

Beauties of the Truth

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The Little Horn

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Daniel 12 refers to three periods of time: 1260, 1290, and 1335 days. These prophetic days are generally understood to represent years, which began to count "from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up." (Daniel 12:11)

The date when Papacy was "set up" with her doctrine of the mass, which sets aside the value of Jesus' once-for-all ransom sacrifice, represented by the daily sacrifice, has been taken to be 539 AD. For then Papacy acquired a new dimension of civil authority, the result of a power vacuum caused by the defeat of the Ostrogothic kingdom who had previously ruled Italy.

Our purpose here is:

1. To review the 3rd Volume account of this date.
2. Identify the 3 horns of Daniel and discuss why they required to be plucked up.
3. To establish the 539 date from history.
4. To reflect on the significance of that date.

In this way we hope to reconfirm our faith in time prophecies.

1 The prophecies that mark the rise of Papacy to its position of control appear in Daniel chapter 7. Papacy is represented as a little horn which grew upon the Roman beast and assumed dominance among the other horns or powers.

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: ... in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things ... he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (3 1/2 times, or 1260 days) (Daniel 7:8, 24, 25)

Bro. Russell explains the date of Papacy's power this way:

"Since the close of the times of Papal power are not only thus clearly fixed, as occurring during the French Revolution, but also by the events of Chapter 11:40-44, which mark the very year 1799, we can readily measure backward 1260 years to note whether Papal power had its beginning there. If we find that it had, we have our evidence as clear and strong as faith could ask. Let us thus verify. Measuring back 1260 years from 1799 would bring **US** to **AD 539**, where we shall show the Papal power began." (C68,69)

The setting for the times which led to Papacy's "setting up" in temporal power is discussed in Volume 3, page 70:

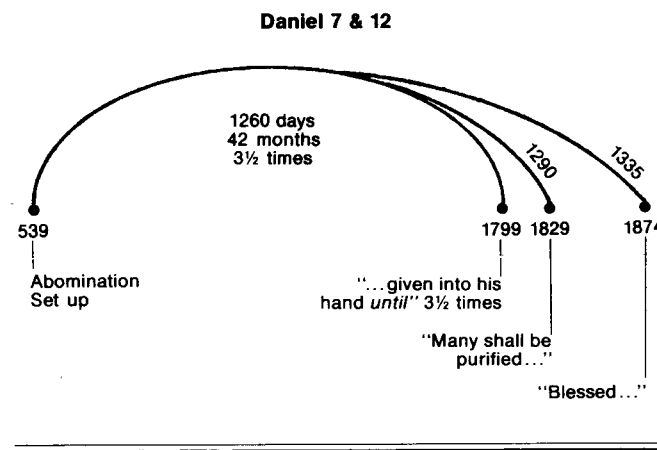
"The spirit of rivalry was abroad, and other bishops in other large cities claimed supremacy also, some upon one and some upon another ground. It was not until **AD 533** that the bishop of Rome was thus recognized by the emperor, Justinian 1. This was in connection with a warm religious discussion in which the emperor took sides with the bishop of Rome, recognizing the Virgin Mary's worthiness of adoration, and disputing with the Eutychians and Nestorians regarding distinctions and blendings of natures in our Lord Jesus. The emperor feared that the discussion might divide the church, and thus divide the empire which he was desirous of more firmly uniting; for even at that early day the nominal church and the empire were one and the same 'Christendom.' And desiring to have some authority as a standard to settle the dispute, and to tell the people what to believe and what to disbelieve, and finding the bishop of Rome already the most popular of the claimants to primacy (popedome or headship), as well as the one most 'orthodox' the one most nearly in harmony with the emperor's views on the questions-Justinian, by documents, not only condemned the doctrines of the Eutychians and Nestorians, but, addressing the bishop of Rome as the Head of all the holy churches, and of all the holy priests of God, thus acknowledged him, and desired to assist the pope in putting down the heresy and in establishing the unity of the church."

In the Volume 3 treatment there follows a letter from Emperor Justinian to Pope John, dated 533, in which Justinian maneuvers to exalt John's power and to unify the kingdom under his doctrine. Then follows John's reply of 534 to show he took the bait, and Justinian's letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople with instructions to cooperate. But this was only paper work. As Bro. Russell says (C76):

"Justinian was far from Rome, with his capital at Constantinople. Rome, and Italy in general, was under the sway of another kingdom-the Ostrogoths-who did not recognize the bishop of Rome as supreme pontiff; for they were mainly Arians in faith. Papacy, therefore, was exalted and advantaged in name only, by the emperor's recognition, until the fall of the Ostrogothic Monarchy, when its exaltation became an actual fact. Indeed, as if by a preconcerted arrangement, the emperor at once (**AD 534**) sent Belisarius and an army into Italy, and in six years after the pope's recognition by the emperor, the Ostrogothic power was vanquished, and their king Vitiges and the flower of his army were taken with other trophies to Justinian's feet. This was in **AD 539**, which is therefore the point of time from which we should reckon the 'Desolating Abomination set up.' Papacy there had its small beginning. There the little, peculiar 'horn: noted

in Daniel's prophecy, just began to push itself up, upon the Roman beast ...

The Prophet had said that three horns would be plucked up, or rooted out, to make room or prepare the way for this peculiar power or 'horn.' And so we find it: Constantine built Constantinople, and removed his capital thither; this, though favorable to Papacy's development in the seat of the Caesars, was unfavorable to the empire; and soon it was found expedient to divide the empire, and Italy was thenceforth known as the Western Empire, whose seat or capital was at Ravenna. This was one of the 'horns': it fell, AD 476, at the hands of the Heruli, another of the horns, which established itself on its ruins. Next came the Ostrogothic kingdom, another 'horn,' overthrowing the Heruli and establishing itself as ruler of Italy, AD 489. And, as we have just seen, it was during the power of this 'horn' (the third to be rooted out to make way for the papal horn) that Justinian acknowledged the papal supremacy; and it was by his orders, and by his general and his army, that it was plucked up..



2 For more history on the 3 horns, and why they required removing for Papacy to flourish, we return to the time of Constantine.

Constantine was the Roman emperor who claimed the Christian faith and made Christianity the nominal religion of the empire. It was he who convened the Nicene council in 325, where 318 bishops disputed over the nature of Jesus and the identity of God. Arius defended our faith in the humanity of Jesus as the Son of God. He was defeated in these debates and banished from the empire. In later years his followers at times had more or less influence, but the trinitarians finally prospered in the young Catholic church.

The empire was sprawling and hard to control. So in 330, Constantine established two capitals, one in Rome and another in Constantinople, each with an emperor and senate, armies and courts. Each was to honor the ruling of the other capital, and so broaden the base of control over an immense kingdom. The region of Constantinople was called the Eastern Empire, and Italy with Rome its head was the Western Empire. The western empire became weakened by affluence,

indulgence, political graft, and carelessness. The emperors were weak and often the subject of assassination. Italy was overrun by the Visigoths (western goths) and their king Alaric in 410. Henceforth Rome was always accommodating or conceding to Germanic tribes. Though often enlisted in the service of the empire, they had become accustomed to set up and depose emperors to suit their own special interests.

So it was until Romulus Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors. Finally in 476 Prince Odoacer of the Germanic Heruli, the most powerful of the rival German generals in Italy, banished the last of the Western emperors and ruled in his stead. The year 476 has commonly been taken as the date of the "fall" of the Western Empire and the beginning of the Middle Ages. Goodrich's Encyclopedia says: "The revolution of 476, which put an end of the Roman empire in the west, forms one of the most strongly marked epochs in the history of the world."

Previous governments had succeeded one another in the Roman empire—first the Republic ruled by the Caesars as monarchs, then a Democratic form ruled by the Senate, then the Western Empire formed by Constantine. But this did not evolve into the next. It was "plucked up"—overthrown.

But the Heruli Prince had a problem. How was he going to calm the wrath of Zeno, the emperor of the East in Constantinople, and placate the Roman population in the West?

He sent the imperial insignia to Zeno, declaring his subordination, with the modest request to rule the Italian diocese under the title of Patrician; while locally he reconvened the Senate and commanded respect of the imperial laws. So to the populace, they noticed little outward difference—except for 2 things: there was now a military might, and the Heruli were Arians—while granting the Catholic church liberty, they strictly limited its political influence.

While formally acknowledging Constantinople, Odoacer actually ignored the Eastern Emperor and his independence grew stronger.

While this was happening, a young Ostrogothic (eastern goth) prince was being trained in the arts of war and government in Constantinople. His name was Theoderic. In 475 the Ostrogoths proclaimed him their king. Zeno, seeing this menace in his eastern domain, and Odoacer's independence in the West, suggested Theoderic go west and invade Heruli-held Italy.

He entered Italy in 489 (C77), and soon struck a treaty with Odoacer for joint rulership. But in 493, Theoderic invited Odoacer and his son to dine with him at Ravenna. He fed them generously, then slew them both with his own hand for sole rulership of Rome. The 2nd horn had been plucked up.

Theoderic had been selected for the task because, though an Arian, he was more moderate, was well schooled in allegiance to eastern Byzantium and guaranteed greater liberty to the Trinitarian Catholics. Though he appointed some Arian bishops, he protected the Orthodox church and property and worship. One of his ministers penned this memorable policy of religious freedom. "We cannot command religion, for no one can be forced to believe against his will."

But of course the "man of sin:" "antichrist," did not want toleration for all, he wanted complete power and authority. We think this time of struggle of the false church with civil Rome is the "war" in Revelation 12:7-8, and that it occurred in the years preceding 539, before the woman, the true church, fled into the wilderness for 1260 years. (vs. 6, 14) Antichrist had already assumed the name "Michael." Indeed the mystery of iniquity had already conceived in Paul's day ... and was brought forth in Constantine's day. (12:5)

This Ostrogothic horn continued till Theoderic died in 526. He left the throne to his Grandson, Atalaric, for he had no son. His daughter, Amalasantha, served as guardian of the throne till Atalaric would come of age. But her son became sick and died 8 years later. She invited her cousin Theodatus to share the throne. But he didn't want to *share* the throne, and had her killed.

The year after Theoderic's death, one of the greatest emperors of the East, Justinian, had come to the throne at Constantinople. He undertook to regain for the empire the provinces of Africa and Italy, and his general Belisarius overcame the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa in 534.

It was amidst these unsettled situations that Justinian determined to uproot this Gothic horn, reoccupy Italy with Roman soldiers and align the military power behind the church as the head of the empire.

In the years 533-534 the exchange of letters quoted in Volume 3 occurred between Justinian and Pope John. Upon learning of Theodatus' usurpation of the Western throne (for Justinian had had a league with Amalasantha), he called on his general Belisarius to put down the Goths. Belisarius entered Sicily immediately in 535, marking the first year of the Gothic wars.

3 Establishing the accuracy of 539 as the date of the subjugation of the Ostrogothic horn, and hence the setting up of the antichrist, depends on knowing that 535 was the first year of these wars, and knowing the events of the next five years.

Fortunately there was an historian named Procopius who was an advisor to Belisarius and traveled with him. He is very careful in noting the events of each year of the war. However our AD dating had not come into common use yet. So he gives four time points to fix the 1st and 2nd years of the war. * Year one was Justinian's 9th year of reign, thus 535. 9 Year two, when Belisarius captured Naples and Rome, is said to be the 3rd year of Theodatus. He is known to have come to the throne in 534; therefore his third year, year two of the Gothic war, was 536.

This is said to be 60 years after the Heruli victory of Odoacer, known to be in 476 (all history agrees), and $476 + 60 = 536$. Here are 3 lines of evidence that concur with other histories that fix the dates of Odoacer, Justinian and Theodatus. The testimony confirms 535 as the first year of the Gothic War and 536 as the 2nd. But there is a 4th statement by Procopius that cannot be harmonized with the other 3 statements. o He says "Rome became subject to the Romans again after 60 years, on the 9th day of the last month, which is called 'December' by the Romans in the 11th year of the reign of the Emperor Justinian."

The 2 expressions are not in agreement, for 60 years after Odoacer was the 10th year of Justinian, not the 11th. The only explanation is that either Procopius made an error or there is a transcript error of the Greek text. This error has caused some historians to date the war from 536 and 5 years later the **fall** of Ravenna in 540. Gibbon in *Decline and Fall* footnotes this discrepancy and weights the evidence for the war beginning in 535. He is correct.

Let's briefly cover the events just preceding the Gothic Wars. Justinian wished to reunify the Roman Empire. Ostrogothic powers held the throne. He wrote to Pope John 11, stating his intention to subjugate the Western Empire into the hands of the Papacy. Theodatus was invited to share the Gothic throne in 534 upon young Atalaric's death, but this sharing with Amalasantha did not last more than a year. "Theodatus, upon receiving the supreme power, began to act in all things contrary to the hopes she had entertained and to the promises he had made." (*Procopius*, Vol. 3 of H. B. Dewing's translation, pg. 37) During his 2nd year he slew her supporters, imprisoned, exiled and finally killed her. Procopius continues: "Justinian, upon learning what had befallen Amalasantha, immediately entered upon the war, being the 9th year of his reign."

From here Procopius recounts the events of each year of the war to recover Italy for Justinian. He concludes each account with the words: "And the winter drew to a close, and the 1st (2nd, etc.) year ended in this war, the history which Procopius has written." So knowing the date 535 as the 1st year of the Gothic war (even if other dating methods are obscure) we can be sure what year it was that any event during the war happened especially the fall of the last Ostrogothic king—the 3rd horn on the beast of Daniel's vision.

Year 1, 535 Theodatus had Amalasantha killed. Theodatus appointed Agapetus Pope. He was sent to Constantinople to deter Justinian in the Western Campaign ... to no avail. He died after 1 month and 3 weeks in office. In this 1st year of the war Belisarius conquered Salones and Sicily.

Year 2, 536 Silverius was appointed Pope in the place of Agapetus by Theodatus in June. The Goths replaced inept Theodatus with Vittigis, a military leader (in Theodatus' 3rd year). Early in the year Belisarius moved into Italy, captured Naples through an aqueduct, and laid siege against Rome March 1st. But with delays in wages for his army and hungry soldiers, it was not till December 9 that they entered Rome. Thus ended the 2nd year of the war. One of the 1st executive acts of Belisarius was to exile the Gothic-loyal Pope Sylverius and install Vigilius as more to his liking. Though Sylverius appealed to Justinian, he died late in the 3rd year of the war, 537.

Year 3, 537 Vittigis' forces tried to retake Rome. But while Belisarius held the city, his forces advanced on other Gothic-held cities. So Vittigis broke off the siege to fortify Ravenna, his capital, while Arminum, a city just to the south, was under siege by the Roman army.

Year 4, 538 Arminum fell to the Romans and Vittigis vainly tried to recover it. As city after city fell to Belisarius, and Vittigis saw the battle coming closer to the gates of Ravenna, he devised a clever scheme. Vittigis sent envoys with a letter to Chosroes, king of the Medes, offering him huge sums of money and alliances if he would break a treaty that he and the Persians had with Constantinople, to beseege Justinian in the east. It was intended as a distraction, knowing Justinian would recall Belisarius and the forces in Italy to defend his own frontiers.

The plan had its effect. "When the emperor ... heard that Chosroes and the Persians were planning to this end, he decided to bring the war in the west to an end, as quickly as possible, and to recall Belisarius in order that he might take the field against the Persians." (*Procopius*, pg. 63) He sent word for Belisarius to "draw up the treaty with the Goths in such form that the interests of both sides would be furthered." This was as the winter of 538, the 4th year of the war, drew to a close.

But God had his own timetable, and would not allow the last little "horn" to fall a year too early or too late. Notice brethren, had this order been obeyed, the object of subduing the Western empire under Papacy would have been delayed for some years. But Belisarius had fought too long and hard to leave with a shared rule with a Gothic power still in control.

Year 5, 539 The news reached Belisarius of Justinian's order. He at first ignored it. From here on there were a number of events that Belisarius regarded as providential and took as signs to continue his pursuit. One of these was that the Goths had assembled a fleet of ships on the River Po with food and supplies for Ravenna. However the river dropped so drastically that the ships could not pass and were taken by Belisarius. The river not long afterward returned to proper volume and became navigable. As far as we know from tradition, this had never happened to the river before.

Belisarius now set siege directly to Ravenna. But the city was heavily defended. This was an advantageous time for another German tribe, the Franks. For a share in the rule of Italy, they offered to join forces with the Goths against the Romans. But about this time envoys from Justinian arrived to offer the terms of peace to Vittigis for a joint rule with Rome. A decisive victory was about to be snatched from the hands of Belisarius, either by a 3rd party or by his own emperor.

Vittigis favored a peace treaty with the Romans, but became suspicious when Belisarius would not ratify it with his own signature. The Roman troops were complaining bitterly against Belisarius. They were weary of the war and wanted him to break it off. Accordingly Belisarius had his commanders sign a document stating they felt unable to do the enemy any further harm and they were unable to achieve superiority over their opponents. This was to avert any regrets afterward for missing out on the spoils of war.

Now the Goths were hard pressed with famine and were ready even to declare Belisarius himself as emperor of the West. Belisarius was unwilling to usurp power against the will of the emperor Justinian and had vowed never in his lifetime to organize a revolution. But he perceived an advantage over the Goths to let it appear he had gladly received this proposal. He received envoys from Vittigis and pledged protection of the Gothic forces and to general terms of a treaty. But concerning his sharing kingship he said he would swear to no one else but to Vittigis himself.

With these assurances, the Gothic envoys conducted Belisarius and his army through the open gates of Ravenna with the supplies of food they had captured. But Belisarius had been intentionally vague to the envoys, and when conducted to the palace, he took Vittigis prisoner and quickly subdued his palace guards. The palace treasure was seized and whatever private property was to be had. Soon all Gothic resistance in Italy crumbled. Procopius writes:

"While I watched the entry of the Roman army into Ravenna at that time, an idea came to me, to the effect that it is not at all by the wisdom of men or by any other sort of excellence on their part that events are brought to fulfillment, but that there is some divine power which is ever warping their purposes and shifting them in such a way that there will be nothing to hinder that which is being brought to pass ... and Belisarius took his way to Byzantium; and the winter drew to its close and the 5th year ended in this war, the history of which Procopius has written." (pp. 133-147)

That 5th year was 539.

So the 3rd "horn" was plucked up. As Belisarius returned with the spoils of war in 540, it was with the implicit understanding that the Pope in Rome was the chief authority and that the Roman army would be there to defend him. Though civil heads were subsequently appointed in the West, they were ultimately subject to the church head.

It was a small beginning for the "Little Horn," but in the years to follow it would "grow" and speak great words and subdue other nations.

4 Why should such an obscure event in history mark the beginning of Daniel's vision of 3 prophetic dates? Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312 would to some seem more likely. But he was not the church. He was a civil emperor who only was strongly influenced by the church and influenced it.

Some would consider Pepin's donation of the Papal states in 756 or the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 as more significant. But the Papacy had already been commanding civil affairs before it owned lands and crowned kings.

So we see it was here in 539 when the last of the 3 "horns" were plucked up to make way for the Papal horn that the delicate balance of civil power was redefined to reside in the church and its head, the Pope.

-Contributed

We urge that the presentations of this journal be tried thoughtfully by all readers. "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good" We do not necessarily endorse every expression of contributed articles appearing herein. Information on the authorship of any article is freely supplied on request.

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