

The Book of Daniel - Number One-Hundred and Sixty-Two

Rome's Prophetic Time: Unveiling the Vision

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Rome establishes the vision, and Rome is revealed in its “time”. This is a statement by Sister White where she states what should be understood as the obvious:

“Revelation is a sealed book, but it is also an opened book. It records marvelous events that are to take place in the last days of this earth’s history. The teachings of this book are definite, not mystical and unintelligible. In it the same line of prophecy is taken up as in Daniel. Some prophecies God has repeated, thus showing that importance must be given to them. The Lord does not repeat things that are of no great consequence.” Manuscript Releases, volume 9, 8.

The “Lord does not repeat things that are of no great consequence” and the “times” associated with Rome are repeated over and over. It is of “great consequence” to understand the “time” associated with Rome, for that is what reveals Rome as the subject that establishes the vision. Seven times the twelve hundred and sixty years of papal rule is directly referenced in Daniel and Revelation.

And 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: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. Daniel 7:25.

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 swore 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. Daniel 12:7.

But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. Revelation 11:2.

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. Revelation 11:3.

And the woman 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. Revelation 12:6.

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. Revelation 12:14.

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. Revelation 13:5.

These seven direct references present different specific prophetic characteristics of Rome. It is in those passages that Rome is revealed. Sister White adds that these periods are also represented as “three years and a half or 1260 days.” You do not find either three and a half years or twelve hundred and sixty days” in the Bible. Sister White is simply applying the computation of the seven references accordingly.

“In chapter 13 (verses 1–10) is described another beast, ‘like unto a leopard,’ to which the dragon gave ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once held by the ancient Roman empire. Of the leopardlike beast it is declared: ‘There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.... And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.’ This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy.

“‘Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.’ And, says the prophet, ‘I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death.’ And again: ‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.’ The forty and two months are the same as the ‘time and times and the dividing of time,’ three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God’s people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, ‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.’” The Great Controversy, 439.

With the inspired authority to also consider three and a half years as the “time” which “reveals” Rome, other biblical references to Rome emerge.

But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land. Luke 4:25.

The three and a half years of Elijah, connects the time with Jezebel, who is the symbol of papal Rome in the church of Thyatira.

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Revelation 2:20, 21.

The “time” given the fourth church, represented by Jezebel, is also a “space.”

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. James 5:17.

Commenting on the forty-two months being the same as the thousand two hundred and threescore days, Sister White identifies the period as “those days,” which Christ referred to.

“The periods here mentioned—‘forty and two months,’ and ‘a thousand two hundred and threescore days’—are the same, alike representing the time in which the church of Christ was to suffer oppression from Rome. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798. At that time a French army entered Rome and made the pope a prisoner, and he died in exile. Though a new pope was soon afterward elected, the papal hierarchy has never since been able to wield the power which it before possessed.

“The persecution of the church did not continue throughout the entire period of the 1260 years. God in mercy to His people cut short the time of their fiery trial. In foretelling the ‘great tribulation’ to befall the church, the Saviour said: ‘Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.’ Matthew 24:22. Through the influence of the Reformation the persecution was brought to an end prior to 1798.” *The Great Controversy*, 266.

Christ and Sister White identify the expression of “those days,” as the “time,” which identifies papal Rome. When Daniel speaks of the persecution which followed the placing of the papacy on the throne of the earth in verse thirty-one of chapter eleven, he speaks of that time of persecution as “many days.”

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Daniel 11:31–33.

Rome is revealed in connection with the prophetic time which is associated with it, that is why Paul says the man of sin will be revealed in “his time”. The fact that Rome establishes the vision, which if we do not know, we perish, identifies why that prophetic time is represented so often, and in so many ways, for God “does not repeat things that are of no great consequence.” In the previous verses, the end of the period of time is also marked.

And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. Daniel 11:33–35.

The “time of the end” “is yet for a time appointed.” The Hebrew word “appointed” is “moed,” and means a fixed time or an appointment. The prophetic relevance and importance of the “time appointed,” in the book of Daniel is identified by how often it is referenced. Very few Laodicean Adventists, if any, recognize that 1989, was a “time of the end,” and therefore 1989 was an appointed time. It was an appointment made by God, when He would unseal the knowledge for the

movement of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. For this reason, the book of Daniel provides witnesses to the fact that the “time appointed” marks the arrival of “the time of the end”. In Daniel eight, this prophetic symbol is set forth.

And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. Daniel 8:16–19.

As with chapter eleven, the word “end,” in “time of the end” in these verses is a different Hebrew word than is translated as “appointed.” The time of the end is representing a period that commences at the time appointed. The “time appointed” (moed) is an appointment, and the time of the end (the Hebrew word “gets”) is a period of time, which begins at the time appointed. It is the “time” that reveals Rome, and that “time” is so important that the end of that period of time, and the period which follows the end of that time, are represented by several witnesses. In verse twenty-four of chapter eleven of Daniel, pagan Rome is identified as ruling the world for a “time.”

A symbolic “time,” is three hundred and sixty years, for there are three hundred and sixty days in a biblical year. Pagan Rome ruled for a “time,” and papal Rome ruled for “a time, times and half a time.” Modern Rome rules for a symbolic “hour,” or a symbolic “forty-two months.” There is no prophetic time after 1844, so the “hour” and the “forty-two months” is the period from the soon-coming Sunday law unto the close of human probation. But pagan Rome ruled supremely from the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, until Constantine moved the capital of the empire to Constantinople in the year 330. We know the following verses are speaking of pagan Rome, for Christ is represented as the “prince of the covenant” that “shall be broken” when He was crucified. The power then ruling was pagan Rome, so the verses we are now going to look at identify pagan Rome.

And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers’ fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time. Daniel 11:21–24.

The word “against” in the last phrase of the verses actually means “from,” and the verse is saying that pagan Rome shall rule (forecast his devices) “from” its stronghold (the City of Rome) for three hundred and sixty years.

“‘VERSE 24. He shall enter peacefully even upon the fattest places of the province: and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers’ fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strongholds, even for a time.’

“The usual manner in which nations had, before the days of Rome, entered upon valuable provinces and rich territory, was by war and conquest. Rome was now to do what had not been done by the fathers or the fathers’ fathers; namely, receive these acquisitions through peaceful means. The custom, before unheard of, was now inaugurated, of kings leaving by legacy their kingdoms to the Romans. Rome came into possession of large provinces in this manner.

“And those who thus came under the dominion of Rome derived no small advantage therefrom. They were treated with kindness and leniency. It was like having the prey and spoil distributed among them. They were protected from their enemies, and rested in peace and safety under the aegis of the Roman power.

“To the latter portion of this verse, Bishop Newton gives the idea of forecasting devices from strongholds, instead of against them. This the Romans did from the strong fortress of their seven-hilled city. ‘Even for a time;’ doubtless a prophetic time, 360 years. From what point are these years to be dated? Probably from the event brought to view in the following verse.

“‘VERSE 25. And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.’

“By verses 23 and 24 we are brought down this side of the league between the Jews and the Romans, BC 161, to the time when Rome had acquired universal dominion. The verse now before us brings to view a vigorous campaign against the king of the south, Egypt, and the occurrence of a notable battle between great and mighty armies. Did such events as these transpire in the history of Rome about this time?—They did. The war was the war between Egypt and Rome; and the battle was the battle of Actium. Let us take a brief view of the circumstances that led to this conflict.” Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, 271–273.

In the following verses the time appointed and the end are again referenced by Daniel.

And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. And both these kings’ hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed. Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land. At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. Daniel 11:25–29.

In chapter eight, Gabriel identified that the “chazon,” vision of the twenty-five hundred and twenty years, would conclude at the time appointed, and then the period represented by “the time of the

end” would begin. In this passage, the time appointed is the end of the three hundred and sixty years that pagan Rome would rule the world supremely. In this passage there is no “time of the end,” for there was nothing sealed up that was to be unsealed at the end of that period of history.

In Daniel chapter eight, the vision of the “last end” of the indignation, which was the twenty-five hundred and twenty years that concluded at the same time as the twenty-three hundred years, was sealed up to the “time of the end,” for in 1844, which was the appointed time of both visions, the light of the third angel was unsealed. In Daniel eleven, verses thirty to thirty-six, at the end of the “first indignation” in 1798, there was to be a period represented as the “time of the end,” when the light of the first angel was unsealed. Therefore, the time prophecy of pagan Rome did not have a time of the end, but only a time appointed, identifying when the three hundred and sixty years concluded, but the time appointed in 1798, and the time appointed in 1844, both unsealed a message that was to be understood in the period represented as the “time of the end”.

Rome is revealed as it is represented prophetically within its prophetic time. “Time, times and dividing of time”, “forty-two months”, “twelve hundred and sixty days”, and “three and a half years” are some of the various symbols that represent the period when the papacy ruled during the Dark Ages. The period of time that links the movement of the Millerites to the movement of the one hundred and forty-four thousand is one hundred and twenty-six years. One hundred and twenty-six is also a symbol of twelve hundred and sixty days, for it is a tithe or a tenth of that amount. The one hundred and twenty-six years from the rebellion of 1863, unto the time appointed in 1989, identifies 1989 as God’s appointment with His last day people.

We will continue this study in the next article.

“How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions, or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying. Men entertain errors, when the truth is clearly marked out, and if they would but bring their doctrines to the word of God, and not read the word of God in the light of their doctrines, to prove their ideas right, they would not walk in darkness and blindness, or cherish error. Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions, and they mislead themselves and deceive others by their misinterpretations of God’s word. As we take up the study of God’s word, we should do so with humble hearts. All selfishness, all love of originality, should be laid aside. Long-cherished opinions must not be regarded as infallible. It was the unwillingness of the Jews to give up their long established traditions that proved their ruin. They were determined not to see any flaw in their own opinions or in their expositions of the Scriptures; but however long men may have entertained certain views, if they are not clearly sustained by the written word, they should be discarded.

“Those who sincerely desire truth will not be reluctant to lay open their positions for investigation and criticism, and will not be annoyed if their opinions and ideas are crossed. This was the spirit cherished among us forty years ago. We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided.

One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. Solemnity characterized these councils of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood, it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that we might be one, as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed. If one brother rebuked another for his dullness of comprehension in not understanding a passage as he understood it, the one rebuked would afterward take his brother by the hand, and say, 'Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus is with us; let us keep a humble and teachable spirit;' and the brother addressed would say, 'Forgive me, brother, I have done you an injustice.' Then we would bow down in another season of prayer. We spent many hours in this way. We did not generally study together more than four hours at a time, yet sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth for our time. On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through God's appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one Spirit.

"We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man's opinions. We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance, upon which there were varying opinions. But the burden of every soul was to bring about a condition among the brethren which would answer the prayer of Christ that his disciples might be one as he and the Father are one. Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared, we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, that each one might have an opportunity to go to God in prayer, and without conversation with others, study the point of difference, asking light from heaven. With expressions of friendliness we parted, to meet again as soon as possible for further investigation. At times the power of God came upon us in a marked manner, and when clear light revealed the points of truth, we would weep and rejoice together. We loved Jesus; we loved one another.

"In those days God wrought for us, and the truth was precious to our souls. It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. We are in the school of the Master here, that we may be trained for the school above. We must learn to bear disappointment in a Christ-like manner, and the lesson taught by this will be of great importance to us.

"We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed." Review and Herald, July 26, 1892.