

Examining What We Believe

In The Time We Now
Live

Gregory John

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About the Author

Gregory John grew up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and as a long-time member and lay person, upholds the Church's 28 Fundamental Beliefs as true doctrines of faith which to live by. Where Gregory John differs from his fellow believers is that he is not a di-hard traditionalist when it comes to some of the early Adventist interpretations of Bible prophecy. As an avid student of the Bible, prophecy and history, Gregory John holds himself to the standard of testing what he theologically believes with the two book-ends of truth: *The Bible and History*.

Introduction

Anyone who has ever attended a Seventh-day Adventist prophecy series or read Ellen G. White's book, *The Great Controversy* will surely tell you that John the Revelator's description of the beast from the earth (Revelation 13:11-17) is symbolic of the United States of America. Furthermore, many early and modern-day Adventist commentators believe the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-17) and Revelation's false prophet (Rev. 16:13-14, 19:20, 20:10) to be the same entity. Yet Ellen White never connected the two or identified the False Prophet. The question then to be asked, "Is Revelation's false prophet a separate enti-

ty from the beast from the earth?" Under the book title, *Unveiling The False Prophet*, this question is not only examined and answered, but gives rise to potential candidate that is well suited to fulfill the role of Revelation's false prophet. As for this book, it brings forward seven declarations that Seventh-day Adventists should keep in mind when evaluating the Author's question.

Seven Declarations for Thought

When it comes to our traditionally held beliefs in regard to prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, it is important to remember that both prophecy and history are unfolding with time. Therefore, our beliefs on Bible prophecy should be tested over time to assure that our interpretations are not without error. Failure to do so, leaves us in the position that we have nothing new to learn from God's Word or history itself. The author brings forward seven declarations to keep in mind when testing what we believe.

(1) As a Church we are not defined but influenced by our prophetic beliefs.

When it comes to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's 28 Fundamental Beliefs which define us as a Christian denomination, there is no mention of the beasts from Daniel or Revelation, even though great emphasis is placed upon them in our evangelism outreach.

Regarding the Church's fundamental doctrines, none of them were founded upon Ellen White's visions, but the Bible and the Bible only! Therefore, what defines us as a Christian organization today, doesn't have to live or die on the sword when it comes to our traditionally held views on Bible prophecy.

2) J.N. Andrews influenced Adventist thinking.

J.N. Andrews in 1851 brought forward in the Church's newspaper, the *Review and Herald*, that the beast from the earth (Rev. 13:11-17) and Revelation's false prophet

(Rev. 16:13-14, 19:20, 20:10) were not only the same entity but pointed to the United States of America. It must not be overlooked that his interpretative ideas and conclusions were influenced by both earlier Protestant interpretations and the signs of the times (then current social-political issues within America).

When it comes to the deceptive and supernatural wonders of the beast from the earth (false prophet), Andrews saw the perfect fulfillment of these wonders in the rise and development of modern spiritualism within America. The author's book *Unveiling The False Prophet* not only points out but examines another spiritualistic power within America today that claims to be the true and higher order of spiritualism.

(3) Ellen White borrowed from Andrews' writings.

In evaluating Ellen White's writings, it cannot be overlooked that both language and interpretative ideas from J.N. Andrews' writings (1851-1855) were incorporated into her books, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4 (1884), and *The Great Controversy* (1888-1911). Yet when it comes to Revelation's false prophet, she never identified or connected it with the beast from the earth. Why is that?

As for the inspired writings of Ellen White, they are a seer's eye into the deeper things of God. Yet her writings as an authoritative source don't have the same authority as the Bible. Furthermore, shouldn't be used as the measuring stick when it comes to the Bible's own interpretation of prophecy.

(4) The Bible is the gold standard when testing what we believe.

Both Ellen White and J.N. Andrews held to the belief that the Bible is its own expositor

of truth. Furthermore, when it comes to the spirit of prophecy's (SOP) relationship to the Bible, the spiritual gift doesn't supersede or replace the authority of the Bible. Like the Bereans of the Bible and early Sabbatarian Adventists who prayerfully studied their Bibles without bias, we too should follow in their footsteps when it comes to seeking the truths of the Bible. Therefore, let us be mindful to not put the cart (SOP Writings) before the horse (Holy Bible) when it comes to studying and interpreting the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

(5) History affirms what the Bible declares to be truth.

When we fail to listen to history or have selective hearing in what we believe, then our understanding of the Bible's prophecies can become misguided and muddled with a mixture of truth and error. If prophecy is as a lock, then history is the key that unlocks our understanding of prophecy.

Unveiling The False Prophet not only looks to differentiate between the beast from the earth and Revelation's false prophet, but to show from history a candidate that is perhaps better poised to fill the role of Revelation's false prophet that is yet to deceive the world with wonders, including the miraculous wonder of bringing fire down from heaven (Revelation 13:13).

6) Knowledge matters.

When asked to give an answer to what you believe, can we openly defend your *Adventist* beliefs from a strong position using the Bible? Or when it comes to our interpretations of Bible prophecy, can you from a historicist point of view show how history not only supports prophecy, but lends to its future fulfillment? If not, then you may find yourself in the same position as the Protestants who had to openly defend their traditional beliefs in the face of William Miller's message and calling.

(7) Questioning our Adventist beliefs is not heresy.

When it comes to questioning and/or testing what we believe, it not heresy to do so. Furthermore, when we don't, our understanding is left resting upon the Laodicean position and mindset that we have nothing new to learn.

The purpose of this booklet is twofold: (1) To present the question, "Is Revelation's false prophet a separate entity from the beast from the earth?". (2) To encourage further examination and discussion on the possible identity of Revelation's false prophet knowing that Ellen White never identified it. In closing, may we as Seventh-day Adventists "come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). In doing so, may the Lord pour out his wisdom and understanding from heaven above in the time in which we now live!

“There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scriptures are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.” Ellen White, “Christ Our Hope.” Review and Herald, (December 20, 1892): 785

Afterword

When it comes to J.N. Andrews' philosophy on discovering what is truth, the author Gilbert Valentine had this to say, "Andrews based his systematic expositions of the movement's doctrinal positions on the conviction that *truth* was based on facts and that when facts were uncovered and clearly established, truth could be seen by all as just plain *common sense*. In this Scottish Enlightenment worldview, Andrews was shaped by the *common sense* philosophy which underlay the thought patterns of nineteenth century New England society. It derived from the Baconian scientific view that stressed the assembling of facts on any given topic and

that when this was done the truth of the matter was *self-evident*. Whether or not Andrews actually read the works of Scottish philosophers such as Francis Hutcheson (1694-1790), Thomas Reid (1710-1796) or Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), their worldview formed the ground for his own underlying, sub-conscious philosophy. It framed all his writing, whether on health, ethics or religious doctrine. Andrews saw his role as setting out *the facts* on the Sabbath truth and on the prophetic fulfillments and the assemblage of facts would form an argument that would *speak for itself*.” Valentine, Gilbert M. (2020, August 19). Andrews, John Nevins (1829–1883). *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. Retrieved December 13, 2023, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=C8VX>.

To learn more about Gregory John and his book, ***Unveiling The False Prophet***, please visit: gregoryjohnbooks.com