

The Power of the Little Horn to Change Times and Laws

Daniel 7:23-25; Ephesians 6:12

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Since the “little horn” in Daniel 7 is revealed by God in Daniel’s dream to be a chief persecutor against the saints of the Lord in making war against them and in prevailing over them, it is certainly not trivial or wasted time to seek to identify who this Little Horn is in history. If it was important enough for the Lord to include this Little Horn in Daniel’s dream, and if Daniel was particularly interested in knowing who this Little Horn that became great was, then it is important for us to identify who the Little Horn is. In fact, I submit that the Little Horn in Daniel 7 is the same as the “man of sin” and “son of perdition” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; is the same as the “antichrist” in 1 John 2:18; and is the same as the “image of the beast” in Revelation 13:15-16 who requires all to receive the mark of the beast in order to buy and sell. This is not a light subject. I know it is troubling—it was troubling to our Protestant/Reformed forefathers as well who declared in 1647 in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (25:6):

There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.

Any claim made by an individual (other than Christ) to be the visible head of the church on earth is to blasphemously usurp the office of Jesus Christ as the only Head of His Church (Vatican I, 1870):

... all the faithful of Christ **must believe** that the holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff possess the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and is **true vicar of Christ, and head of the whole Church**, and father and teacher of all Christians...

That is just another example of the blasphemous speaking of “great words against the most High” (Daniel 7:25). The main points are: (1) The Little Horn Changes Times and Laws (Daniel 7:23-25); (2) The Extended Length of Time That the Little Horn Persecutes the Saints (Daniel 7:25).

I. The Little Horn Changes Times and Laws (Daniel 7:23-25).

A. The Lord expects us to take the characteristics of the Little Horn given to us in Daniel 7 and then to locate that entity in history which has those very characteristics. This we have sought to do. Let’s review.

1. The Little Horn appears on the head of the Roman beast—it is connected to Rome—Capital in Rome—*Pontifex Maximus*.

2. The Little Horn appears among 10 horns (barbarian kingdoms) when the Western Roman Empire fell and was divided (476—Romulus Augustus deposed). The 10 horns gain power to rule after the first century (Revelation 17:12—likewise the little horn). When the last emperor is deposed in Rome, the papacy replaces him and fills the vacuum of leadership in Rome, growing to become mightier than the 10 kingdoms. Three of the barbarian kingdoms fall before the Little Horn (Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths in the 5th and 6th centuries).

3. The Little Horn is different from the other kingdoms in that it grows to gain great ecclesiastical and political power.

4. The Little Horn has eyes of knowledge—in fact it claims an infallible knowledge in matters of faith and morality.

5. The Little Horn speaks great words of blasphemy against the Lord—the papacy

claims the prerogatives and titles of God/Christ.

6. The Little Horn grows to become “stout”, stronger than the other horns (kingdoms) in exercising power over kings and kingdoms (deposing/crowning kings).

7. The Little Horn makes war against the saints in persecuting the saints and requiring submission to his decrees.

8. There are two more characteristics of the Little Horn from our text today.

B. Beginning in Daniel 7:23, the interpreting angel answers Daniel’s further questions concerning the 4th beast/10 horns/Little Horn.

1. The identity of the 4th beast (Daniel 7:23)—Rome.

2. The identity of the 10 horns (Daniel 7:24)—Barbarian kingdoms that divided the Western Roman Empire (4th-5th centuries).

3. The identity of the Little Horn (Daniel 7:25).

C. The little horn would claim a supreme legislative power to change **TIMES and LAWS**.

1. What does it mean to change **TIMES**? This refers to the power to add to or to alter appointed religious feasts and holy days. This is not a power that Jesus (the ONLY Head of the Church) has given to any person on earth (worship is appointed by God alone). The holy days of the Old Testament were all appointed by God and were shadows abolished by the Lord Jesus on the cross (Colossians 2:14-17). Neither Jesus nor the apostles appointed or celebrated Christmas or Easter as holy days to be observed by Christians (“teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” Matthew 28:20). The only appointed holy day given to us to celebrate in the New Covenant is the Lord’s Day (Revelation 1:10).

a. The papacy has changed “times” by appointing countless holy days throughout history. To impose such holy days is exercising a great oppressive power over a nation/people (it is control).

b. “Holy Days of Obligation” are mandated by the papacy to be observed by all Roman Catholics in which they must attend the Mass and abstain from unnecessary works (Canon 1247 of the Code of Canon Law). The “Holy Days of Obligation” required by the papacy (in 2023) have been greatly narrowed since 1969: (1) The Solemnity of Mary—the mother of God (January 1); (2) The Ascension of Jesus (May 18); (3) The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15); (4) All Saints’ Day (November 1); (5) The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (December 8); (6) Christmas (December 25). These are not optional, but bind the conscience of those in the Church of Rome.

c. It was Pope Gregory XIII (1582) that decreed by way of a papal bull that the calendar used for over a thousand years (the Julian calendar) be changed among Catholic nations. One can certainly argue that the Gregorian calendar rectified errors in the Julian calendar, but still it was an unparalleled exercise of papal power in changing times.

2. The Little Horn also would change **LAWS**. The papacy’s power in adding to or subtracting from established laws is well known throughout history.

a. In the Code of Canon Law of the Church of Rome, we see the supreme authority of the papacy clearly established to change laws.

Canon 331

By virtue of his office he possesses supreme, full, immediate, and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he is always able to exercise freely.

Canon 333 (Par.3)

No appeal or recourse is permitted against a sentence or decree of the Roman Pontiff.

b. The papacy claims power to legislate laws concerning doctrine and morals for

the Universal Church throughout the whole world (e.g. The Immaculate Conception of Mary in 1854, The Infallibility of the Papacy in 1869-70, The Assumption of Mary in 1950).

c. The papacy changes God's law making images and kneeling before them contrary to the 2nd Commandment (Exodus 20:4-5).

d. The papacy changes God's law in forbidding marriage to priests and commanding to abstain from meats—these are marks of the apostasy (1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Pope Gregory VII and the Second Lateran Council (1139) forbade the marriage of the priesthood. Pope Nicholas I (866) prohibited meat on Fridays.

e. The papacy changes Christ's glory to make the pope the visible head of the universal church on earth.

f. The papacy changes God's authority and claims the power to forgive sins (*A New Catechism of the Catholic Faith*, p. 62).

Does the priest really forgive your sins?

With the power of Christ given to him in the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the priest really forgives your sins.

g. The papacy has legislated through its power the deposing of kings. Pope Gregory VII (1075) decreed "that it may be permitted to him to depose emperors" and asserted the papal power to "absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men." Also, the papacy has claimed power to make (crown) kings as Pope Leo III did December 25, 800 when he crowned Charlemagne, emperor of the Roman Empire.

3. I dare say there has not been a more powerful dynasty ruling in the Western world nor for as long as the papacy has ruled from its throne in Rome. The power of the papacy to change times and laws that effect church, state, and family are demonstrable throughout history. This characteristic of the Little Horn is also realized in the papacy.

II. The Extended Length of Time That the Little Horn Persecutes the Saints (Daniel 7:25).

A. The interpreting angel gives a time in which the persecution of the saints by the little horn would continue: "a time, times, and dividing of a time" (Daniel 7:25).

1. How long is this period of time? When we turn to the prophetic Book of Revelation, I submit we will find the answer (Revelation 12:14; Revelation 13:5; Revelation 12:6). When we compare these passages in Revelation, we see that "a time, times, and half a time" are the same period as 42 months (three years and six months) and are the same period as 1,260 days (three years and six months). So as we turn back to Daniel 7:25, we can calculate this unusual reckoning of time this way: "a time"=1 year, "times"=2 years, "the dividing of time"=1/2 year. In other words, it is the same period of time as in Revelation: 3 ½ years, or 42 months, or 1,260 days.

2. Is this period of time to be interpreted literally or prophetically? In other words, is the period of time that the Little Horn wages war against the saints and fulfills all the characteristics in Daniel 7 to be realized in a short period of 3 ½ years or is this a much longer period of time? Again we must look to Scripture to interpret Scripture (even to interpret these prophetic numbers).

a. **Daniel 9:24** foretells the length of time that would pass until the first coming of Christ, His death, and the early ministry of the apostles—70 weeks. But if that were literally 70 weeks of days it would be 490 days or about 1 year and 4 months from the time of Daniel to the time of Christ. The angel of God did not mean 70 weeks of days, but rather 70 weeks of years (in which the 490 prophetic days are 490 actual years until the fulfillment). We will consider this very closely when we get to Daniel 9.

b. **Numbers 14:34.** Here we find the Lord judging Israel based upon a Day-Year Principle. Twelve spies had been sent out into the land where they explored Canaan for 40 days. Ten of the

twelve spies returned with an evil report and led Israel into disbelief of God’s promise to give them the land of the Canaanites. God gave them 40 years of wandering in the wilderness—a year for a day (40 years for 40 days).

c. **Ezekiel 4:5-6.** Ezekiel is first commanded to lie on his left side for 390 days as exhibiting the sins of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Ezekiel 4:5). Then the Lord commands Ezekiel to lie on his right side for 40 days as exhibiting the sins of the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Ezekiel 4:6). Once again, the Lord states there is a year for every day.

3. “The time, times, and dividing of time” is 1,260 prophetic days which according to the established day-year principle is 1,260 actual years (a year for every day). Is there a kingdom on earth that has waged war against and oppressed the faithful witnesses of Christ for as long as the papal kingdom of antichrist? I know of none. I submit that this final characteristic of the little horn is likewise realized in the papacy.

B. Application

1. “God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship” (WCF, 20:2). The Papacy claims the power to enslave the conscience of men to mere human tradition. Christ sets us free to walk in His commandments (2 Corinthians 1:24). Jesus (as the alone Head of the Church) has given authority to His faithful ministers and elders to rule on His behalf in His Church, but their authority is bound by the written Word of God—not by the mere words or traditions of men (“Thus saith the Lord”).

2. The Papacy wages war for 1,260 years against God’s faithful witnesses who stand for Scriptural authority alone over tradition and papal authority in doctrine, worship, church, state, and family. The greatest and most important preparation we can make in the war the enemy wages against us is spiritual preparation (that is not to discount food preparation as did Joseph in Egypt). But we must realize that the real enemies are not political leaders, religious leaders, economic leaders, technological leaders, but rather spiritual enemies in high places (Ephesians 6:12). Let us not resort to mere earthly resources in fighting this battle. Let us be armed with God’s armor—the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit and prayer. We cannot be lazy, indifferent, or lukewarm, for we are in a battle for the souls of our children, our brethren, our neighbor. Jesus is King and has already won this battle. We are more than conquerors. And we overcome this enemy now as the faithful witnesses of Christ have always overcome him (Revelation 12:11)—a redeeming testimony, a living testimony, a dying testimony.

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