

How Long Do The Beast And The False Prophet War Against The Faithful Witnesses Of Christ? (#1)

Ezra 7:11-12
Revelation 19:19-20
Daniel 9:24
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As we continue our study of Revelation 19, in seeking to understand how infinitely greater Christ's universal dominion is as King of kings (in contrast to that of King Artzaxerxes in Ezra 7:12), we move from a consideration of when and where this great and final military battle before the millennium will occur to a consideration of the enemies whom Christ will destroy at Armageddon and cast into hell.

But before turning our attention to the enemies that Christ will destroy in Revelation 19, let me summarize very briefly the order of events that we considered last Lord's Day that surround the last great Battle (The Battle at Armageddon), which brings about the destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet.

- 1.** The nations of the world will unite with the civil Beast and the papal False Prophet as a confederation to subdue and crush an apostate Israel that is dwelling in the Land and that has taken a course contrary to the will of that one world confederation (Revelation 16:13-16; Zechariah 14:1-2; Joel 3:1-11; Ezekiel 38:1-16).
- 2.** This initial phase of the Battle of Armageddon will issue in a victory for the confederation of the civil Beast and the papal False Prophet, as God's judgment falls upon Israel for her unbelief, while she is yet the enemy of God in her unconverted state (Zechariah 14:2).

- 3.** Many in Israel will be cut off (either by death or by deportation), while a smaller proportion will yet remain in Jerusalem and in the Land (Zechariah 13:8; Zechariah 14:2).
- 4.** During this period of subjugation and deportation (whether weeks or months), Christ will bring that part of Israel that remains in the Land “through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is MY PEOPLE: and they shall say, The LORD is MY GOD” (Zechariah 13:9). That is covenantal language. Through the almighty power of the Holy Spirit, He will turn the heart of Israel (within the Land) to embrace Jesus Christ as He is freely offered in the Gospel, at which time Israel will “look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son. . . . In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem. . . . And the land shall mourn, every family apart” (Zechariah 12:10-12).
- 5.** After the conversion of that part of Israel that is in the Land, God will wondrously intervene and deliver Israel from her enemies at the second stage of the Battle of Armageddon by means of a consuming plague, by means of an internal tumult within the ranks of the enemy so that they destroy one another, and by means of the forces of Israel (Zechariah 14:12-15).
- 6.** This miraculous deliverance of that part of Israel that remains in the Land will issue forth in the conversion of the nations by the power of the Gospel that is preached and by the testimony of God’s miraculous deliverance of that portion of Israel in the Land (Isaiah 66:15-19; Romans 11:25; Revelation 11:12 [the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses]).
- 7.** By means of the power of God in the preaching of the Gospel to the Jews dispersed throughout the world and by means of the miraculous deliverance of their brethren in the Land of Israel, the dispersed Jews in the nations will be powerfully brought to faith in Jesus Christ and will be

brought by the Gentile nations back into the Land of Israel (Romans 11:26 [“all Israel shall be saved”]; Isaiah 66:20).

8. These converted nations of the world will then in this victorious stage of the Battle of Armageddon turn upon the civil beast and the papal false prophet as Christ rides upon His white horse to destroy them and to cast these enemies into the lake of fire (Revelation 19: 17-21; Revelation 11:13 [sixth trumpet or second woe]; Revelation 14:14-20 [the reaping of the harvest and the vintage with a sharp sickle at the treading of the great wine press of God’s wrath]; Revelation 16:17-21 [the seventh vial].

9. These amazing events will then usher in the binding and restraint of Satan for a thousand years, so that he cannot deceive the nations of the world and cannot lead the nations of the world into apostasy during the worldwide millennial reign of Christ from heaven over all of the converted nations of the world (Revelation 20:1-6; Revelation 11:15-17 [seventh trumpet or third woe]; Zechariah 14:8-11).

10. After the millennium, Satan will be released and will deceive the nations once again, and will gather them to destroy the Church of Christ, but the Lord Jesus will bodily return to consume them all with fire (Revelation 20:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

11. At the bodily Second Coming of Christ the dead will be bodily raised and the living will be translated and will appear before the Great White Throne Judgment of Christ (Revelation 20:8-15; Matthew 25:31-46).

12. Then comes the everlasting new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1-8).

Dear ones, it is most important to our hope in Christ that we are absolutely certain that Christ will destroy all His and our enemies, but I submit to you that it is also very important that we rightly identify who these enemies are whom Christ will destroy and cast into hell. It is important that we are not vague, obscure, or unclear as to these enemies that are identified as the beast and the false prophet in Revelation 19:19-

20. Although these are figurative terms, the Lord Jesus did not intend that we be left in the dark or confused as to who these enemies are, particularly if these enemies are now going about seeking to mislead and to silence the testimony of Christ's faithful witnesses (as I intend to demonstrate in future sermons). For if these prophetic enemies have already appeared and have been destroyed (as the prophetic system of preterism erroneously alleges) or if these prophetic enemies are yet to appear and to be destroyed (as the prophetic system of futurism erroneously alleges), these enemies pose no immediate threat to Christ's faithful witnesses (since they do not presently exist). However, if these enemies (the Beast and the False Prophet) are presently deceiving the world and warring against the faithful witnesses of Christ, then we must be testifying against them, and we must be warning others in order that others follow not in their steps; for all who follow these enemies in taking the mark of the beast and in drinking of the cup of the harlot's abominations will also receive of the plagues that fall upon these enemies of Christ. Thus, to avoid receiving such awful plagues, we must accurately identify these enemies, so that we may testify against them rather than walking with them.

The question we now seek to answer in this and in the sermons to come is this: **How May The Beast And The False Prophet in the Book of Revelation Be Identified?**

I. **In giving a partial answer to that question in this sermon, I respond by saying: The Beast And The False Prophet May Be Identified By Considering How Long They Are United In War Against The Faithful Witnesses Of Christ.**

A. You may be asking, How does the issue of time relate to who the Beast and the False Prophet are?

1. Because **in preterism** the Beast is alleged to be a past individual person (namely, Nero) and the False Prophet is alleged to be a past apostate Judaism prior to 70 a.d., Preterists must interpret the prophetic periods of time mentioned in the Book of Revelation in which the Beast and the False Prophet war against the faithful witnesses of Christ (1,260 days, 42 months, a time, times, and half a time i.e. 3 ½ years) to be actual, literal days, months, and years.

2. And because **in futurism** the Beast is alleged to be a future political world leader and the False Prophet to be a future religious world leader, Futurists must likewise interpret the prophetic periods of time mentioned in the Book of Revelation in which the Beast and the False Prophet war against the faithful witnesses of Christ (1,260 days, 42 months, a time, times, and half a time i.e. 3 ½ years) to be actual days, months, and years.

3. However, **in historicism**, these prophetic time periods in the Book of Revelation (1,260 days, 42 months, a time, times and half a time i.e. 3 ½ years) are interpreted according to a biblical principle called the Day-Year Interpretive Principle, so that one prophetic day equals one actual year, i.e. 1,260 prophetic days equals 1,260 calendar years. And if this prophetic interpretive principle is applied to the prophetic time periods in the Book of Revelation (as was universally applied by Reformed and Protestant Reformers from the 16th century forward, in order to identify the Beast and the False Prophet in the Book of Revelation), then it is impossible that Nero (as erroneously alleged by preterism) or some future world political leader (as erroneously alleged by futurism) could be the Beast revealed in the Book of Revelation (or that an apostate Judaism immediately prior to 70 a.d. or that a future world religious leader could be the False Prophet), for obviously neither the historical Nero nor a future world leader (nor an apostate Judaism immediately prior to 70 a.d. nor a future world religious leader) lived for 1,260 actual, calendar years. However, a political system (that is antichristian in usurping Christ's office

as King of kings and Lord of lords) or a religious organization (that is antichristian in usurping Christ's office as head of His Church) may certainly exist for 1,260 actual, calendar years in hating, warring against, and seeking to silence Christ's faithful witnesses (as is interpreted in historicism). Thus, I believe one way that it may be demonstrated that preterism has misinterpreted the Beast of Revelation (as Nero) and the False Prophet (as apostate Judaism immediately before 70 a.d.), and that it may likewise be demonstrated that futurism has misinterpreted the Beast (as a future political world leader) and the False Prophet (as a future religious leader) is to demonstrate from Scripture that the prophetic 1,260 days (in the Book of Revelation) are actually 1,260 calendar years (i.e. to demonstrate the day-year interpretive principle from God's Word, which is what we shall now seek to do).

II. The Day-Year Principle As Used By The Holy Spirit In Scripture.

A. **Numbers 14:34.** Here we find the Lord judging Israel based upon a Day-Year Principle. The Israelites find themselves upon the borders of Canaan. Spies had been sent out into the Land, where they explored Canaan for **40 days** (Numbers 13:1,2,25). When they returned, the unbelieving report of the 10 spies (which was the majority report) declared it was impossible to take the Land, while the believing report of Joshua and Caleb (which was the minority report) declared that all things are possible with God, and that the God (with whom it is impossible to lie) had promised the Land to Israel. Sadly, the people of Israel (collectively) believed the unfaithful majority report rather than the faithful minority report. The Lord then states that Israel will bear its sin in the wilderness for **40 years**—for the 40 days the spies went throughout the Land, they would spend 40 years in the wilderness, i.e. for one day, one year.

1. Carefully note the emphasis on the Day-Year Principle in Numbers 14:34 from a literal rendering of the Hebrew text: "According to the number of the days which you spied out the land, forty days, **A DAY FOR THE YEAR, A DAY FOR THE YEAR**, you shall bear your iniquities forty years." Why is "**A DAY FOR THE YEAR**" repeated by God in the Hebrew text? It is repeated for emphasis, so that this Principle might be indelibly marked upon the minds of the Israelites and upon our minds as we read and seek to interpret Scripture (and especially prophetic Scripture as we shall see).

2. God Himself gives a very specific reason for the 40 years that Israel would bear its sin in the wilderness: A DAY FOR THE YEAR. And God repeats it for emphasis, so that later on in the Scripture we might use this interpretive key to unlock time periods found in prophetic portions of God's Word. Thus, it is God Himself that first uses the Day-Year Principle.

B. **Ezekiel 4:4-6.** In this prophetic Book of the Bible (that is filled with figurative language), Ezekiel is commanded by God to act out in symbols stated time periods of sin that were perpetrated against the Lord by the Northern Kingdom of Israel and by the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

1. 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).

2. But what is significant is what God says the prophetic time periods of 390 days and 40 days mean in actual calendar time for the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in bearing their sin. God says in Ezekiel 4:6, "I have appointed thee each day for a year" (literally in the Hebrew text, "**A DAY FOR THE YEAR, A DAY FOR THE YEAR**"). Now where have we heard that language before? It is precisely the same language that was

used in the Hebrew text back in Numbers 14:34. Thus, the 390 prophetic days equals 390 actual calendar years, and the 40 prophetic days equals 40 actual calendars years according to God's own interpretation here in Ezekiel 4:4-6.

3. I would submit that both of these time periods provide the reasons why the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah incurred the judgment of God that fell upon them. The sin of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the 390 year period of time would seem to have begun with the sin of Jeroboam in leading the revolt against Judah and in leading Israel into idolatry (as we see in 2 Kings 17:22, where it is stated that it was due to Jeroboam's idolatry that God brought His judgment upon Israel). And the sin of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the 40 year period of time would seem to have begun with the sin of King Manasseh in leading Judah into the grossest forms of idolatry (as we see in 2 Kings 21:10-13, where it is stated that it was due to Manasseh's idolatry that God brought His judgment upon Judah). Thus, it is God Himself, who once again, uses and presents to us the interpretive key of the Day-Year Principle.

C. **Daniel 9:24.** This, dear ones, is without a doubt one of the most significant prophecies in the Old Testament, and it too is based upon the Day-Year Principle.

1. Here in Daniel 9:24, we see that 70 prophetic weeks are determined for God's people Israel in order to accomplish redemption for His people through the work of Jesus Christ. Now 70 prophetic weeks equals 490 prophetic days (70 weeks x 7 days per week=490 prophetic days). It should also be noted that the Hebrew word translated "weeks" (*sha-bu-im*) is always used in the Old Testament to refer to a week of days, i.e. a week consisting of seven days (for example, *sha-bu-im* is used 20 times in the Hebrew Old Testament [according to *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament*, p. 1224, George

V. Wigram], 4 times in the singular and 16 times in the plural, and each time it refers to a week consisting of 7 days).

2. Now note what is said in Daniel 9:25, “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (this is most likely a reference to the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra in Ezra 7:11-26), “unto the Messiah [i.e. the Anointed One—GLP] the Prince” (this refers to Christ and most likely to the time in which Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit came upon Him at the time of His baptism by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:13-17), “shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.” In other words, from the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra until Christ’s anointing and baptism, the angel speaking to Daniel said there would elapse 69 weeks (7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks). It should be obvious that a literal 69 weeks or a literal 483 days (which is literally 1 year and almost 4 months) cannot take us from the decree of Artaxerxes (in 458 b.c.) to the anointing of Christ by the Holy Spirit at His baptism by John (in 26 a.d.).

a. However, using the Day-Year Interpretive Principle that the Holy Spirit has already given to us in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6, when we interpret 483 prophetic days as 483 actual calendar years, we see the most amazing fulfillment of prophecy: From the decree given to Ezra (in 458 b.c.) to the anointing and baptism of Christ (in 26 a.d.), precisely 483 years had passed. God is without controversy using the Day-Year Principle of interpretation in Daniel 9:24-25.

b. Then (according to Daniel 9:26a and Daniel 9:27a) Christ is “cut off” (i.e. crucified) 3 ½ years later in the middle of the 70th week of years. This again demonstrates that the Holy Spirit has given to us the Day-Year Principle as a means of interpreting prophetic periods of time .

c. Therefore, when we come to the Book of Revelation (a highly symbolic prophetic portion of Scripture, just as is true of Ezekiel and Daniel where we find the Day-Year principle used by the Holy Spirit),

we ought to be already predisposed to the Day-Year Principle in considering time periods like 1,260 prophetic days, 42 prophetic months, and a time, times, and half a time (especially since Daniel uses that same prophetic time period, a time, times, and half a time to refer to the papal “little horn” that is prophesied to come in Daniel 7:25).

d. Early Church Fathers also used the Day-Year Principle to interpret the 70 weeks of Daniel (or 490 prophetic days) to mean 490 actual calendar years. For example, Tertullian (c. 160-220 a.d.) interpreted the first 69 weeks of Daniel (in Daniel 9:25—7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks) as giving the time period up to the first coming of Christ. “How, then are we to show that Christ came within the sixty-two weeks? . . . Let us see, then, how the years are fulfilled up to the advent of Christ" (*Adversus Judaeos [Against the Jews]*, Chapter 8.1ff.). And from that time on, there are found various Church Fathers using the Day-Year Principle to interpret the time periods in the Books of Daniel and Revelation.

e. The Day-Year Principle likewise became the classic, historic Reformed and Protestant interpretation of prophetic time periods in the Books of Daniel and Revelation from the First Reformation onward. In fact, it was the Counter-Reformation efforts of the Roman Catholic Church that argued against the Day-Year Principle of the Protestant Reformation, and rather defended a literal interpretation of the 1,260 days of Revelation.

(1) It was the Jesuit priest, Francisco Ribera, who systematized futurism and interpreted the 1,260 prophetic days in the Book of Revelation as 1,260 literal days (contrary to the Day-Year Principle) in seeking to identify antichrist with a future worldwide leader (in his *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 1590).

(2) And it was another Jesuit priest, Luis de Alcasar, who systematized preterism and interpreted the 1,260 prophetic days in the Book of Revelation as 1,260 literal days (contrary to the Day-Year

Principle) in seeking to identify antichrist with Nero (in his Commentary on the Book of Revelation, 1614).

(3) Both of these Jesuit priests sought to undermine the Day-Year Principle. For these Jesuit priests understood that if they interpreted the 1,260 prophetic days as literal days (rather than as calendar years per the Day-Year Principle), they would take attention away from the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy (which had existed for hundreds of years) and rather turn the attention of people to figures in past history or figures in future history, whose power against the church would be limited to a mere 3 ½ year period of time. However, when the Protestant Reformation applied the Day-Year principle to 1,260 prophetic days (in the Book of Revelation) to mean 1,260 actual calendar years, these prophecies that are found in Daniel and Revelation were revealed to be fulfilled by the apostate Church of Rome (the Great Harlot of Babylon) and by the Papacy (the Antichrist) who would usurp the office of Christ and who would war against the true biblical religion of Jesus Christ in reference to a period of time consisting of 1,260 years.

In conclusion, dear ones, prophetic time periods in Scripture remind us of a very important truth: God has ordained all our days. We do not live by chance from day to day, but every event in history (and every event in our lives), and even the very number of days that each of us shall live has been ordained by the Lord (Job 14:4,5). We are taught by such truths to beseech the Lord to teach us to number our days that we might live wisely rather than foolishly (Psalm 90:12). For we at times forget that the days we live here upon the earth are numbered and short. The strength we feel today in these mortal bodies will pass away, and so will all our earthly possessions (Psalm 39:4-5). Therefore, dear ones, life for the Christian is summed up in the words of the Apostle Paul (Philippians 1:21). What is it for you to live? What gives meaning and purpose to your life? If your life is not Christ, but is rather something earthly, you will

leave your life behind when you die. But if Christ is your life and your reason for living, you at death will be going to enjoy your life forever and ever with Christ in heaven. Let us not be foolish. Today is the day of salvation, not tomorrow, or the next day. All our days are in God's hands. Let us then live each day as if it were our last in faith and hope in Christ.

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