

## РЕЛІГІЄЗНАВСТВО

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### **THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH (REV. 13:11-18) IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ADVENTIST PIONEERS**

*The book of Revelation contains rich imagery that has always aroused deep interest among Christian commentators. One of the most mysterious parts is Rev. 13, where the author wrote about the forces of evil fighting with God. John introduced the two main satanic forces – the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth. There is a unique interpretation in the Adventist Church that the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18) symbolizes the Protestant country of the USA. However, the emergence and development of this interpretation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not received sufficient attention. This article traces the development and characterizes the interpretation of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18) among Adventist pioneers. The first impetus for identifying the beast from the earth was the eschatological understanding of the Sabbath as a central issue in end-time events. Hermeneutic methods of Early Adventists were based on the principle of historicism, and they began to view Sunday as the mark of the beast from the sea (papacy) to be forcibly imposed by the beast from the land – the Protestant USA. G. W. Holt first stated that America would become an ally of the Antichrist and is a symbol of the beast from the earth. Other Adventists accepted this interpretation, which was confirmed in the visions of Ellen White. John Nevins Andrews made significant contributions to the biblical basis for the Adventist understanding of the beast from the earth. Building on his comments, John Loughborough, Uriah Smith, and Ellen White deepened and developed the argu-*

*ments regarding the interpretation of the beast from the earth. Anticipation of the law on mandatory Sunday observance in the USA has become part of Adventist eschatology. Based on the apocalyptic prophecies of the book of Revelation, Adventists saw a future unification of Christendom in which US Protestantism would play a key role.*

**Keywords:** *beast from the earth, prophecy, book of Revelation, hermeneutics, Adventists, Apocalypse.*

## Introduction

The book of Revelation is a unique book of the New Testament because it is written in an apocalyptic style. It contains amazing visions that have always attracted the attention of researchers. Theologians have made great efforts to understand the symbolic pictures and mysterious images. Believers throughout the history of Christianity have often associated certain events and political authorities with apocalyptic prophecies. The belief that the book of Revelation contained a map of future events that would help resist the forces of evil and recognize the manifestation of the devil in the world motivated them to explore it. In addition, Christians believed that chapter 13 of the book of Revelation described the antichrist and his allies, in whose identification they were particularly interested. There are two powers: the beast from the sea (Rev. 13:1-10), and the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18). In the Adventist Church, theologians use the historical method to interpret the beast from the earth as a symbol of the United States and Protestantism. This interpretation is unique and is not supported by most theologians belonging to other denominations. The interpretation of the vision of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18) as a symbol of the United States of America is one of the features of Adventist theological thought and a manifestation of church identity that actualizes this study.

The interpretation of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18) as a symbol of the United States arose at the very beginning of the Adventist movement. Merlin D. Burt writes about this in his article, «A Brief Overview of the Unfolding Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Three Angels' Messages in Connection with Revelation 13 and 18 and Ellen White's Role» [13]. Burt summarizes the development of the Ad-

ventist understanding of the Three Angels' Message (Rev. 14), the mark of the beast (Rev. 13), and the question of worshiping the Creator through Sabbath observance. Burt provides some information on who first proposed a unique interpretation of the beast from the earth as the United States and mentions key figures who wrote research on the subject among Adventists.

It is worth noting that Merlin Burt's study presents the topic very briefly and concisely. In addition, he focuses on the Three Angels' Message, not on the image of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18). In his article, Burt does not cover the theological views and arguments of Adventist theologians. Scholars did not carry out detailed analysis of the development of interpretation Rev. 13:11-18 in the Adventist environment. Therefore, the lack of historical theological study of the development of the interpretation of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18) necessitates the study of this topic.

The purpose of the article is to trace the development and to determine the characteristic features of the interpretation of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18) among the Adventist pioneers. The realization of this goal involves the solution of the following tasks: a) to illuminate the development of the interpretation of the symbol of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18); b) to identify key studies and analyze them in chronological order; c) to analyze the hermeneutic principles of interpretation.

### *The emergence of the Adventist interpretation of the beast from the earth*

It is worth noting that the identification of the beast from the earth as a symbol of the United States of America arose from a deeper understanding of «the mark of the beast» as a false Sabbath established by the papacy. Joseph Bates and Ellen White began to view the Sabbath celebration not simply as fidelity to God and obedience to the fourth commandment, but as an eschatological seal that would play a key role in the impending crisis. Merlin Burt writes that «Joseph Bates initially presented the end-time emphasis on the Sabbath in connection with Christ's most holy place ministry in January 1846. A few months after

this, Ellen White enriched Bates' study when she saw that the Sabbath was to be proclaimed more fully by God's people at the end of time» [13]. In contrast to the Sabbath, the celebration of Sunday began to be perceived by Adventists as the mark of the beast. Therefore, «in March 1850, G. W. Holt connected the "image to the beast" to a future role by American Protestantism in enforcing Sunday worship in cooperation with the Papacy» [13].

In his letter, G. W. Holt wrote about the Three Angels' Message (Rev. 14) and claimed that the First Angel's Message (Rev. 14:6, 7) was heard from 1840 to 1843 [16, p. 64]. This was followed by the proclamation of the Second Angel (Rev. 14:8), which led to 1844. Holt believed that after 1844 the Third Angel's Message began to be proclaimed (Rev. 14:9-11) [16, p. 64]. According to Holt, the context of the Three Angels' Message helps to understand the symbols of the book of Revelation. Rev. 14:12 says that the faithful keep the commandments of God. This means that «now those who submit to, and reverence the institution of the Pope, receive the mark of the beast, but those who throw off the last vestige of Papacy, and reverence God, by keeping his Holy Sabbath, will receive the mark, or seal of the living God» [16, p. 64]. Therefore, Holt concluded, «the image beast is similar in character to "the first beast before him," for he speaks "like a dragon." He assumes the character of a lamb, (protestant and republican,) yet he is a dragon at heart» [16, p. 64]. Thus, the idea emerged that the force that will impose the celebration of Sunday – the first day of the week – is Protestantism and Republicanism in America. Merlin Burt writes: «three months later (June 27, 1850), Ellen White had a confirming vision. "I realized, as never before, the importance of searching the Word of God carefully, to know how to escape the plagues which that Word declares shall come on all the ungodly who shall worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. It was a great wonder for me that any could transgress the law of God and tread down His holy Sabbath, when such awful threatenings and denunciations were against them... Those who would not receive the mark of the beast and his image when the decree goes forth, must have decision now to say, Nay, we will not regard the institution of the beast"» [13].

Burt notes that «in the following months S. W. Rhodes, H. S. Case and Hiram Edson came to share the views presented by Holt» [13]. N. S. Case wrote that Brother S. W. Rhodes revealed the significance of the Third Angel's Message in light of Rev. 13 [14]. So, it became clear to him that «the two horned beast is the power of Church and State. It is an “image” of the Papal Beast to whom the dragon gave “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” The Papal Beast was church and state united. An image must be like the thing imitated; therefore, the image-beast is composed of church and state united-Protestant churches and Republicanism. The word of the Lord is plain» [14, p. 85].

Hiram Edson in his article commenting on the beast with seven heads (Rev. 13:2) wrote that «these texts seem to authorize us to go back to the head of gold or lion, Babylon, to count the seven heads: Babylon, one; Medo-Persia, two; Grecia, three; Rome Imperial, four; Rome Kingly, five; Rome Papal, six; and Rome Protestant, or two-horned beast, seven» [15, p. 9]. The commentator considered the heads of the beast as kingdoms that ruled one after another in the history of the earth. The seventh head is the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11) – that is, Protestant America. He continued: «The two-horned beast is Protestant Rome, and is the seventh head. The two horns are civil and ecclesiastical power. The great and grand principle on which the Protestant churches have reared themselves was the right of liberty of conscience, and free toleration. This was, indeed, lamb-like. The civil power became deeply imbued with the same spirit. It protected, sustained, and upheld the churches in this principle. This was also lamb-like in the civil power» [15, p. 9].

Merlin Burt argues that «On October 23, 1850, Ellen White received another vision confirming and enriching the role of American Protestantism in uniting with Catholicism in persecuting those who keep the Sabbath based on Revelation 13» [13]. Ellen White wrote that she «saw that the two-horned beast had a dragon mouth, and that his power was in his head, and that the decree would go out of his mouth. Then I saw the mother of harlots, that the mother was not the daughters, but separate and distinct from them. She has had her day, and it is past,

and her daughters, Protestant sects, were next to come on the stage and act out the same mind that the mother had when she persecuted the saints. I saw that as the mother has been declining in power the daughters have been growing, and soon they will exercise the power once manifested by the mother... Then the Catholics bid the Protestants to go forward and issue a decree that all who will not observe the first day of the week instead of the seventh shall be slain, and the Catholics, whose numbers are large, will stand by the Protestants. The Catholics will give their power to the image of the beast and then Protestants will work as their mother worked before them to destroy the saints. But before their decrees bring forth or bear fruit, the saints will be delivered by the voice of God» [28].

*J. N. Andrews*

Merlin Burt writes that «between 1851 and 1855 J. N. Andrews provided a detailed study with biblical and historical evidence. He identified the two horns of the eschatological Protestant American lamb-like beast as the combining of civil and religious power» [13]. In the first article, published in 1851, J. N. Andrews interpreted the Three Angels' Message in the context of the missionary work of the Adventist movement and its announcement of the message of judgment [2, p. 81-82]. Since the Three Angels' Message is related to the worship of the beast out of the sea (Rev. 13:1-10), he set out to identify this power. Andrews claimed that the «beast is evidently the Papal form of the fourth beast, for it receives its seat and dominion from the dragon, Rome Pagan» [2, p. 82]. He wrote that the beast from the sea ruled for 1260 years, then was mortally wounded (Rev. 13:3), but must recover and fight against God again, which would bring him to his final end (Rev. 19:19, 20). Accordingly, Andrews concludes «that there is no other beast which is to take the place of the fourth beast, for the empire of this beast in its divided state, as represented by the ten horns, is to continue till the God of heaven shall set up his everlasting kingdom. Dan. 7; 2:44» [2, p. 82].

J. N. Andrews then moved on to the interpretation of the beast out of the earth (Rev. 13:11-18). He drew a contrast with the previous beast from the sea and argued that the two-horned beast must appear

elsewhere and at the end of the reign of the first (1798) [2, p. 82]. The commentator believed that the empires mentioned in biblical prophecy were always directed to the west. Therefore, the power that the two-horned beast symbolizes must also be in the west [2, p. 81-82]. Another argument was the connection of the time of the action of the beast with the time of the existence of God's people, since the Third Angel's Message (Rev. 14:9-11) is proclaimed as a counterbalance to the actions of the beast. Accordingly, Andrews concluded that the prophecy referred to the United States of America [2, p. 83]. The commentator drew a contrast when other empires (Dan. 2, 7) arose as a result of wars and the overthrow of the former power, but the country of the USA appeared peacefully by migration to a new continent (Rev. 13:11). He also saw a contrast with other empires in the characterization of the beast from the earth – «two horns like a lamb» (Rev. 13:11). In his opinion, they indicated «the civil and religious power of this nation – its Republican civil power, and its Protestant ecclesiastical power» [2, p. 83]. Religious freedom and the Bible as the basis of doctrine were both part of the Lamb's nature.

The next characterization of the beast from the earth is «it spoke like a dragon» (Rev. 13:11). J. N. Andrews interpreted it as a symbol of the despotism of Protestantism, which will begin to persecute the saints, as the Catholic Church did before. This will manifest itself through the creation of the image of the beast – a copy of the first beast, the papacy [2, p. 84]. The union of Catholicism and Protestantism will lead to the forcible imposition of the mark of the beast – a false Sabbath/Sunday celebration [2, p. 85].

In a publication «Angels of Rev. XIV – No. 4.» on December 23, 1851, an unknown author [30] repeated the study of J. N. Andrews in a more systematic form [1]. He listed 7 key characteristics of the beast from the earth that help to identify it: 1) *The time of its rise* – about 1798, when the power of the first beast ended; 2) *It is «another beast», beside the ten-horned beast* – the beast from the sea (Rev. 13:1-10) and the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18) are different and separate powers; 3) *The manner of its rise* – peaceful emergence of power; 4) *The location of this beast* – outside Europe; 5) *The two lamb-like horns* –

Republican civil and Protestant ecclesiastical authorities of the United States; 6) *The power exercised by this beast* – a union of two beasts; 7) *The wonders and miracles performed by this beast* – scientific progress and fake miracles [1, p. 69-72].

In 1855 J. N. Andrews published «The Three Angels of Revelation XIV, 6-12. The Two-Horned Beast», in eight issues of the magazine «The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald» [8; 7; 6; 10; 9; 5; 4; 11], [31]. Andrews' arguments became more detailed and more thorough. He tried to explain every point of his theses and answer critical questions. The Third Angel's Message was considered by Andrews to be «the most serious warning» in the Bible [3, p. 69]. He relates the fulfillment of this message to the future and connects it with the two-horned beast from Rev. 13. To understand the meaning of the beast with two horns, the author showed the interpretation of the beast from the sea in Rev. 13, which symbolizes papal authority. Andrews then wrote that the two-horned beast will create the image of the papacy and force everyone to worship this power, as warned by the Third Angel's Message [3, p. 77]. The author refuted various views on the meaning of the beast from the earth with a detailed argument and concludes that this beast symbolizes the United States. Andrews reveals in detail the characteristics of the beast from the earth and shows with the help of various historical facts how they were fulfilled in Protestant America. Some aspects of the prophecy are yet to be fulfilled in the future [3, p. 78-143].

J. N. Andrews called for caution in interpreting future events. Although he did not claim to know precisely how the end time scenario will play out, he did believe it was safe to say that in the end there will be a clear dividing line between the faithful and sinners. Therefore, the purpose of proclaiming the Third Angel's Message is to prepare the saints for the coming great conflict [3, p. 113], since the formation of the image of the first beast by the second beast will lead to the outpouring of the last seven punishments of God's wrath. J. N. Andrews also mentioned the number 666 and believed that it refers to the blasphemy and proud claims of the beast. Acceptance of the mark of the beast means belonging to that power [3, p. 113]. Because God's faithful people are described as those who keep God's commandments, this means

that the God's law will play a key role in the end-time crisis. Imposing a Sunday celebration is the mark of the beast, a false commandment. The beast from the earth will work miracles through spiritism. Therefore, the Third Angel's Message warns of the wine of the Lord's wrath and of the torments in fire and brimstone [3, p. 129].

J. N. Andrews did not stop his study of this topic and from 1860 to 1886 five editions of the book «The Three Messages of Revelation XIV:6-12 Particularly the Third Angel's Message and the Two-Horned Beast» came out from under his pen [12], [32]. J. N. Andrews' research has made a significant contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the book of Revelation. Andrews' approach can be described as reasoned, detailed, versatile and clear. The commentator used a variety of historical facts, linked them to biblical prophecies, and clearly refuted misinterpretations. J. N. Andrews developed qualitative arguments in favor of the idea that the beast from the earth is Protestant America, and that Protestantism will form the image of the beast. The author provides a clear understanding of the Three Angels' Message in connection with the 13th chapter of Revelation, the historical events in the proclamation of the Gospel by the early Adventists. All subsequent studies by Adventist theologians of Rev. 13 and 14 were directly or indirectly based on the developments of J. N. Andrews.

We can say that J. N. Andrews was one of the first to study Rev. 13 and 14 in depth, using his erudition and theological basis to discover a unique interpretation. Although the ideas he presented in his studies were widespread among the early Adventists, he clearly outlined the fallacies of many interpretations that existed at the time and presented arguments for his interpretation. Historical facts about spiritualism, mediums, the emergence of the United States, the spiritual state of the churches in America, various statistics – all these were new contributions by J. N. Andrews. His work was one of the most powerful in the early Adventist church and marked the beginning of a serious theological study of the Three Angels' Message and the two beasts of Rev. 13.

*John Loughborough*

John Norton Loughborough initially supported J. N. Andrews' interpretation and repeated and to some extent developed his opinions in his publications. Loughborough wrote an article in two parts entitled «The Two-Horned Beast» in 1854, based on Andrews' arguments [17; 18]. The purpose of the article was to report the iniquity of the beast and to warn of the events that will take place before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Loughborough began his study by interpreting some Adventists who combined two beasts into one (the papacy) or claimed that the two-horned beast symbolized «movements of Napoleon Buona-parté». The author rejected such interpretations and stated that the Bible indicates the approximate time of the appearance of the beast from the earth – after 1798, when the papacy was mortally wounded [17, p. 65]. Loughborough concluded that the two-horned beast should appear on the western continent in contrast to the eastern papal continent. Accordingly, the two-horned beast is the United States of America [17, p. 65].

The author claimed that the four winds and the sea symbolize war. Therefore, the two-horned beast coming out of the earth should not appear as a result of wars, but peacefully because of its internal characteristics [17, p. 66]. Loughborough cited secular sources and statistics on US population growth, strength and power as evidence [17, p. 66]. The commentator then began to interpret the two horns as Protestant church authority and republican civil authority. Unfortunately, however, this beast speaks like a dragon, which according to the theologian means slavery, which is contrary to freedom and faith, as well as the persecution by Protestants of those who were waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ [17, p. 67], [33]. Interestingly, another aspect of the dragon's voice Loughborough considered was the ban on work on the first day of the week, which is contrary to the constitution and, accordingly, the rights of those who celebrate the seventh day of the Sabbath [17, p. 67].

Commenting on Rev. 13:12, the author emphasized once again that it is impossible to unite two beasts in one power, because they act separately. The second beast forces everyone to worship the first. What is this worship? It is the keeping of the commandments of the papacy,

which changed God's law and instead enforced the following of human traditions [18, p. 73]. Loughborough cited evidence of the papacy's change from Sabbath to Sunday and showed the importance of the seventh day, which is a sign between God and His people forever. Because some states already had laws related to worship on the first day of the week, he saw this as a testament to the fulfillment of Bible prophecy [18, p. 73]. Loughborough interpreted the prophecy that the two-horned beast will work miracles and make fire out of nothing as scientific progress at the time. He quoted Nahum 2:3, 5 and saw the fulfillment of this prophecy in cars, trains, and steam engines. Referring to Benjamin Franklin's experiments, Loughborough believed that people's control over lightning and electricity is a fulfillment of the prophecy of «raising fire from the sky» [18, p. 74]. He also mentions the wonders of psychology, biology, and hypnosis. However, he also saw spiritualism and communication with the spirits of the dead as playing an important role in fulfilling this prophecy [18, p. 74].

How should we understand the concept of «image of the beast» which the two-horned beast will create? Loughborough believed that this will be a union of state power with the church, which will provoke the persecution of God's faithful children for their observance of God's commandments [18, p. 74]. The researcher wrote that when you see the publication of the law on the celebration of Sunday in the United States, it will indicate the formation of the image of the papacy, the Inquisition, which will be in the hands of church leaders. He believed the mark of the beast will be placed on the hand or forehead of people, including slaves [18, p. 74, 75].

Loughborough claimed that the mark of the beast's name is the title of the papacy. Papal power took the place of God on earth and changed of God's law. The seal of God is fidelity to His commandments, so those who worship the beast break the Law. Loughborough gave examples of laws and orders of earthly monarchs on which they put their signatures [18, p. 75]. So, the commandment of God about the Sabbath has the signature of the Lord God. The title: «Lord», the authority: «Creator», and the territory: «heaven and earth». Therefore, Sunday is the mark of the beast. The number 666, according to the theo-

logian, should be interpreted not by the method of Gematria, but as an indication of the «man of sin» of 2 Thess. 2, the papacy. At the end, Loughborough emphasized the imminence of prophecy, called for the keeping of God's commandments, and hoped for God's promises of protection [18, p. 75, 79]. Loughborough continued to explore this topic and published a series of papers in 1857 and 1858 [22; 23; 24; 21; 19; 20; 25].

Loughborough's work shows that there were different views of the two-horned beast among Adventists at the time, but his research, along with that of J. N. Andrews and the visions of Ellen White, helped popularize this interpretation. Early Adventist publications on the Sabbath and Sunday in an eschatological sense, a link to the Protestant world in the United States, and illustrative examples of existing Sunday celebration laws helped early Adventists adopt a unanimous view. The image of the beast is the union of the Protestant churches with the state and the union with Catholicism. In his study the author developed, defended, and argued that the two-horned beast is the United States following the research of J. N. Andrews.

#### *Uriah Smith*

Uriah Smith's book «The United States in the Light of Prophecy» is a commentary on Rev. 13:11-17 published in 1874 [27]. The book consists of 11 chapters. The first section is entitled «Probabilities Considered», in which the author presented ten facts about the United States and emphasized the uniqueness of this country. Smith portrayed America as a peaceful and progressive country that respects religious freedom. The author asked the question, what is the probability that such a majestic and unique country is not mentioned in biblical prophecies? Smith believed that the answer is obvious, that God's providence is behind this nation. Enumerating the kingdoms mentioned in the apocalyptic prophecies, Smith argued that the beast with two horns in Rev. 13 is probably the United States [27, p. 10-12].

In the second chapter, «A Chain of Prophecy», the author began a more thorough study of the symbol of the beast from the earth and encouraged the study of this image, taking into account the context and all

other related prophecies [27, p. 21]. Uriah Smith wrote that the line of prophecy begins in Rev. 12. The red dragon symbolizing the Roman Empire and the beast from the sea (Rev. 13) means papal authority, which in other books is presented as a little horn and a man of sin [27, p. 27]. In the third section, «Location of the Two-Horned Beast», the author focused on the characteristics of the beast from the earth. Uriah Smith pointed out that this power is different from the papacy and refuted the view that the beast from the earth is the second phase of papal power, Russia, England, or France. Uriah Smith pointed out that the location of the United States corresponds to the text of biblical prophecy [27, p. 31-40].

In the fourth chapter, «Chronology of the Two-Horned Beast», the author focused on the time of emergence of the beast from the earth [27, p. 41]. Smith drew readers' attention to the fact that the first beast from the sea ceased to rule in 1798, when the prophecy of the mortal wound was fulfilled. Therefore, the second beast from the earth should appear on the world stage at about this time [27, p. 44-45]. In the fifth chapter, entitled «The United States Have Arisen in the Exact Manner in Which John Saw the Two-Horned Beast Coming Up», Uriah Smith pointed to the nature of the beast's origin from the earth [27, p. 52]. He emphasized the contrast of the symbols «sea» and «earth». All the other beasts that symbolize power came out of the sea, where the winds blew and there were various political intrigues, wars, and enmity among large crowds of people. In contrast, the second beast arises from the earth, peacefully [27, p. 52-53]. In chapter 6, «Character of the Government Represented by the Two-Horned Beast», Smith drew attention to the appearance of the beast from the earth. He had horns like lambs, symbolizing the country's youth and innocence and modesty. He also pointed to the form of government in America – republican, where power belongs to the people. There is freedom of religion and the power has Christian values [27, p. 71-77].

In the seventh chapter, «The Dragon Voice», Uriah Smith examined another characteristic of the beast with the lamb's horns, that speaks as a dragon [27, p. 79]. According to the theologian, this indicates persecution by the authorities, as it was in the days of the Roman

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Empire. The author acknowledged that the fulfillment of this prophecy in a free America may seem impossible. However, already in his time there were grounds for future oppression of God's people. Smith pointed to the problem of slavery, political corruption, bribery, deception, and the influence of the papacy [27, p. 84]. In the eighth chapter, «He Doeth Great Wonders», the author drew attention to the violent actions of the beast in forcing the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast whose wound was healed. Smith also wrote about the miracles performed by the second beast and argued that the whole world is now engulfed in scientific progress and the «miracles» of inventions in which America plays a leading role [27, p. 91, 92]. Although this is not a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, it characterizes the age in which they are fulfilled. False miracles are spiritualism and the actions of mediums, as well as various false teachings and false doctrines [27, p. 95-100].

In the ninth chapter, «An Image to the Beast», Smith wrote about the union between the first and second beasts, and the attempts to make an image of the first beast. The image of the beast is a power that will be created in the future in the image of papal power, so the author considered it appropriate to explore the nature of the Catholic Church [27, p. 103]. The union of church and state will be a special characteristic of the power of the image of the beast. In the tenth chapter, «The Mark of the Beast» the author revealed the meaning of the mark of the beast [27, p. 112]. He wrote that different powers must be divided: 1) The beast from the sea – the papacy, 2) The beast from the earth – the United States and 3) The image of the beast. This union will force all the people of the earth to worship the devil [27, p. 112]. Smith analyzed the Greek word *χάραγμα* (mark), and gave examples of the use of this word in various sources, and examples of the imposition of a certain sign on people in history. However, Smith concluded that the mark of the beast is a change in the law of God – the celebration of Sunday [27, p. 120]. In the final chapter, «The Beginning of the End», Uriah Smith presented his vision of the latest developments in the United States and around the world [27, p. 133].

It is worth noting that this is one of the first attempts to shed light on the role of the United States in the context of biblical prophecy to

such an extent. The book is well structured and logically constructed. Uriah Smith added new historical facts about the United States, the emergence of the country, the nature of its power, and presents his vision of recent events. He emphasized the spread of the Sunday celebration movement and said that 30-40 years ago no one would have thought that this Sunday celebration movement would reach such a scale. This, in his opinion, confirms the correct interpretation of apocalyptic prophecies. It is worth noting that his book largely repeats the ideas expressed by J. N. Andrews in his research. However, Uriah Smith added some new aspects to the ideas of J. N. Andrews. Unlike Andrews, Uriah Smith focused only on the Rev. 13 and hardly raised the issue of the Three Angels' Message.

*Ellen White*

A more voluminous commentary on the symbol of «the beast from the sea» (Rev. 13:11-18) was given by Ellen White in «The Great Controversy», published in 1884 and revised in 1911 [13]. Merlin Burt explains that «Ellen White even quotes Satan in his end-time strategy against God's people which includes increasing persecution in connection with Sabbath and Sunday» [13]. Ellen White in chapter 25, «God's Law Immutable», gave an explanation of Rev. 13. After identifying the beast from the sea (Rev. 13:1-10), she wrote that, «both the appearance of this beast and the manner of its rise indicate that the nation which it represents is unlike those presented under the preceding symbols» [29, p. 440]. Ellen White drew attention to the contrast between the symbols of sea and earth. The appearance of the first beast from the sea symbolizes the methods of conquest, conflicts, and wars that led to the emergence of new kingdoms. In contrast, the appearance of the beast with two horns from the earth indicates the peace and quiet of the emergence of power: «instead of overthrowing other powers to establish itself, the nation thus represented must arise in territory previously unoccupied and grow up gradually and peacefully» [29, p. 440, 441].

Ellen White also argued that the emergence of this power must have occurred after 1798, when the papacy was mortally wounded. In the West, only one country matches this prophecy exactly, and that is

the United States of America [29, p. 441]. She then proceeded to explain the characteristics of the beast. The lamb-like horns symbolize «youth, innocence, and gentleness», which in her opinion fit very well with America, because the country was founded on «civil and religious liberty» [29, p. 441]. Persecution in the old world had led many believers to look for territory where they can establish a form of government where there was no repression of religious beliefs. This was one of the factors behind the emergence of the United States on the world stage:

«Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity. The oppressed and downtrodden throughout Christendom have turned to this land with interest and hope. Millions have sought its shores, and the United States has risen to a place among the most powerful nations of the earth» [29, p. 442].

The second characteristic of the beast from the ground is that it «speaks as a dragon». Ellen White believed that this indicates a contradiction between the principles of freedom and the actions of power in practice. «“The speaking” of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities» [29, p. 442]. Accordingly, through certain laws that will contradict God’s will and honor the Catholic Church, American Protestantism will follow Rome. The USA will begin to impose complete subjugation to the papacy [29, p. 442].

Also, Ellen White gave specific commentary on the words from Rev. 13:14 «Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast». In her opinion, «here is clearly presented a form of government in which the legislative power rests with the people, a most striking evidence that the United States is the nation denoted in the prophecy» [29, p. 442]. The image of the beast that will be formed in the future is a semblance of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages, created in Protestant America. Only the correct interpretation of the beast from the sea and understanding of its nature of reign helps to understand the symbol of the image of the beast. Ellen White wrote that as a result of the apostasy of Christianity, the power of the papacy was formed, which controlled «the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the pun-

ishment of ‘heresy’» [29, p. 443]. Similarly, for the «United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends» [29, p. 443]. Ellen White cited examples showing that since the Reformation, Protestants have already followed the footsteps of the papacy and suppressed religious freedom. The problem of such a situation always lies in the unification of the Church and the State, caused by a spiritual apostasy from the Word of God and the Lord [29, p. 444]. She wrote that «when the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result» [29, p. 446].

The image of the beast is a «form of apostate Protestantism», which will be created by the joint efforts of the united churches of America to impose their doctrines on the entire population of the earth. Ellen White tied Rev. 13 with the Third Angel’s Message, and claimed that the mark of the beast is a fake Sabbath that the Catholic Church has established [29, p. 447-449].

Later, in the section «Impending Conflict», Ellen White continued to write about the latest conflict over the commandments of God. She claimed that «even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected» [29, p. 591, 592].

### *Conclusions*

In this study, I have traced the development of the Adventist interpretation of the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-18). The interpretation of the symbol was highlighted, and key studies were identified and analyzed in chronological order. In the early days of the Adventist movement, the idea arose that the «beast from the earth» was the United States of America and Protestantism. Joseph Bates and Ellen White articulated the eschatological meaning of the Sabbath and showed the im-

portance of keeping the commandments of God in the last conflict. Researchers such as G. W. Holt, S. W. Rhodes, H. S. Case and Hiram Edson have also concluded that the United States plays an important role in Bible prophecy. This shows that this opinion was not imposed by one person but arose as a result of the study of the biblical text by different theologians. Ellen White's visions only confirmed what was received through the analysis of the Scriptures. The main contribution to the interpretation of chapter 13 of the book of Revelation was made by J. N. Andrews, whose studies became the model and basis for subsequent Adventist commentators. Later, John Norton Loughborough, Uriah Smith and Ellen White continued to develop the interpretation of the «beast from the earth» and revealed new aspects. As a result of the analysis, the hermeneutical principles of interpretation of the Adventist scholars were established, who consistently used historicism. I see need for further consideration of this issue in modern commentaries on Rev. 13:11-18 among Adventist theologians.

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30. It is possible that it was the editor-in-chief of the magazine – James White.

31. This study has also been published as a book [3].

32. Five editions of J. N. Andrews' book were published in the following years: 1860; 1864; 1872; 1877; 1886 [13].

33. For the connection between the theme of slavery and the interpretation of Bible prophecy among Adventist pioneers, see: [26].

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**Звір із землі (Об. 13:11-18) в інтерпретації адвентистських піонерів**

**Анотація**

Книга Об'явлення містить багаті на зміст образи, які завжди викликали глибокий інтерес в християнських коментаторів. Одна із самих загадкових частин – це Об. 13, де автор написав про сили зла, які борються з Богом. В адвентистській церкві існує унікальне тлумачення про те, що звір із землі (Об. 13:11-18) символізує протестантську країну США. Проте виникненню та розвитку цієї інтерпретації в церкві Адвентистів сьомого дня не було приділено достатньо уваги. В цій статті простежено розвиток і визначено характерні особливості інтерпретації звіра із землі (Об. 13:11-18) серед адвентистських піонерів. Першим поштовхом для ідентифікації звіра із землі стало есхатологічне розуміння суботи як центрального питання в подіях останнього часу. Ранні адвентисти почали розглядати неділю як знак звіра із моря/папства, який буде силою нав'язаний звіром із землі – протестантською США. Г. В. Холт вперше заявив, що Америка стане союзником антихриста і є символом звіра із землі. Інші адвентисти сприйняли це тлумачення, яке отримало підтвердження у видіннях Еллен Уайт. Джон Ендрюс вніс значний вклад в біблійне обґрунтування адвентистського розуміння звіра із землі. Опіраючись на його коментарі, Джон Лафборо, Урія Сміт та Еллен Уайт поглибили та розвинули аргументацію інтерпретації звіра із землі.

**Ключові слова:** звір із землі, пророцтво, книга Об'явлення, герменевтика, Адвентисти, Апокаліпсис.