

## On the time, times and a half of Daniel and Revelation

by Douglas E. Cox

Daniel mentions the period called "a time, times and a half," in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, and it is associated with two numbers, 1,335 days, and 1,290 days, in the final verses of chapter 12. Daniel 12:7 indicates that the period extends to the end of the age, when all the things mentioned in his prophecies are to be fulfilled.

The same period of *a time, times and a half* occurs in Revelation 12:14, and it is associated with 1,260 days in verse 6, and 11:3, where it is the duration of the period for which the two witnesses prophesy.

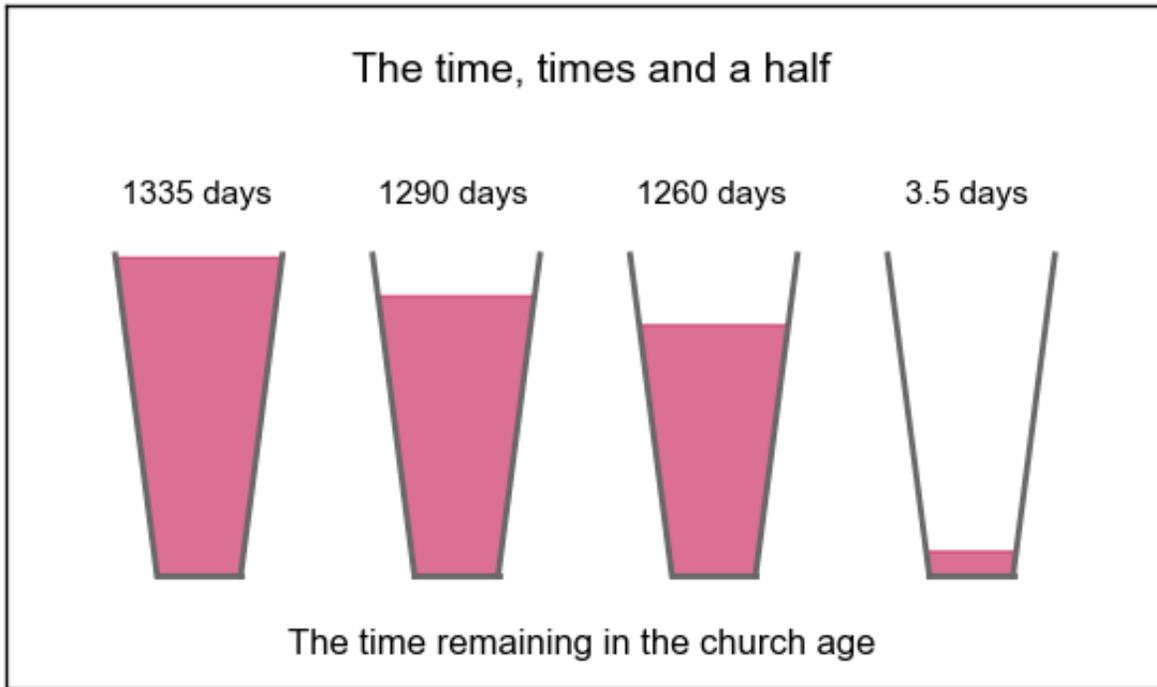
In Figure 1, these time periods are represented by the amount of wine remaining in the cups.

The cup on the right represents the three days and a half mentioned in Revelation 11:11. The numbers are progressively smaller representations of the period represented by the "time, times and a half," the symbol representing the whole age of the church. Time is like the decreasing amount of wine remaining in the cup. Like the wine in a cup, it becomes less and less, and eventually runs out. Think of aging, or tax deadlines. Another example is the gestation period of a pregnant woman, usually 40 weeks. In Revelation 12:3, the woman in heaven, who represents the church, is described "travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The Church is the *mother* of the saints.

In Figure 1, the remaining time of the Church is represented by the three cups on the left, and the end of the age is signified by an empty cup. Each period represents the remaining time after various events in the Church's history, and ends at the end of the age. The label "a time, times and a half" applies to each period, as they all fit the pattern of "a time, times and a half," or three and a half symbolic years, where months are 30 days, and there are various combinations of regular years of 12 months, and leap years of 13 months.

These three periods each represent an "unreal" or non-literal three and a half years. They apply to the *heavenly* Jerusalem, the Church. When Christ ascended to heaven, the Jerusalem of prophecy became the heavenly city. Thus it is invalid to apply these numbers to the earthly Jerusalem. The time prophecies that apply to the heavenly city are not like the previous ones; the

Figure 1: The wine represents the remaining time of the Church



period	time	times	half time	Reference
1,335 days	12 x 30	2 x 13 x 30	1/2 x 13 x 30	Daniel 12:12
1,290 days	13 x 30	2 x 12 x 30	1/2 x 12 x 30	Daniel 12:11
1,260 days	12 x 30	2 x 12 x 30	1/2 x 12 x 30	Revelation 11:3 & 12:6

units are *symbolic*. The 1,335 days, the 1,290 days, the 1,260 days represent the diminishing time remaining for the age of the church, the last half week of the 70th week when Christ continues to confirm the covenant with his saints. He reigns in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one. And so the time units for its duration are not given in terms of earthly years, or months, or days, but in divine language, that is, in symbolic units. Failing to recognize this, the preterists have applied these non-literal prophetic periods of time to the history of the earthly Jerusalem. They fail to understand prophecy, and like the "little horn" with "eyes like the eyes of a man," representing a human viewpoint, as opposed to a divine one, they "think to change times and laws." [Daniel 7:25]

The 1,335 days represents the time from the resurrection of Jesus, to the end of the age. The 1,290 days is a little smaller, and so this began some time after the New Testament church had become established, but before the writing of the Apocalypse. The 1,260 days represents the remaining time of the church, after John wrote the Apocalypse, when the New Testament was complete.

The prophetic numbers which represent the remaining time of the church, and the present age,

point to the fact that time is running out. When the two witnesses, symbolic of the Word of God, and the Spirit, resemble dead bodies lying exposed in the street, and they are subjected to ridicule by the world, the time remaining for the church is very short. Their revival is followed by the 7th trumpet, and the resurrection of the saints, and judgment. When the dragon is cast out, and the saints overcome him, he "hath but a short time" left to deceive people.

The 3 1/2 years of Daniel's prophecies, and Revelation 11, 12, and 13, is not a literal 3 1/2 years. This was pointed out by James Orr, in his encyclopedia article on the book of Revelation. [1]

If it is once recognized that the Apocalypse is a book of true prophecy, that its symbols stand for something real, and that its perspective is not to be limited to a brief period like 3 1/2 years, the way is opened, not, indeed, for a reading into it of a series of precise historical occurrences, but still for doing justice to the truth which lies at the basis of the historical interpretation, namely, that there are here prefigured the great crises in the age-long conflict of Christ and His church with pagan and anti-Christian adversaries. Events and tendencies may be grouped, or under different forms may relate to the same subject (e.g. the 144,000 sealed on earth — a spiritual Israel — in Revelation 7:1-8, and the triumphant multitude in heaven, 7:9-17); successions of events may be foreshortened; different pictures may overlap; but, shining through the symbols, great truths and facts which have historical realization appear. There is no need for supposing that, in a drama of this range, the "heads" of the beast of Revelation 13 and 17 (behind whom is the Dragon-enemy, Satan, of Revelation 12) stand, in contrariety to the analogy of Daniel, for seven individual emperors, and that "the image of the beast," which has life given to it and "speaks" (Revelation 13:14,15), is the statue of the emperor; or that such tremendous events as the fall of the Roman Empire, or the rise of the papacy — with which, however, must be combined all ecclesiastical anti-Christianism — or the false prophecy of later intellectual anti-Christianism have no place in the symbolism of the book. Sane, reverent thought will suggest many lines of correspondence with the course of God's providence, which may serve to illuminate its dark places.

## Reference

1. James Orr. *Revelation of John*. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Vol. 9.