

The Woman, the Beast, and 666

Understanding Revelation 17 – A Paradigm Shift

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Questions & Answers Summary

1. What is your identification of the "great whore, the Mother of Harlots, that great city?"
Answer: The See of Roman (Roman Church)
2. What is your identification of the "scarlet colored beast?"
Answer: Roman Church allied with Political powers—Persecuting Medieval church
3. What is your identification of the "seven heads/mountains/kings?"
Answer: Seven lines of spiritual/religious powers
4. What is your identification of the "ten horns?"
Answer: Daughters of the Harlot —Apostate Protestant Churches
5. What is the time-frame in prophetic history that this vision points to?
Answer: After the Time of the End (Post 1798)
6. Are you prepared to provide biblical proof for each of the above answers?
Answer: Yes
7. Are you prepared to reconcile all relevant statements in Sister White's writings to your answers above?
Answer: Yes

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The quest for understanding the enigma of Revelation 17 and its mysterious scarlet beast that “was, is not, yet is” with seven heads and ten horns has resulted in little or no unanimity among an array of Adventist interpreters from the time of Uriah Smith to the present. The scarlet beast is predominantly considered to be a civil/political power or by a few interpreters as a religious/political system, where the *harlot woman*³ controls the civil powers in a religious/political confederacy. Although the seven heads are predominantly identified as civil/political powers, there is no consistency in identifying each individual head among the seven. Table 1 summarizes a few of the different Adventist interpretations of Revelation 17 which illustrates the lack consistency and unanimity. This inconsistency may be traced to the neglect and disregard of the guidelines of prophetic interpretation we find illustrated with the prophetic beasts in Daniel 7 and 8, even though the interpretive interdependence of Daniel and Revelation is commonly acknowledged.⁴

A Paradigm Shift

Based on consistent application of the guidelines of interpretation associated with the prophetic beasts of Daniel 7 and 8, a radical paradigm shift in understanding Revelation 17 is

¹ This document was updated in January, 2023 and again in March, 2025 by J. W. Peters

² This is a synopsis of an initial interpretation of Revelation 17 based on the earlier work of Wendell Slattery and Ronald Johnston (*ca.* 2005) found at <http://www.666man.net/> The author wishes to acknowledge Mark E. La Rose for significant contributions to this document especially of those related to the Babylonian worship system.

³ The harlot woman is identified as “Babylon” that “Great City” consisting of three entities: the Papacy, apostate Protestantism, and spiritualism/paganism (Rev 16:13, 19) under the leadership of the Papacy.

⁴ “Study Revelation in connection with Daniel, for history will be repeated” (TM116); “With intense interest [Wm Miller] studied the book of Daniel and the Revelation, employing the same guidelines of interpretation as in the other scriptures, and found, to his great joy, that the prophetic symbols could be understood” (GC88 320.2); The book of Revelation, in connection with the book of Daniel, especially demands study” (Ed191).

proposed. For example, the wilderness scene in Revelation 17:3-6 is a retrospective of the past experience of the “great whore” fornicating with the kings of the earth to persecute God’s people (symbolized by the scarlet beast) for 1260 years. Now, in the wilderness since 1798, she is visible on the seven heads (not integrated with the body of the beast, see v.9) and drunk with the blood of the saints, while the scarlet beast, having received a mortal wound to one of its seven heads (13:3), is in the abyss—a place of confinement or paralysis. In other words, the “mystery of the woman and the beast” (v. 7) is revealed, when it is understood that the harlot functions in two phases—first, in a persecuting church-state alliance (scarlet beast), and second, simply as the apostate church, at which time the beast is confined to the abyss until it ascends from the abyss as the “eighth.” It is noteworthy that the woman is specifically seated on the seven heads of the beast, according to the interpreting angel (Rev 17:7). It will be shown that the picture of the woman sitting on the seven heads (v. 9) in the wilderness represents the beast in its “is not” stage. The woman is no longer fornicating with the kings of the earth in a church-state union, but simply represents the papal church. Thus, the scarlet beast (church-state union) is in its non-persecutory “is not” stage. Since the scarlet beast is a union of the harlot with the kings of the earth, the harlot (the apostate Roman church) effectively becomes the scarlet beast upon the commencement of this fornicating relationship.

The seven heads on the scarlet beast of Revelation 17, the sea beast (Rev 13), and the dragon (Rev 12) all represent the same spiritual/religious kingdoms⁵ (powers). Likewise, the ten horns on each of these three beast-like entities also represent another set of

⁵ Daniel 7:17 identifies the four beasts as four kingdoms with the implication that the four heads of the leopard would be kingdoms as well.

spiritual/religious powers. More specifically, the seven heads and ten horns on each of the three beast-like entities are not civil or political powers as commonly understood in Table 1; they are all spiritual/religious powers. The characteristics and activity of the seven heads and ten horns on the three beast-like entities are not explained until Revelation 17, which confirms their similar nature. Please note: the “kings of the earth” are political kingdoms, whereas “kings” represented by heads and horns are spiritual (religious) powers. Finally, the proposal that the scarlet beast is identical to the persecuting stage of the sea beast of Revelation 13 may be adduced from the fact that both the scarlet beast and the sea beast exist in three phases. The scarlet beast progresses through three stages, “was, and is not, and yet is,” in a manner identical with the three stages of the sea beast. The sea beast persecutes the saints in a church + state alliance for forty two months (“was”), is inactive after forty two months of persecution corresponding to the deadly wound (“is not”), and will persecute again in a church + state alliance “over every tribe, tongue, and nation” (“yet is” as the “eighth”). Both the scarlet beast and the sea beast are the same religious/political persecuting powers during the forty two months, as is the dragon (Rev 12), who works through the papacy. The same three stages of activity of the both the scarlet beast and sea beast correlate with the sequential, three-step appearance of first, the beast entity, followed by seven heads, followed by the ten horns. The sequential three-step appearance (beast-heads-horns) is identical for all three scenarios of Revelation 12, 13, and 17. These three stages and sequential appearance/activity are summarized in the chart below.

Three Stages of Activity of the Beasts with Seven Heads & Ten Horns
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Scarlet Beast	“Was”	“Is Not”	“Yet Is”
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Sea Beast		Persecution 42 Months	Deadly Wound Post 1798	Deadly Wound Healed Image of Beast
3-step Appearance Beast, Heads, Horns		Beast Active	Seven Heads Active	Ten Horns Active + The “eighth”

It will become apparent that Revelation 13 expands and elucidates the activity of the dragon in Revelation 12. In a similar manner, Revelation 17 expands and elucidates Revelation 13. Each “beast” has a similar configuration containing slight variances to reveal additional characteristics in order to highlight certain elements as history unfolds. For the purposes of this exposition, the focus of Revelation 12 is the persecution during the 1260-year period of 538 to 1798—the beast “was” stage. The focus of Revelation 13 is the “yet is” stage (healed wound), with a secondary focus on the persecuting stage. The primary focus of Revelation 17 is the “is not” stage (deadly wound stage), with secondary focus on the “yet is” stage (healed wound) associated with the ten horns.

John is observing the vision described in Revelation 17 during the wilderness experience of the Scarlet beast (“is not”), which corresponds to the “time of the end” beginning in 1798 and beyond. The sixth head (“one is”) functions during the same wilderness period initiated in 1798 and continuing to the present. The remaining seven heads (five have fallen and one is yet to come) function in this same time frame post 1798.

Finally, and most significantly, a correct understanding of Revelation 17 correlates the wisdom statement of Revelation 13:18 with the wisdom statement of Revelation 17:9 and elucidates the significance of the mysterious number 666.

Hermeneutical Guidelines for Prophetic Beasts in Daniel 7 & 8

The interpretation proposed in this paper examines and follows the general hermeneutical guidelines associated with prophetic beasts of Daniel 7 and 8 and applies them

to the interpretative scheme for the scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns in Revelation 17. The same guidelines apply for the dragon and sea beast, each with their seven heads and ten horns. The designation of a political or religious power as a “beast” in Daniel and Revelation forecasts the persecution of God’s chosen people by that power. A concise summary of the prophetic guidelines of interpretation found in Daniel 7 and 8 follows:

Derivation Guideline: The heads or horns on a beast derive from the beast on which they are attached, unless there is an exception stated in the text as with the Little Horn in Daniel 7:24. Note: If both heads and horns exist on a beast, as in Revelation 17, the horns will derive from the heads, not the beast. Heads never represent kingdoms that arise independently of one another. The heads always arise and grow out of the beast body to which they are attached. The heads trace their origin back to a common kingdom—the beast on which they are attached. This guideline is self-evident with the four heads on the leopard and the ten horns on the fourth beast of Daniel 7. This guideline is violated in all the interpretations in Table 1, where, in each case, the seven heads are seven sequential kingdoms (manifestations of the beast), which are not derived from the scarlet beast, the sea beast, or the dragon.

Succession Guideline: When the heads or the horns on a beast gain power, the beast itself loses its power or becomes subservient to new power. If both heads and horns exist on a beast, as in Revelation 17, the heads and horns do not exercise power simultaneously. Thus, when the four heads on the leopard are active, the leopard (kingdom of Greece) loses its power. The same transition occurs with the ten horns on the fourth Beast (Imperial Rome). When the “ten” barbarian kingdoms come to power, Imperial Rome loses its power. The simultaneous assumption of power by the ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel 7 was consummated with the dissolution of the Imperial Roman Empire in 476 when Odoacer

text. Thus, in Daniel 7 the leopard beast (Greece) is a civil power and the four heads that arise from this power are civil/political powers. Likewise, a similar continuity is found with the fourth beast (Imperial Rome), where the “ten horns” represent an indefinite number of barbarian tribes with kingly leaders exercising civil/political power in Western Europe after the fall of Imperial Rome. A civil/political beast power will not have heads that are spiritual/religious powers. Likewise, a spiritual/religious beast power will not have civil/political heads. An exception to this guideline is the Little Horn, stated in Daniel 7:8, 24, which arises and receives power *after* the “ten” horns come to power. The dragon in Revelation 12 is a spiritual entity, defined as Satan (Rev 12:9); therefore the heads on the dragon would not be political/civil kingdoms, as many believe. The sea beast and the scarlet beast are both spiritual/religious entities by virtue of the fact they have blasphemous names or character traits including the power to forgive sins – “blaspheming His tabernacle” (Rev 13:6; 17:3). Thus, the seven heads on each beast entity would be spiritual/religious entities.

Similarity Guideline: **If one head or horn on a beast is a civil/political entity, all the heads and horns are civil/political entities unless the text states an exception. Likewise, if one head or horn is a spiritual/religious entity, all the heads and horns will be spiritual/religious entities unless the text states an exception.** This guideline is self-evident in the Daniel 7 description of the leopard beast, as well as with the ten-horned beast. The appearance of the little horn is an exception to this guideline which the text explains (Dan 7:24). This guideline is violated in Table 1, where there is a consistent mixing of some heads that are civil/political and some that are spiritual/religious in nature.

Relationship of the Beast, Heads and Horns

In harmony with the guidelines of prophetic interpretation noted above, it is proposed that the scarlet beast and the seven heads and the ten horns are all spiritual/religious entities. Moreover, the seven heads function when the scarlet beast loses its power. Furthermore, the ten horns function after the seven heads lose their power. In other words, there are three independent stages of activity of the scarlet beast where the seven heads and ten horns represent the continuum of time: scarlet beast (stage 1), the seven heads (stage 2), and the ten horns (stage 3). When the “yet is” stage of the scarlet beast functions again as the “eighth,” the seven heads have ceased activity (“fallen”) and the ten horns become active during the time when the “eighth” is in power. Since 1798 the scarlet beast remains in the “is not,” non-persecutory, stage and continues to the present time.

Identification of the Scarlet Beast: The sea beast in Revelation 13, which arises out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns is a spiritual/religious power, which evolves into a persecuting religious power fornicating with the kings of the earth, commonly identified as the medieval Roman papacy. This power blasphemes God (13:6) and persecutes the saints (13:7). To the careful inquisitor, the similarities of the scarlet beast to sea beast are unmistakable. Although most Adventist expositors identify the scarlet beast with political kingdoms, the similarities of the scarlet beast with sea beast, summarized below, are unambiguous.

Scarlet Beast/Sea Beast Similarities

Both have 7 heads & 10 Horns (Rev 13:1; 17:3)

Both Blaspheme (13:5, 6; 17:3)

Both exist in 3 Stages (13:12; 17:8)

Both make war/persecute (13:7; 17: 14)

Both are marveled (thaumazo) by the world (13:3; 17:8)

Both manifest wisdom statements (Rev 13:18; 17:9)

Finally, both the scarlet beast and the woman are “arrayed” in scarlet—symbolically suggesting the religious character of both the woman and the beast of Revelation 17.

Commencing with a forty two month period of persecution the sea beast becomes the church-state beast which is identical to the scarlet beast of Revelation 17. The description of the scarlet beast in Revelation 17:3-6 is a retrospective of its persecutory activity during the forty two month period. Like the sea beast, the scarlet beast is a spiritual/religious power, which is full of names of blasphemy (17:3), and is responsible for making the harlot woman drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (17:6). Furthermore, the scarlet beast progresses through three stages, “was, and is not, and yet is,” in a manner identical with the three stages of the sea beast, which persecutes the saints for forty two months (“was”), is inactive after forty two months of persecution (“is not”), and persecutes again as the “eighth” (“yet is”).

The scarlet beast is the result of the harlot woman fornicating with the kings of the earth to become a persecuting religious/political alliance—a church-state alliance. Simply stated, the scarlet beast is the *Harlot Woman (Catholic Church) + National Governmental Powers* in a persecuting alliance. However, the scarlet beast pictured in the wilderness in Revelation 17:3-6 is in its non-persecutory (“is not”) stage while the harlot woman is sitting on the seven heads through whom the woman exercises ruling authority.

Sequential Activity of the Seven Heads & Ten Horns: In view of the identification of the scarlet beast and in harmony with the prophetic guidelines of interpretation summarized above, it becomes apparent that the seven heads of the scarlet beast become active during the “is not” phase or stage of the beast. Thus, the seven heads become active after the deadly wound of 1798. In addition, the ten horns obtain power in the third stage after the seven heads become inactive, and, coincidentally, the scarlet beast resumes its persecutory activity

again in its “yet is” phase, and it becomes active for a brief time as the “eighth” in a church + state fornicating alliance. Again, the sequential activity and appearance of the heads and horns are summarized in the chart below.

Three Stages of Activity of the Beasts with Seven Heads & Ten Horns
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Scarlet Beast	“Was”	“Is Not”	“Yet Is”
Sea Beast	Persecution 42 Months	Deadly Wound Post 1798	Deadly Wound Healed Image of Beast
3-step Appearance Beast, Heads, Horns	Beast Active	Seven Heads Active	Ten Horns Active + The “eighth”

Identification and Location of the Harlot Woman: The general consensus of Adventist expositors, with few exceptions, is that the harlot woman represents the apostate Roman Catholic Church (see Table 1). She is called Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, that great city, which purports to reign over the kings of the earth. The great city Babylon necessarily includes apostate Protestantism (False Prophet) and the Dragon or Spiritism/Paganism (see Rev 17:18; 16:13, 19). Babylon, the Great appears and develops in the “last days” as a three-fold spiritual union (Dragon, Beast, False Prophet) under the leadership of the papacy. She lives and arrays herself in a luxurious manner.

Harlot Woman Defined

- Fornicates (forms church + state union)
- Adorned w/ purple/scarlet/gold/jewelry
- Holds a golden cup
- Mother harlots
- Drunk w/ blood of saints
- John (world) marvels
- Historical evidence pts to the See of Rome (GC 382)

The location of the woman on the beast is of vital importance. A superficial examination of Revelation 17 would conclude that the woman is sitting on the “body” of the beast itself. This

is an invalid conclusion. “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. These are also seven kings” (Rev 17:9-10). She sits upon the seven mountains (equivalent to seven heads or seven kings) of the scarlet beast —not upon the beast itself. In other words, the woman is isolated on the seven heads (mountains or kings) during the “is not” phase (stage) of the scarlet beast, when the seven heads are active. She is no longer integrated with the scarlet beast in a fornicating relationship with the kings of earth. This phase begins after the deadly wound is inflicted on “one of his heads,” which (please note) is a particular man which will be shown to represent a papal name lineage.⁸ During this second stage the harlot woman exercises authority by means of the seven heads (papal leaders) on which she sits. Although she sits on the seven heads of the beast, the assertion that she sits seven historical heads (media/Persia, Greece. etc.) is not plausible, since she did not exist in their respective time frames. This second stage continues from 1798 until the persecutory actions of the beast resume when it functions as the “eighth” (“yet is”). This third and final stage occurs when a persecuting church + state alliance is revived and the scarlet beast becomes the “eighth.” Coincident with this third stage, the seven heads become inactive signaling the imminence of the ten horns forming an alliance with the revived scarlet beast. Both of these religious powers fornicate with the nations and thereby receive persecuting power to enforce laws violating individual conscience.

⁸ “That afternoon he had us accompany him to the cathedral and look upon the bust of Pius VI who was noted in prophecy, who was led into captivity and died in captivity. Here was the one marked in history who received the deadly wound. His heart is encased in the marble monument beneath where the bust is placed. We felt rather solemn as we looked upon the monument of this man noted in prophecy.” {Lt110-1886.5} (To W. C. White and wife, November 4, 1886.) {8MR 354.1}{Ms70-1886.25} Released June 21, 1978.

The Beast and the Woman in the Wilderness: Prior to the wilderness experience

commencing in 1798, the harlot woman was in a persecuting church + state alliance symbolized by the scarlet beast during the 1260-year medieval period. The wilderness experience of the woman and the beast begins when the woman is sitting on the seven heads (17:9) of the scarlet beast. During the wilderness time (post 1798), the beast is in the “is not” stage and the seven heads begin functioning independent of the beast. Thus, the wilderness experience is a time when the deadly wound has been inflicted and the persecutory phase of the beast comes to an end, beginning in 1798. The wilderness experience is a place of confinement or paralysis for the scarlet beast and corresponds to the bottomless pit (the abyss)⁹, which is identified as the “is not” stage of the scarlet beast in Revelation 17:8. (Note: the term “wilderness” (*erēmos*) has the same connotation—a place of confinement or paralysis—in Revelation 12 where the woman flees into wilderness during the medieval period.) The revived beast, as the “eighth,” will ascend out of the bottomless pit (the abyss or wilderness), and he will exist for a brief time in the “yet is” stage as a persecuting church + state alliance of fornication. The ten horns, which are spiritual/religious powers, correspond to the harlot daughters of Babylon the Great. (The identification and function of the ten horns will be discussed in a later section in this paper.) The ten horns or religious kings now receive power (Rev 17:12-13) in this final and third phase (“yet is”), and support the revived persecuting beast, which will then finally go into perdition and be destroyed.

The Seven Heads and Wisdom

⁹ The abyss is a place of confinement or paralysis for the entities in Revelation 9:1-3, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3, 7.

Wisdom is required in understanding the seven heads of Revelation 17. “Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time” (Rev 17:9-10)¹⁰. There is a similar wisdom statement related to the sea beast of Revelation 13. “Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate (count) the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (Rev 13:18). The two wisdom statements are essentially identical, since the word, “mind” (Rev 17:9) and “understanding” (13:18) derive from the same Greek word, *nous*. The “understanding” (mind) required for calculating the number 666 is directly related to the “mind” (understanding) of the seven heads. The identity of the man whose number is 666 is imbedded in the secret of discovering the method of calculating the number of the beast, namely, the man who personifies the end time beast. The clue and method of calculating (counting) the number (666) of the beast is directly related to identifying the seven heads on the scarlet beast. Calculating the number 666 correctly will lead to the identification of the end time persecuting beast who is an individual man. For the Bible says “the number of the beast . . . is the number of a man: His number is 666.”

Identifying the Beast/Man whose Number is 666

The Seven Heads are Seven Mountains: The woman is sitting on the seven heads during the wilderness experience, which commences with the deadly wound in 1798. This is the period of time of the deadly wound when the papal church simply functions as a church, albeit an apostate church divorced from any formal political/civil alliances that conspire to persecute for

¹⁰ All scriptural texts are taken from the New King James Version

matters of conscience. In the vision of the wilderness experience (Rev 17:3-6) the woman sits on the seven heads, which are synonymous with seven mountains, and also seven kings (17:9-10). The seven mountains are not political kingdoms as was literal Babylon (Jer 51:25). It is commonly held that the “mountains” represent literal “hills,” however, that belief must be rejected as it necessarily mixes literal terms with symbolic language. The seven mountains represent spiritual/religious entities. (Specifically, it will be demonstrated that the seven mountains/heads represent seven lines of pope-names since 1798.) For example, the Rock (Jesus) cut out of a mountain in Daniel 2 represents a religious kingdom—God’s kingdom (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Likewise, in Daniel 9:16 and 9:20 the term, “mountain,” is associated with God. God’s kingdom is repeatedly called Mount Zion and “My holy mountain” throughout OT prophecy (Exo 3:1; 24:12, 16-18; Ps 2:6; 3:4; 15:1; 24:3; 43:3; 48:1-2; Isa 2:3; 14:13; 66:20; Ezek 20:40; 28:14-16; Joel 2:1, 32; 3:17; Mic 4:2; Zech 8:3), and it becomes identified with the place of the Holy City in the book of Revelation (Rev 14:1; 21:10). In Revelation 17 the seven heads, which are seven mountains, which are also seven kings, represent religious or spiritual entities.

The Seven Heads (Mountains), 666 and Babylonian Worship: The number of the beast is 666. When the woman, who is Babylon, is allied with the kings of the earth in a persecutory union, she becomes a persecuting beast power whose number is 666. Because the harlot woman is called Babylon who sits on the seven heads or mountains, the seven mountains are related to Babylon. God called ancient Babylon a mountain in Jeremiah 51:25. Just as the Godhead is represented by the mountain of Daniel 2, likewise the seven mountains of Revelation 17 represent false gods.

Historically, Babylon constructed a ziggurat (mountain) for the purpose of worshipping gods.¹¹ The relationship of Mesopotamian ziggurat structures and mountains as the dwelling place of the gods has been noted by Hans Bieddermann.¹² The Temple of Ekur, located in the ancient city of Nippur, was one of the most significant religious structures in Babylonian and Mesopotamian mythology. Dedicated primarily to the storm god Enlil, the temple served as a center for worship and a symbol of divine authority in the region. The Temple of Ekur was characterized by its massive ziggurat structure, a terraced pyramid that served as the focal point of the temple complex. The Temple of Ekur served as the religious center for the worship of Enlil and other deities. It was believed to be a dwelling place for the gods, where they could be approached through rituals and offerings.¹³ Mountains as the dwelling of place of the gods in ancient Near Eastern culture influenced Greek culture as well, where Mount Olympus was the home of twelve Olympian gods.¹⁴ God repeatedly condemned the worship of gods associated mountains and high places which was practiced by Assyrians and Canaanites and adopted by Israel (Deut 12:2; 2Kg 17:29; 21:3; Is 65:7; Eze 6:13).

Within the Babylonian of motif of Revelation 17, each of the seven mountains may be designated as the abode of multiple gods. In the Babylonian sun worship system there were thirty-six (36) constellation gods, and one of these, the god associated with the sun, was supreme over all the other gods.¹⁵ The number 666 can be traced to ancient Babylon and was

¹¹ https://www.bible-history.com/babylonia/babyloniathe_ziggurat.htm

¹² "The ziggurat structures of ancient Mesopotamia were architectural translations of DIVINE MOUNTAINS; the mountain is the abode for the gods." Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism*, Facts on File; illustrated edition (January 1, 1992), p. 228.

¹³ <https://babylonian.mythologyworldwide.com/the-temple-of-ekur-the-abode-of-the-gods/>

¹⁴ <https://www.greeklegendsandmyths.com/mount-olympus.html>

¹⁵ "The Babylonians divided each of the 12 houses in the zodiac into three rooms, making 36 in all. They then divided the entire remainder of the sky into 36 constellations, and appointed the ruling god of each constellation to rule over one of the 36 rooms of the zodiac. Since the spirits of the departed were believed to go to and dwell in

completely incorporated in the religious practices of Babylon.¹⁶ Because the harlot woman is said to be Babylon this paper will briefly illustrate how the number 666 comes from the way the Babylonians calculated the number. In ancient Babylon, the pagan priests calculated the number 666, which is a triangular (summary) number¹⁷, by counting 36 constellation gods in sequence which, in fact, added up the count to 666. Consequently, since Babylon consisted of only one mountain, which contained 36 gods, the number 666 was calculated by adding up the count of the gods (36+35+34 . . . 3+2+1) = 666.¹⁸

Mystery Babylon, Mountain and 666: Ancient Babylon used the sexagesimal (base 60) numeral system.¹⁹ It is still used to measure time, angles, and geographic coordinates. The Babylonian Magical Square (medallion) was an amulet²⁰ fashioned as a 6x6 square containing the numbers 1-36. Each row and column added to 111, (6 x 111 = 666), where

the stars --a teaching still much alive today, there was therefore not a spirit in the heavens, not a star in the sky which was not represented in the 36 rooms of the zodiac, and to swear by the number 36 was to swear by every god in the heavens above, as well as by all the spirits of the departed. The 36 gods were called decans because each ruled over 10 degrees of the zodiacal circle and over 10 days of the 360-day year.” Murl Vance, *The Trail of the Serpent*, Oriental Watchman Publishing House, Salisbury Park, Post Box 35, Pune 411 011, India, 1991, pg. 27,
¹⁶<http://www.666numberofthebeast.com/666numberofthebeast.html#:~:text=In%20this%20system%20of%20worship%2C%20they%20had%2036,so%20that%20they%20could%20have%20power%20over%20them>

¹⁷ “...the Medieval Church was very number conscious, that it was well-acquainted with the principle of triangular or summary numbers, and that it studied pagan literature to learn the significance of sacred numbers. The Church could not have been ignorant of the significance of 8 and of the summary or triangular form of 8 (36) mentioned by Plutarch as the most sacred numbers in the mysteries. [Vance shows pagan religions added numbers together in triangular number form in such a way to designate sacred numbers, for example, adding 1 through 36 equals 666.] Nor could the church have been ignorant of the summary number of 36, the number 666 assigned from early days to the worship of the sun god as the ruler of the 36 rooms of the zodiac circle. There are far too many 'seals of the sun' with Latin inscriptions to admit of such ignorance, when the 36 rooms are numbered and laid out in a 6 x 6 square with the numbers so arranged that each column adds up the same no matter in which direction the adding is done. The Church could not have been ignorant of the fact that the '36 heavens' which they mention refer to the 36 rooms of the zodiac and the 36 constellation gods assigned to these rooms.” Murl Vance, *The Trail of the Serpent*, pg. 96-97.

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/666_%28number%29

¹⁹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexagesimal#:~:text=Sexagesimal%20%28base%2060%29%20is%20a%20numeral%20system%20with,modified%20form%20for%20measuring%20time%2C%20angles%2C%20and%20geographic%20coordinates.>

²⁰ <https://www.bookofthrees.com/the-number-of-the-beast-666-2/> See also Murl Vance, *The Trail of the Serpent*, pp. 27-28.

$1+2+3...33+34+36=666$. Babylonians priests wore “amulets” (medallions) to protect the wearer from harm.

Numerical arrangement of a Babylonian Amulet for numbers 1 to 36

6	32	3	34	35	1
7	11	27	28	8	30
19	14	16	15	23	24
18	20	22	21	17	13
25	29	10	9	26	12
36	5	33	4	2	31

In Revelation 17, the seven heads are equivalent to seven kings and seven mountains, which mean they are seven groups of gods. As previously noted, Babylon constructed a ziggurat (representing a single mountain) for the purpose of worshipping gods.²¹ However, in Revelation 17 there are seven mountains or groups of gods, which correspond to seven lines of kings. The answer to the command to calculate the number 666 in Revelation 13 resides in the wisdom statement (17:9-11) associated with the seven heads (mountains) and with the “eighth” presumably culminating in 666. For each mountain or group of gods/kings, one must count the gods in each of the seven mountains, and add up the total in each “mountain,” which should apparently total to 665. Revelation 13:18 commands those who have been granted wisdom and understanding to “count the number of the beast.” The method can be generalized and

²¹ “The Romans had a large building in Rome called the Septizonium, the 7 zones and the Latin word Seps is a “venomous serpent.” --Harper, op. cit. A common title of Rome was Septimontium, “Seven Mountains” --id. Harper also gives “the 7 planets” as a definition for Septizonium, and it would appear definite that the 7-zone building was dedicated to the worship of the 7 planets, just as the 7 mountains were name[d] originally after the planets (Latin literature speaks of the Hill of Saturn, the Hill of Jupiter, etc., in Rome). But the 7-planet city of Rome was only a copy of the city of Babylon. The Babylonians also had a massive 7-zoned or stepped temple tower dedicated to the worship of the 7 planets. --Seven Great Monarchies, Rawlinson, ii, p. 191. This temple, curiously enough, was known as the “mountain house,” “house of the 7 divisions of the world,” “house of seven zones,” and “temple of the seven lights.” The Trail of the Serpent, pg. 14, Murl Vance

summarized as follows: Count all the gods/kings in each mountain. Sum the count of the gods/kings in each of the seven mountains. Sum the total for each of the seven mountains to reach the presumed total of 665. As God provided the time and place for the Messiah to come the first time, He has provided the precise events leading up to Jesus' return, only to be understood immediately before the second coming.

Identification of the Seven Heads on the Scarlet Beast

Although the focus of the Book of Revelation is Jesus Christ and His second advent, nevertheless, the same book identifies a counterfeit worship system (the Harlot sitting on the Scarlet Beast), and commands the reader to calculate the number of the beast and warn the world accordingly. The Catholic Church claims there have been 266 popes beginning with Peter and continuing through Pope Francis.²² When a pope selects his name he usually chooses to honor a predecessor or someone he admires.²³ Of the 82 different names taken by popes, 46 are unique meaning only one pope has used the name (including Peter & Francis). The remaining 36 pope-names have been taken by two or more popes, qualifying them to be "mountains of gods" (or lines of kings), just as the Godhead/Trinity is the "Mountain" of Dan 2:35, 45.²⁴ Of the 36 pope-names or lines of popes (mountains of gods) taken by two or more popes only seven lines of popes (kings) remain since 1798. "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. These are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come" (Rev 17:9-10).

Who are the seven lines of popes (kings) of the Catholic Church since 1798?

Pope-names used since 2/15/1798

²² <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12272b.htm>

²³ <https://aleteia.org/2019/05/13/how-do-popes-choose-their-new-name>

²⁴ Interestingly, in Ellen Gould's (White) first vision she records, "Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains..." {EW 18.2}

Name, (# of times a name has been used by a pope), First and Last year used:

1. Pius (**12**) AD140-1958
2. Leo (**13**) AD440-1903
3. Gregory (**16**) AD590-1846
4. Benedict (**14**)²⁵ AD575-1922 (Benedict XVI 2005-2013)²⁶
5. John (**21**) AD523-1963²⁷
6. Paul (**6**) AD757-1978
7. John Paul (**2**) 1978-2005
Francis (**1**) 2013-202x

Count of the “gods” in the seven Mountains (seven Heads = Lines of Kings)

Using the Babylonian Mathematical System:

1. Pius (12) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12=78$
 2. Leo (13) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13=91$
 3. Gregory (16) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16=136$
 4. Benedict (14) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14=105$
 5. John (21) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16+17+18+19+20+21=231$
 6. Paul (6) $1+2+3+4+5+6=21$
 7. John Paul (2) $1+2=3$
- Total = 665 Francis (**1**)²⁸

²⁵ The Papacy declared Benedict X an antipope (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipope_Benedict_X). Benedict IX was elected and served 3 different terms; counted as 1 pope. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Benedict_IX.

²⁶ A pope name is counted by the Vatican if in good standing, after death. Although the death of Benedict XVI occurred on December 31, 2022, he no longer remains relevant to count since the count closed at 665 with death of John Paul II on April 2, 2005 as will be shown in the following pages.

²⁷ The papacy designated the man claiming to be John XVI as an antipope (AD 997-998, (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipope_John_XVI) and the name “John XX” was skipped, so there are actually only 21 popes who used the name “John” even though the last pope using the name “John” was designated as John XXIII.

²⁸ See note 26.

Summary Count of "gods" in the 7 Mtns of gods = 7 Heads = 7 Lines of Kings

#1	Count	#2	Count	#3	Count	#4	Count	#5	Count	#6	Count	#7	Count	"Eighth"	Count	Total
Pius		Leo		Gregory		Benedict		John		Paul		John Paul		New Name		
I	1	I	1	I	1	I	1	I	1	I	1	I	1	I	1	
II	2	II	2	II	2	II	2	II	2	II	2	II	2	II	2	
III	3	III	3	III	3	III	3	III	3	III	3					
IV	4	IV	4	IV	4	IV	4	IV	4	IV	4					
V	5	V	5	V	5	V	5	V	5	V	5					
VI	6	VI	6	VI	6	VI	6	VI	6	VI	6					
VII	7	VII	7	VII	7	VII	7	VII	7							
VIII	8	VIII	8	VIII	8	VIII	8	VIII	8							
IX	9	IX	9	IX	9	IX	9	IX	9							
X	10	X	10	X	10	XI	10	X	10							
XI	11	XI	11	XI	11	XII	11	XI	11							
XII	12	XII	12	XII	12	XIII	12	XII	12							
		XIII	13	XIII	13	XIV	13	XIII	13							
				XIV	14	XV	14	XIV	14							
				XV	15	XVI	15	XV	15							
				XVI	16			XVII	16							
								XVIII	17							
								XIX	18							
								XXI	19							
								XXII	20							
								XXIII	21							
	78		91		136		120		231		21		3		1	
						XVI	-15									
Total	78		91		136		105		231		21		3		1	666

Please note: Seven lines of popes since 1798 consist of sixteen different popes.

Popes highlighted in yellow since Pius VI died a prisoner in 1799.

Reigning Years of the Seven Lines of Popes Remaining since 1798

Benedict XVI was a candidate for the "eighth" since he was "of the seven" after all seven heads had fallen, but his death precluded his candidacy (see note 26).

#1	Term	#2	Term	#3	Term	#4	Term	#5	Term	#6	Term	#7	Term	#8	Term
I	140-155	Leo	440-461	Gregory	590-604	Benedict ^A	575-579	John ^B	523-526	Paul ^C	757-767	John Paul ^D	1978	New Name ^E	1
II	1458-1464	II	682-683	II	715-731	II	684-685	II	533-535	II	1464-1471	II	1978-2005	2	2-2nd Coming
III	1503	III	795-816	III	731-741	III	855-858	III	561-574	III	1534-1549	III		3	
IV	1559-1565	IV	847-855	IV	827-844	IV	900-903	IV	640-642	IV	1555-1559	IV		4	
V	1566-1572	V	903	V	996-999	V	964	V	685-686	V	1605-1621	V		5	
VI	1775-1799	VI	928	VI	1045-1046	VI	973-974	VI	701-705	VI	1963-1978	VI		6	
VII	1800-1823	VII	936-939	VII	1073-1085	VII	974-983	VII	705-707	VII		VII		7	
VIII	1829-1830	VIII	963-964	VIII	1187	VIII	1012-1024	VIII	872-882	VIII		VIII		8	
IX	1846-1878	IX	1049-1054	IX	1227-1241	IX	1032-1048	IX	898-900	IX		IX		9	
X	1903-1914	X	1513-1521	X	1271-1276	X	1303-1304	X	914-928	X		X		10	
XI	1922-1939	XI	1605	XI	1370-1378	XI	1334-1342	XI	931-935	XI		XI		11	
XII	1939-1958	XII	1823-1829	XII	1406-1415	XII	1724-1730	XII	955-963	XII		XII		12	
		XIII	1878-1903	XIII	1572-1585	XIII	1740-1758	XIII	965-972	XIII		XIII		13	
		XIV	1590-1591	XIV	1623	XIV	1914-1922	XIV	983-984	XIV		XIV		14	
		XV	1621-1623	XV	1831-1846	XV	2005-2013	XV	985-996	XV		XV		15	
		XVI		XVI		XVI		XVI	1003	XVI		XVI		16	
		XVII		XVII		XVII		XVII	1003	XVII		XVII		17	
		XVIII		XVIII		XVIII		XVIII	1003-1009	XVIII		XVIII		18	
		XIX		XIX		XIX		XIX	1024-1032	XIX		XIX		19	
		XX		XX		XX		XX	1276-1277	XX		XX		20	
		XXI		XXI		XXI		XXI	1316-1334	XXI		XXI		21	
		XXII		XXII		XXII		XXII	1958-1963	XXII		XXII		21	
			78		91		136		120		231		21		1
						XVI	2005-2013		-15						
Totals	78	91	136	105	231	21	21	3	666						

^A Benedict IX was elected three times and served as pope three separate terms, is counted as one pope. The papacy skipped Benedict X, so the count is 15 individuals in the Benedict line.

^B Notice John XXIII. The papacy skipped John XVI and John XX thus, there are only 21 popes in the line using the name of John.

^C Paul line: the "one is" of Rev 17:10, since 'five have fallen'. This is the present tense from which John was shown this vision.

^D John Paul line: the one "not yet come" of Rev 17:10. He "must continue a short time". The John Paul line was in power 26 years, by far the shortest of all pope lines.

^E In order for Pope Frances (3/13/2013 to date) not to add to the count¹, he will be deposed (2Thess 2:7). Benedict XVI (DOB 4/16/1927) will reclaim his throne ("is of the seven" Rev 17:11). Soon after, possibly coinciding with regaining the power to persecute those who worship the Creator according to the 4th commandment, he will change his name to a unique name, the '8th king', signaling the beast's return (Rev 17:8). He (Joseph Ratzinger) will die at Christ's second coming according to 2Thess 2:1-17; Rev 19:20.

The source of the number 666 ("number of a man") is derived from identifying the seven heads. The source was hidden until the appearance of the line of the popes called John Paul (the seventh line of popes, Rev 17:10) which occurred in 1978. The connection between 666 and the seven heads of the Scarlet Beast is not an accident—but God ordained the use of symbols to hide the source (seven heads—lines of popes) of these numbers to the very end,

when the symbols (seven heads) could be combined to calculate the number 666 in order to fulfill the command of Revelation 13:18. It is true the gospel in Revelation is about worshipping God, not about calculating popes. However, Revelation 13:18 commands those who have been granted wisdom and understanding to “count the number of the beast.” This wisdom and understanding distinguishes genuine worship from the counterfeit.

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

- The seven kings are *religious* and synonymous with the seven mountains (representing lines of “gods”) and the seven heads (lines of popes) from Rev 17:9²⁹
- “Five have fallen” (name last used in [year]): Pius [1958], Leo [1903], Gregory [1846], **Benedict [1922]**,³⁰ John [1963]
- “One is”: John is being shown this vision *as his present tense...as if he was shown the vision during the reign* of the sixth head/mountain/king, Pope Paul VI, during his reign (1963-1978)
- “the other has not yet come...continue a short time”: Popes John Paul I & II were in power a total of 26 years (1978-2005), by far the shortest time a pope name was in use in comparison with the other six names used since 1798 as well as in the history of the other 29 names making up the total of 36 pope “mountains” or “lines” (John was shown this seventh “king” as future to his vision time)
- **Notice:** The one head that was wounded (Rev 13:3) was Pope Pius VI representing a papal name line. Thus, the remaining six heads represent six other papal name lines.

The Probability of the Count 665

What is the statistical probability that the count of the sequential rise of the seven lines of popes after 1798 would terminate with the seventh line at exactly 665? First, it is extremely improbable that exactly (and only) seven lines of popes (consisting of sixteen different popes) would remain after 1798. Second, the count began accumulating in the second Christian

²⁹ “It is indeed worthy of note that John the Revelator declares that the seven heads on which the fallen church was to sit are seven hills or mountains and that both branches of Catholicism, the Eastern and Western Churches, should each be ruled or directed from cities founded on seven hills.⁶ The doctrines of the two branches of the great mother church are essentially the same and the pope of Rome has from the beginning claimed jurisdiction over both Eastern and Western Catholicism.” The Trail of the Serpent, pg. 71, Murl Vance

³⁰ Pope Benedict XVI) died and he became irrelevant to the count, since he appears after the seven heads have fallen---the count is full with the seven heads.

century with the arrival of the first pope of the seven lines, who was St. Pius I (140-155). So there is a time span of 1865 years from the beginning of the seven lines to the last pope of the seven lines (John Paul II, 1978-2005). John Paul II is "the *other* [who] has not yet come; and when he comes, he must continue a short time" (Rev 17:10), and he would terminate the counting of the seven kings at 665. The arrival at that exact number, 665, over a period of 1865 years, is utterly improbable. Yet, it happened. Clearly the count could have arrived at a multiplicity of other numbers (either higher or lower). No one could possibly have guessed that it would arrive at that value, for no one but God could know this ahead of time—substantiating God's foreknowledge and the validity of the present interpretation of Revelation 17.

The Identity of the Revived Beast—the “Eighth”

A Single Individual: **“And the beast that was, and is not, is himself an eighth, and is of the seven, and is going into perdition”** (Rev 17:11). The text is similar to the beast that “was, is not, yet is” (17:8) which refers to the healing of the deadly wound and the reappearance of the persecuting beast. But Revelation 17:11 is more specific. It refers to a specific individual as the “eighth.” It does not refer to a group of gods or a line of kings as was true for the wounded head (Pope Pius VI) who represented a line of kingly popes. The count will be completed to 666 by an individual who the Bible says is not a mountain (a group of gods) and not a line of individual kings, but a single, “eighth.” All of the previous count numbers, except for that of the “eighth”, were calculated by counting the individual seven mountains of gods/seven lines of kings. The “eighth” is the last pope/beast. The Bible defines him as the final pope and as the leader of the church-state beast. Revelation 13:18 says that the number 666 is the number of both the beast and also a man, fulfilling both aspects of the prophecy, because the “eighth” will

be a single individual. In summary, the seven kings refer to seven lines of popes by line name; and, in contrast, the “eighth” refers to an eighth name (individual), not a line of individual kings. The word "king" which appears in the NIV is not found in any of the Greek manuscripts, but it is implied by the masculine form of "eighth." It cannot refer to an eighth head, since the word for "head" is feminine.

The “Eighth” Originates from (“is of”) the Seven: The revived scarlet beast identified as the “eighth” (Rev 17:11) originates from a homogeneous group of the seven heads after the fall of the seventh head with the death of John Paul II. This assertion is supported by the observation that the woman is sitting on all seven heads—not just one head. Furthermore, the Greek text in verse 11 mandates that the seven heads be of a homogeneous nature, not a heterogeneous nature. Hence, the “eighth” derives from *any (or anyone)* of the seven heads. In other words the seven heads, although different in title, must have essentially the same form and function. This specification is fulfilled if the seven heads are either all religious entities (seven lines of popes) or they are all political entities with similar form and function. If the seven heads are a mixture of political and religious entities as in Table I (not having the same form and function), the text would necessarily specify that the “eighth” derives from a *unique* head of the seven heads. The basic meaning of the Greek preposition, *ek*, “denotes . . . exit or emission out of, as separation from, something with which there has been a close connection: *from out of, out from, forth from, from.*”³¹ In the current case the "close connection" is that of the "eighth" with the *entire group* of the seven heads—not part of the group. Thus, the

³¹ Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Baker Book House, March, 1987. See also Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich (BDAG), 2nd edition, 1958, p. 234, where *ek* denotes separation always from a homogeneous group in all cited texts. A careful survey of both Greek lexicons, where *ek* is associated with a group/community/company, demonstrates that the “group” is always a homogeneous group without exception.

“eighth,” the revived scarlet beast whose number is 666, originates from *any* of the seven heads. The apparently insignificant Greek preposition, *ek*, precludes, without exception, the possibility that seven heads are a heterogeneous combination of political and religious entities as set forth by almost all Adventist expositors of Revelation 17 including those in Table I.

Mandatory Name Change Pinpoints the “Eighth”

“[T]he beast that was, is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going into perdition” (Rev 17:11, NKJV). The text demands that the “eighth” first appears with a place-holder name of one of the seven lines of kings in verse 10. To become the “eighth,” he must change his name. Hence, when the first pope to appear, after the rise and fall of the seven heads ending with John Paul II, and subsequently takes the name of one seven heads, he immediately becomes a candidate for the “eighth.” If he changes his papal name, he becomes the “eighth” according to the text. If that same pope dies before changing his name, his papacy becomes irrelevant to the prophecy. Moreover, his death would not change the count of the fallen seven heads, since the count of the seven heads closed at 665 with the death of the seventh head which was John Paul II (“five have fallen, one is, and one is yet to come,” v. 10).

When Cardinal Ratzinger became pope in 2005 and he took the name of one of the previous seven heads (Benedict), he immediately became a candidate to become the “eighth.” But he never changed his name prior to his death on December 31, 2022, and therefore he became irrelevant to the prophetic scenario. For Benedict XVI to fulfill the prophecy and become the “eighth,” he would necessarily have to be resurrected and subsequently change his

name. However, it would be inconsistent with the character of God to resurrect the man whose number is 666 in order to deceive the whole world.³²

What about Pope Francis?

When Cardinal Bergoglio assumed the papal chair in 2013 as Pope Francis, he did not take the name of one of the seven heads, therefore he cannot be considered as a candidate for the “eighth.” Pope Francis is presiding over an increasingly divided church. He acknowledged a potential schism³³ publically in 2019, and he could likely move to adopt a change in church doctrine,³⁴ thereby exacerbating the schism between liberals and conservatives in the Roman Church. Upon the passing of Francis a new pope will be elected who may or may not take the name of one of the seven heads. But the prophecy requires that another pope, after Francis, will ultimately take the name of one of the seven heads and then change his name to become the “eighth.” At that time the deadly wound will be healed coinciding with the return of the persecuting church + state alliance onto the world’s stage representing the ultimate rebellion against God’s law. And all the world will marvel when they see the beast that was, is not, and yet is.

The Persecuting Beast is the Eighth

The first pope that arises after the death of John Paul II and takes the name of one of the seven heads (kings), and subsequently changes his name will become the “eighth,” completing the 666 count:

1. Pius (12) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12=78$
2. Leo (13) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13=91$
3. Gregory (16) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16=136$

³² A satanic impersonation of a resurrected Benedict would be unmasked as a deception by the exhuming of the body of the deceased Benedict XVI.

³³ <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/pope-francis-defends-himself-and-discusses-schism>

³⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/pope-francis-put-woman-top-vatican-role-it-shows-how-ncna1119661>

4. Benedict (14) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14=105$
5. John (21) $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11+12+13+14+15+16+17+18+19+20+21=231$
6. Paul (6) $1+2+3+4+5+6=21$
7. John Paul (2) $1+2=3$
8. New, Unique Name $1 = 1$

Total = 666 Rev 13:18

666 Calculation Summary/Projection

- Pope Francis will be ultimately be replaced by a new pope, or his successors, one of whom will take the name of one of the seven heads and subsequently change his name to a new unique name and become the “eighth.”
- **The “eighth” completes the 666 count—the number of a man.**

“His Number is 666” — A WARNING TO THE WORLD

With the appearance of the “eighth,” he completes the Babylonian numerical system of 36 gods: $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8 = 36$ ³⁵ and $36+35+34 \dots 3+2+1 = 666$. This appearance of the “eighth” is a significant warning component of the fourth angels’ message of Revelation 18 that will lighten the earth with the glory of an all-knowing God who calls his people out of Babylon and darkness. The warning of Revelation 18 may appear to be unpleasant; however, it demonstrates the true depth of God’s love for all humanity.

In view of Ellen White’s statements that Christ could have returned soon after 1844³⁶ if His people would have adhered to His leading -- does this interpretation contravene that possibility? God providentially could have raised up a series of popes with short life spans, such as John Paul I, using the seven names beginning after 1798 and culminating some years after 1844 in order for this prophecy to be fulfilled in every detail. After all, “He changes the times

³⁵ See notes 15 and 17.

³⁶ E. G. White, Evangelism, 695.

and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.” Dan 2:21.

What about the Ten Horns?

“And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive power for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and strength to the beast” (Rev 17:12-13, KJV). Revelation 17 provides the first comprehensive identification and the characteristics of the ten horns mentioned in Revelation 12 and 13. Following the prophetic guidelines of interpretation, the ten horns are derived from the preceding power, namely, the seven heads. The ten horns become active sometime after the seven heads become inactive (“. . . ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet.”). The seven heads are spiritual/religious powers (lines of popes), thus, the ten horns are spiritual/religious powers, which are derived from the seven heads. The ten horns become active simultaneously with the healing of the deadly wound and the appearance of the beast that “was, is not, yet is” — the “eighth” (“. . . [they] receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.”). This occurs 1) after the rise and fall of the seven heads ending with the death of John Paul II followed by 2) the election of the first pope who takes a place-holder name of one of seven heads, and 3) who also subsequently changes his name to a new unique name, thereby becoming the “eighth” receiving power to persecute in Europe. The harlot daughters, apostate Protestant powers (Rev 17:5), correspond to the ten horns which are ten kings which have “received no kingdom as yet,” meaning they have received no power over God’s people as yet. But they “receive power for one hour as kings with the beast” (Rev 17:12, KJV), which means they subsequently receive power to persecute God’s people in America. The ten horns will then “give their power and strength to the beast” (Rev 17:13, KJV), which means they

acknowledge the supremacy of the beast, signaling that the Protestant reformation has been irrevocably cancelled. When the ten horns give their power to the beast, they both unite in making war with the Lamb and His people (Rev. 17:14). This war is not Armageddon at the Second Advent; Revelation 17:14 refers the persecution of the saints following the formation of the image of the beast.³⁷

Remember that the scarlet beast is a union of the harlot with the kings of the earth, but with the deadly wound in 1798, the beast devolves into the harlot (the apostate Roman church). With the ultimate healing of the wound, the harlot woman again effectively becomes the scarlet beast upon the commencement of this fornicating relationship. So when the ten horns receive persecuting power with the beast (Rev 17:12), who acquires this power prior to the horns, they effectively receive power along with the harlot. The harlot (papacy) is the mother of daughter harlots (17:5) who inherit the characteristics of their mother and act in harmony with the mother. Since the ten horns act in harmony with the beast/harlot (17:12), the ten horns can be identified as the harlot daughters or the leaders of the apostate Protestant churches. Furthermore, the harlot daughters (apostate Protestantism) will reunite with the beast (the Protest ends) which coincides with Revelation 17:13 where the ten horns give their authority to the beast (17:13). This substantiates the identification of the ten horns as the harlot daughters.

It is significant that Ellen White, when speaking of Revelation 17 in Letter 232-1899, effectively identifies the ten horns as the power (Protestantism) that gives its kingdom to the beast by her allusion to verse 17. She states, "What is it that gives its kingdom to this power?"

³⁷ See E.G. White, Selected Messages, Vol. 3, p. 392 and Manuscript Releases, Vol. 8, p. 344.

Protestantism, a power which while professing to have the temper and spirit of a lamb, and to be allied to heaven, speaks with the voice of a dragon. It is moved by a power from beneath.”³⁸

The identification of the ten horns as apostate Protestantism, the daughters of the mother harlot, appears to be unmistakable.³⁹

When the ten horns (apostate Protestantism) realize they have been deceived by the beast (harlot church + kings of the earth) following their unsuccessful war in Revelation 17:14, they will turn on their mother and “hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh and burn her with fire” (Rev 17:16).⁴⁰ Please note that it is not the beast *and* the ten horns that hate the harlot in v. 16 as many interpreters suggest; it is solely the ten horns *which are on the beast* that hate the harlot.⁴¹ This is confirmed by verse 17 where the personal pronoun “their” in verse 17 corresponds to the demonstrative pronoun “these” in verse 16. In other words, if the pronouns refer to the beast *and* ten horns, then the beast must give its kingdom to the beast (an oxymoron) in verse 17. It is only the ten horns, the harlot daughters of apostate Protestantism, that give their kingdom to the beast as confirmed and reiterated in Revelation 17:13. Thus the angel, who explains the vision (17:3-6) to John, effectively concludes his interpretation of the woman, the beast and the ten horns with Revelation 17:16-18.

Significance of the Crowns

It seems odd that the dragon in Revelation 12 has *crowns on heads*, but the sea beast in Revelation 13 has *crowns on its horns*. The crowns on the heads followed by the crowns on the

³⁸ https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_Lt232-1899.4¶=7407.10, (see paragraphs 20-22).

³⁹ By comparing White’s full statement in note 37 with the text in Revelation 17:13 & 17, the implication is clear that she equates the beast with the woman in her persecuting phase.

⁴⁰ The suggestion that the ten horns represent the kings of the earth cannot be substantiated since the kings of the earth weep and lament when they see the harlot burning (Rev 18:9); whereas the ten horns (kings) actually burn her with fire (17:16).

⁴¹ The difference depends whether the Byzantine or the Alexandrian Greek text-type is employed. The Byzantine tradition (*Textus Receptus*) is that which harmonizes with the context of the passage as demonstrated.

horns may be a way of reinforcing the rules of interpretation for the prophetic beasts of Daniel 7 and 8. To understand more fully the relationship of the beasts to the crowns in Revelation 12 and 13, consider the following facts. The dragon, the sea beast, and the scarlet beast of Revelation 17 all have 7 heads and 10 horns. There is only one explanation in the entire Bible for the seven heads and ten horns of all three beasts described in Revelation 12, 13, and 17. That explanation is found in Revelation 17 where we find descriptive details of the heads and horns. It also suggests the seven heads and ten horns represent the same powers upon the three beasts (dragon, sea beast, and scarlet beast).

First, notice that the heads function with crowns (Rev 12) prior to the horns functioning with crowns (Rev 13). This harmonizes with the rise and fall of the beast, followed by the rise and fall of the heads, followed by the rise and fall of the horns. Daniel 7, by definition, tells the reader that the body of any beast, and its heads and its horns, are kings. You do not need crowns to tell you that they are kings. Therefore, the crowns tell reader something other than that the heads and horns are kings. The crowns on the horns of the sea beast indicate that the sea beast whose deadly wound was healed (the “eighth”) will dominate the ten horns when they become kings. When the ten horns come to power, the scarlet beast (the “eighth”) will be their master. This significant function of the crowns on the horns is confirmed in Revelation 17 verse 13, where ten horns will hand their power and authority over to the beast, thereby making the beast their master.

The seven crowns upon the heads of the dragon indicate that the seven heads will be controlled by Satan during the time of the seven heads which follows the infliction of the deadly wound. The dragon will effectively control the seven lines of popes during the time of the seven heads.

In summary, this means that during the operative time of the seven heads, the powers represented by the seven heads exercise kingly power and are the dominant power coming out of the sea beast after the sea beast went into restraint in 1798. Further, *during this time they are under the control of the dragon. But don't confuse the dragon and the sea beast because of this, however. They ARE different powers because the Bible shows them as separate powers! Control is NOT identity!* During the time of the ten horns, the powers represented by the ten horns have kingly power and are the dominant powers coming out of the seven heads after the seven heads are gone. Yet, these ten horns **will hand their power over to the scarlet colored beast** (the “eighth”, which is said to ascend out of the abyss and return) for accomplishment of a common purpose. **So, in the end, the scarlet beast (the “eighth”) which is the papacy does become dominant over the ten horns and directly controls them during the time the ten horns are granted power.**

What about Time Setting?

This interpretation of Revelation 17 sets no definite time for the fulfillment of the events as they unfold in this prophecy. Dated, prophetic time ended with the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. “Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time-proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord's coming.”⁴² Any charge of “soft” time setting must be rejected. Adventists have long anticipated the passage of Sunday legislation in the USA, extending to the whole world, as a final sign of the imminence of the Lord's coming. Upon passage of any Sunday legislation, it could be reasonably assumed that the coming of Christ would occur within a relatively short period of time—how

⁴² https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_Lt38-1888.16¶=4618.22, (see paragraph 16).

short we do not know. Likewise, in this prophetic interpretation, the appearance of a pope after the fall of seven heads ending with John Paul II, who then assumes a place-holder name of one of the seven heads and subsequently changes his name to a new unique name, would immediately become the “eighth,” whose number is 666. This would lead to a persecuting church-state alliance and would be a similar final sign of the imminence of the Second Advent.

Summary

Based on the guidelines of interpretation associated with the prophetic beasts of Daniel 7 and 8 (e.g., the four heads function when the leopard beast ceases to function), a radical paradigm shift in understanding Revelation 17 has been established. Thus, when the beast receives its deadly wound, the seven heads begin to function with the harlot sitting on the seven heads through whom she exercises authority. It then becomes evident that the wilderness scene in Revelation 17:3-6 is a retrospective of the harlot’s past experience of fornicating with the kings of the earth for 1260 years (symbolized by the scarlet beast), where now, in the wilderness since 1798, she is visible on the seven heads and drunk with the blood of the saints, while the persecuting scarlet beast is in the abyss—the place of the dead. The scarlet beast progresses through three stages, “was, and is not, and yet is,” in a manner identical with the three stages of the sea beast. The sea beast persecutes the saints in a church + state alliance for forty two months (“was”), is inactive after forty two months of persecution corresponding to the deadly wound to one of its seven heads (“is not”), and persecutes again in a church + state alliance “over every tribe, tongue, and nation” (“yet is” as the “eighth”). The same three stages of activity of the scarlet beast and sea beast correspond to the sequential, three-stage appearance and activity of first, the beast, followed by the seven heads, followed by the ten horns. The seven heads are spiritual/religious kingdoms identified by characteristics

in Rev 12:3, 13:1, 3, and 17:9-11, and they function after the scarlet beast ceases to function (“is not” stage).

During the “is not” stage after 1798, the harlot sits on the seven heads which correspond to seven mountains of gods or seven lines of pope-names. Wisdom is required for understanding the seven heads or mountains on which the woman sits (Rev 17:9) who is known as Babylon the Great. The Babylon motif of Revelation 17 is amplified by recognizing that Babylon’s worship system employed a mountain (ziggurat) for the purpose of worshipping a line of multiple gods. Similarly, in Revelation 17, the woman is sitting on not one but seven “mountains” of gods (seven lines of pope names through whom the woman exercises authority). Wisdom is required not only for understanding the seven heads or mountains, but it also necessary for calculating the number 666. There is a direct correlation between the two wisdom statements in Revelation 13:18 and 17:9 associated with the Greek word, *nous*, which can denote either mind or understanding. The source of the number 666 (“number of a man”), which requires wisdom and understanding, is derived from identifying the seven heads or seven mountains of gods or seven lines of pope-names. The Papal name count of the seven heads culminates miraculously at 665 with the death of John Paul II. This apparent fortuitous summation, in the providence of God, has a probability close to zero (mathematically, nearly impossible).

The revived scarlet beast is identified as the “eighth” in verse 11 and receives the number 666. The “eighth” originates from a homogeneous group of the seven heads after the fall of the seventh head with death of John Paul II. This assertion is supported by the observation that the woman is sitting on all seven heads—not just one head. Furthermore, the Greek text of verse 11 precludes the possibility that the seven heads are a heterogeneous

combination of political and religious entities as set forth by almost all expositors of Revelation 17 including those in Table I. Any pope that arises after John Paul II and assumes the name of one of the previous seven heads, and subsequently changes his name will pinpoint the identity of the “eighth” who will lead a persecuting church-state alliance. The ten horns, symbolizing the harlot daughters (apostate Protestant church leaders) of Babylon the Great, will ally with the “eighth” and form an image to the scarlet beast, which will result in a final persecuting religious + state alliance. Then the final test will be brought before the inhabitants of the world, and all will be compelled to choose between worshipping the beast or his image and receiving his mark of authority or worshipping the Creator of heaven and earth and receiving the seal of God.

Conclusion

The paradigm shift in understanding and interpreting Revelation 17 set forth in this paper contravenes and supplants the commonly employed Seven Ancient Kingdoms paradigm where the seven heads primarily represent political kingdoms of past ages. The new paradigm, where the seven heads represent spiritual entities (namely, seven kingly lines of popes existing since 1798) allows the interpreter to take the wisdom statements in Revelation 13 and 17 seriously, and enables the reader to fulfill the command to “calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: and his number is 666.” This harmonizes with the Babylon motif of Revelation 17 and Babylon’s worship system associated with triangular numbers and its sexagesimal numeral system (as opposed to the Roman numeral system) for calculating the number 666.

Table 1 SYMBOL	Uriah Smithⁱ Osiander 1511	R. Andersonⁱⁱ 1953	K. Strandⁱⁱⁱ 1992	C.M. Maxwell^{iv} 1985	R. Stefanovic^v 2005	E. Reynolds^{vi} 03 E. Mueller^{vii} 05	McNulty/Veith 2006
HARLOT	Church	Roman Catholic Church	Church	Church	Former people of God now apostate/woman Rev 12:13-14	Spirit of the Dragon/Scarlet Beast/Historical power	Babylon in its Totality
SCARLET BEAST	Dragon/Pagan and Papal Rome	Civil/Political Power	State	State	Religious-political system/Papacy	Dragon/Satan	Babylon in its Totality
WILDERNESS				Final Moments of Papacy at the end of earth's history	1260 years (538-1798)	Final Moments of Papacy at the end of earth's history	1260-years (538-1798)
SEVEN HEADS	Phases of Rome in entirety	Kingdoms	Kingdoms	Kingdoms	Kingdoms	Kingdoms	Kingdoms
Setting of John Looking back at 5 fallen heads	Head 6 Emperors/John is exiled		Head 6 Pagan Rome	1798/1844 era of judgment	Head 6 Pagan Rome	Head 6 Pagan Rome	1798 After fall of Papal Rome
Head 1	Kings	Babylon	Egypt	Babylon	Egypt	Egypt	Babylon
Head 2	Consuls	Persia	Assyria	Persia	Assyria	Assyria	Medo-Persia
Head 3	Decimvirs	Greece	Babylon	Greece	Babylon	Babylon	Greece
Head 4	Dictators	Pagan Rome	Medo-Persia	Roman Empire	Persia	Medo-Persia	Pagan Rome
Head 5	Triumvirs	Papal Rome	Greece	Christian Rome	Greece	Greece	Papal Rome
Head 6	Emperors	Republicanism	Pagan Rome	Wounded Christian Rome	Pagan Rome	Pagan Rome [Rome 2 Phases]*	Earth Beast/USA
Head 7	Popes	Scarlet Beast/ Dragon confederation	Medieval Papacy	Christian Rome Revived	Medieval Papacy	Papal Rome [Earth Beast]*	Earth Beast/Sea Beast-Combine US/Papal Power
Head 8	Modern Papacy	Modern Papacy	Modern Papacy	Entire Beast	Scarlet Beast Papacy	Scarlet Beast/ Ten Horns	Ten horns

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- ⁱ Uriah Smith, *The Seven Heads of Revelation 12, 13, and 17*. Tract, 40 pp. <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/1411.2>; his view is not as clearly expressed and perhaps modified in *The Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation*, revised (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1944), pp. 707-13.
- ⁱⁱ Roy Allan Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation*, revised (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1953), pp. 172-82; Louis F. Were, *The Woman and the Resurrected Beast: Why is the Seventh Head numbered 8?* (1952).
- ⁱⁱⁱ Kenneth A. Strand, "The Seven Heads: Do They Represent Roman Emperors?" in *Symposium on Revelation—Book II*, edited by Frank B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 7 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 191.
- ^{iv} C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares, Vol. 2: The Message of Revelation* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1985), pp. 474-479.
- ^v Ranko Stefanovic, "The Seven Heads of the Beast in Revelation 17," *Ministry* (Dec., 2013) <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2013/12/the-seven-heads-of-the-beast-in-revelation-17>
- ^{vi} Edwin Reynolds, "The Seven-headed Beast of Revelation 17. *Asia Adventist Seminary Studies* 6 (2003): 93-109.
- ^{vii} Ekkehardt Mueller, "Interpreting the Beast of Revelation 17: A Suggestion. *Biblical Research Institute Release* 1 (May. 2005), pp. 1-14. <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Release%201%20%283-1-16%29.pdf>
- * Edwin Reynold's view of 6th and 7th head