NEW PLAYER

There are children born every day into the horrible places of war zones. The soldiers on the ground are only players against the great backdrop of leaders and entities. In a similar way, we all have been born into a war zone. The players on the field are situated against the backdrop of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. We must look beyond the players on the field of history that we can see to the invisible realities that we cannot see, to realize fully the issues that are at stake.

In Daniel 7 we have a repetition of the world powers in the metal image of Daniel 2; but we have an additional player that enters the scene. The new power is different than all the rest, and Daniel 7 gives the most details about this new power, leaving us clues to come to a clear understanding of the identity of this new player.
Write out Daniel 7:1–8; 15–28 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out Daniel 7:8, 25. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.
FOLLOWING THE CLUES

Daniel 7 is a repeat and enlargement of the same timeline as the metal image in Daniel 2. This time instead of metals there are beasts.

- Lion – Babylon
- Bear – Medo-Persia
- Leopard – Greece
- Beast With Iron Teeth – Rome
- Ten Horns – Divided Europe

This is a review of the information presented in Daniel 2, but there is new insight that is given. There is a little horn power that arrives on the scene. Here are ten characteristics and clues that we can gather about the little horn power from Daniel 7:8, 25:

1. This power comes from “among them,” meaning somewhere from divided Europe. (vs. 8)
2. If it came up among the ten horns, then it would have to be sometime after the fall of Rome — in 476 AD.
3. This power would be a little kingdom. (vs. 8)
4. This power would pluck out or uproot three kingdoms: Heruli, Vandals, Ostrogoths. (vs. 8)
5. There is a “man at its head” and this man “speaks for it.” (vs. 8)
6. It would be “different” from the others. (vs. 8)
7. It would speak “pompous words against Most High.” (vs. 25)
8. It would “persecute saints of the Most High.” (vs. 25)
9. It would “intend to change times and laws.” (vs. 25)
10. It would rule for a “time, times, and the half of a time.” (vs. 25)

Daniel 7 adds an additional player to the lineup of world kingdoms. There would be a world player that is a Christianized version of paganism. Through this power, God’s law would be changed. Through this power, millions would be persecuted and killed. There is only one power that meets all ten of the characteristics: it is the Roman Catholic papacy. Every Protestant reformer from Luther to Calvin to Wesley came to the same conclusion. God is giving a prophetic message that the papacy will play a critical role in history and in end-time events.

In the successive kingdoms from Babylon to Rome, Satan has sought to develop pagan practices such as sun worship and idolatry. With the inception of Christianity during the time of Rome, Satan sought to stamp out Christianity by persecution. However, the more Satan persecuted, the more Christianity grew. Satan changed his plans; if you can’t beat them, join them. Christianity became the popular religion of Rome and with it the pagan practices such as sun worship and idolatry were rebranded into Christianity. Papal Rome became the vehicle through which Satan would move his agenda.
Does This Mean That Catholics Will Not Be Saved?

The little horn power being identified as the Catholic church does not have any bearing on the salvation of the members of the organization. God is identifying the papacy as a key player in world events. He is not making a statement about the eternal salvation of its members. However, this fact does not minimize the gravity of the fact that Satan will use the mode of paganism under the garb of Christianity as a means to an end.

What Is “A Time, Times, And Half A Time”?

This time period comes up other places in Scripture, namely Revelation 12:14: “The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.”

Notice that this is the exact same time period as in Daniel 7:25 describing the little horn power that persecutes God’s people. In other words, while the little horn is persecuting for a time, times, and half a time, the woman is on the run and hides in the wilderness for a time, times, and half a time.

Revelation 12:6 unlocks the meaning of “a time, times, and half a time. In this verse, the woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days. This verse says the same thing that vs. 14 says, except it replaces “a time, times, and half a time” with 1,260 days.

Using the day-for-year principle (Ezek. 4:6; Num. 14:34), this comes to 1,260 years. This is the exact time period that the papacy dominated Europe during the Dark Ages from 538 CE (when Justinian eradicated the last of the remaining three kingdoms that stood in opposition to the papacy) to 1798 when Berthier, Napoleon’s general, took the pope captive where he died in exile.

Similarities between the little horn of Daniel 7 and the sea beast of Revelation 13

Notice that the exact same beasts of Daniel 7 are mentioned in Revelation 13:1–3, except in reverse order. This sea beast is an amalgamation of the beasts of Daniel 7. This power is a synthesis of all the pagan kingdoms that have gone before it.

- Revelation 13:5 – Both speak great words and blasphemies.
- Revelation 13:5 – Both rule for a prophetic 42 months, or 1,260 literal years.
- Revelation 13:7 – Both make war with the saints.

The little horn of Daniel 7 is the beast of Revelation 13. They are referring to the same power. However, Daniel 7 is from our vantage point in the twenty-first century as reference to the workings of the papacy in the past while Revelation 13 is an indication of the workings of the papacy from now until the end of time.
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

2 Thessalonians 2:1–4
1 Timothy 4:1–3
Acts 20:28–30
Matthew 24:24
2 Peter 2:1–2
1 John 4:1, 3

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Daniel 7:1–8; 15–28?

JESUS CHRIST OR ANTI-CHRIST?

The great controversy between Christ and Satan culminates with Satan using the papacy as the vehicle to bring the world to false worship. The central issue in the end of time will be worship. The central issue will be will you worship Jesus Christ or will you worship the anti-Christ.

The prophecy of Daniel 7 about the little horn’s power is a warning from God that the issues at stake will not be Christianity against paganism. Rather it will be paganism under the garb of Christianity that will be persecuting God’s people. Ultimately, the papacy is simply a player on the backdrop of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

The warnings about the end-time anti-Christ is by implication a clarion call to rest in Jesus Christ. If we rest in Jesus, we can be assured that He will save us for the next part of the prophecy, where the kingdom of God will be established, and we will be a part of God’s kingdom forever. The end-time issue will revolve around the central issue of worshipping Jesus Christ or worshipping the anti-Christ.

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dan10-6
TYRANNY AND PERSECUTION

Romanism is now regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years. In those countries where Catholicism is not in the ascendency, and the papists are taking a conciliatory course in order to gain influence, there is an increasing indifference concerning the doctrines that separate the reformed churches from the papal hierarchy; the opinion is gaining ground that, after all, we do not differ so widely upon vital points as has been supposed, and that a little concession on our part will bring us into a better understanding with Rome. The time was when Protestants placed a high value upon the liberty of conscience which had been so dearly purchased. They taught their children to abhor popery and held that to seek harmony with Rome would be disloyalty to God. But how widely different are the sentiments now expressed!

The defenders of the papacy declare that the church has been maligned, and the Protestant world are inclined to accept the statement. Many urge that it is unjust to judge the church of today by the abominations and absurdities that marked her reign during the centuries of ignorance and darkness. They excuse her horrible cruelty as the result of the barbarism of the times and plead that the influence of modern civilization has changed her sentiments. Have these persons forgotten the claim of infallibility put forth for eight hundred years by this haughty power? So far from being relinquished, this claim was affirmed in the nineteenth century with greater positiveness than ever before. As Rome asserts that the “church never erred; nor will it, according to the Scriptures, ever err” (John L. von Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History, book 3, century II, part 2, chapter 2, section 9, note 17), how can she renounce the principles which governed her course in past ages?

The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution. (The Great Controversy by Ellen G. White, p. 564.)
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Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How does our world currently view the papacy?

How does our culture view the position that the papacy is the little horn power of Daniel 7?

How can we love the members of the system yet be faithful to sharing what the Bible says about the system?

How does the backdrop of the great controversy between Christ and Satan reframe how you share about the little horn power?

What does God revealing the little horn power reveal also about the character of God?

What are some practical pointers for how we should and should not share the message of Daniel 7?

More than a revelation of the new superpower, what is the larger message when we zoom out from Daniel 7?