

and persecute any who refused to worship God according to her dictates.

8. *Attempts to Change God's Law:* The most shocking characteristic of the little horn is its audacious effort to tamper with the very laws of God. Verse 25 reads: "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws."

The contextual setting clearly links the "times and laws" here specified to "the Most High" God. It goes without saying that ruling authorities routinely change human laws. Daniel is dealing with spiritually significant issues that affect God and His people. To say the little horn will think to change human laws would mean nothing. To say that this anti-Christian power will think to change laws established by God means a great deal. And this is exactly what we discover as the historical evidence is considered.

There are two very blatant attacks that the Papal Church has made upon God's law:

1. She has completely omitted the second commandment forbidding the worship of man-made images. Look up the ten commandments in any Catholic catechism and compare them with the ten commandments as recorded in the Bible, Exodus 20. You will notice that the second commandment, which forbids image worship, is deleted. This has been done, of course, in order to allow for the worship of statues and paintings of Mary and the saints. The tenth commandment is divided into two in order to maintain ten.

2. The second attempted change of God's law is the substitution of Sunday observance in the place of the fourth commandment, which exalts the seventh day as God's holy Sabbath.

It is of interest that both *time and law* are mentioned in Daniel's prophecy. The Aramaic word for "times" in this text is *Zimnin*, which means "set or fixed time." When considering the law of God, we immediately notice only one specific set time—the seventh day of the week as God's holy Sabbath. As the fourth commandment of God's law, it says to all mankind: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).

The Sabbath day, Saturday, has its divine origin in the Garden of Eden. This day was set aside by divine appointment as a weekly time for worship of the Creator and for rest from common labor. Since the Sabbath was established at creation week, it was given to mankind as a race; as Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man [kind]" (Mark 2:27). It cannot be argued with any biblical authority that the Sabbath is merely for Jews and not for Christians. It would be as logical to argue that the laws forbidding murder or adultery are only for Jews. While the Ten Commandments were given in written form to the Jews, they were given to them for the world as a whole.

Jesus was, of course, the founder of the New Testament Christian church. He kept holy the seventh-day Sabbath and never indicated a change to Sunday, the first day. To the contrary, when warning His followers of future events to occur after His death, He told them to "pray ye that your flight [from persecution] be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day" (Matthew 24:20). Clearly, Jesus expected His followers to continue honoring the Sabbath day as the appointed time of worship. The apostles, as well, were all Sabbath-keepers, and the New Testament mentions no change to Sunday.

But Daniel 7:25 does, however, speak of such a change. It foretells an attempted change of God's laws by a power not invested with divine authority. The "little horn," says Daniel, will "think" to change "times and laws" of "the Most High" God. The usage of the word "think" further establishes that it is *divine laws* we are considering. Human laws can be changed, and often are. But God's laws cannot actually be changed. Men may "think" they can change God's laws, but in reality, "all His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever" (Psalm 111:7-8).

The Catholic Church openly and proudly claims that she is responsible for the exaltation of Sunday in place of the Sabbath. In *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, by Peter Geiermann, we read these astonishing words:

"Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."

As the centuries ebbed on, council after council exalted Sunday and pushed down the Sabbath until almost all Christians actually believed the church did possess God-given authority to "change" the divine law. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel: "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25).

9. *To Reign for a Period of 1260 Years:* The final identifying characteristic of the little horn is the length of time it would exercise its authority over God's people. Daniel says, "and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25). The Revised Standard Version gives a more accurate translation, describing the period as "a time, two times, and half a time."

The same language occurs in Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32. In this passage Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is taken from him "till seven times pass over him." Here "seven times" is undoubtedly seven years. "A time, two times, and a half a time" is three and a half years.

Parallel prophecies in the New Testament book of Revelation call our attention to the same time period. In Revelation 12:14 we again read of "a time, and times, and half a time." In verse 6 the period is calculated as "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (NKJ). In chapter 11:2-3, "forty-two months" is equated with "one thousand two hundred and sixty days."

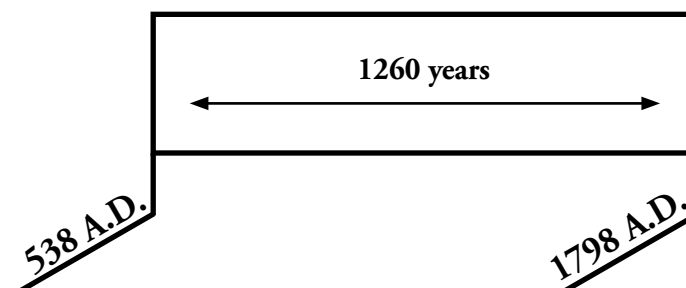
Therefore, three and a half times equals forty-two months, which is also equal to 1260 days. Twelve hundred and sixty days divided by 42 leads us to the conclusion that a prophetic month is 30 days and a prophetic year is 360 days. We conclude, then, that the period of time Daniel renders "a time, two times and a half a time" is 1260 days. But we must go one step further to define this symbolism. In Bible prophecy, a day is equal to a year. To the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord said, "I have appointed thee each day for a year" (Ezekiel 4:6).

We should expect the little horn of Daniel 7, the Papal Church, to rule for a period of 1260 years. Remarkably, this is exactly what the historical records reveal. The Roman Catholic Church-State did, indeed, possess unconquerable religious and political power for 1260 years; no more, no less.

The Papal Church was fully established in undisputed reign by 538 A.D. Prior to this time there were three Arian tribes at constant war with the claims of the church. The Heruli, the Vandals and the Ostrogoths stood in the way of Papal supremacy. One by one these three tribes were, as Daniel says, "plucked up by the roots." The Heruli were destroyed in 493 A.D. The Vandals were eradicated in 534 A.D. Finally, the Ostrogoths were overcome in 538 A.D.

Therefore, 538 marks the beginning date for the 1260 years of Daniel's prophecy. It is truly amazing to count down through time 1260 years from 538 and realize where we are. With breathtaking accuracy, the prophecy leads right to the year 1798, the very year Papal rule was broken. After exactly 1260 long, dark years, the French general Berthier, under the command of Napoleon, arrested the Pope and declared the church's reign at an end.

In our next study we will look at a prophecy in the New Testament book of Revelation that foretells the re-establishment of the Papal Church at the end of time.



The Unsealing of Daniel

Study Number 8



The pages of history are filled with long and cruel military reigns, powerful kingdoms and wealthy empires. Rarely, if ever, has power been held in benevolence and goodwill. We humans have caused one another pain beyond calculation. It seems we are bent on possessing dominance over our fellow human beings. The darker side of our passion drives us with obsessive daring to conquer and control the consciences of any and all we possibly can.

There is one chapter of our world's history that very well may be darker than any other, appropriately called the *Dark Ages*. For well over a thousand years, the mainline Christian church, bearing little resemblance to the church inaugurated by Christ and the apostles, tortured the bodies and ruined the souls of countless millions who were victims of her tyranny. Yes, there had been many evil empires before her; but they were evil and knew it. They were cruel and meant to be. They were ugly with greed and violence, but did not claim to be representatives of the one true God Jehovah. But then, and what an ominous *then*, the most horrendous horror of all history descended upon the world.

What made the *Dark Ages* so dark was the claim of their ruler to be an angel of light. The medieval church professed to be the faithful guardian of men's souls and the true representative of God's character. In reality, she enslaved all who believed her voice. She painted a picture of God so distorted that even the most clear-thinking men and women had difficulty seeing His goodness. Never was the world so tormented as under Papal supremacy. And the world has never fully recovered.

Daniel 7 clearly foretold this dark episode of human history centuries before it happened. With incredible accuracy and detail, prophetic revelation chronicled in advance the birth and long reign of the Medieval Church, while warning of her anti-Christian character.

But Daniel 7 is not all bad news. The bad news about the "little horn" is only told in loving warning so that the good news may be told and appreciated. This amazing section of prophecy also proclaims the eventual demise of this dark kingdom and the vindication of God's downtrodden people. As heavenly insights were opened to Daniel, he beheld the final judgment of God against the little horn and in favor of His faithful people.

The Four Beasts

It was "the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon" (Daniel 7:1), about 553 B.C. Daniel was now an elderly man, in his seventies, though continuing to serve in high political office as a captive slave in a foreign land. For years now he had prayed to understand the future of his people, Israel. God gave him more, much more, opening to his mind the future of the world down to the end of time. Now the time of divine revelation had come in

The Kingdom Threatened and Triumphant, Part 1

heaven's great schedule. Daniel 7 records the first in his series of visions, all of which disclose the key players and events of earth's history from Daniel's day to the very close of time.

The aged prophet lay sound asleep on his bed. Little did he know that on this night God would paint a picture in his mind that would constitute one of the most significant prophecies ever entrusted to humanity.

"I saw in my vision by night," Daniel explains, "the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another" (Daniel 7:2-3).

Without question, Daniel's vision is highly symbolic, bringing to view an ocean raging with the wind, out of which arise four beasts of prey. There could be no real significance to the vision if taken literally. These first three symbols are basic and easy to understand if we allow the Bible to interpret itself.

The *sea* is symbolic of many nations, a great populace of humanity. The New Testament book of Revelation supports this interpretation: "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues [languages]" (Revelation 17:15).

The *four winds* which stirred up the sea with rage represent war and strife between nations. In Daniel 11:40 a "whirlwind" is associated with "chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships," all of which signify war. The prophet Jeremiah also saw that the *four winds* symbolize one "nation" warring against another as "enemies" (Jeremiah 49:36-37; see also Jeremiah 25:31-33).

What, then, are the "four beasts" that arise out of this windswept seascape? The answer is crystal clear in Daniel 7:17: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." Verse 23 says the beasts represent "kingdoms."

It is clear then that this part of Daniel's dream deals with the rise and fall of political powers in human history. Specifically which kingdoms, is the logical next question. The prophet continues on to describe each beast in greater detail.

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Daniel 7:4-7).

There they are. Four great kingdoms portrayed as beasts. A lion with eagle's wings. A lopsided bear with three ribs in its mouth. A four-winged, four-headed leopard. And a terrible beast that defies zoological classification, very strong with iron teeth and ten horns.

Four world empires represented by means of symbolism is reminiscent of what God showed to King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. There, you will recall, the king had a dream in which he saw a large statue divided into four sections of different metals. Daniel interpreted the dream. The head of gold, he said, symbolized the kingdom of Babylon. The chest and arms of silver represented Media-Persia. The belly and thighs of brass, Greece. The legs of iron, the Roman Empire.

These are the four principle kingdoms dealt with in the book of Daniel. The four beasts of chapter 7 reveal the same succession of empires as brought to view in chapter 2. Babylon is the lion with eagle's wings. Jeremiah the prophet likened Babylon to a lion (see Jeremiah 50:17). The prophet Habakkuk employs the eagle, flying swiftly to eat, to represent Babylon (see Habakkuk 1:6-8). Throughout history nations have been symbolized by animals. Even today we think of the American eagle, the Russian bear and the Chinese dragon.

If Babylon is represented by the lion, then the interpretation of the remaining three beasts is locked into the kingdoms that followed in succession.

The lopsided bear is obviously Media-Persia, higher on one side than the other because the Persians were stronger than the Medes (see Daniel 8:3, 20). The three ribs in the bear's

mouth are a symbolic reference to the three main areas conquered by the Media-Persian armies. These were Lydia, Babylon and Egypt.

After reigning for more than two hundred years, the Media-Persian Empire gave way to the Grecian kingdom led by Alexander the Great. Symbolized by the leopard with four wings, the Greeks swiftly conquered the Persians. The leopard itself is known to be the fastest creature on earth. The addition of four wings must denote the amazing speed with which Alexander became the undisputed ruler of the greatest empire yet to arise in the history of nations. In less than a decade the incredible military task was achieved.

But Alexander's glory was short-lived. He died in 323 B.C. at the young age of 32. It is here that the "four heads" have their significance. After a period of contention, the kingdom was divided into four principle parts. Alexander's four most prominent generals laid claim to various territories. Ptolemy took control of Egypt, Palestine and a section of Syria. Cassander took Macedonia and Greece. Lysimachus ruled Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor. Seleucus possessed part of Asia Minor, Northern Syria and Mesopotamia.

Following Greece, Daniel's dream introduces a fourth beast. This is the one so "terrible" it defied description. Unlike any animal in nature, it had iron teeth and ten horns. Daniel is told by the interpreting angel that "the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth" (Daniel 7:23).



If Babylon is the first beast, Media-Persia the second, and Greece the third, it follows that whatever empire emerged in history after Greece must be the fourth. Historical records are unmistakably clear. The Iron Monarchy of Pagan Rome arose to power next in the stream of time. The iron teeth call to our attention the ruthless cruelty and indomitable strength of Rome. City after city, nations and tribes alike, were brought low by the devouring military prowess of this mighty kingdom. Those who were not utterly destroyed were made slaves.

The ten horns symbolize "ten kings that shall arise" (verse 24). Due to repeated invasions into the empire by barbarian Germanic tribes, a number of divisions developed. Eventually there were ten separate mini-monarchies established to form what we recognize today as the foundational nations of modern Europe:

1. The Franks (modern France)
2. The Anglo-Saxons (England)
3. The Alemanni (Germany)
4. The Lombards (Italy)
5. The Visigoths (Spain)
6. The Suevi (Portugal)
7. The Burgundians (Switzerland)
8. The Heruli (extinct)
9. The Vandals (extinct)
10. The Ostrogoths (extinct)

The Little Horn

Daniel's vision of earthly kingdoms did not end with the fourth beast. The Pagan Roman Empire was never conquered by another political-military force. But it was absorbed into a rising religious force whose dominion would be even more cruel and lengthy. It is this power that Daniel next sees in his impressive dream:

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Daniel 7:8).

Here is represented a fifth power. It arises out of the divided Roman Empire. All one really need do is consult the history books in order to identify the "little horn" power here brought to view. Ask one simple question: What kingdom inherited the authority of the Roman Empire as it ebbed away off the stage of history? The annals of antiquity give one clear answer: The Papal Roman Church-State.

Although the "little horn" is that easily interpreted, Bible prophecy goes to great lengths to fasten this vital nail in its sure place. There are at least nine unmistakable identifying characteristics given in Daniel 7 to pinpoint Papal Rome as the "little horn."

1. *Geographic Location:* Daniel is told that the "little horn" comes to power "among" the ten horns that existed before it. As we have already noted, the Pagan Roman Empire fragmented into ten European kingdoms. Here, then, we have the geographic location for the emergence of the little horn. It would arise out of the rubble of divided Rome, among the Western European nations. This first characteristic fits the Roman Church perfectly. She did, indeed, ascend to dominance in Western Europe as the successor to Imperial Rome.

2. *Time of Ascendancy:* The second characteristic is the logical counterpart to geographic location. Since the little horn arose out of the crumbling Pagan Roman Empire, it follows that it would emerge "after" (Daniel 7:24) Pagan Rome falls. This gives us not only geography but also time. Imperial Rome reigned from about 168 B.C. to 476 A.D. By 538 A.D., the Roman church was established as the uncontested new empire of dominance.

3. *Destroys Three Kingdoms As It Rises to Power:* Daniel was shown that "three" of the ten horns were "plucked up by the roots" as the little horn amassed its empire. Later in chapter 7, Daniel says the angel told him this means that the little horn "shall subdue three kings" (verse 24). Previously in this study we listed the ten horns by name. You may want to check that list again at this juncture. Notice that while seven are still in existence to this day, three of them are identified as extinct. The Heruli, the Vandals and the Ostrogoths were, indeed, "plucked up by the roots." They are non-existent due to the fact that they vehemently opposed the church's rule, but without success. They were relentlessly overthrown until there was no trace of their posterity left.

4. *A Human Authority to Dictate Its Belief System:* "In this horn," Daniel says, "were eyes like the eyes of a man" (Daniel 7:8). In the Bible, eyes symbolize understanding. Paul prayed that "the eyes of your understanding" might be "enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). The little horn is not divinely led with heavenly understanding of truth. Rather, this power is under human guidance apart from God. A human figure occupies a very lofty position as arbiter of truth. This characteristic is accurately fulfilled in the more-than-human status conferred upon the popes.

5. *A Mouth Speaking Great Things Against God:* Verses 8 and 25 warn that the little horn will use its authority to speak shocking words against God Himself. The claims of the Papal Church certainly do fit this characteristic. For starters, the church claims infallibility. This alone is an incredibly bold rival claim against God. But the Papal system doesn't stop there. She claims the power to forgive sins through her priesthood, apart from which there is no pardon from God. She claims to stand as mediator between God and mankind, and unabashedly exalts her human leader, the pope, to the status of deity. He is, as it were, God on earth.

6. *A Persecuting Power:* Daniel was shown as this powerful kingdom employed its influence and "made war with the saints and prevailed against them" (Daniel 7:21, 25). It is estimated that Hitler murdered six million Jews, and that Stalin executed perhaps fifty to seventy million of his own people. But the Papal Church put to death over one hundred million men, women and children who chose to worship God according to conscience. The Papal persecution of Christians who wanted nothing more than freedom is, without question, the most extensive persecution of human beings in recorded history.

7. *A Different Kind of Power:* The little horn kingdom would be "diverse" or different from those that reigned before it (Daniel 7:24). All the previous powers brought to view were primarily political kingdoms worshiping pagan gods. The Papacy arose as a primarily religious power, a church, professing to worship the true God and claiming the name of Christ. Then, as a church, she employed the military might of various political kingdoms to fight her wars