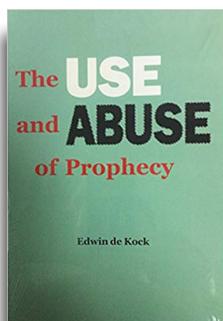


## BOOK NOTES

### Books on Prophecy, Edwin de Kock, Edinburg, TX, 2013



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The author of the books in this review is Edwin de Kock, who was born in South Africa in 1930, but has been a United States citizen since 2000. He graduated with honors from the theological course at Helderberg College in 1950. He also holds an MA in Afrikaans and Dutch literature, and a Licentiate of Trinity College, London, England. He was an educator for more than thirty-five years, in South Africa, South Korea, and the United States. He finished his career by teaching college writing at the University of Texas. His fascination with prophecy and history began more than eighty years ago when he became a Seventh-day Adventist, after his mother accepted the Sabbath as a result of reading the Ten Commandments. In addition to his books on prophecy, his work includes articles and poetry in English, Afrikaans, and Esperanto, three of the thirteen languages with which he is acquainted. At the age of eighty-eight, he finished in Esperanto an epic of more than four hundred pages, titled *La Konflikto de la Epokoj* (The Conflict of the Ages). Over the years, De Kock has also lectured and appeared on television and radio in several countries. Both he and Ria, his wife of sixty-four years, are retired at their home a few miles outside Edinburg, Texas. Their two sons with their spouses and three grandchildren also live in the United States.

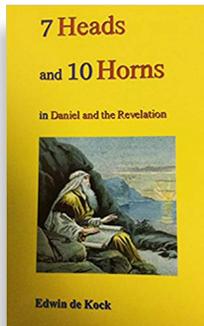
*The Use and Abuse of Prophecy*, (Edwin de Kock, Edinburg, TX: 2007; 127 pages).

In the first chapter of this book, de Kock summarizes L. E. Froom's *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, a four-volume series on the history of prophetic interpretation from the church fathers until the twentieth century. He traces two tracks of prophetic interpretation during the two thousand years of church history. The first one is the mainline historical interpretation that can already be found in the writings of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus (second and third century). It dominated prophetic interpretation until the nineteenth century.

The second track contains all the various interpretations that diverged from the historical explanation.

In chapter two, the author outlines seven principles of prophetic interpretation that provide, for him, the means to understand prophecy correctly. These principles are: 1) the internal expositors, or texts that provide an explanation (e.g., Dan 8:20–21); 2) comparing Scripture with Scripture; 3) consistency in applying the same or similar meanings to the same symbols; 4) prophetic augmentation, meaning that later visions on the same topic add further details to the prophetic scenario; 5) historical correctness and honesty, in that prophecies should be correctly measured against historical events; 6) avoiding the interpretation of prophecy with current events; and 7) respecting previous prophetic interpreters. To a large extent, we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. de Kock recognizes that there are other principles of prophetic interpretation,<sup>1</sup> but these are the principles he considers of primary importance.

The second chapter in the book is titled “History as Christian Forgery,” which deals with distortions in historical documents—even Christian documents. The next chapter asks, “But is the Bible True?” as a historical document, and the answer is a resounding “Yes.” The last chapter addresses the issue of “History and Prophecy as Christian Mythology.” Throughout history, rulers and churchmen have applied prophecies to their own time or person. For example, Bishop Eusebius believed that Constantine fulfilled Revelation 12 by casting down the dragon, which for him was paganism. More recently, Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God taught that the English and American people are descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Prophecy and history are indeed closely intertwined, but incorrect interpretations of Scripture have produced a variety of Christian mythologies. The book *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy* is a valuable introduction to the interpretation of prophecy. It highlights the impor-



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tance of proper principles of interpretation and the pitfalls the student of prophecy should avoid. The history of prophetic interpretation in chapter one provides a concise summary of the various methods of prophetic interpretation in church history and helps the reader understand why today we have preterist, futurist, and historicist interpretations of Daniel and Revelation. Every student of prophecy will benefit from the study of this small volume on prophetic interpretation.

*7 Heads and 10 Horns in Daniel and Revelation* (Edwin de Kock, Edinburg, TX: 2011; 207 pages)

In this volume the author surveys various Adventist and non-Adventist interpretations of the seven heads and ten horns and comes to the conclusion that all of them fall short of getting it right. In agreement with traditional historicism, he identifies the woman in Revelation 12:1 as God's people in the Old and New Testaments, and the woman in Revelation 17 with apostate Christianity, including Catholicism and the degenerate forms of Protestantism (p. 41). The scarlet beast he identifies with Satan.

The author introduces an interesting interpretation when he deals with the seven heads of the scarlet beast (Rev 17:3). Generally, Adventists have interpreted the seven heads as the major persecuting powers of Israel in history—namely Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, the Roman Empire, and the papacy.<sup>2</sup> de Kock begins his list with Babylon and Medo-Persia, but then he goes to Daniel 7:6 and introduces the four heads of the third beast (and the four horns in Dan 8:8) as the next four powers in Revelation 17. Thus, head number three is Macedonia and Greece, followed by the Seleucids of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt. The sixth head is the Greco-Roman Empire of Magna Graecia, Sicily, etc., and the seventh head is the papacy. Revelation 17:10 is explained as follows: The five fallen kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Macedonia and Greece, the Seleucids in Syria, and the Ptolemies in Egypt. “The one that is” is the Greco-Roman Empire of Magna Graecia, Sicily, etc., and the one that “has not yet come” is the papacy (p. 81).<sup>3</sup> The historical basis of de Kock's interpretation is the fact that “a large and influential portion of Hellas, the region that lay in the West (particularly Sicily, Italy, and

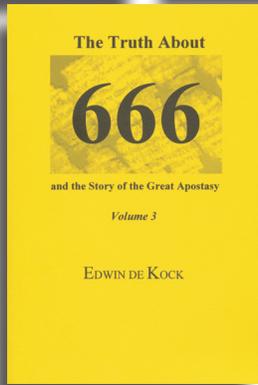
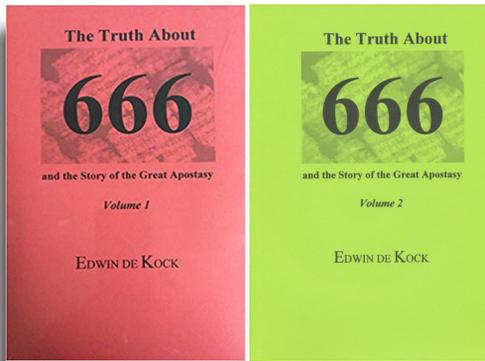
southern Gaul) at no time came under his [Alexander's] control” (p. 82). This large region, which the Romans called Magna Graecia (p. 85), is for the author the fourth horn in Daniel 8:8, out of which, following Rome's conquest of all these lands, came the little horn, the papacy. de Kock spends many pages buttressing his contention that the Roman Empire was really a Greco-Roman Empire. Thus, for him, the little horn came out of one of the four horns of Daniel 8:8–9. This is not a new interpretation; a similar position was held Taylor G. Bunch in his commentary on Daniel. He wrote, “Rome did come out of the Macedonian or western division of Alexander's empire,”<sup>4</sup> by which he meant the “Greek part of Italy.”<sup>5</sup>

By including the western Greeks in Italy in Daniel's prophecies, de Kock believes he has solved some of the problems in Daniel 8. For example, when Alexander died in 323 BC, rival generals fought for control over his empire. In 311 BC there were five of them, ten years later there were four, and in 281 BC only three were left: the Antigonids who ruled Macedonia and Greece, the Seleucids in Syria, and the Ptolemies in Egypt. To complete the four, says de Kock, we need the Greeks in Sicily and southern Italy (p. 149).

The second problem concerns the origin of the little horn. He rejects the current Adventist position that the little horn came out of one of the four winds,<sup>6</sup> which he says, “flies in the face of both the prophetic context and the historical facts” (p. 150). However, this is not just an Adventist position; the Protestant scholar A. Bloomfield wrote, “The little horn, we are told, is to come out of one of the four winds of heaven (v. 8).”<sup>7</sup> de Kock's offhand dismissal of the Adventist position may be due in part to the fact that he is not a Hebraist.<sup>8</sup>

A third problem, according to de Kock, is the phrase “in the latter time of their kingdom” (Dan 8:23). De Kock insists that this must refer to the four kingdoms. When Rome expanded its territory during the Punic wars (264–146 BC), only three of the traditional four kingdoms were still in existence. Hence the Greco-Roman Empire of Magna Graecia is needed to make up four kingdoms.<sup>9</sup>

According to this reviewer, the book *7 Heads and 10 Horns in Daniel and Revelation* is the best scholarly defense of the position that the little horn came out of one of the four horns in Daniel 8. Apart from the position whether this view is cor-



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rect or not, the book is valuable because it is full of historical events and facts that are of interest to every student of the books of Daniel and Revelation.

*The Truth About 666*, second rev. ed., 3 vols. (Edwin de Kock, Edinburg, TX: 2013; 880 pages).

The three volumes of de Kock’s magnum opus contain the most extensive treatment of the traditional historicist interpretation of the enigmatic number 666 in Revelation 13:18. At the present time, two views concerning it prevail in the Adventist Church. The traditional view, which de Kock defends, holds that it is one of the many titles of the pope in Rome; the second view teaches that it is a human number that “stands for the satanic triumvirate in contrast to the triple seven of the Godhead in Revelation 1:4–6.”<sup>10</sup>

Whatever view one holds on the issue, these three volumes are a veritable goldmine of historical information on this issue. Every Adventist interested in the meaning of 666 will benefit from reading this trilogy. My review of the three volumes was published in the *Adventist Review*, May 15, 2014.

*Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (Edwin de Kock, Edinburg, TX: 2013; 419 pages)

This book is a defense of the historicist method of prophetic interpretation. The author deals specifically with the book of Daniel, focusing on the prophecies concerning Christ and the antichrist. After a brief introduction and some pointers on how to study prophecy, he spends four chapters interpreting and explaining the historical background to the prophecy of the image in Daniel 2, and two chapters on the vision of the four beasts out of the sea in Daniel 7. As he had done in the book *7 Heads and 10 Horns in Daniel and Revelation*, he emphasizes again that the fourth power in Daniel 2 and 7 is a Greco-Roman power (p. 99).

In chapter 9, titled “The History That Never Was,” the author looks at prophecies that predict a Messianic kingdom in Old Testament times, in which “nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more” (Mic 4:3). A wonderful temple would be built (Ezek 40–48) and the Messiah would rule as king (Mic 5:2–4, Isa 9:6–7). Because general proph-

ecies are conditional (Jer 18:7–10), Israel’s failure to live up to God’s plan for them meant that this kingdom never became a reality. Nevertheless, the essentials of this prophecy will be fulfilled in the heavenly kingdom. The apocalyptic prophecies in Daniel, however, are not conditional, and they depict a very different history. Thus “God gave two sets of predictions, foretelling entirely different histories for the world: two tracks so to speak” (p. 110). Which of the two would actually take place depended on God’s people.

The next four chapters (10–13) provide a brief summary of Messianic prophecies and their fulfillment. One of the most important Messianic prophecies was the seventy-week prophecy, which predicted Christ’s ministry and His death in AD 31. In this connection the author points out that the futurist/dispensational interpretation “is simplistic, unscriptural, and has given rise to many errors” (p. 140).

Chapters 14–19 address the issue of the antichrist—the little horn, or the papacy. He traces the origin and development of the papacy and its effect on Christianity, of which the change from Sabbath to Sunday was one of the most significant. Chapter 18, “Words Against the Most High,” chronicles the blasphemous statements of the popes, who claimed to rule in the place of God, “and to speak ill of them was to slander God himself” (p. 206). The next chapter, “Tampering With God’s Law,” is an exposition of Daniel 7:25, which not only refers to the change from Sabbath to Sunday, but also to a number of other changes in the Ten Commandments. de Kock says, “The papacy has altered more than half of the Decalogue” (p. 231).

The next section of three chapters (20–22) explains the ten horns and the little horn and its activity in Daniel 7:7–8. The ten horns are seen as the Germanic tribes “who took over the Western Roman Empire and later became European nations that still exist” (p. 250). The following, the author says, are representative: “Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Alemanni, Saxons, Heruli, Lombards, Burgundians, and Suebi” (p. 255).<sup>11</sup> The little horn is the antichrist, which from the third century on has been identified by some as the Roman Church or the papacy. de Kock provides pages of historical evidence for this fact. He also refutes the preterist and futurist interpretations that identify the little horn either with the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes, or with a single

future individual who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and abolish the Christian religion (p. 272–277). For de Kock, the three uprooted horns are the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals.<sup>12</sup> He believes the Germanic Christians were not Arians,<sup>13</sup> but that they kept the Sabbath and refused to accept Rome’s insistence on Sunday-keeping (p. 290).<sup>14</sup>

In chapter 23, “The Sevenfold Prophecy and the Year-Day Principle,” de Kock defends the year-day principle, and in the next chapter he addresses the question “Why Christians Persecute Christians?” He provides a long list of atrocities committed by Christians against Christians throughout church history and concludes that the reason for Christians persecuting Christians is “that they have forgotten what their religion is supposed to be based on: love, not only for the Lord in heaven, but also for every human being on earth.” (p. 346). An appendix on “Literature and the Bible” concludes the book.

*A More Sure Word of Prophecy* (Edwin de Kock, Edinburg, TX: 201; 68 pages).

This booklet is based on four lectures presented in Havana, Cuba, in 2014, to which the author added some additional material. The book focuses on historicism, which, as the author says, “validates itself by comparing Bible predictions with events as they unfold through the centuries, and is therefore fully credible. This is not true of any other method, like Idealism, Preterism, or Futurism” (back cover). In contrast to historicism, all of them deny that the papacy is the antichrist.

de Kock begins with a survey of ancient historicist interpreters—for example, Jewish rabbis who identified the fourth beast in Daniel 7 with Rome, and the Church Fathers Irenaeus (c. 130–203), Tertullian (c. 160–240), and Hippolytus (c. 170–235), all of whom interpreted the four kingdoms in Daniel as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. He believes that historicism flourished during three periods of church history: in Apostolic and post-Apostolic times, from pre-reformation times until the early nineteenth century, and among the Millerites and present-day Seventh-day Adventists (p. 21).

The second half of the book pays particular attention to the revival of historicism after the Middle Ages, in which Augus-

tine’s view held sway. Augustine (354–430) taught that the fourth kingdom was Greece and the stone in Daniel 2 was the Catholic Church. The revival of historicism, the author believes, began with the Waldenses, Albigenses, and men like Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135–1202), Dante Alighieri (1263–1321), and the Dominican priest Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498).

The Reformers all saw the papacy as the Antichrist. The Counter-Reformation, therefore, deflected this criticism by introducing Luis Alcazar’s (1554–1613) preterism and Francisco Ribera’s (1537–1591) futurism (p. 44). Both men were Spanish Jesuits, whose teachings were eventually taken over by Protestants. Futurism in particular has become the hallmark of Protestant eschatology, as the books by Hal Lindsay and the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins show.

This booklet is a good survey and explanation of the three major methods of interpreting the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation: historicism, preterism, and futurism. It and all the other books reviewed are well researched and documented. The only thing missing are indices (scholars like indices!).

Of all the books reviewed, *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* is probably the most useful for pastors and church members. It contains a great amount of historical background information concerning the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that can be used in Bible studies, sermons, and public lectures.

While one may not agree with all the positions presented, all the books are valuable additions to the library of anyone interested in the apocalyptic prophecies of Scripture. They can be purchased from Amazon, or directly from the author [edwdecock@hotmail.com](mailto:edwdecock@hotmail.com).

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US \$8.50

1 See for example, George W. Reid, ed., *Understanding Scripture* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005).

2 F. D. Nichol, ed., "Revelation," *Seventh Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1978), 7:855. See also Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, rev. ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 521.

3 The problem with this view is that Magna Graecia was a number of independent city-states in southern Italy, but never a Graeco-Roman empire. They originated in the eighth century BC, long before the four horn replaced the kingdom of Greece. By the time the Antigonids, the Seleucids, and the Ptolemies were established in their kingdoms in the third century BC, Magna Graecia was nearing its end. When in 282 BC the Romans appeared in the Tarentine Gulf the end was near.

4 Taylor Bunch, *The Book of Daniel* (reprint, Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn, 1986), 11

5 Ibid., 113.

6 William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, rev. ed., DARCOM Series, vol. 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 50; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 125.

7 Arthur E. Bloomfield, *The End of the Days: A Study of Daniels Visions* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1961), 165.

8 The Adventist Old Testament scholar Martin Pröbstle has put together some solid arguments

for the Adventist position that the little horn comes from one of the four winds. See his book "Truth and Terror: A Text-Oriented Analysis of Daniel 8:9–14" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2006), 119–126.

9 Except that by that time most of these city-states had disappeared or were taken over by the Romans.

10 Stefanovic, 437.

11 The fact is, the Roman Empire succumbed to many more than ten Germanic tribes, it is better therefore to take the number ten as a round figure (e.g., Gen 31:7; Num 14:22; 1 Sam 1:8; etc.) indicating the multiplicity of states in contrast to the one empire of Rome.

12 More recently, Adventist scholars have identified them with the Visigoths, Vandals, and Ostrogoths. See Heinz Schaidinger, *Historical Confirmation of Prophetic Periods* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2010), 30; William H. Shea, *Daniel 1–7*, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), 168.

13 The fact is, most of the Goths were Arians or semi-Arians, some however were not; see Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 75–85; Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 245.

14 This is based on a statement by Sidonius Apollinaries, a bishop in France (c. 430–489).

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***“Be strong and take heart, all  
you who hope in the Lord”  
(Psalm 31:24 NIV)***

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