

Daniel 7 and the 1260 Years

Most of Daniel 7 is a pretty straightforward "repeat and enlargement" of Daniel 2, only using beasts rather than metals. The "enlargement" of added information is primarily concerned with the new character of the "little horn" power and the final judgment that eventually puts an everlasting end to that power.

We see in three places in the chapter that the horn destroys three other horns as it rises to power, and that its primary characteristic is that it "makes war with the saints", persecuting God's people. In fact, it is the worst persecutor of God's people of all the powers that ever existed during the whole history of the world! It also has "eyes like the eyes of man" indicating how much greater awareness, intelligence and subtlety it has than the brutal "beastly" kingdoms that came before it, so it can "think to change times and laws", and be successful at it too.

Reassuringly, it is also emphasized three times in the chapter that God's judgment would condemn the horn power and eventually take away its global kingdom and give it to the saints forever.

The prophetic statements about the successes of the horn in its warfare against God's people are very distressing, but we are given the assurance that God would permit it to carry on its evil designs only for a set time; "a time, times and the dividing of time", Dan. 7:25.

So how long is that? Is it a comparatively short time, or is it quite a long time? It is certainly the most important time prophecy given in the Bible, because it is the only time prophecy in the Bible that is repeated seven times ("seven" being the number of completeness or perfection in the Bible); twice in the book of Daniel and five times in the book of Revelation.

How long is a "time"? The Bible reliably defines its own terms, and the term "time" has been already defined for us as a "year" in chapter 4. Nebuchadnezzar was out in the field, in order to convince him of the error of his ways, for "seven times" which we understand was seven years.

So a "time" equals a year in the Bible, but how long is a Bible year? We learn from the story of Noah and the Ark that a month in the Bible is uniformly 30 days. Twelve 30-day months give us a total of 360 days per year. Therefore a "time" is 360 days.

So the formula for Dan. 7:25 is:

Time = 360 days.

Times = 2 x 360 days, which is 720 days.

"Dividing of time", or 1/2 a time, 1/2 a year, or 180 days.

Add them all together: 360 + 720 + 180 = 1260 days, or 3 1/2 years.

But three and a half years isn't a very long time for the horn power to rule the world, and doesn't seem to fit the span of the prophecy, so there is another Bible-time rule that we can apply in Numbers 14:34. "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." (For a second witness for the "year-day principle" see Eze. 4:6.)

So is it more likely the 1260 days is actually referring to 1260 years? The historical evidence does indicate so quite strongly, but lets also look at the other six places in the Bible where the 1260 is noted.

The next is in Daniel 12:7, within the larger context of Dan. 12:4-9:

v.4 "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. v. 5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. v.6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? v.7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. v. 8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? v.9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

So here we see the same formula as Dan. 7:25 repeated, and giving the added information that it has to do with the finishing of the "scattering the power of the holy people" at the "time of the end."

The third and fourth places where the 1260 years shows up are in Revelation 11:2-3, where we read that the "court" of the [heavenly] temple, the place of the [earthly] "holy city", is "tread under foot" by unholy Gentiles for "forty and two months". Therefore, 42 months times 30 days per month equals 1260 days-years, and in the next verse the same time-period is given in the language of Daniel as it describes the time given for the "two witnesses" to also work for God "clothed in sackcloth" while the Gentiles are working against God.

The fifth and sixth places where the 1260 appears are in Revelation 12:6 & 14 "And the woman [the "holy people" or the Christian Church] fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." V. 13-14, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

Here we see "the holy people" or the Christian Church, fleeing and hiding out in the wilderness from the wrath of the horn-dragon-serpent power for the same 1260 years, with the added

information that this persecuting power is motivated by Satan himself, characterized as the dragon and serpent.

The seventh and last place the 1260 shows up again is in Revelation 13:5. In the first four verses we see a beast come up that is a composite of the four beasts of Daniel, having some of the characteristics of each one as it works for "42 months" to oppose God's work in the world. It is wounded and healed, and then all the world wonders after it and worships it as it uses its blasphemous mouth to apply the attributes of God to itself. We also see that it gains the support of the second beast of Rev. 13, and has a special mark and a number identified with it, the infamous "666".

So who is this power that is the greatest enemy of God and His people throughout all human history? Its not very hard to tell if one follows the flow of history as an "historicism" interpreter of Bible prophecy. As has been brought out in the previous articles the beasts of Bible prophecy that appeared before the horn power were Babylon from 605 BC to 539 BC, Medo-Persia from 539 BC to 331 BC, Greece from 331 BC to 168 BC, and Pagan Rome from 168 BC to about 500 AD when it was finally carved up into ten sections by invading barbarian tribes, called the "ten horns" on the terrible "iron-toothed" Pagan Roman beast. It is among those ten barbarian kings that the "little horn" power arises, three of them being destroyed or "uprooted" in the process.

Actually, the three were destroyed by other horn powers in order to make way for the rise of the new "holy" Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church-State, when the last pagan king was driven from the city of Rome in 538 AD. Here is where the 1260 years comes in. Counting the 1260 years from 538 AD we travel through the darkest ages of human oppression in all of world history, known as the "Middle Ages" or "Dark Ages", and at last come to the new "Age of Enlightenment" in 1798 AD when Napoleon Bonaparte's growing atheistic French empire deposed the Pope to make way for his own ambitions, the "deadly wound" of Rev. 13:3.

But very unfortunately that's not the end of the story. The same verse states that "his deadly wound was healed and all the world wondered after the beast". When that time comes it is described in the last chapter in Daniel; 12:1 "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (just before) v.2 "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

So who are "thy people", the people of Daniel that shall be delivered? They are the ones that read and understand the prophecies of Daniel's book. v.3 "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." And v.10 "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Let us strive to be among the "wise" that shall understand.

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