

How Are We to Understand the Period of 1,260 Days?

When Does It Occur?

Revelation 11-13

The End Times

In my last post, we completed **Revelation 10:8-11** dealing with the **Yochanan Eats the Scroll**. In this post, we look at an introduction of **Revelation Chapters 11-13** addressing the **1,260 Days**.

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 11-13 ¹

Historicist Approach:

- The measuring of the **Temple** represents the determining of the true remnant church in the midst of the papal church at the time of the Reformation.
- The 1,260 days are 1,260 years, being the duration of the power of papal Rome.
- The two witnesses represent the Waldenses, Albigenses, and other who resisted the papacy in the years before the Reformation.
- The woman is the visible church persecuted by Imperial Rome before 313 CE, and her male child is the true church within her, vindicated by the enthronement of Constantine.
- The beasts each represent different aspects of the papacy.

Preterist Approach:

- The 1,260 days is a period of the Jewish War, of Nero's persecution, or both
- The two witnesses are either historical, prophetic witnesses against the Jews before the downfall of Jerusalem or a representation of the civil and religious authority in Israel.
- The woman (Israel) gives birth to a child (the church) who flees Jerusalem (during the Jewish War) and is afterward persecuted by the devil.
- The first beast is Rome (or possible Nero or both) persecuting the church.
- The second beast is either the cult of the emperor, some zealous Roman procurator or false prophets in Israel.

Futurist Approach:

- The 1,260 days refer with to a period of a literal three and one-half years at the end of the **Tribulation** or at two different times of that length totaling seven years.
- The two witnesses are two individual prophets yet to appear in Jerusalem ~ possibly Moses and Elijah Enoch and Elijah. Alternatively, they may represent a larger witnessing body.
- The woman (faithful Israel) will be forced by persecution from the Antichrist to flee into the wilderness during the **Tribulation**.
- The first beast is a political world-ruler [Anti-Christ] and the second beast [False Prophet] is his religious counterpart who enforces universal worship of the first beast. (Some Futurists take an approach to this section more like that of the Idealist approach.)

Idealist Approach:

- The 1,260 days symbolize the entire church age.
- The two witnesses are the church throughout the church age.

¹ Material in this post is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.

- The woman sustained in the wilderness represents the same.
- The first beast signifies political power that persecutes the church at any time in history and anywhere upon the planet.
- The second beast is a false religion and especially that which venerates political power.

The 1,260 Days: Introduction Chapters 11-13

In chapters 11–13 of Revelation are repeated references to the period of time alternatively designated as “forty-two months,” “twelve hundred sixty days,” or “a time, and times and half a time.” These are probably three different ways of saying “three and one-half years.” It is the time that the Gentiles will trample the outer court and the holy city for this period (11:2). It is also the duration of the testimony of the two witnesses (11:3), of the preservation of the woman pursued by the dragon (12:6,14), and of the continuing blasphemies of the beast (13:5).

Some believe that all the references are to the same three-and-a-half-year period. Among **Preterists**, some identify the time as that of the Jewish war in rebellion against Rome (66-70 CE). Others think it corresponds to the length of Nero’s persecution of the church which began in November 46 CE and ended with his death on June 9, 68 CE.

Most **Futurists** see here two such periods totaling seven years. Some would suggest that all the events of Revelation 4:1 through the conclusion of chapter 19 transpire during this time, referring to it as “the **Tribulation**” and the latter half of the period as “the **Great Tribulation**” (Revelation 7:14).

Historicists understand the 1,260 days as symbolic for the same number of years, citing the “year-for-a-day-principle” from Ezekiel 4:5-6 as their basis. ***“I am requiring you to bear Israel’s sins for 390 days—one day for each year of their sin. ⁶ After that, turn over and lie on your right side for 40 days—one day for each year of Judah’s sin.”***^(ESV) [I think that the Historicists have their formula backward on this principle. It should be a-day-for-a-year as Scripture records it. The Life Application Study Notes state: *“Ezekiel’s unusual actions symbolically portrayed the fate of Jerusalem. He lay on his left side for 390 days to show that Israel would be punished for 390 years; then he lay on his right side for 40 days to show that Judah would be punished for 40 years.”*] While **Historicists** agree upon their formula; there is no consensus whatsoever on the beginning and the end of the period. Except for Matthew Henry, the starting dates cover the first through the eighth century. Henry believes it represents the reign of the Antichrist (papal church) until the end of the world, but the beginning is unknown.

Most **Idealists** see the period of the 1,260 days as symbolic of a period of indefinite length, corresponding to the entire church age. Alternatively, it may be intended to correspond to the actual length of **Yeshua’s** earthly ministry.

The decision about which of these opinions is most correct will be inseparably tied to the identification of the two witnesses, of the beast, and the events described in chapter 11-12.

In my next post, we will explore **Revelation 11:1-2** dealing with **The Temple Measured**.