



Conducted by
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"Would you please explain Daniel 12, verse 7."

This month we have another question based on that fascinating book of prophecy, the book of Daniel.

The expression to which the question refers is *'time, two times and half a time'* (R.S.V. rendering) and to understand it we need to look at the **11th Chapter of the book of Daniel**. That chapter introduces a series of prophecies relating to world history after the fall of the Babylonian Empire to an alliance of the Medes and Persians, as recorded in **Dan. 5**. The 31st verse of that chapter tells us that Darius the Mede ruled after the death of Belshazzar, but history reveals that it was the Persians who became the dominant partner in that alliance (**ch.11;2**), whilst the Medes faded into the background.

Some time ago I replied to a question concerning the 'Inter-testamental Period', and to avoid too much repetition, it would be useful to refer to what I wrote at that time.

It is sufficient to say that **Daniel 11** predicts the conflict, which developed between the Persians and the rapidly rising, Macedonian, or Greek Empire, of which Alexander the Great was the central figure: a conflict, which resulted in the defeat of Persia.

However, after the early death of Alexander, predicted by **Dan. 11:4**, power was not retained by his immediate family as might have been expected, but went to his many generals who fought among themselves for control of the empire. It is often claimed that, before he died, when he was asked to whom he left the empire, Alexander replied, *"To him who can take it"*.

STRUGGLE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA

Eventually, two rulers remained to face each other in a contest for supreme power. These were Ptolemy, who is described as **"king of the South"**, which was Egypt, and

the "king of the North", which was Syria, ruled by the Seleucid dynasty, whose successive rulers took the name **Antiochus**.

We should bear in mind that, since at this point Daniel's prophecy relates to the future of Palestine and the Jews; these two kingdoms, Syria and Egypt, are called 'North' and 'South' only in relation to the situation of the Jews.

At first Judea and the Jews formed part of the kingdom of Ptolemy, but as you may see from a map, because of their unfortunate geographical situation, lying between the two warring kingdoms, they were overrun, first by the army of Antiochus as he marched south to attack Egypt; and then by the Egyptian army as Ptolemy struck back. This conflict is described in **Dan. 11, from verse 5**.

The most notorious of these Syrian rulers was **Antiochus 4th**, whose vanity led him to call himself '**Antiochus Epiphanes**'. The word 'Epiphanes, which means 'Glorious' or 'Brightness', reveals his opinion of himself. The people, however, called him 'Epimanes', a word that means 'mad'. This man is referred to in **ch.11: 21-25**.

THE SYRIAN OPPRESSION

The intensity of the suffering, which he inflicted on the Jews, is well known and well documented, and we need not discuss it here. It is sufficient to say that the period of time during which they were oppressed by Syria, for which Antiochus 4th responsible, lasted for **three and a half years, or 42 months, or 1260 days (ch.12: 6-7)**.

This is the period which in prophetic language, is expressed as time, two times and half a time.

'Time' represents one year.

'Times' (or two times) equals two years.

'half a time' represents six months.

This gives a total of three and a half years.

THE HISTORICAL DATES

This persecution of the Jews, instigated by Antiochus, began in **June 168 BC** and continued to **December 164 BC**, a period of three and a half years, as predicted by Daniel.

They enjoyed a period of independence, lasting for 100 years. This independence ended when they foolishly invited the Roman general Pompeii to enter Judea. The Romans came - and they stayed! We know that they were still there when the Lord Jesus was born.

However, the expression '**time, times and half a time**' relates to the three and a half years of Syrian oppression which the prophet foresaw.

The subsequent liberation of the Jews from Syrian oppression is still celebrated by them in the 'Feast of Lights', and it is therefore important to remember that the expression which we are now considering relates to a *definite period in the history of God's ancient people*, during which they endured persecution by the 'Gentiles' (i.e. 'the Nations') which was ended by a great deliverance.

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES

In the **Book of Revelation**, the same period of time is also used to represent a period of persecution or suffering, inflicted on God's *new* people, the Church, but also as a period which ends with their vindication and the defeat of the oppressor.

Five times this period is referred to in terms of 'days' or 'months' or 'times' or 'years'.

1. In **Rev. 11:2** we read that the 'Holy City' would be 'trampled', that is violently overrun, by the Gentiles; a clear figurative allusion to the persecution of Jerusalem by Antiochus. This would be for **42 months**, (which are 1260 days, or three and a half years).

2. The same chapter mentions the **1260 days**, in v.3. Notice here the significant reference to 'sackcloth', the emblem of grief and mourning.
3. **Verse 9** speaks of '**three days and a half**', using here the well-known prophetic symbolism in which a day is used to represent a year; hence **three years and a half**.
4. **Verse 11** again expresses this period as '**three and a half days**', after which God's witnesses rise again.
5. And, in **ch.12: 6**, the Church, represented as a 'radiant woman', is driven into the wilderness by Satan, (the 'Dragon' of ch.20: 2), for that familiar period **1260 days**, where she is nourished and cared for by God.

It is clear that these verses in the Revelation refer to the same period of time, viewed from different angles, and are meant to remind us of that piece of ancient history.

They represent, as in the book of Daniel, a period of opposition and persecution endured by the Church, the 'true Israel of God' (**Gal. 6:16**), but which lasts for only a limited time, because God has determined both the final deliverance and victory of His people and the destruction of the evil one responsible for their oppression.

Compare the reference to Antiochus, at the end of **Dan. 11:45**, and **Rev. 20:10**.

I also heartily recommend a comparison of **Daniel chaps. 11 and 12**, with **Revelation chaps. 11 and 12**. At the very least this makes an interesting study!

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