to be the correct solution. For example, if after Francis we get a Benedict XVII and Paul VII, in that order (in this scenario, Paul VII would be the one who becomes the eighth name by changing his papal name to the new name), then not only would Benedict

XVI have to be deposed, but also they would have to depose Benedict XVII as well for the count to work out because Benedict XVI and Benedict XVII would contribute 15 and 16 respectively to the count total, which would have to be removed by deposing them. This assumes, of course, that all popes of a name line are to be counted, which may be true (but see later in this document about this as it may not necessarily be true if one uses the Filter Effect, for the Filter Effect gets around the extra popes in the 7 lines problem). So, we have to wait and see how many popes we get and their names to know the final outcome on this and see who gets deposed, if any of them are deposed.

The best solution is the Filter Effect, as you will see next.

## The Filter Effect – A Deeper Explanation

After Benedict XVI died, we went back to Revelation 17 to study it again and we concluded that it was still true that a pope will change his name in the future to a new name and he will be the last pope. But we realized we Benedict XVI is not going to be fulfilling the prophecy unless, somehow, he is resurrected or is hiding out, both of which are very unlikely. To solve the problems posed by his death, we proposed various ways in which the prophecy could still come true, all aimed toward the purpose that a pope will change his papal name from one of the seven to a new name never used before and with the count resolving to 666 with the final pope. Because of that research, I have previously listed the various ways in which the prophecy could still come true.

But the one that I think is more likely to be the correct explanation of the prophecy and gives the best explanation of how it will end is the Filter Effect.

John Peters, Ph.D., found the explanation which a friend of mine later suggested be called the Filter Effect. I am thankful that John found this explanation and suggested it because, with deeper study, I have concluded that it is more likely to be the correct understanding of Revelation 17:10-11. John Peters joined our group in about 2019, if I recall correctly. He is a retired Seventh-day Adventist pastor.

So, what is different now in our understanding using the Filter Effect to explain the verses compared to what it was just months ago? Well, several things have changed in our understanding. The most significant changes are as follows:

1. In using the Filter Effect, we do not count the popes in exactly the same way we did before. We now recognize some limitations verse 10 imposes on the counting that is done.
2. We do not see verse 11 in the same way we did from the resignation of Benedict XVI to his death in 2022.

Let me explain the second point first.

Obviously, Benedict is almost certainly dead and consequently is extremely unlikely to end up being the last pope. Therefore, instead of the “was” time of verse 11 beginning with the arrival of Benedict XVI in April of 2005 and him being “the beast that was” from 2005 to 2013, we now see that beginning in 538, verse 11 begins the “was” time. This time runs until the Catholic Church lost legal authority to persecute in most of Europe, including in Rome, which happened in 1798. This is followed by the “is not” time beginning in 1798. The “is not” time, instead of it representing the time that Benedict XVI was supposed to be gone until he returned, will instead be the time from 1798 until the eighth name arrives. The “is not” time of verse 11 is all about the time when the beast has no power, from 1798 until the coming of the eighth name yet in the future.

Verse 10 effectively remains the same as it was before. It has a change in how we can look at the counting connected with it, but that has more to do with what happens after verse 10 is finished. As I have said before, verse 10 tells the story of the 7 kings, which rose to prominence in 1798 (except for the last one), and was completed with the death of John Paul II in 2005. Thus, in 2005 verse 10 was completely finished and there is nothing more that it predicts beyond the death of John Paul II. This means you cannot add or subtract from it or change it in any way because we are now past the time it predicted. Thus, it is permanently locked in place. The count is also permanently locked in place at 665 as of the end of verse 10 in 2005 with the death of John Paul II.

Now, permit me to explain point number 1, the changes in the counting of the popes. We have changed the counting just a little. Before explaining the changes, please reread the verses below:

Rev 17:9 And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

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

Rev 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Very briefly the changes are as follows:

1. We have restricted the popes we count to those the Bible expressly tells us to count.
2. We do not count any pope that the Bible does not expressly tell us to count.

Now permit me to explain what this means.

The connection of 666 to the 7 heads is made in verse 9, just as I previously explained that Ralph Myers made the connection. Ralph Myers then deduced that verse 9 lists 7 kings, which occur beginning in 1798. The count to 666 is then explained to be divided between two subsequent verses, which are verses 10 and 11. The instructions on who to count are given by the pope name lines, the 7 kings, which are mentioned in verse 10 and by the eighth name, mentioned in verse 11.

By listing the popes to be counted, we are instructed to count 665 of it using verse 10, which ended in 2005 with the death of John Paul II. We know from experience that the count ends at 665 then, so this completes the count of the 7 lines of popes and this also tells us all of the individual members of the 7 lines which are to be counted in the verse.

If you think about it, verse 10 gives 665 of the count and verse 11 gives 1 of the count, for a total of 666. But God knew that this total would happen at the end of the 7 kings in 2005. So, what God is doing here is telling us that after the 7 kings are ended in 2005, you are **not** to count any more individual members of the 7 kings. You see, it only instructs us to count the eighth name after the death of John Paul II in 2005, for a count of 1 to complete the total to 666. So, once you reach 665 in 2005, you never again count any of the seven king name lines (Benedict, Leo, Gregory and so on). You only count the eighth name.

Until recently we did not understand this idea that counting stops with 665 in 2005. Even Ralph Myers did not understand this. When Benedict XVI came in 2005, he thought for sure that Benedict XVI had to be counted and added to the 665 for a total of 680. Thus, he concluded, we have a value of 1 to add for the eighth name in verse 11 that should bring the count total to 666, but instead, if this is done, it bring the count total to 680 (665 for the 7 kings and 15 for Benedict XVI). We thought then that

when the eighth name came, he would come as the eighth right from the first day he became pope. We later realized this could not possibly happen, but we did not understand that until after Benedict XVI had been in office for some time. Because the count would be set too high by Benedict XVI, Ralph believed that he had to be deposed someday before the end to make the count total work out right. Now that we better understand verses 10 and 11, I now know that it is not required for Benedict XVI to be deposed for the count to work out correctly to 666. The instructions seem to tell us this fact by stating that we count the 7 kings to the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> line and then no more of the seven kings are to be counted. Thus, the count comes to 665 and then stops. Then you can count only the eighth, for a value of 1 to complete the count total to 666.

Now, how do I know that once you have counted to 665 in 2005 with the death of John Paul II, you do not count any more of the seven kings? Well, the answer is in the verses itself. Here again are verses 10-11 for your convenience:

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

Rev 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

It says in verse 10 that there are seven kings, which means these are to be counted. We know that with the death of John Paul II in 2005, the count stood at 665. In verse 11, it mentions only the eighth name that must be counted to complete the count to 666.

Now, tell me, where are the instructions in verse 11 to count any more of the seven kings that have or may yet come after the death of John Paul II in 2005? Truthfully, there are no such instructions to do that.



Does verse 10 or 11 tell us NOT to count popes after 2005? It does not expressly say, “do not count any popes that come after 2005 except for the eighth name.” But at the same time, it expressly instructs us which popes to actually count toward 665 in verse 10. This has obvious implications. It implies that except for the eighth name, you do NOT count any others between the death of John Paul II in 2005 and the arrival of the eighth.

Once we realized that the instructions are written such that it tells us only which popes to actually count, then we realized that we do not need to worry about whether Benedict XVI will be resurrected or is hiding out or is going to be deposed. We are not told to count any popes between the end of the 7 kings in 2005 and the eighth name arrival, so those in between those two points in time add nothing to the count total. The eighth name will be counted and that will bring the total to 666.

This resolves the question of whether or not Benedict XVI must be deposed. Ralph Myers, as mentioned before, thought he had to be deposed to make the count work out. But because we are not to count any popes from the end of the 7 kings in 2005, then Benedict XVI, Francis, and any other pope names that may yet arrive on the scene before the arrival of the eighth name, simply are not to be counted. Why? Because we are not instructed to count them.

So, let me summarize this:

1. We are given explicit instructions of which popes to count. This means count the 7 kings and count the eighth.
2. We are NOT to count any other popes, including any between the end of the 7 kings in 2005 and the arrival of the eighth. This includes that you do NOT count the starting name of the pope who will have the eighth name. He first comes with one of the seven names and that name is NOT to be counted, and later he changes it to the eighth

name that is to be counted (this easily resolves this question of why that name is not also to be counted).

Now, think about what God is doing here. God divided the count between 665 for verse 10, which he foreknew would be completed in 2005. He also knew that this would be followed by an indefinite gap of some years (18 so far in 2023) during which time we will have some popes with names that include the 7 kings' names, and then the eighth name will come afterward. God foreknew all the popes who would come in between 2005 and whenever the eighth name comes.

Yet it is clear that God intended that we count only the ones he listed and gave instructions for. All others coming between the 7 kings after the death of John Paul II in 2005 and the arrival of the eighth are not to be counted, but rather they are to be ignored. This filters out all but the popes we are instructed to count. This is called the Filter Effect, which means that you are told which popes to count and in the indefinite gap between 2005 and the arrival of the eighth, you are to ignore every pope in this gap and you are not to count them. In other words, the popes in the indefinite gap are simply filtered out of counting by the instructions of which popes we are to actually count.

To summarize:

**You are instructed to count the 7 kings up to 2005 with the death of John Paul II and you are instructed to count the eighth. You are not instructed to count any other pope names and numbers.**

Does this make sense to you?

But is there anything else in verse 10 which tells us this understanding is right? Well, yes there is. Permit me to explain it.

God wanted us to get the point about who to count and who not to count after the death of John Paul II in 2005, so he added something to the prophecy of verse 10 which indicates that after 2005, no new member of any of the seven kings is to be counted again. It is not just the count coming to 665 in 2005 that determines we are not to count any more popes of the 7 kings after the end of the seventh king.

Here is how God embedded information to be sure we got the point about this. He said of the first five kings of verse 10 that “five are fallen.” The same is obviously implied to be true of the “one is” and the one that had not yet come, that they also fall. The implication of this is both from what came with the first five, that they were fallen, but also from the fact that the eighth name follows the seventh name, which implies that the seven are finished. From the history of the seven kings, we know that all of them had fallen on or before the death of John Paul II in 2005.

So, what was God getting at? God intended for you to understand that ***only for the purpose of counting***, those 7 name lines had fallen, which means you do not count any more members of any of the 7 name lines that may come after the seventh line has fallen and the count total has reached the value of 665. God did not mean the lines were necessarily fallen so that they were never going to come back. They can come back and, in fact, one of them has come back – Benedict. A few more may come back before the eighth name arrives. But once the 7 kings have all come and the count total reaches the value of 665, then you stop adding to the count total any more members of the 7 name lines. Once this is done, then you can only add in the count value of the eighth when he arrives.

In other words, regardless of whether or not a pope name line comes back after 2005, we do not count them because it says they are fallen. God declares them fallen by or before 2005.

We have an example of this in Benedict XV. He died in 1922 so that his name line fell then. But Benedict XVI came in 2005 and died in 2022. So, why do I say that the Benedict line fell in 1922 as a part of the 5 that had already fallen before the 'one is' of the 7 kings (the "one is" would be Pope Paul VI)?

Consider that, obviously, Benedict XV was not the last Benedict for Benedict XVI came later. Because Benedict XV was not the last Benedict, then he cannot have fallen in 1922 because he was the last Benedict of the name line so far as we know. There are only two reasons for why we could say he fell in 1922. These reasons are as follows:

1. Benedict XV was the last Benedict to be counted before the death of John Paul II in 2005. Because he was not the last Benedict to die, then logically there is a fiat declaration by God that each line is fallen regardless of what happens after the death of John Paul II in 2005.
2. Alternately, Benedict XVI could be deposed someday. This might actually turn out true, but the probability is relatively low that it will happen IF the Catholic Church schisms. As it stands right now, the probability is zero, for at present they would never depose Benedict XVI in order that both the liberals and conservatives in the Catholic Church can continue to coexist within the same church.

Because the probability is effectively zero right now and even if the church schisms, it will be a low chance of them deposing Benedict XVI. Therefore, given what item number 1 says above, that God declares that all 7 of the name lines are fallen by 2005 with the death of John Paul II is the more realistic option. Therefore, I will go with it rather than saying that Benedict XVI must be counted and must later be deposed, which probably will never happen.

So, going with option 1 above, then this has to mean that there are two definitions of the word “fall.” Here is what they are:

1. The word fall typically means that a kingdom and king has fallen because it has been conquered by another kingdom and therefore has been put to an end. Or, it simply ended and the kingdom was subdivided (pagan Rome of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is a good example of this).
2. The word fall for Rev. 17:10 very likely does not have the meaning given in definition 1, but rather it means that, for the purpose of counting, you count all of the 7 kings that come before the end of the seventh name line of the 7 kings in 2005 and then you stop counting. You stop counting no matter that some of them may come back with new members of the 7 name lines. It falls because the prescribed count value of 665 has been reached and the verse is intended that it reach this value and no more. Its purpose is to instruct you which popes to count rather than which popes constitute the entire line of each of the 7 kings. So, you cannot count any other new members of the 7 kings after the fall of the seventh line with the death of John Paul II in 2005.

Because the Benedict line is declared by God to have fallen in 1922, we count Benedict XV in the count total toward 666 and yet we do not count Benedict XVI toward the same total because his line had already fallen and he came after the seventh line had fallen. However, you should understand that Benedict XVI is still a member of the Benedict name line even though he is not counted toward the number 665 (or 666). The same would be true of any of the other names of the seven kings.

Does this make sense to you?

So, here are some simple rules of what you need to know about this:

1. We are given clear instructions which popes we are to count in Rev. 17:10-11. Count only those popes of the 7 kings up to 2005 at the point of the death of John Paul II and also count the eighth of verse 11.
2. The count total at the end of the 7 kings in 2005 will be 665. The count total at the end of verse 11 is 666.
3. We are told that each of the 7 lines of verse 10 is fallen, which means they are declared fallen irrespective of what may happen to any of the name lines after the death of John Paul II in 2005. This means that once the 7 kings are counted up to the death of John Paul II in 2005, after that you never count any of the seven name lines again because all of them are declared by God to have fallen by or before 2005 with the count standing at 665. History then moves beyond verse 10 to verse 11.
4. After the death of John Paul II in 2005, we count the eighth name only. This brings the count total to 666.

I hope this makes things clear for you. Think about these “rules” above if you need to.

In the Bible, the word fall, when applied to a king or kingdom, normally means that it came to an end. From this one could think that the same should be true of the word fall in Revelation 17:10. However, in that verse it does not mean the same thing because we are to count the 7 kings, which adds to 665, and the next verse clearly must supply a count of 1 to complete the total to 666. This count total can only happen if you are to count only the seven kings and also the eighth name and you do not count the name the same pope (the one with the eighth name) had before changing his papal throne name to the eighth name. So, count the 7 kings

of verse 10 up to 2005 and thereafter count only the eighth name. You cannot again count any of the 7 names after the death of John Paul II.

We do not know how many popes will come between now and the arrival of the eighth, but you should not count them toward the papal count to 666. Count only the eighth name.

You should understand that we do not know how many popes will come after Francis resigns or dies in office. I expect one or two, but we could have more. We could have one or more popes that are there only for a short time and who also choose one of the seven names (those are the most popular names since 1798). If all popes of a name line of the seven names are to be counted even after 2005, then for the count to work out, all of them after 2005 except the last one would have to be deposed for the count to work out correctly. This is highly unlikely to happen.

We may have only one pope after Francis because the pope after Francis turns out to be the eighth name, which we will learn when he changes his name from one of the seven to the eighth name. If that happens and Benedict XVI is not deposed, then the Filter Effect is true. If Benedict XVI is deposed, then we can say only that the Filter Effect probably is true but it cannot be absolutely proved under such circumstances.

I want to add that I have learned just a few days ago (it is not the latter part of June of 2023) that Francis publicly said back in February or March of this year that he has decided not to retire. This is contrary to what he suggested when he first became pope, but he certainly has a right to change his mind. Of course, he could change it again. But if he stays until death, then we don't know how long he will be there. However, I do not expect it to be very long. He is 86 and we have noticed that his health is not as good as it once was. Thus, while I do expect him to be around for a while, I rather think its possible that he will die in the next couple of years

and then we will have a new pope elected. We shall have to wait to see what he does.

So, which popes do we count and which do we not count? The answer is as follows:

1. Count the 7 kings to 665
2. Do NOT count any pope numbers after the death of John Paul II until the arrival of the eighth name.
3. When the eighth name arrives, then count only the eighth name with a count value of 1. Do NOT count the name the eighth name pope starts with because it is one of the seven names that are not to be counted after the death of John Paul II.

I know this may seem a bit complicated, but as near as I understand it, this is the correct method to count the popes. I have good reason to believe this is the final understanding we will have about how to count them. Time will tell whether that is correct or not.

Here are the things which support the idea of counting the 7 kings only up to the death of John Paul II in 2005:

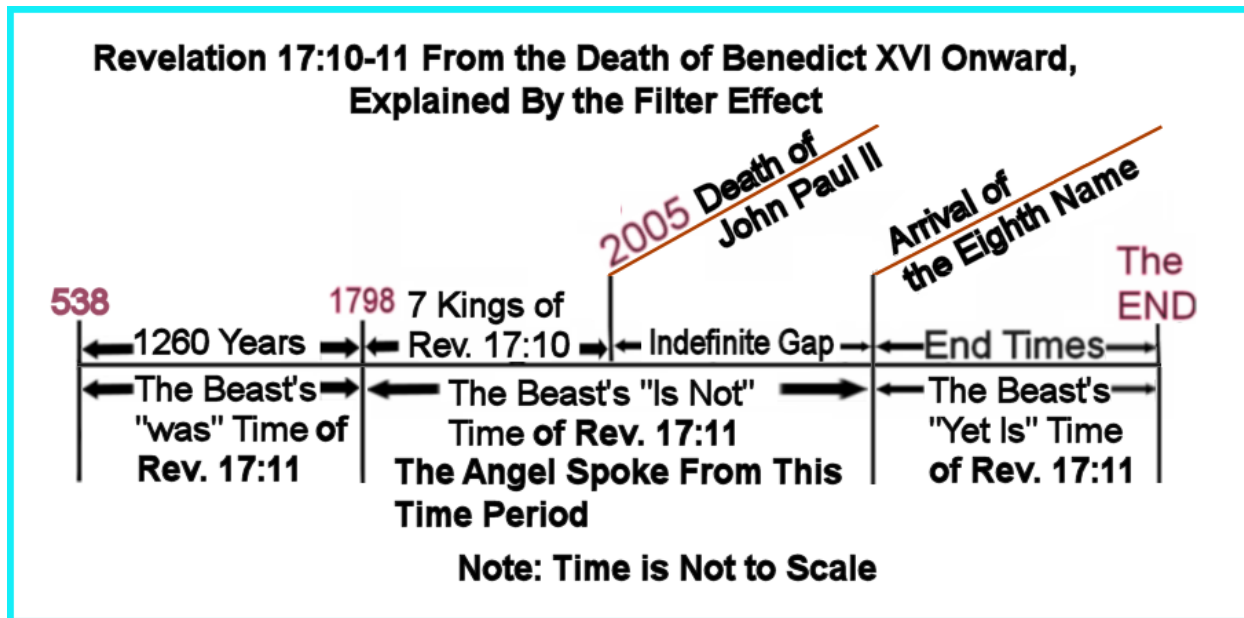
1. The first six lines came and went and then the seventh line came. The John Paul line came after the first six lines had gone into history and also after they were said to have fallen, which may refer only to the fact that they cannot be counted again. This made the John Paul line the seventh name line.
2. The count accumulates to 665 in verse 10. Only a count of 1 is expected in verse 11, so 665 has to be the count total before the count of one arises.



3. The 7 kings/7 name lines from 1798 to 2005 are said to be fallen, which means that the seven kings all fall for the purpose of counting by or before the count total reaches 665. Once fallen, they cannot be counted again.

The list just above is the Filter Effect. It is named that because it filters out all popes for counting purposes but the ones that God wants us to count to a value of 666.

Next, I have an illustration to help you understand how we understand verses 10 and 11 now that Benedict XVI is dead. Note in the illustration that verse 10 begins in 1798 and ends in 2005. Verse 11 begins in 538 and the “is not” period begins in 1798 and continues until the arrival of the eighth name sometime in the future (I am writing this in 2023). Comparing verse 10 with the “is not” period of verse 11 clearly shows that there is an indefinite gap between the death of John Paul II and the arrival of the eighth name. Once the eighth name arrives, then prophecy and history will move to verse 12 and continue forward through subsequent history and verses to the end of Revelation 17, which terminates near the end of the world during the sixth plague when the 10 horns turn against and destroy the woman.



The **7 kings** fill the time for Rev. 17:10 and run from 1798 until 2005 and then stop. The **indefinite gap** is filled with popes such as Benedict XVI, Francis and there will be one or more additional popes beyond Francis in all probability before the eighth name comes (caution: the one after Francis could turn out to be the eighth name). Whether it be the pope after Francis or a pope even beyond that, eventually the last pope will change his name from one of the seven names to the eighth name.

The indefinite gap is important because it began with the death of John Paul II in 2005 and runs until the eighth name arrives. Hypothetically, there could be an unknown and possibly significant number of popes during the indefinite gap. However, given that we are seeing the very things that we were told are signs of the end, then we know the time cannot be long before the eighth name arrives, whatever happens after Francis. Consequently, for good reasons, I believe there will not be many popes after Francis. There may be only one or two of them. When the eighth name arrives, then the **end times** begin with the arrival of Sunday laws in Europe. Later still, we get the Sunday laws here in American. At a later date, the end comes when Jesus comes again.

The reason I say that the Sunday laws come to America after Europe gets them is because in verse 11, first the beast gets authority to persecute. Then in verse 12, right after the beast has been handed persecuting authority when he becomes the eighth name in verse 11, it says that the 10 kings have not yet received a kingdom. This means they have not yet received persecuting authority, which is true even though the beast in Europe will by this point in time have received such authority. The 10 kings are the Protestant churches of America.

## Filter Effect Objections

Now, there are several objections that same may raise about the Filter Effect. These are:

1. **We do not know at present in 2023 that this is how the count will be resolved.** The objection may be true, for the author has previously listed several ways in which the problems with Benedict XVI can be resolved and the filter effect method is not the only way in which the count may be resolved. But it still is true that God gave only two instructions about how the count is to be done after linking the total, 666, to the 7 heads, which is that found in verses 10 and 11. Logically, because no others are mentioned, then any popes occurring in the indefinite gap time are not to be counted.

Thus, it appears that whatever happens to the count of Benedict XVI is irrelevant because this can be handled by the Filter Effect. If Benedict XVI is deposed, the filter effect still applies and the same is still true if he is resurrected or is hiding out. But if he is deposed, then many will want to count him and then remove the count by him being deposed. The end result is the same, so I suppose it makes no

significant difference in this case.

2. **With this theory, there could be any number of popes between now (2023) and the eighth, which means we really do not have a good estimate how soon Jesus is coming.** This is technically true. We do not know how many popes will yet be elected. However, for good reasons, I do not think it will be more than a few popes at most before Jesus comes again. As I have said, the signs are there that the end is here. Why then would it go on for another 10 or 15 popes?

Why do I see it this way? Because the signs are all around us that Jesus is about to come and we will not have a long wait for his arrival. Events we were told would happen near the end are all around us as never before in earth's history. For example, when Jesus said that the end would be as the days of Lot with Sodom and Gomorrah, then when we see that homosexual marriage is allowed in America and in many other countries of the world, homosexuality is pushed very hard on American society, young children are being told that they can change their gender, and young children are being directly exposed to drag queens (gender cross dressers where males dress up as what they think are beautiful females), you can know that this matches what Jesus said conditions would be like shortly before the end. For this reason, we can reasonably conclude that there will almost certainly be only a few popes left, at most. Perhaps there is only one left after Francis.

The eighth is soon to arrive. We just do not know exactly when that will happen nor do we at present know who the man will be (we don't know his name and he has not yet been elected as pope, so we cannot individually identify him now). But it cannot be more than a few years away and thus, the author believes the man who will do this very likely is a cardinal in the Catholic Church right now early in 2023. We have only to wait a few years and then I believe we will

see the arrival of the eighth.

The objection is noted, but virtually certain to effectively end up being mostly irrelevant.

3. **The filter effect requires use of a second exception principle.** The truth is that the Revelation 17 study requires the use of only one exception principle unless one is using the Filter Effect, in which case then two exception principles must be used. But uses of two of them is not wrong. The exception principle we use in Revelation 17:10 is this: There is the prophetic interpretation principle from Daniel 7 and 8 that heads on a beast all rise to power at the same time. But Rev. 17:10 tells us that one of them comes after the others have all fallen, which means the last one is an exception to the principle because the seventh head does not rise to power with the other six heads in 1798. Instead, the seventh rises to power after the first six have fallen, so it comes later. We know that it came to power in 1978. Thus, we say an exception to the usual previously established rule occurs here.

With the Filter Effect, there has been the suggestion that because we do not count those popes after John Paul II, then Benedict XVI has to not only not be counted, but he must also be excluded from the line of Benedict. If this were true, then it means we are making an exception to the rule that all popes of a given name all belong to the same name line, for some have suggested we are actually leaving popes out of their name lines when using the Filter Effect. Actually, this is not really the truth. For Benedict XVI, he is a Benedict and therefore very much is a part of the line of Benedict. He must be included in the Benedict name line. There must be no exception made with him on this because kings are defined as lines of individual kings, so it must include all Benedicts. But, that does not mean we

have to count him, for it seems that there is a second exception principle at work here. Permit me to explain it.

By using the definitions given in Daniel and the information in Rev. 13:18, we know that we are to count the 7 lines of kings to accumulate the number 666. God made sure you understand who to count to count to 666. So, Rev. 13:18 actually gives you the instructions you are to follow to count to 666, though not the complete instructions because it does not give you the detail found in Rev. 17:11, which you need to complete the count correctly according to how God want it done.

What is important to understand is that Rev. 17:10 limits the count to 665, both by making it clear that the count must come to 665 and also by saying that the 7 name lines are all fallen. Now, of course, we do not know, but it is possible that there will be only one more pope after Francis and that Benedict will also be deposed, in which case the count would come to 665 before the final pope changes his name to a new name. In such a case, then we could not say whether one is not to count the popes from the death of John Paul II or not because it would not give us enough information to state that for sure. One could do it either way (not count them – the Filter Effect – or else count Benedict XVI and then he must be deposed to bring the count back to 665 before the final pope changes his name. But if there is more than one pope after Pope Francis, then unless all popes between Francis and the eighth name are deposed, one must use the Filter Effect else the count will be too high.

What it means is that if the Filter Effect is to be used and there is no counting of popes of the seven name lines after John Paul II, then depending on how many popes come after Francis before the eight arrives and whether any popes are deposed, then we can use the word “fallen” in Rev. 17:10 as an exception principle to the

instructions in Rev. 13:18. We will not know this for sure until the eighth arrives when we can look back and know the answer on this for certain.

This means that if the Filter Effect is being used to determine the count, then there is a second exception principle being used, which is that you count the popes of the 7 kings up to 665 and ignore all additional popes of the 7 kings beyond the count of 665 because all are declared fallen. There may be more popes of the 7 lines nafter 2005, but none of them will be counted because they are all said to be fallen. This is an exception, for it does not follow the definition found in other parts of the Bible that for a line to fall means it has come to an end. Here a line (or more than one, depending on what happens after Francis and before the eighth has come) may come to an end after the counting of them has stopped.

**4. The seven kings eventually all fall by or before the death of John Paul II in 2005. But the eighth is to come from the seven to change his name to a new name. Now, how could the eighth come from lines that have already fallen?**

The answer to this is that the name of one of the seven names which the eighth chooses before he changes his papal name has already fallen in Rev. 17:10, but only for counting purposes before he even arrives, but this does not mean the first name he chooses necessarily is a dead line. Being fallen in verse 10 does not preclude the same name being reused because it refers to them being fallen for the purpose of counting rather than stating that the name line has stopped existing.

Consider Benedict XVI. With the Filter Effect, the name of Benedict XVI is irrelevant for counting purposes. Why? Because he did not change his name and he came after John Paul II in 2005. Yet, he died

as a Benedict, not as a pope with a new name never used before. If he had changed his name to a new name never used before, then the new name only would be counted. The old name, one of the 7 names, would be ignored because the 7 kings are already fallen, so it cannot be counted again. As a Benedict up to the point where he was supposed to have changed his papal throne name, he would still add to the Benedict line, but he would not add anything to the count.

The truth is that in the past, we said that Benedict XVI or any other of the 7 names that might be the first name of the pope who would become the eighth name, would simply disappear because the name was fallen and the names were not to be counted until they die. The problem with this is that the Vatican actually does count them before they die, for they list them under whatever name and number they have while still living. But it is also true that they are later listed under the name they die with. So, according to the Vatican, we should count the name the eighth name pope comes with at first. But if we understand that according to verse 10, they were all fallen by the death of John Paul II in 2005, then this is not something that we need to do. We can simply ignore the name until he changes it to a new name never used before in their history.

That we do this to exempt Benedict XVI from the count may appear to some to be a contrived excuse to make the count work. But, in reality, if Rev. 17:10 really was completed in 2005 (we know for a fact that it was because the count then stood at 665), then history and prophecy move on to the next verse and the count that was accumulated in verse 10, a count of 665, is set in concrete and cannot be changed. Revelation 17 mentions nothing about any of the lines continuing to exist after 2005, which means you cannot count any additional popes of the 7 lines after verse 10 was completed should any such lines continue to exist. Verse 11 mentions the one who will become the eighth, which is to be counted, but because the count must complete with a value of 1 to reach 666, then it is clear that



God himself ignores the name this pope will have at first until he changes his name. So, it seems to me that they are omitted by God himself and thus, not to be counted. If God meant for Benedict XVI to be counted, then why did the count total needed not work out in verse 11 to be something other than 1?

In time we will know what the truth is. But for now, the Filter Effect is the best explanation I have until it is either proved true or false. I believe that the only other realistic contender to it is that Benedict XVI will be deposed.

## Will there be a Biblical Warning That the Last Pope is Here Before he Changes His Name?

My purpose of writing this section is to make you aware that there may be a warning that the pope who will become the eighth is about to arrive. We do not know for sure that there will be a warning because the interpretation I am going to explain here is not 100% certain. But there is reason to believe it may be correct, so you may want to study this so you understand it just in case it is right. Whatever happens, be aware and be preparing no matter which way it goes.

Please read the following verses, which have to do with this question:

2Th 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

2Th 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

2Th 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

2Th 2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

2Th 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

2Th 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2Th 2:9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2Th 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

In general, the verses above refer to the papacy, for it refers to the man of sin, which it describes as the one who sits in the temple of God and shows himself that he is God. The temple of God is the church in New Testament times and showing himself that he is God is done by the things he does in contradiction to God's commands. He substitutes his own commands for God's commands, which means he in effect he says he is God and can do what God does, including change God's law. This description points to the Catholic Church in Rome, which in particular has done this.

Paul makes it clear that God instructed him about many things, but the prophecy of 2 Thess. 2 is something which he probably did not need much, if any, specific instruction to explain it. The same basic information found in the verses in 2 Thess. 2 is available in the vision of Daniel 7 with the

fourth beast that represents Pagan Rome and its divisions, and ultimately represents the papal church rising among the political divisions of pagan Rome (the 10 horns). Paul simply says it a different way in 2 Thess. 2, a way that explains the vision without the use of the symbolic beasts.

There are two interpretations that I can give you for 2 Thess. 2. The first interpretation is the one currently held by many in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The second interpretation is one which I found and which I share here because I think you will find it of value. Whether it turns out true will soon be known. Both are based on the idea of the man of sin being papal.

The first interpretation can be divided into two major variations, which I will refer to here as variation A and variation B. Briefly, these are as follows:

1. Variation A interpretation - the Roman Empire is the one taken away (verse 7, done in the year 476) to make way for the Papacy to take power in Europe in 538 AD. When this happened, then began the 1260 prophetic days of Daniel 7:25 and also of Revelation 13:5 (42 months of 30 days = 1260 symbolic days). This is the interpretation I learned in college Bible class.
2. Variation B – Persecution by Rome holds back the arrival of the man of sin. The persecution was removed by Constantine and this made way for the development of the papacy as we know it today, the man of sin, through combining church and state, which brought paganism into the church of the day. This resulted in a split between those who would do as God says and those wanting instead to mingle Christianity with pagan ideas and traditions, which was wanted by the majority.

Variation B is best described by Ellen White in the paragraphs below:

The apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, foretold the great apostasy which would result in the establishment of the papal power. He declared that the day of Christ should not come, “except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” And furthermore, the apostle warns his brethren that “the mystery of iniquity doth already work.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7. Even at that early date he saw, creeping into the church, errors that would prepare the way for the development of the papacy. GC 49.1

Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, “the mystery of iniquity” carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ. GC 49.2

This compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of “the man of sin” foretold in prophecy as opposing

and exalting himself above God. That gigantic system of false religion is a masterpiece of Satan's power—a monument of his efforts to seat himself upon the throne to rule the earth according to his will. GC 50.1

In the two variations of the Roman Empire theory, the difference is whether the restraint on the coming of the man of sin is exerted only until the state joined itself with the church or until the Roman Empire itself was taken out of the way so that it no longer was a hindrance to the final development of the papacy as a power for the 1260 day prophecy. The first more accurately reflects the history, while the second more accurately reflects the power the church had during the 1260 day prophecy. The church did not itself have nearly as much independent power during the time before 476 even though it was joined to the Roman Empire as it did after the 1260 prophetic days began.

There is a second interpretation, the one I came up with, in which the man of sin in verse 8 is the last pope as the eighth, with the eighth having persecuting power that he wields until Jesus comes again, at which point he is destroyed by the brightness of the coming of Jesus. This is not presently held by the Adventist Church, but is something which I came across when in a college Bible class.

Go read 2 Thess. 2:7-8 and ask yourself this question: who is it that is destroyed by the brightness of the coming of Jesus? Just based on the knowledge that the papacy is the man of sin and not knowing anything else, then it would logically be that the man of sin is the last pope when Jesus comes, for unless the popes are resurrected, then only the last pope will be alive when Jesus comes again. Now, it could also be that the popes are all resurrected and they will be there with the last pope to see Jesus come and all be destroyed by the brightness of the coming of Jesus and at the same time, the verse in 2 Thess. 2:8 actually focuses on the last pope alone. I will show you some evidence that this is the case so that my interpretation can

indeed be true even if all the popes are resurrected. What I am saying is that there can be a dual interpretation so that both are true in some sense.

If the idea that verse 8 is about the last pope is true, then who is the one removed just before he (the eighth) is revealed? It is quite possible that the immediate predecessor of the one who becomes the eighth is the one that is removed, which then reveals the one who becomes the eighth. In other words, just before the final pope arrives on the scene, his immediate predecessor may be removed from office. It is this possibility which may give us warning of the soon arrival of the eighth. Some, however, may prefer to see the one removed to be the Roman Empire, though that seems a bit far apart in time from the eighth.

The question is this: is the interpretation I found correct? If there is evidence to support that the man of sin in verse 8 can be the last pope, then the chance that the one removed in the previous verse will be the removal of his immediate predecessor goes up, in which case we might have a warning. But that does not necessarily mean it will happen this way. It may be that the one removed still refers to the Roman Empire being removed or the persecution being removed by the church and state joining together in the Roman Empire. Many will probably see it either of these two ways and I suspect either can be correct. there is some evidence suggesting that verse 8 can refer to the last pope alone. But it could still be wrong. Time will tell whether it is right or not. We will know if a pope is removed and the next pope turns out to be the eighth.

This idea from 2 Thess. 2:7-8 was actually applied in our beliefs in the past. Until Benedict died, we thought Benedict would remove Pope Francis, but that is now impossible unless Benedict is resurrected, which is very unlikely to happen. Had Benedict removed Francis, then this would have fulfilled 2 Thess. 2:7-8.

So, very briefly, this lays out the facts for you. Now, what is the truth about this?

First, permit me to give you a little history. Paul says that there will be a falling away from real Bible truth before the day of Christ, the Second Coming of Jesus, arrives. So, what he is doing is setting up the background of what he says in the rest of the verses of 2 Thess 2. Everything he said after that in 2 Thess. 2 was intended to explain something about this apostasy from the Bible truth he taught, how it would happen and a few things of its future history right down to the end. The reason he was doing this is because some were expecting Jesus to come in their day, but Paul wants them to understand that the Second Coming of Jesus will not occur until many other events have happened, finishing long after all of them are dead and gone.

How did it happen that I found the second interpretation of 2 Thess. 2:8? Well, it was this way. The author took a college level Bible class and eventually the verses in 2 Thess. 2 were discussed and explained in class. The explanation was that the Roman Empire is taken out of the way, meaning that it fell in 476, and this action made way for the rise of the papacy in 538. It seems logical and I do believe it is true, just as true as the other variation, which I also believe. But I did not believe it when we learned this explanation, primarily because not all the necessary information was provided to us. Here is a little more about what happened.

I recall that on the day we were to discuss this in class, I had read the assignment before going to class and I noticed something which bothered me about this interpretation. In verse 8, it says, "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Not all Bibles translate this verse in this way, but what I saw in the KJV Bible is that there is one who is destroyed when Jesus comes again. I did not see this saying

that a group of popes would be taken out by the brightness of the coming of Jesus, for it seems to refer to one man only. This bothered me because if the Roman Empire is taken out of the way to make way for the papacy in 538, then, as I saw things, it would seem to imply that all popes were alive when Jesus comes. I thought it not possible for all of the popes to be alive when Jesus comes again, so I doubted the explanation. Please note, this is what I thought then, but I think differently today after learning more in the intervening years about what happens shortly before Jesus comes again.

The next class period when this was to be discussed in class, I raised my hand and brought up this question to the instructor. But the instructor was insistent that the standard interpretation is the only right one. The instructor never explained that nearly all the popes who opposed Christ will be resurrected to see Jesus come and he did not show me any evidence that they will be resurrected. He simply claimed it was the whole system from the beginning that it referred to and left it at that, which was not satisfactory to me. I went home and thought that there was something not quite right with this explanation. So, the question remained unanswered. To me it seemed the standard explanation could not explain the presence of the whole system from the entire history of the papacy when Jesus comes again. To me, the only logical explanation that made sense is that it refers only to the last pope.

The instructor insisted he was right, so since I needed to pass the class, I dropped the issue. The class went on to other subjects and I had to drop it. Yet, I had this in the back of my mind for a long time and then gradually forgot about it. But I did not think the instructor was right about this one issue.

After Francis became pope, then the memory of this incident in my Bible class came back to me and I realized that this could explain how Benedict would return to be the last pope and at the same time he would remove Francis. As I saw it, verse 7 was about the removal of Francis and verse 8



was about Benedict being the last pope as the eighth. We knew this should be accurate because the chapter is about the papacy. With Benedict XVI having said he wanted to change his papal throne name, then we believed he would become the eighth someday. We also thought that we had to count Francis at that time and if he was not removed, then it would make the papal count too high. Today I know that Francis cannot be counted, but we did not understand that then. So, we thought for the papal count to work out, Francis had to be removed. Thus, given what we saw in 2 Thess. 2, we thought that Benedict would remove Francis.

But with the death of Benedict, it is clear that unless Benedict XVI is resurrected, he cannot depose Francis. Of course, once Benedict died, this brought about some uncertainty about what exactly 2 Thess. 2: 7, 8, actually mean.

Now, if 2 Thess. 2:8 is about the last pope, logically then it may happen that just before the last pope arrives on the scene, the pope then in power will be removed from office. In other words, he may be deposed or else declared an anti-pope (one who opposes a legitimately elected pope that holds office at the same time, which means there might be a rival pope). And once he is removed, then the next pope comes, the one who will become the eighth, the last pope ever. The last pope will correspond to the one in 2 Thess. 2:8, the one that is destroyed at the Second Coming of Jesus.

Can it be true that verse 8 points to the last pope? Yes, it can. There are two reasons I see in the verses of 2 Thess. 2:7-8. First, in verse 8, it refers to the "man of sin." This is worded in singular form, which would suggest that it is talking about one man rather than a group of men. It did not say, "men of sin", but rather says, "man of sin." This leads to a not unreasonable conclusion that verse 8 is probably talking about 1 man rather than a group. Of course, this does not force the conclusion that it is the man of sin rather than the men of sin, but it sure seems likely given

what was said. In other words, it is talking about the last pope rather than the whole group of popes from the beginning.

But there is a second reason verses 3 and 8 point to the last pope. In verse 3 it calls the man of sin the son of perdition, which the evidence shows likely is a reference to the last pope. Let me explain this.

Consider that in Rev. 17:11, it says this:

Rev 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

We know that the eighth is the final pope. Verse 11 specifically says that he goes to perdition. Revelation 17 does not appear to say this about any pope other than the final pope. The word perdition means to go to destruction, but there is more implied here, for all popes who have taught error when they knew the truth will go to hell, including the last pope. So, the whole group, with a few possible exceptions, will go to hell, which means they go to destruction. But in Rev. 17:11, it seems to imply more than that this one, like the others, goes to hell, for how is that different from the other popes? The truth is that it is not different. So, there is something implied here that goes beyond the last pope going to hell. Perhaps a special kind of punishment and destruction applies to the last pope, one which somehow is different than that which all others receive as punishment. Whatever the reason exists for this, it is the reason the last pope is said to go to perdition. There is something special done with this pope that is not done with the other popes.

But what is it that makes the difference?

It is a fact that the last pope will face conditions different from any pope ever in their history. How it is different is pointed out in Rev. 14, where it says this:

Rev 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

Rev 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

In Rev. 18 it says this:

Rev 18:6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

This means that the final pope and church officials (along with all other wicked people within the symbolic Babylonian system) will receive a double punishment. Rev. 14:9-10 tells us what that double punishment is, for it indicates they will receive both the 7 last plagues AND also receive hell fire as their punishment for the evil that they have done. What have they done which merits a double punishment? They are given a double punishment because during the end times they punish God's people for refusing to obey man's law and instead obeying God's law. During the last days, knowledge of the real truth will be everywhere, so the last pope will be especially held to accountability because he will know more than popes of the past that persecuted. Popes of the past will not have had as much knowledge as the final pope will of the true will of God regarding what they are to do or not do.

So, for the final pope, the eighth, it promises that he will receive both the 7 last plagues and also he will finally die in hell. Further, 2 Thess. 2:8 promises that he will also receive death by the brightness of the coming of Jesus. If all the other popes are resurrected to see Jesus come again, then

logically they will all die for the second time as Jesus comes and they will die for the third time in hell.

So, what is different about the last pope? It is that the last pope will receive the 7 last plagues, which the other popes resurrected to see Jesus come again will not receive. There is no evidence I am aware of which says they will be resurrected at the beginning of the 7 last plagues so that they receive them also. So, herein lies the difference, for the last pope receives a greater punishment than all other popes because he receives the seven last plagues, something which the other popes will not receive. It is in this sense that he especially goes to perdition, that he in particular, different from all other popes, is punished beyond the punishment that the remaining previous popes receive.

To summarize, all popes will receive the following punishment:

1. All will be resurrected (except the then living pope) to see Jesus come, a resurrection which will take place shortly before Jesus comes again.
2. All will die at the second coming of Jesus
3. All will die in hell

The following apply only to the last pope:

1. The last pope will receive the 7 last plagues
2. None but the last pope will receive the 7 last plagues, though it should be obvious they will all experience the seventh plague because it takes place as Jesus and the angels come near to the earth just before they arrive here

I hope this makes things clear for you.

Now, if you wonder how to understand the verses of 2 Thess. 2, permit me to explain them verse by verse:

- **2 Thess. 2:4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

This verse discusses the man of sin and says that he sits in the temple of God (the church in the New Testament time, not the temple in Jerusalem). It says of him that he also shows himself that he is God. We know that the Catholic Church popes claim they stand in the place of God when speaking theologically to their church and claim they cannot teach wrong doctrine when doing this, which means they claim infallibility when it comes to their teachings. They also claim that they transferred the holiness of the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week. They will tell you that Sunday as a holy day is a Catholic institution alone. They even attack the Protestant Churches that keep Sunday, saying that they have not adhered to the Bible alone claim they make because they adhere to Sunday keeping.

History records that at the council of Laodicea, they were the first church ever to pass a church law requiring that all members keep holy Sunday rather than the seventh day of the week, so they claim to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday. In other words, in their church law, they removed the solemnity (holiness) from the seventh day Sabbath and transferred it to Sunday. It is THIS which fulfills the claim that the power spoken of in Daniel 7:25 would think to change times and law. In other words, it would imagine that it has authority to change God's law and God's time, the Sabbath.

They did not do this in a vacuum, but rather they did it after a long history of keeping Sunday rather than the Sabbath. So, these things make the popes the one that shows himself he is God. God

alone has the authority to change his law. The 10 commandments describe the character of God. God further says that he never changes. So, the 10 commandments will never be changed. The pope claims to head a Christian Church, so he is sitting in the temple of God and he takes power to himself that only God has. Thus, he shows himself he is God by the authority he claims for himself.

- **2 Thess. 2:5** Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

In this verse Paul reminds his readers that he previously told them about the things he discusses in this chapter.

- **2 Thess. 2:6** And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

In this verse, Paul mentions that they already know what was withholding the man of sin from coming, with the result that the man of sin might be revealed after the withholding is stopped. In the interpretation the Roman Empire is the power that is removed so that the papacy can come to power as predicted in Daniel 7, it is true that they would have understood this from Daniel 7. If you want to look at it as the persecution that prevents the rise of the spirit of apostasy and the removal of the persecution that permits the rise of spirit of apostasy, they very likely were aware of this also, for there was persecution going on in their day and more of it came when Nero became Emperor (I have read that Nero did well as Emperor until he had some kind of illness, after which he was crazy).

But in the interpretation that I came up with, what is being held back is the arrival of the last pope. After all, Paul does call him the man of sin, which is singular rather than plural. It seems to me that if he was talking about all the

popes, he should have said “the MEN of sin” rather than “the MAN of sin.” Of course, it does not force this to be the case, for the word man could be taken to be representative of all of them, but Paul’s language about the “man of sin” suggests it points to one person rather than to a group. And we also know that the last pope goes to perdition, which also points to the last pope, for only he, out of all the popes, gets the 7 last plagues.

Until there is a pope removed that makes way for the “man of sin” to be revealed, it is possible that this somehow prevents the last pope from taking over the office of pope. The removal somehow allows the man of sin to be revealed, though exactly how, we do not know at present.

That there is one removed and then the man of sin is then revealed suggests to me that there may be an active effort by the last pope to remove his predecessor, perhaps because he is greedy for power and sees an opportunity before him if he can just get himself put on the papal throne. But perhaps it proves difficult to achieve, which delays the arrival of the last pope. Perhaps removing the predecessor of the last pope proves difficult to achieve, for perhaps he has significant support within the College of Cardinals and therefore the one who wants the power cannot easily convince them to remove him.

Removal of a pope by the one who succeeded him is something that has been done in the papacy during their history. Centuries ago, it sometimes happened that this was done. To be sure it stuck, they typically made arrangements for the imprisonment of their predecessor or his death so as to

prevent them from causing his own removal by his predecessor.

Perhaps it will be that the one who becomes the last pope removes his predecessor and then he is able to take office. He would have to arrange the vote ahead of time with the College of Cardinals, but they have done this kind of thing in their history, so this would be nothing particularly new to them. Once in office, eventually the last pope will receive authority to persecute from European civil authorities and then he changes his papal throne name to a new name in response to receiving this authority. This makes him the eighth, the last pope ever.

Of course, it is also true that God will continue to allow the cardinals of the Catholic Church to elect new popes until he (God) is satisfied that conditions are right for the end to take place. Then the predecessor of the last pope will come and it is possible that he will be removed, thus making way for the last pope to arrive on the scene.

And, maybe not. Maybe we do not understand this correctly, so we will have no warning. We cannot be absolutely sure of this. But you should at least be aware that it might turn out to be a warning after all. Things could happen this way, but we shall have to wait to see what actually happens. Reality may be very different.

- **2 Thess. 2:7** For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

In this verse, it talks more about the restraint on the arrival of the last pope and what seems to be the removal of his predecessor to make way for the last pope.



- **2 Thess. 2:8** And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Depending on which interpretation one is talking about, this verse discusses either all of the popes or else the last pope, the one destroyed by the brightness of the coming of Jesus (the way it is translated in some Bible versions).

Now that I have briefly explained the verses, let us continue to talk about the question at hand: Will we have warning by the removal of a pope that the one who will become the eighth is about to arrive? Well, I cannot prove it will happen. Perhaps we misunderstand it. But I am somewhat inclined to think it may happen because there is evidence in the Bible which suggests it will happen. But it may not happen after all. Just be aware and be watchful.

When Benedict was pope, we thought he would remove Francis and then return to be pope. If he had done this, it would have fulfilled the prophecy in 2 Thess. 2:7-8. Benedict did not do this and thus did not also change his papal throne name. Yet with Benedict, we at least had a reason that was plainly visible as to why he could have removed Francis. They were polar opposites, which could have given Benedict a good reason to remove Francis. And Benedict said he wanted to change his papal throne name, which marked him as the one who very likely would become the eighth. So, we thought it was coming. But, Benedict died and unless he is resurrected, he cannot fulfill this prophecy.

With the future eighth name pope and his immediate predecessor, if this prophecy in 2 Thess. 2:7 is to be fulfilled, we have no way of knowing what will precipitate the removal of the predecessor, though the verses suggest that the one who will become the eighth may well engineer the removal of the previous pope for his own purpose. It seems as though the predecessor

will try to hang onto his throne or perhaps those responsible for removing him are resistant to making the change. We are not told exactly how and why it will happen, if it happens. We can only wait to see how and why the predecessor will be removed from office - if this happens.

For Seventh-day Adventists, you now know that Ellen White supported the interpretation of the Roman Empire persecuting to inhibit the development of the man of sin. And later the persecution was removed, which revealed the man of sin. But what may surprise you is that she also supported 2 Thess. 2:7-8 as the last pope as a second interpretation. Below is her statement about the last pope interpretation:

The last great crisis is upon us. The working of the man of sin is revealed. “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 13LtMs, Ms 68, 1898, par. 18

If you look at the paragraph above, note that she is talking about the persecution that takes place. In association with this, she says, “The last great crisis is upon us.” This directly tells you she is talking about the time of the last pope when persecution is going on. And this is followed with, “The working of the man of sin is revealed. This last phrase should seem to pair well with the phrase, “And then shall that Wicked be revealed.” This is logical for it seems she is saying that the man of sin is especially revealed at the end with the coming of the eighth. She continues, “For the mystery of

iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” It seems that when the last great crisis comes about, then she says one is taken out of the way and it appears that she is saying that the last pope is revealed.

Am I reading too much into it? I don’t know, but it appears to me to suggest that this points to the last pope. It seems as though she supports my interpretation. And maybe not. But it can be read the way I have suggested and it makes sense in light of the idea that 2 Thess. 2:8 is talking about the last pope.

If you search for the phrase, “then shall that Wicked be revealed,” in the Ellen White Estate database of her writings, you will discover a number of quotes among the 15 places where this phrase is found where she directly associates this phrase with the last period of persecution of God’s people just before the end. She also associates it with the one who sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, which we understand to refer to the papacy. Thus, what she does is directly associate 2 Thess. 2:7-8 with the man of sin and by associating it with the end, she seems to strongly suggest it is the last pope she is referring to, the one who persecutes at the end.

But let us now look at the following question: We should ask, how is it possibly that 2 Thess. 2:8 refers both to all the popes and the last pope only at the same time? Well, it depends on who one considers the man of sin to be. If the man of sin is all the popes, then it is the Roman Empire or Roman persecution that is removed. If it is the last pope only, then the one removed is the predecessor to the last pope. Can both interpretations be true? Yes, it is logical that both can be true. It can be a dual interpretation prophecy (there are not many of these). They might seem contradictory to

one another, but the definition of the man of sin is what determines the interpretation to be used.

So, how can we explain Biblically that all the popes fit into verse 8, for it should seem as though only the last pope could be alive at the Second Coming of Jesus to be destroyed then? Actually, it turns out that they can and, in fact, will be alive when Jesus comes again – all of them! But how can that be explained Biblically to be so? The answer to this is suggested in the Bible in several different places. Here are several such places that I can think of right away:

Mat 26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Rev 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Now, in Matthew 26:64, Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that they would see him come in the clouds of heaven. In Rev. 1:7, it includes the soldiers who crucified him. Neither the soldiers nor the Jewish leaders that crucified Jesus are alive today. So, logically, they have to be resurrected just before Jesus comes again for them to see him come. Logically they have to be alive before he actually arrives for them to watch him come. This much can be proven.

But are they the only ones that will be resurrected just before Jesus comes again? I do not think so. For good reasons, I believe that there will be some righteous people who also will be resurrected to see Jesus come again. After all, if Jesus felt it important to resurrect those who strongly opposed him, then why not also resurrect some of those over the ages who strongly supported him? It does not say that they are resurrected, but it is

logical that they would be. So, I believe they will be resurrected along with the wicked men directly mentioned in the Bible.

I also believe that among those resurrected shortly before Jesus comes are many who strongly opposed Christ, among which are the Jewish leaders and the soldiers that crucified him. You can be sure others from all ages of earth's history will also be resurrected to see this event and to see the one that they hated and opposed coming in the power of God. This would include many of the popes, who have opposed Christ by taking Christ's authority as if it is their own, having persecuted and killed God's people and claimed authority to determine whether they shall be in heaven or hell (at present, God alone has this power of judgment over the eternal destiny of people).

What this means is that even though verse 8 seems to apply only to the last pope, it logically can and does include popes from the entire history of the papacy because they have opposed Christ.

Given that Francis is not likely to be removed and we know he is not the last pope, then if I understand this correctly, it is likely that there will be another pope after Francis that may be removed, and if this happens, he will then be followed by the one who will become the eighth. This suggests there may be two more popes after Francis, but we cannot be sure of that. It depends on whether I understand verse 7 correctly under the condition that verse 8 refers to the last pope. Time will tell the tale.

There is one more evidence of interest that I ran across regarding the original language in 2 Thess. 2:8, which is that the word translated as man of sin is masculine, which means it is a single individual, and also neuter, which makes it a world power, which would seem to fit the entire organization (see Dejan Stanjević, page 17, A CRITIQUE OF HISTORICIST APPROACH TO THE INTERPRETATION OF 2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-12,

[https://www.academia.edu/28162131/A CRITIQUE OF HISTORICIST APPROACH TO THE INTERPRETATION OF 2 THESSALONIANS 2 1 12 doc](https://www.academia.edu/28162131/A_CRITIQUE_OF_HISTORICIST_APPROACH_TO_THE_INTERPRETATION_OF_2_THESSALONIANS_2_1_12_doc)).

To reiterate, my purpose of writing this section is to make you aware that there may be a warning that the one who will become the eighth is about to arrive. Two things in 2 Thess. 2 point to one man as the “man of sin” interpretation, which would make my interpretation valid. These are:

1. The term man of sin seems to point to a singular individual
2. The fact that the man of sin is the son of perdition points to the last pope

As a result, while we do not know for sure, it is possible that there will be a warning that the one who will become the eighth is about to arrive. Whatever happens, be aware of this and at the same time be preparing just in case, no matter which way it goes. Do not count on a warning, but if it happens, then you know what is soon to follow.

## Conclusion of this Document

By which method will the problems with the death of Benedict be taken care of? The best answer I have is that the filter effect will very likely be the solution. But one or more of the other methods may happen as well, any of which may appear to fix the count with Benedict. These would be things such as, will they depose Benedict XVI? Is he going to be resurrected? Is he hiding out? I have no idea whether any of these other things will happen, but it is possible that one of them may actually happen. However, I do think the probability Benedict XVI will be resurrected or has been hiding out is very slim and the chance that he will be deposed is zero at present, but may increase to a greater chance, though one that is low, should the Catholic Church schism before the eighth name arrives.

I am not God and cannot say for sure that any of these will take place. I only know that the problems are fixed by the Filter Effect method and the verses back it up as the most likely way in which the present problem with Benedict XVI will be fixed. However, before history is over, one of the other things may also happen. We can only wait to see what happens.

Once the eighth arrives, then the end begins. Only a few years later Jesus will come again and sin will finally be ended a thousand years later when God and his people come back to earth and the New Jerusalem also comes. A resurrection of the wicked will take place then and they will subsequently be judged by God. After the judgment of the wicked is completed, then hell takes place to destroy them. Once they are destroyed and are no more, then afterward, forevermore, sin will be no more. God will remake this world and all will finally be restored to what it was intended to have been in the first place. We are not far from the end of history

Another question is whether there will be a warning that the last pope is about to arrive? We do not know for sure that we will have a warning in the form of his predecessor being removed, but it may be possible that this will happen. We have to wait and see whether or not it happens. If no pope is removed and the last pope shows up, then we will know no warning is to be understood from 2 Thess. 2:7-8.

Finally, what is the significance of our Revelation 17 study, with its focus on identifying the eighth? Why has it come to our attention and why is it important to the Adventist Church and to the world at large? The entire purpose of it is to give to the Adventist Church the midnight cry message for the time that is just before us. This message will activate the church to finish the gospel work of Jesus and this will bring about the end

of the world very quickly. It will also help prepare God's people for what is soon to come. When the eighth arrives, it is time to be ready at all times for Jesus to come (it always is time for that, but it will be even more so then).

There was a midnight cry message in 1844 for the Millerites which caused the people to go out to finish the work before Jesus was believed to be coming. He never showed then because the prophecy was actually for a different event than that which they had understood, though the date was right for the actual event predicted. But, likewise, there is a midnight cry message to be given again just before the end that will cause people to go out and finish the work. But this time Jesus will show up.

How will the Revelation 17 study cause people to go out to finish the work? Well, when people actually see that an old pope, who is the last pope ever, is on the papal throne and come to recognize that this is the real truth of the Revelation 17 study, it will produce an effect that nobody could guess at now. It will at once divide the church and at the same time, it will unite and energize as never before those ready to go out and give the three angels' messages, which, under the influence of the midnight cry message as a part of the loud cry message, they will do so with very great power. They will finish the work in short order and then, after a short time of trouble, Jesus will finally come to take all of his people home to be with him for eternity and the end of the world arrives then. Let every reader begin preparation for that day, for it is not at all far away.

**The End.**