

**CRITIQUE ON THE ANDREWS BIBLE COMMENTARY**  
**The name, number, and place of the Roman antichrist**

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**REVELATION 13 & 17**

It is not my intention to address all the details of this new Andrews Bible Commentary, but two other chapters of Revelation are striking, where in some respects, an idealist interpretation is again resorted to rather than the historicist one. The first has to do with Rev 13:17-18, concerning the name and the number of the “beast.” The passage reads as follows:

“That no one should be able to buy or to sell, if not the one having the mark—the name of the beast, or the number of its name. Here is a call for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and that number is six hundred and sixty six.”

In the days of the apostle John there were no Arabic numerals that we have today, so the letters were assigned a numerical value. Because of this it was common to refer to people’s names by their number. Being that at first, the number one enemy of Christianity was the Roman Empire, there were authors who tried to find names of emperors or Roman institutions that contained the letters that, added together, gave 666. But it was not until the second Christian millennium that the antichrist foretold by Daniel, Paul, and John began to be seen in the Roman papacy, prompting Protestants to seek blasphemous titles from the pope that met all the requirements of prophecy. That was the most natural way to decode the meaning of the number in connection with the “name” or “title” of the “beast,” in reference to the Roman papacy according to the symbol.

Among the Protestant reformers, who stood out most in this interpretation was the famous German philologist Andreas Helwig, who at the beginning of the seventeenth century saw that the only blasphemous name of the pope that meets all the specifications of the Bible and whose Latin letters add up to 666, is *Vicarivs Filii Dei*, “Vicar of the Son of God.” More than 100 interpreters followed this interpretation. That interpretation was introduced in the Adventist Church in 1865 through a book by Uriah Smith on the book of Revelation. But W. W. Prescott who, (as already seen in our review of Rev 8 and 9), denied the prophetic dates of Daniel and Revelation, also rose up at the Biblical Council of 1919, against the identification of that title with the Roman papacy.

In response to their requirements, the General Conference organized more than one committee between 1939 and 1943 to study the subject. Different papers from both sides of the ocean were prepared for those committees. They reached the conclusion that the objections Prescott had brought from Catholic authors were false. So, the official interpretation of our church remained that of *Vicarivs Filii Dei* for the name of the beast.

Surprisingly, in the Sabbath School Quarterly of June 8, 2002, Dr. Angel Manuel Rodriguez introduced this liberal line of W. W. Prescott unaware of the conclusions of such studies, denying any reference of the name and number of the beast to *Vicarivs Filii Dei*. And that produced a very great concern in many parts of the world not only because it was a denial of what the church had been teaching since its beginnings, but also because of the lack of foundation of its criticisms. There were even former Catholics who, reading that Sabbath

School Quarterly, left our church to return to Catholicism, convinced that Protestantism and we Adventists had been slandering the Catholic Church.

Edwin de Kock, a lay Adventist polyglot, was among those who were disgusted by the Sabbath School publication. He gathered a very extensive material to prove the falsity of the statements of Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, and published them in a book with more than 800 pages entitled: *The Truth of 666 and the History of the Great Apostasy*. Let me essentially summarize Rodríguez's objections, and the way de Kock responded:

**Objection 1.** The Bible does not say that the number has to do with the aggregate numerical value of the letters of a name.

**Brief Answer:** He comes to this conclusion ignoring the earliest way in which Rev 13:18 was interpreted, and what the passage itself implies, by requiring calculating the number of the name. It was common for people to do so in John's day. This is confirmed by the most modern commentaries on the book of Revelation. Rodríguez's problem here is based on his most serious problem that we will see in the next objection, because it shows us his trend to spiritualize what he finds difficult to explain, denying definite and concrete facts of history. His methodology in this is not historicist, but idealistic.

**Objection 2.** The symbol can serve to represent humanity without divine rest (the seventh day). It is not necessarily the "name of a man," but the "name of humanity."

**Brief answer:** Here Rodríguez admirably forgets the beast to move on to talk about humanity. That is idealism, a way of dodging or softening the true purpose of prophecy. The beast represents an institution, the papacy, not humanity in general. E. de Kock shows well, especially in appendix VII (866-870), that the translation offered by some versions for *anthropos* by "humanity" is not correct, because the text refers the name of the beast, not the name of humanity. This is the reason why the most serious translations follow lexicons that translate "the number of a man," which in Rev 13:18 is a reference to the "the man (*anthropos*) of lawlessness," who "sits as God in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thess 2:3-5). In the effort to find a supposed symbolic meaning of the number, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez forgot the name of the beast.

**Objection 3.** Calculating the numerical value of the letters of a name leads to speculation, since many names can contain that value.

**Brief answer:** It is not a question of speculating, but of identifying the "blasphemous" name of the beast, within the context of the description in chapter 13:1,5-6. The only blasphemous title of the papacy whose letters contain the number 666, is *Vicarivs Filii Dei*.

**Objection 4.** It cannot be proven that the title *Vicarivs Filii Dei* is an official title of the Roman papacy.

**Brief answer:** De Kock overwhelmingly proves that it was an official title of the Roman papacy, which many popes applied to themselves, even the most recent ones, just as many great dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church did to highlight the blasphemous political and spiritual authority of the papacy.

**Objection 5.** The Bible does not say in which language the name should be read, so any language chosen will be arbitrary.

**Brief answer:** What is arbitrary is to pretend that when the time came, it would not be possible to know in what language the calculation should be made. Already Helwig in the Seventeenth Century, (the German philologist who discovered the blasphemous title of the papacy and its numerical correlation with 666), defined the obvious principle that should be sought to determine the language of the name, that is, the official language of the blasphemous entity represented. And the official language of the Roman papacy is Latin. It makes no sense to look for the number in a language that is not the official one of the blasphemous authority predicted.

**Objection 6.** The best option for the moment would be an intensified rebellion reflected in the triple use of the number six.

**Brief answer:** Arabic numerals were invented about a millennium later and were introduced to Europe centuries later. In Greek no one could have understood that number as three six.

What does the new Andrews Bible Commentary now say? It insists on maintaining that liberal line of Prescott, going over what the church always believed. And the worst thing is that it does so without any foundation, seeking to do like the Hellenized Jews of Alexandria, who allegorized everything they could not or did not want to explain. What in that Sabbath School Quarterly was a testimony of ignorance on the part of Angel Manuel Rodriguez, now becomes a stubborn and blatant lie in the *Andrews Bible Commentary*. This is what we will see next.

### ***Objections by the Andrews Bible Commentary to deny the value of the title Vicarivs Filii Dei***

**Objection 1.** Although some popes were referred to as *vicarivs filii dei* in the past, there is no documented evidence that this was ever an official title of the papacy.

**Short answer:** Any well-educated Catholic will admit that the title *vicarivs filii dei* is an official title of the Roman papacy. Only when some Catholics realize that the number 666 fits that title starts to argue against it. And more than one priest is going to laugh after seen that Andrews University fell for the story.

In his book, Edwin de Kock gives testimonies of more than 20 popes who applied that title to themselves during the Middle Ages. And that number is not exhaustive. As Dr. Gerard Damsteegt states, “a name is official when it appears in an official document,” and what more official for the Catholic Church than the declaration of the popes? There are official letters of popes declaring themselves Vicars of the Son of God. That title also appears in Catholic Encyclopedias and Dictionaries.

Throughout the Middle Ages this title was used in the *False Donation of Constantine* that was included in the Canon Law, which was wielded as a weapon of war against those who wanted to oppose the political prerogatives of papal supremacy. That document marked the entire medieval policy of the papacy for more than 1000 years. And although they could finally not avoid recognizing that this document was false, they never renounced that title, nor did they renounce other titles attributed to the pope in that document. On the contrary,

such a title had the silent sanction of some 150 popes, even after acknowledging that this alleged donation was false. Even Pope John Paul II applied it to himself at the end of the twentieth century.

This reminds me of a Basque joke known in Spain. A Basque went to buy cheese at a hardware store. They told him they didn't sell cheese. Insisting that a soap they sold was cheese, they gave him a taste. With his mouth full of foams, the Basque ended up saying: "Although it tastes like soap, it is cheese."

**Objection 2.** The text "does not at any point indicate that we ought to attach numerical value to the letters of a name. This has been the assumption... The 144,000 are described as having the name of God..., but no one has used mathematical calculations to interpret the number".

**Short answer:** The most natural assumption in John's days was to extract the name by the number of its letters. And if no one uses mathematical calculations to interpret the number 144,000 by the name of God, it is because, unlike the name of the beast, this is not required by the passage of Revelation to identify them.

**Objection 3.** "The text does not specify which language ought to be used to interpret the name of the beast. In Revelation, when a name has a special meaning, the language is regularly specified as being either 'in Hebrew' (9:11; 16:16) or 'in Greek' (9:11). Latin is not used in Revelation; there is no indication that 666 is to be decoded in this language."

**Short answer:** In Rev 9:11 the apostle translates a Greek expression into Hebrew, and in Rev 16:16 he refers to the name of a place. But in Rev 13:17-18 God requires readers to awaken their minds to discover its meaning, which is why He does not specify language. As Helwig declared at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the name should be sought in the official language of the "beast," which is Latin. It makes no sense in looking for its meaning in another language. The very fact that Latin is not used in the book of Revelation suggests that God did not see wise to specify it in the first century.

**Objection 4:** "Rev 13 shows that 666 applies exclusively to the end time in connection with the healing of the mortal wound of the sea beast as the earth beast causes the earth's inhabitants to receive the mark of the beast. Applying 666 to a Medieval Latin title does not fit the end-time context. It is obvious that we must wait for the interpretation, for only time will reveal the full meaning of this symbolic number".

**Short answer:** Rev 13 does not apply the number 666 exclusively to the end time. It is declared earlier, at the beginning of the chapter, that over the heads of the beast the beast had "a blasphemous name" when he came up from the sea. The beast has many names of blasphemy (Rev 17:3). But God saw fit to point one out because of the historical relevance it was going to have in relation to the role that this impostor institution would play in the future. At the end of the chapter God gave the apostle John one more guideline to allow to identify that name by its number, once the time came to do so. The blasphemous name of the beast that in John's day was not known, would become prominent again at the end, when the beast would want to impose his political-religious prerogatives by imposing his impostor day. We will see this more definitely in the following messages.

*The allegorized interpretation of the Andrews Bible Commentary*

Although the main contributor to the commentary on the book of Revelation was Ranko Stefanovic, the arguments put forward about Revelation 13:17-18 are those of its senior editor, Angel Manuel Rodriguez. There he stubbornly repeats what he tried to impose without real foundation, in the *Sabbath School Quarterly* of 2002 already mentioned. Well, we have already seen that other arguments he has taken from the liberal wing of the church lack serious foundation. Does he have other options to interpret the number and the name?

Yes. An “idealistic” interpretation, spiritualized, allegorized, which allows him to avoid recognizing the papacy by its blasphemous “*vicarivs filii dei*” title—among the several others it is known by (Rev 17:3)—which would serve to impose its authority as the Lord of Sunday, the false Sabbath. Such a generalized interpretation of the name as in the case of “humanity,” opens the doors to dilute also the other descriptions of the same chapter. Let us deal with the arguments found in the Andrews Bible Commentary.

**Argument 1.** “The Greek phrase *arithmos anthrópou* means ‘the number of mankind, as in Rev 21:17.’”

**Answer:** This unfounded interpretation has already been answered. *Anthrópos* means in Greek, literally, “man,” not humanity. What does Rev 21:17 say? “He measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.” The *Berean Literal Bible* and the *Young’s Literal Translation* renders “measure of man,” not human measure or of humanity.

To those who want to translate “human measure” I ask, why doesn’t anyone translate what follows into Rev 21:17, which is *angelic* instead of *an angel*? Instead of referring to a generic interpretation of Rev 21:17 to also generalize the meaning of Rev 13:17-18, why doesn’t Rodriguez turn to 2 Thes 2:3, referring to the same antichrist of Revelation 13, to translate “mankind of lawlessness”? Because there, the reference is clearly to the antichrist, and it is not about all of humanity. Also, in Rev 13:17-18 the reference is defined to the antichrist represented by “the beast,” not by humanity.

**Argument 2.** “Seven expresses the perfection of God. Being one short of seven, six represents how humanity falls short of divine perfection based on the fact that human beings were created on the sixth prior to the completion of the full week of seven days.”

**Answer:** On the sixth day God also created animals. So, it is not only the day of *humanity*, but also of *animality*. On the other hand, was Adam created imperfect? Were animals also created imperfect? The Bible is clear. On that day God made man “in His image and likeness,” not in the image and likeness of an imperfection. “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day” (Gen 1:31). Imperfection came after the sixth and seventh days. “God created man upright, but they have gone in search of many schemes” (Eccl 7:29).

**Argument 3.** Although the number 666 is expressed in Greek six hundred sixty six, “this trifold emphasis on ‘six’ identifies the satanic triune league—the dragon, the sea beast, and the earth beast—as the counterfeit of the Trinity of the Godhead.”

**Answer:** But Rev 13:17-18 refers to the “name” or “blasphemous title” of the beast, not a trilogy composed of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. It is the number and name of the papacy represented by the beast.

**Argument 4.** The number “666 refers to the rebellious system that opposes God and exalts itself above God by claiming His titles and prerogatives..., a human institution that falls short for the divine character.” It “expresses human attempts at success without God.”

**Answer:** Could it be that Adam’s attempts to succeed on the sixth day failed because he did not have God? And what about the living beings or angels (Eze 10:20), who each have six wings before the throne of God? (Isa 6:2-3; Rev 4:8). Do they fail in their attempt to perfectly praise God? What about the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles who are inscribed in the foundations and twelve gates of the city of God? (Rev 21:12). Isn’t the city of God perfect? Could it be that the 144,000 that are sealed at the end will not reach perfection either, also multiple numbers of 6, because the number 7 is not applied to them?

**Argument 5.** “Revelation 13 concludes with a call... to understand the number of the beast..., and a declaration that special wisdom and insight are needed to cultivate an understanding (see also 17:9).” It “requires divine wisdom rather than intellectual cleverness and calculation.”

**Answer:** We agree. Divine illumination is required to distinguish the deception of an institution that for more than a millennium sought to take the place of God in the midst of Christianity, as it will try to do again in the world at the end. Only then can the meaning of the number 666 be perceived in relation to the title of the papacy. There is more to say on this.

### ***The God of Israel and the pagan gods of the nations had specific names***

God had definite names. The gods of the pagans had definite names. We cannot avoid the attempt to discover the concrete blasphemous name of the antichrist by relegating it to a generic projection of “humanity,” because “humanity” is not a name. So, we cannot play with the symbolism of numbers to make them say whatever we want and avoid pointing directly to the blasphemous name that God anticipated of the beast, decipherable by the number of its letters, 666.

In the great controversy between the Lord and Satan, we find a definite war between *the names of the pagan gods* and *the Name of the God of Israel*. The God of Israel commanded the destruction of those pagan names in the land He gave them, and the reverence of His Name which He put in His temple (Deut 12), more precisely in the ark and its law (2 Sam 6:2; 1 Kings 8:20-21; cf. Deut 12:11). This struggle between the name of God and the names of false gods is clearly expressed in the following words, with the day of the Lord bound to the name of the Eternal, as seen in the seal of His law:

“You call on *the name of your god*, and I will call on *the name of the Eternal*” (1 Kgs 18:24). “All the nations may walk in *the name of their gods*, but we will walk in *the name of the Eternal our God* for ever and ever” (Micah 4:5). “Foreigners who bind themselves to the Eternal to minister to him, to love *the name of the Eternal*, and to be his servants, *all who keep the Sabbath* without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant, these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer” (Isa 56:6-7).

Both the names of the pagan gods and the Name of God were not mere philosophies or symbolism of numbers, but involved concrete names such as Asherah, Astarte, Baal, Mot, in the case of pagan gods; and The Eternal, the Almighty..., in the case of the Name of the God of Israel. The Sabbath was linked to the name of the Eternal. The book of Revelation also contrasts the nature of the final crisis between “walking” in the name of a blasphemous impostor and walking in the name of God and the Lamb.

So too, the final crisis of the world will have to do with a confrontation between a false worship of an alleged impostor Vicar of the Son of God, and the worship of the Name of God and his Son on His day that recognizes Him as Creator and Redeemer. The name of the antichrist can be honored even without believing in him by keeping the day that honors him instead of the day of the Creator and the Redeemer (his mark will be received on the forehead: conviction; or in the hand: action without conviction). However, the Name of the Father and the Son that are interrelated (Matt 28:19; Jn 14:13,15-17,20-21,23; 17:11-12), can be honored only by conviction (their seal will be received on the forehead, implying that the divine law is stamped on them). Without conviction and complete conversion to the Name of God and His Son, no one will be able to stand before His coming (Rev 6:17-18), nor before the beast and his image (Rev 13:4-5,17-18).

### ***The hate of the devil against the title Son of God***

There are many titles for God in the Old Testament, such as Most High, *Yahweh* (“the Eternal”) and *Adonai* (“Lord”). We do not discount any of them because others are used more frequently. Likewise, various titles have been used to refer to the popes. God chose one of them to link to the number 666 in order to specifically unmask the blasphemous claims of the papacy. This choice was not based on which of their titles the popes have used most frequently, but on the content of the title itself. As we shall see, the title “Son of God” is the one the devil hates most. Throughout history he has tried to destroy it or attach it to his own earthly representative in a counterfeit way.

The Jews wanted to kill Jesus, not only because He declared Himself Son of God, but also because as God’s Son, He revealed a greater authority than that of the pharisees to determine how to keep the Sabbath (Jn 5:16-18). That “authority” would the dragon pretend to give to a godson of his, the bishop of the ancient capital of the Roman Empire (Rev 13:3-4). An impostor pretending to be vicar of the Son of God, imposing his mark of authority on a false Sabbath (Sunday) was to be the mark of fraudulent authority of the final crisis.

While no man would consider the title *Son of Man* blasphemous, the title *Son of God* was extremely blasphemous to the Jews (Jn 5:17-18). Their problem was that they could not see God in the human flesh. Should it surprise us that later Muslims were likewise indignant against the title Son of God, and launched in the Koran a call for a revengeful war against the allegedly blasphemous infidels who defended the divine nature of the Son? Is not the devil behind the outrage that brought so many revengeful wars for centuries? And, through the Roman papacy, the dragon attributed that title to himself in fraudulent form. There is no other title in history against which the devil manifested as much fury as that of Son of God, for he wanted to take God’s place in heaven, and the true Son came to dispute that claim on earth.

That hatred of the devil against the name *Son of God* is now seen in an attempt to camouflage in the Adventist Church, the identification of the antichrist by his impostor name, *Vicar of the*

*Son of God*. The only people God raised up to give His final warning to the world are now distracted by symbols without being able to define them by name.

We see the devil's hatred against the title Son of God already in the first temptation, when he tried to cast doubt on Jesus about His divine nature. He suggested that because He had also assumed human nature, He would not really be the Son of God (Matt 4). He wanted to denigrate Him, to deny Him the authority attributed to Him by that title. Should we be surprised, then, that the devil raised up in the midst of Christianity the Roman antichrist, who would want to appropriate that title in the supposed absence of the true Son of God? It is also in connection with the denial of that title that John in his epistles describes the antichrist who was to come.

“Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also...” (1 John 2:22-24). “Whoever believes in the *Son of God* accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us *eternal life*, and this life *is in his Son*. Whoever has the Son has life; *whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life*. I write these things to you *who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life*” (1 John 5:10-13).

Even if one purports to confess the Name of the Son of God, deeds are required rather than words. Eternal life is obtained by invoking “the Name of the Son of God,” not that of an alleged blasphemous vicar to obtain forgiveness of sins...

For a more comprehensive study on the name of the beast and the number 666, see my webpage:

<http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Vicarivsgreatapostasydekok.pdf>

## **THE DENIAL OF THE NAME AND PLACE OF THE BLASPHEMOUS ENTITY**

Chapter 17 of Revelation describes in more detail the role of the papacy and the Roman Catholic Church in the final crisis. But we are astonished to see that the new Andrews Bible Commentary not only seeks to avoid naming the papacy by its blasphemous title, as in Rev 13:17-18, but also seeks to deny the application of its See over the city of Rome, clearly portrayed in Rev 17:9. The book of Revelation does indeed specify the blasphemous title *vicarivs filii dei* by means of its number 666. It also specifies the See of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome, the city of the seven mountains.

When God intervenes, it is common for Him to give the name and address of the person referred to. We see it when the angel calls Ananias in Damascus, and indicates the name of Saul, and the place where he was. He told him: “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul” (Acts 9:10-12). We also read that the angel instructs Cornelius to locate Peter, and reveals where he could be found. He told him, “send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea” (Acts 10:5-6).

When the angel appeared to the shepherds, he gave them the news that the “Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” And he told them where to find the Lord: in Belen, the city of David, in the manger of a stable (Luke 10:10-12). Should we wonder that in the book of Revelation, an angel revealed to John not only the name and title of the antichrist who occupies so much space in the prophecies of Daniel, Paul and John, but also his See?

Where is the Son of God in this Christian dispensation? The Bible is clear. He is at the right hand of God in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 1; also in chapter 8, etc). What is He doing there? He intercedes for us (Heb 7:25). Where is the impersonating antichrist today? In Rome, the city of the seven mountains or hills. What is he doing there? He pretends to take the place of the Son of God as his vicar, as Rome’s bishop, to intercede for sinners.

What is happening with some of our theologians? First, we saw how they try to avoid associating the trumpets of Revelation with punishments of Rome, the last empire of the four universal empires projected by Daniel. They are distracted by the destruction of Jerusalem in Rev 8 and 9, and attribute only one trumpet each to imperial Rome and papal Rome and in so generalized a way that it is hard to see the connection. This is the reason why these new theologians prefer to resort to the idealistic method to interpret the prophecies. This methodology allows them to avoid giving the direct warnings that God requires to be given about that apostate kingdom.

When we go to chapter 13, we encounter that same problem of trying to avoid identifying the papacy by its blasphemous title decoded in the number 666. Again, the idealist method employs its spiritualized or allegorized approach to avoid the plain and simple truth of the ambition of the Roman papacy to take the place of the Son of God. This same elusive strategy of the *Andrews Bible Commentary* is used in Revelation chapter 17, not only regarding the papal See in Rome, but also with respect to the identity of the woman who represents it.

The new commentary of Andrews recognizes that the Bible uses the symbol of a woman to represent a religious system. But it tirelessly repeats that Babylon is an End-time apostate religious system, a Satanic Trinity (an invented title), that has to do with the final religious apostasy framed by the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. Why do they have such a hard time mentioning them by name? If any reference appears, it is fleeting, as if they are afraid to say it with all words as befits the truth. Although Babylon has daughters, that does not negate the fact that the axis, the center of Babylon, is still Rome.

To begin with, the Andrews commentary emphasizes that Babylon dresses as a prostitute (Jer 4:30), but at the same time points out they are the same colors of the apparel of the high priest in the sanctuary of Israel. Did the priesthood of Israel dress as prostitutes? They also note that the scarlet color reveals blood, and that purple represents a royal garment (Est 8:15; Dan 5:7). But at no time will they refer to the prominent clothes of the cardinals and purple ones [*purpuratorum*] of the Roman Catholic Church. Why? Because they want to avoid being too precise, and instead stick with symbolic, generalized and allegorized terms that allow them to avoid concrete definitions. Let us read how directly the Spirit of Prophecy approaches the issue.

“The power that maintained despotic sway for so many centuries over the monarchs of Christendom is Rome. *The purple and scarlet color, the gold and precious stones and pearls, vividly picture the magnificence and more than kingly pomp affected by the*

*haughty see of Rome.* And no other power could be so truly declared ‘drunken with the blood of the saints’ as that church which has so cruelly persecuted the followers of Christ. Babylon is also charged with the sin of unlawful connection with ‘the kings of the earth.’ It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that the Jewish church became a harlot; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, receives a like condemnation” (GC 382-3).



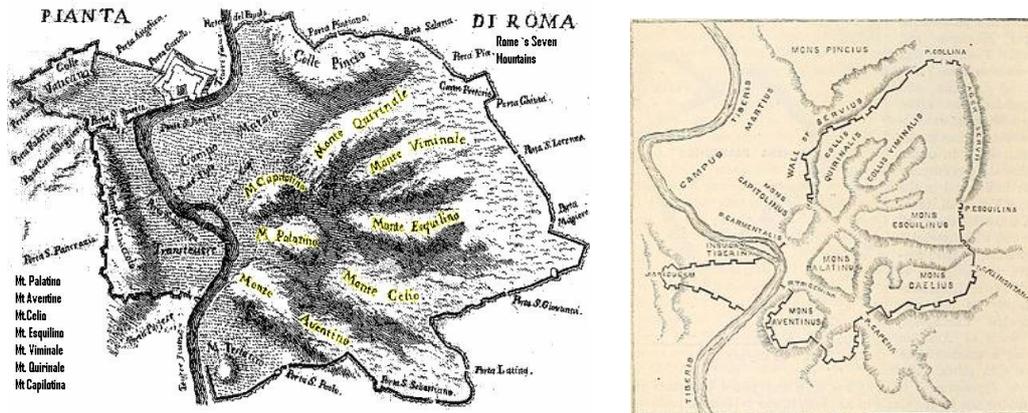
“While the Protestant world is becoming very tender and affectionate toward the man of sin (2 Thess 2:3), shall [not] God’s people take their place as bold and valiant soldiers of Jesus Christ to meet the issue which must come, their lives hid with Christ in God? Mystic Babylon has not been sparing in the blood of the saints and shall we [not] be wide awake to catch the beams of light which have been shining from the light of the angel who is to brighten the earth with his glory?” [Rev 18:1-5] (*Letter 112*, 1890; 3 *SM* 426)

***Andrews Bible Commentary Argues for Avoiding Geographical Connection***

**Argument 1.** “The seven heads are mountains on which the woman sits (17:9). The Greek word *ore* means ‘mountains,’ though some translators have rendered it ‘hills,’ possibly to reference the city of Rome, which was known as the city on seven hills.”

**Answer:** In John’s day, people identified Rome as it is today, both by seven mountains (or *mons*) and by seven hills (*collis*). They are literally defined in Latin as *Septem Montes Romae*. This is the reason why several versions feel free to translate v. 9 as “hills.” Because it is sometimes difficult to determine when they are to be called mountains or cease to be called

hills. You can see this in the map that I share below where some of the mountains of Rome are referred to by “hills,” and others by “mountains.”



For this reason, the terms “mountains” and “hills” overlap or are used interchangeably, even as synonyms, in Latin as well as in Biblical Hebrew and Greek. Many biblical references can be seen on my website under the title: *Identifying the Babylon of the Apocalypse, 9*. For references see the link below.

**Argument 2.** “Neither literal hills nor mountains are in view here, for the obvious reason that these mountains are successive, not synchronic. Mountains in the Bible are often used as a symbol for kingdoms or empires (Jer 51:25; Ezek 35:2-5; Dan 2:35).”

**Answer:** Are not the seven churches of Revelation successive? Do they cease having contemporaneous and geographical significance because they have been used in the prophetic perspective as being successive till the coming of the Lord? Let us be careful not to impose “exegetical” rules that we will have to violate in other places without rhyme or reason. It is obvious that the angel projects before John all the empires of the world that are incarnated at the end in that city-church, regardless of whether there is succession used in the symbol (see Rev 18:24).

Indeed, the text of Revelation 17:9-10 does not necessarily say that mountains are successive, but that kings are. The symbolism is manifold, because the woman does not literally sit on the seven heads of the beast, but on the seven mountains. Those heads are also seven kings or kingdoms, as the commentary rightly states. In this way, the book of Revelation projects the seven mountains or hills of Rome as a model of all the empires of the world that rose against the kingdom of God. Rome embodies that proud spirit of all the kingdoms of the world in its last attempt to supplant God on earth (Rev 18:24).

### **Argument 3.**

In the commentary, Stefanovic begins the seven mountains on which the women sits with Egypt, and applies the seventh kingdom to the medieval papacy which, in his view, will be resurrected as the eighth (Rev 17:10-12).

**Answer:** John says that this description is for “the mind that has wisdom” (v. 9). I will not go into discussing the problems and contradictions I see in his commentary on the seven heads, because I do not find that wisdom in his explanation.

If anyone would like to see a broader discussion of the identification of the Babylonian woman in Rev 16-18, they can open the following link from my website:

<http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Identifyingbabylon.pdf>