

Intertextual Parallels to Daniel 12

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Introduction

In what follows I indirectly comment on two recent papers by Samuel Núñez, Sr., entitled respectively, “The Real Message of Daniel 12:6, 7” and “The Real Message of Daniel 12:8-13.” The first of these was presented at the 2015 meeting of the Daniel 12 Study Committee in Fallbrook, CA; the other will be presented this year in Chico.

The first paper discusses the phrase “a time, times, and half a time,” which (as Núñez correctly points out) appears both here in Dan 12:7 and earlier in 7:25. The problem is that it also occurs later in Rev 14:12. Dealing with two out of three occurrences of a given expression leaves one with a sense of incompleteness. The second paper discusses, among other things, a set of twelve terms that describe the hardships and victories of the *maškîlîm*. Some literary relationships among them are pointed out in chap. 12, but the fact that the same list of terms is introduced initially in chap. 11 is passed over in silence. I suggest that when these intertextual parallels are brought into the discussion and fully and fairly considered, the proposed application for the 1290 and 1335 days in literal time will need to be reconsidered.

First Set of Parallels:

Dan 12:7

The expression “a time, times and half a time” (Dan 12:7) occurs elsewhere once in Aramaic (Dan 7:25) and once in Greek (Rev 12:14). Both of these other occurrences are important to the discussion, first, because they address the vexed question of how to translate the preposition *lê-* in Dan 12:7. The Aramaic passage says:

“He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for [‘ad “until”] a time, times, and half a time. (Dan. 7:25 ESV)

This does not say they shall be given into his hand after a time, times, and half a time, but “for [until the end of] a time, times, and half a time.” The corresponding Greek passage conveys the same idea:

But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. (Rev 12:14 ESV)

Although the Greek of Rev 12:14 does not use a preposition, ESV has given the correct sense. The woman would not be nourished after the time is over and nourishment is no longer needed, but during the time when nourishment is most needed.

A second reason is simply that the three passages form a group, so if we mention the first two occurrences, we should also mention the third. See fig. 1.

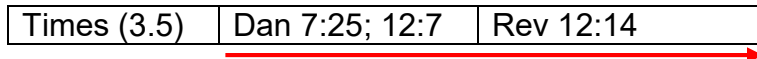


Fig. 1. The need to include all the “times” passages when discussing any of them.

Rev 12:14 is of special interest here, because more than merely being itself a third reference, it brings with it four others, for a total of five in Revelation – all parallel to Dan 12:7. In these five passages the same period is spelled variously as a number of “times” (Rev 12:14), or “months” (Rev 11:2; 13:5), or “days” (Rev 11:3; 12:6). Thus, on the assumption that each month has 30 days, “a time, times, and half a time” (three and a half years) = “forty-two months” = “1,260 days.” See fig. 2.

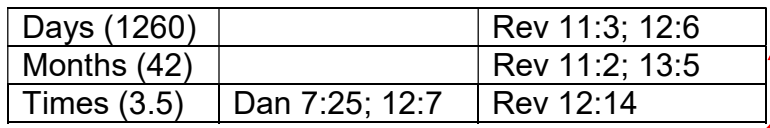


Fig. 2. The need to include the “days” passages and the “months” passages when discussing the “times” passages.

but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months. (Rev 11:2 ESV)

And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." (Rev 11:3 ESV)

And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. (Rev 13:5 ESV)

and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days. (Rev 12:6 ESV)

But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. (Rev 12:14 ESV)

Again, although Greek syntax does not require a preposition, the correct sense is given by ESV. Being nourished a time, and times, and half a time is the same as being nourished “for a time, and times, and half a time” (12:14). The activity takes place within the time period. As an exercise one could substitute the word “after” in each passage to check for that word’s appropriateness in context. If doing this doesn’t work in Dan 7:25; Rev 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; or 13:5 – all of which are closely parallel – I submit that it doesn’t work in Dan 12:7.

Actually, when we include Rev 12:14 as the third instance in Scripture of “a time, [and] times, and half a time,” and add the “month” parallels to that (Rev 11:2; 13:5), and the “day” parallels to all of those (Rev 11:3; 12:6), the series is still not complete. We must complete the loop by also including the “day” parallels found in Daniel. See fig. 3.

Days (1260)	Dan 12:11, 12	Rev 11:3; 12:6
Months (42)		Rev 11:2; 13:5
Times (3.5)	Dan 7:25; 12:7	Rev 12:14

Fig. 3. The need to include all relevant “days” passages when discussing the other parallels.

Although the numbers 1260, 1290, and 1335 are all different, the identity of the numbers was never the issue. The issue was whether any numeral plus the word “days” could be applied symbolically. In fact it can be. We have two clear examples of this in fig. 3. The expression “1,260 days” in Rev 11:3 and 12:6 is syntactically parallel to the expressions “1,290 days” in Dan 12:11 and “1,335 days” in 12:12 and this fact falsifies the proposed principle that expressions of the above syntactic form must be interpreted literally. There is no systematic basis for applying one hermeneutic here and another hermeneutic there. All three “days” passages should be interpreted the same way, i.e., symbolically. The corollary to this is that all three passages involving time in Dan 12 should also be interpreted the same way, i.e., symbolically. They are not only parallel to something in Revelation; they are parallel to each other. See fig. 4.

Days	Dan 12:11, 12	Rev 11:3; 12:6 (1,260)
Months		Rev 11:2; 13:5 (42)
Times (=years)	Dan 7:25; 12:7 (3.5)	Rev 12:14 (3.5)

Fig. 4. Connecting Dan 12:11 (1,290 days), and 12:12 (1,335 days) back to 12:7 via parallel passages in Rev 11:2; 13:5 (months) and 11:3; 12:6 (days).

We can only separate “times” from “days” in Dan 12 by setting aside the parallels in Revelation, which means – in a limited but significant way – separating Daniel from Revelation. But this is something Ellen White urges us repeatedly not to do.¹ It is precisely in cases like these – where an important exegetical question is at issue – that we most need to study the two books together. In such cases especially we need to hear them speak with one voice.

Second Set of Parallels: Dan 12:10-11

In his 2016 paper Núñez discusses the passage which outlines the hardships and victories of the *maškilîm* in Dan 12:10-11. The treatment of this passage is thorough in one sense, but another passage closely parallel to the first is mentioned only in passing.² While the following table, documenting the parallels between the two passages, is informed by Pröbstle 2006, p. 718, a difference is that I include vs. 34, because it also contains a term (*rabbîm*) which occurs in 12:10. See table 1.

¹ See Lt351-1905 (“It is solemn, serious truth which is before the people, the truth of the first, second, and third angels’ messages, linking Daniel and Revelation together”), 1EGWLM 215, 243, 249, 358. On www.egwwritings.org the phrase “daniel and revelation” occurs 103 times.

² Núñez 2016, p. 1.

Table 1
Dan 11:31c-35 / 12:10-11

		11:35 (C)	12:10a-c (C')		
		lisrôp [bâhem] ûl ^e bârêr w ^e lalbên	✕ yitbâr ^a rû w ^e yitlabb ^e nû w ^e yışşâr ^e pû		
	11:32-34 (B)			12:10c-f (B')	
i ii iii iv (duplicate)	ûmaršî'ê ûmaškîlê ['am] yâbînû lârabîm, rabbîm			w ^e hiršî'û r ^e šâ'îm [w ^e lô'] yâbînû [kol-]r ^e šâ'îm w ^e hammaškîlîm yâbînû rabbîm	i iii i (duplicate) ii iv
11:31c-d (A)					12:11 (A')
w ^e hêsîrû hattâmîd w ^e nat ^e nû haššiqqûş m ^e šômēm					hûsar hattâmîd w ^e latêt šiqqûş sômēm

The above terms are arranged in groups and the groups form an ABC:C'B'A' chiasm. See table 2.

Table 2
Abstract Representation of
Dan 11:31c-35 / 12:10-11

		11:35	12:10a-c		
		C1 C2 C3	✕ C'2 C'3 C'1		
	11:32-34			12:10c-f	
	B1 B2 B3 B4			B'1 B'3 B'2 B'4	
11:31c-d					12:11
A1 A2 A3 A4 A5					A'1 A'2 A'3 A'4 A'5

In tables 1 and 2, A:A' contains five distinct terms, contiguously and in sequence; B:B' contains some duplication but four distinct terms; and C:C' contains three distinct

terms. There is a chiasmic relationship in C:C' between C1, C2C3 : C'2C'3, C'1 and another in B:B' between B1, B2B3, B4 : B'1, B'3B'2, B'4. The two halves of the overall structure (ABC : C'B'A') were clearly meant to be studied together.

Núñez argues that, since Dan 12:9 makes reference to the time of the end, and since vs. 10 begins with future verbs, that vs. 10 starts where vs. 9 stops, making the refinement of the *maškilim* farther in the future than the sealing up of what Daniel has heard. If the two were related to each syntactically in some way, e.g., “after the [beginning of] the time of the end the *maškilim* will be refined and made white, . . .” then yes, the observation would apply. The angel is speaking to Daniel half a millennium before Christ. That’s the baseline for past/present/future in vs. 9. He says “the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.” That takes us into the future from the time when he was saying these things. He then says, “Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, . . .” That also takes us into the future – from the time when he was saying these things. There is nothing to imply that the chronological/semantic baseline for vs. 10 shifts forward to 1798 and no basis for saying that either statement takes us farther into the future than the other.

In my view the burden of proof rests on anyone wishing to break the connection between the two halves of the overall structure, treating the second half differently from the first and applying them in different timeframes. The most economical hypothesis is that we are dealing with two sets of references to one set of events. The first half of the chiasm must be taken fully and carefully into account before we are in a position to decide on a timeframe for the second half.

If we argue that the first half of the structure takes place before 1798 (“for it still awaits the appointed time” [11:35]) and the second half after 1798, the same language will describe long processes on the one hand and short process on the other (thirteen centuries as opposed to four years). Núñez addresses this point, suggesting that “the two Hitpaels of Daniel 12:10 describe the purification and the whitening of the *maškilim* as an activity of change during a relatively short process.”³ The conjugation itself has no bearing on how long the action takes. The real question is whether we are dealing with a prefixed form (imperfect, future) or a suffixed form (perfect, past). The predicates at the beginning of 12:10a are prefixed (*yitbār^erû*, *yitlabb^enû*), which would be consistent with continued action, i.e., with longer processes, not shorter ones – if there is any difference at all. In 11:35 the corresponding actions are described with infinitives construct (*ûl^ebārēr*, *w^ealbēn*), which make no claim as to the length of an action. Bottom line, there is no syntactic reason to suppose that the actions described in 12:10 are shorter than those in 11:35. At least a comparable amount of time is required, and this fact is not consistent with an application in literal time.

Beyond grammar, consider that 1,290 is 1,260 + 30, and that 1,335 is 1,290 + 30 + 15. Such relationships are easy to grasp, and in fact, they are artificially tidy. If 30 in this schema represents a month, then 15 is not two weeks plus one day, but half a month. Thus, in order to account for the relationship between 1290 and 1335, two 30-day months

³ Núñez 2016, p. 7.

would have to occur next to each. In our modern calendar there are four 30-day months (March, June, September, November), but no two of them occur next to each other.⁴ This is a problem for a literal-time application using a modern calendar.

Perhaps it is not a modern calendar. Daniel lived in Babylon, so one could reasonably assume that, if he is referring to literal time in Dan 12:11-12, he is doing so in terms of his own Babylonian calendar. We can hope this is not the case, because in such a calendar the connection between days and months breaks down, as does that between days and years, and even months and years.

The Babylonian calendar is based on a Metonic cycle, in which 19 solar years = 235 lunar months (in our calendar 19 years = 228 months). This difference follows from the fact that on seven occasions during the cycle a thirteenth month was required to keep the months in sync with the seasons. So we are left asking, Where does the cycle begin? On what basis can we establish this? Must we account somewhere for an added month? Where does the extra month fall within our calculations? And, in the months we have, how many days do each of them contain? The answer to this last question will depend on when the new moon is first seen, and this is not calculated, but determined by visual inspection.

Such a system is unacceptably complex, and our modern one is little better, with months of 28, 29, 30, or 31 days. In Babylon they periodically added an extra month; in our calendar we periodically add an extra day. But in Dan 12:11 and 12 there is none of this. In the seven prophetic passages discussed above, every year has 12 months and every month has 30 days.⁵ This level of neatness is not compatible with any literal-time system ancient or modern.

Conclusion

I have endeavored to make two points in the present paper. First, if Rev 12:14 (with its “time, times, and half a time”) is parallel to Dan 7:25; 12:7, completeness requires that all three passages be brought into the discussion. There is no principled basis for leaving one of them out. But when we put the one that is missing one back in, it serves as a window into a rich system of parallels in Revelation, where three related terms (“times,” “months,” “days”) are used to describe one period of prophetic time. In Daniel we find only two of these (“times,” “days”), but with two out of three in common between

⁴ Two 31 day months occur next to each other (July, August), but there are no examples of 30 day months occurring adjacently.

⁵ Note that the assumption of an unchanging 30-day month is evident not only in Daniel, where the chronological context is Babylonian, but in Revelation, where the context is Roman. The Babylonian calendar and the Roman calendar were widely different. So our ability to make comparisons between Daniel and Revelation for purposes of calculating the prophecies is yet another evidence that the intended basis for calculation is not Babylonian, not Roman, not ancient. Our modern calendar has leap years to deal with, which the prophecies do not. If literal time is involved in the prophecies of fig. 3 and fig. 4, there should be some discussion of which calendar we have in mind and how that would work.

the two sources, it is clear that the shorter list (in Daniel) is a subset of the longer one (in Revelation). In Revelation “times” and “days” are directly comparable and I submit that in Daniel also “times” and “days” are comparable. The expressions “1,260 days,” “1,290 days,” and “1,335 days” do not present identical numbers, but they do present identical syntax. The principle that a number plus the word “days” must be interpreted literally, is falsified by the symbolic reference to “1,260 days” in Rev 11:3; 12:6.

The second point is that, if the language of Dan 12:10-11, which describes the ordeals and triumphs of the *maškîlîm*, points back to largely identical language in 11:31-35, and if the events of 11:31-35 cannot be placed in the “time of the end” (on the basis of 11:35), the corresponding events of Dan 12:10-11 cannot be placed in the “time of the end” either. The two must be interpreted together. In 11:31-35 and 12:10-11 we have two descriptions of one set of events. And this is what we would expect since chap. 12 is a conclusion for the prophecy of chap. 11.

If the two lines of evidence discussed above had been included and fully discussed in Núñez’s paper, they would have required different conclusions. I submit that Dan 12:10-11 fits most naturally in a timeframe prior to the “time of the end,” and that Dan 12:11 and 12 refer to time, not literally, but symbolically – in a manner consistent with the parallels in Revelation.