

The 1290 and 1335 Days of Daniel 12

Past or Future?

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Introduction

In this presentation I hope to show that the three time periods mentioned in Dan 12:7, 11, and 12 must be interpreted as a single unified group. They cannot be separated from each other. The reference in all three cases is to prophetic rather than literal time.

Overview

Daniel's final prophecy consists of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. These sections correspond roughly to chaps. 10, 11, and 12, but the correspondence is not exact. Fortunately, just before starting his prophetic discourse, the angel makes a personal comment to Daniel ("Now then, I tell you the truth," 11:2), and after the narrative ends he offers another personal comment ("But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge," 12:4). These two statements, which one might otherwise be inclined to pass over, are significant because they form an inclusio around the prophecy and help to define exactly where it begins and ends. If Dan 11:2a and 12:4 form an inclusio around the prophetic narrative, then the narrative itself consists of the material in between, i.e., Dan 11:2b-12:3.

Dan 12

It is important to know where the narrative ends because our understanding of what Dan 12 says will be crucially influenced by our understanding of what verses it contains. At issue is what to do with vs. 1-4. If vs. 1-4 go with chap. 11, they don't also go with chap. 12. So we must decide which position we wish to take. From a structural perspective I submit that, from a structural perspective, Dan 12 starts at vs. 5. Dan 12:1-3, and with it vs. 4, form an epilogue to chap. 11. See table 1.

Table 1
Starting and Ending Points for
Dan 10, 11, and 12

Verses	Structural Role
Dan 10:1-11:1	Introduction
Dan 11:2a	Comment to Daniel
Dan 11:2b-12:3	Body of the prophetic narrative
Dan 12:4	Comment to Daniel
Dan 12:5-13	Conclusion

Verses 1-4. There is a close thematic relationship between Dan 12:1-4 and 11:40-45. These verses all focus in one way or another on events that take place during the time of the end. When the angel says, "At that time . . ." (Dan 12:1), he is referring to the last part of Dan 11:40-45 (e.g., vss. 44-45). And when he says, "Until the time of the end" (Dan 12:4), he is referring to the first part of 11:40-45 (e.g., vs. 40).

There is some overlap between the two sections. No terms are repeated, but Dan 11:44-45 and 12:1-2 refer to both the same bloc of time and to roughly the same events. Thus the time of distress mentioned in 12:1 is the same as the time of the king's wrath in 11:44, and the king comes to his end in 11:45 because Michael stands up in 12:1, comes to the earth with all His holy angels (see Rev 19:11-21), and causes him to come to his end.¹

Verses 5-13. The last nine verses of chap. 12 are the part of the chapter that correspond structurally to chap. 10. They form a tightly organized body of text, the core of which is made up of three smaller subsections. In Dan 12:6-7 and again in vss. 11-12 the angel talks about time periods. In between he talks about other things. There is an ABA sequence of topics within Dan 12:6-12, with vs. 5 as an introduction and vs. 13 as a conclusion.

We can be sure that the angel isn't finished dealing with time when Daniel interrupts him in vs. 8, because after answering the prophet's question he returns to his original topic and continues his explanation of things having to do with time. His subject matter is the same both before and after vss. 8-10. But while our primary interest will be on the outer verses (vss. 6-7, 11-12), it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what is happening in vss. 8-10 as well.

Taken together Dan 12:5-13 forms a nicely balanced ABCBA chiasm, consisting of vss. 5, 6-7, 8-10, 11-12, and 13. Notice that the parts of this chiasm are made up of 1, 2, 3, 2, and 1 verses, respectively, and that the organization of this structure is primarily thematic in nature.

Text of the Passage

Section A. Introduction: Verse 5 (one verse)

The river. A small number of parallels link Dan 10 and 12. In chap. 12, for example, Daniel speaks of "[t]wo others, one on this bank of the river [*liš^cpat hay^oōr*]" and one on the opposite bank [*liš^cpat hay^oōr*]" (12:5). Corresponding to this, in chap. 10 he speaks of "[t]he bank of the great river [*al yad hannāhār*]," (10:4). There is an obvious connection between these two clauses, but it is thematic rather than verbal, because Daniel uses different words for "river" (*hay^oōr*, *hannāhār*). This illustrates what I mean by a thematic connection. It is one based on the meaning of what is said rather than the words used to say it.

The Man clothed in linen. Another parallel between chaps. 10 and 12 involves three phrases: "the man clothed in linen [*lā^hīš l^būš habbaddîm*]" (12:6), "[t]he man clothed in linen [*hā^hīš l^būš habbaddîm*]" (12:7), and "a man dressed in linen [*īš^h-eḥād lābūš baddîm*]" (10:5). The passage from chap. 10 is in turn reminiscent of one from Revelation. See Text Exhibit below.

¹ Other passages that have a mutually overlapping relationship earlier in the prophecy are Dan 11:16-22, 23-28 and Dan 11:29-35, 36-39.

Text Exhibit

Dan 10	Rev 1
(5) a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist.	(13) someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe that reached down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.
(6) His body was like chrysolite, (14) His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow,
his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. ...	and his eyes were like blazing fire. (15) His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. (16) In his right hand, he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

From the above comparison it is clear that the Man dressed in linen is Christ in His preexistent state (see John 17:5), whereas in Rev 1 we see Christ in His glorified state.² Notice that the whole time Daniel is hearing the prophetic narrative of chap. 11 unfold, he is seeing – above the water of the river, over and beyond the narrating angel – a vision of Christ. This is an especially useful perspective and one that we would do well to adopt in our own study of the prophecy.³

Discussion. There is no way to integrate vs. 5 into the angel's narrative from the preceding chapter, because in vs. 5 the angel is no longer the one speaking. He has more to say later, but once we get to vs. 5 the main body of the prophecy is over. At the same time, we can't separate vss. 1-4 from the angel's narrative because he continues on without a break through to the end of vs. 4. We have already mentioned the unique status of vs. 4. Verses 1-3 extend the thought of the preceding section, while vss. 5-13 are separate. Verse 5 marks a very clearly identifiable starting point for the last section of the prophecy.

² Here is one part of the context for what Paul says in Phil 2:5-11.

³ My theory for approaching Dan 11 is that if we grasp the significance of each passage which contains some reference to Christ, His presence will provide a framework for interpreting the entire chapter. There are at least three such references, found in 11:22 ("prince of the covenant"), 11:37 ("one desired by women"), and 12:1 ("Michael, the great prince"). The first of these is in the timeframe of the first coming, the last is in the timeframe of the second coming, and the second applies at an intermediate time, between the others. In this context we see, for example, that vs. 36 does not take place in the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and that vs. 5 does not take place in the time of the papacy.

Section B. First section regarding time:
Verses 6-7 (two verses)

Verse 6: The expression $\acute{a}d\ m\acute{a}t\acute{a}y$. Hebrew $\acute{a}d\ m\acute{a}t\acute{a}y$ ("how long?" or lit. "until when?") occurs 27 times in the Old Testament. In 26 cases it is a cry for relief during a time of evil (see Exod 10:3, 7; Num 14:27; 1 Sam 1:14; 16:1; 1 Kgs 18:21; Ps 6:4; 74:10; 80:5; 82:2; 90:13; 94:3; Prov 1:22; 6:9; Isa 6:11; Jer 4:14, 21; 12:4; 23:26; 31:22; 47:5; Dan 8:13; 12:6; Hos 8:5; Hab 2:6; Zech 1:12). Only in Neh 2:6 is $\acute{a}d\ m\acute{a}t\acute{a}y$ used with neutral connotations. Once, in Dan 8:13, it includes a reference to something good (the term "daily" is included in a question that uses $\acute{a}d\ m\acute{a}t\acute{a}y$), but in the same question we find a "desolating transgression," so while the "daily" itself is good, we see it in the context of something bad, i.e., the context of how it was opposed by the little horn. As a general rule $\acute{a}d\ m\acute{a}t\acute{a}y$ has to do with times of difficulty or distress. In Dan 12:6 as well it is a cry for relief. The times are evil and the question is when they will ever end.⁴

Some have argued that the times in Dan 12:6 are not evil, because the term $happ^{\acute{e}l\acute{a}^{\acute{o}t}$ ("astonishing things," NIV), used in that verse, always refers to the wonderful works of God. In many cases it does refer to God's wonderful actions or attributes, but elsewhere in Daniel it refers to the hostile deeds of the little horn (8:24) or those of the king of the North (11:36). So the question $\acute{a}d\ m\acute{a}t\acute{a}y\ q\acute{e}\acute{s}\ happ^{\acute{e}l\acute{a}^{\acute{o}t}$ ("How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" Dan 12:6, NIV; lit. "until when [will be] the end of the astonishing things?") brings with it the strong presumption that the period just ending was one of evil. There are two reasons for saying so. First, throughout the Old Testament $\acute{a}d\ m\acute{a}t\acute{a}y$ is normally a cry for relief, and second, in Daniel forms cognate with $happ^{\acute{e}l\acute{a}^{\acute{o}t}$ are normally associated with a hostile power. The context for Dan 12:6 must include Dan 8:24 and 11:36. We will have more to say about the $q\acute{e}\acute{s}$ part (the "end") of the expression $q\acute{e}\acute{s}\ happ^{\acute{e}l\acute{a}^{\acute{o}t}$ ("the end of the astonishing things") later.

Verse 7: A time, times and half a time. The expression "a time, times and half a time" (Dan 12:7) occurs not only here, but in Dan 7:25 and Rev 12:14. It would be unwise to ignore such parallels when interpreting Dan 12:7, and with it vss. 11 and 12. If we isolate Scripture from Scripture, how can it interpret itself? Scripture can only interpret Scripture when we bring relevant passages together. Keeping them apart prevents this natural exegetical chemistry from operating and robs us of needed insights.

In the present case there are more than just three passages to consider. Spelled in various ways the 1260 days appear two times in Daniel and five times in Revelation. In Rev 12:14 it is a number of years ("a time, times and half a time"; see also Dan 7:25; 12:7). In Rev 11:2 and 13:5 it is a number of months. In Rev 11:3 and 12:6 it is a number of days. The relationships among these passages cry out to be seen and understood. If we fail to grasp the connections between them we will certainly not understand them separately. God goes over this same material no fewer than seven times in Scripture, for one thing because comparing the passages can teach us how to interpret certain symbols, but also because the number of passages involved is an indication of the emphasis He places on them. See table 2.

⁴ Contrast this with passages such as Isa 9:7 ("Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever") and Dan 2:44 ("In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever").

Table 2
Alternative Spellings of the 1260 Days

Period	References
Three and a half times (=years)	Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14
42 months	Rev 11:2; 13:5
1260 days	Rev 11:3; 12:6

If John had not used Daniel's spelling of the 1260 days ("a time, times and half a time," Rev 12:14) one could claim that the two writers were simply talking about different things. But as it is, there can be no question that historically the above "times" (=years), "months," and "days" all represent the same period of history (AD 538 to 1798). Saying the same thing seven times is a clear indication of emphasis. This period is one that God wants us to understand.

Some claim that "times" in Dan 12:7 is fundamentally different from "days" in Dan 12:11-12. Is "times" in Rev 12:14 fundamentally different from "days" in Rev 12:6? If the terms are comparable in Revelation, why should they not be comparable in Daniel? See fig. 1.

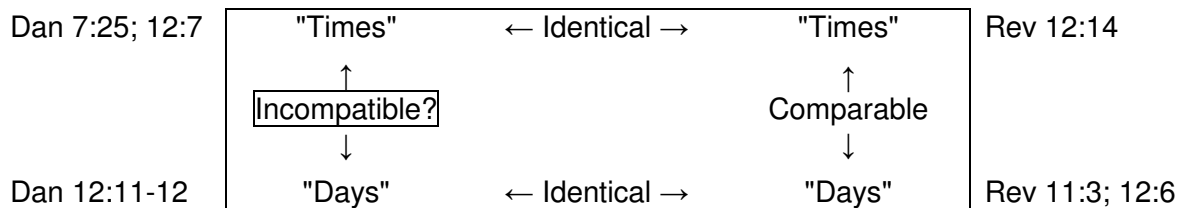


Fig. 1. Relationship between "times" and "days" in Daniel and the corresponding relationship between "times" and "days" in Revelation.

Only various spellings of the 1260 days are included in fig. 1. Granted, 1260 is not the same as 1290, but that is not the question. The question is whether "days" in Dan 12:11 is comparable to "times" in Dan 12:7. Is it the case that within chap. 12 the one must be literal (applied in the future) while the other is symbolic (applied in the past)? I submit that no such distinction is justified. Both are symbolic and their meaning can be verified as history. Daniel would love to have shared the perspective we now have. For him it was all still future.

Section C. Understanding: Verses 8-10
(three verses)

In Dan 12:8 Daniel says, "I heard, but I did not understand." Just in case there is any confusion on this point, what Daniel says is not part of what the angel says. Daniel is not the angel speaking to Daniel. So within the angel's discussion of time periods this interjection – and the angel's response to it – must be considered a parenthesis.⁵ It is extraneous to what

⁵ Textually vss. 8-10 are an integral part of the passage. In a textual sense they not parenthetical, but thematically they are. The interruption does not belong to the thought, but vss. 8-10 do clearly belong to the text.

surrounds it as regards the sequence of topics. When Daniel's question comes, the angel is not yet finished saying what he has to say about time. The evidence for this is that, after answering the prophet's question in vss. 9 and 10, he returns to his earlier thought and completes it.

Section B'. Second section regarding time:

Verse 11-12 (two verses)

The transition at vs. 11 is abrupt. There is no obvious connection between the angel's statement about who would understand what and when they would understand it, on the one hand, and his remarks in the verses that follow, on the other. But there is the closest of connections between what the angel says about time in vss. 6-7 and what he says about time in vss. 11-12.

The "daily" in Dan 8:13. Earlier I mentioned the Hebrew expression *ʿad mātay* ("until when") and said that it focuses on the end of a given period. Having said this, notice that an end implies a process. A period cannot end if it does not first extend through time. Otherwise, what does the word "end" mean? So we will never have the one without the other, but *ʿad mātay* does focus especially on an ending point – on the moment when a period of time stops.

Recall that one of the 27 verses which uses *ʿad mātay* is Dan 8:13. This verse is germane here because it directly bears on our understanding of Dan 12:11. In Dan 8:13-14 the period coming to an end is the 2300 days. This period has three parts: (a) the vision, (b) the daily, and (c) the desolating transgression. One of these parts is, "Until when . . . the daily?"

Notice what the above clause does say and does not say. It does not say, "How long will [there be] mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, atonement?" or whatever. The question is not when mercy would end, but when the "daily" (among other things) would end. So in 1844 did the "daily" end? Some Seventh-day Adventists are starting to say it didn't. By using the expression *ʿad mātay* the Hebrew text of Dan 8:13 asserts that it did. The same word *ʿad* "up to" in Dan 8:14 supports the claim. The "daily" does truly end, and yet mercy continues – in the corresponding yearly. Where Christ continues, mercy continues. Mercy does not reside in a building, or in a ceremony, but in a Person. Thus the end of the "daily" is not the close of probation, or anything resembling the close of probation. It is not the end of human opportunity. (That was the old Millerite error.) Thus it is not necessary to make the "daily" continue beyond 1844 in order to make grace continue. It would be a mistake to translate, "Until 2300 evening-mornings, then shall the 'daily' continue." We do not need the "daily" after 1844; what we do need is Christ. In the corresponding yearly His work continues, so let us make the appropriate distinctions between these two phases of high priestly ministry. My point here is that any interpretation which denies or minimizes the fact that the "daily" ends in 1844 is not being true to the text.

The "daily" in Dan 12:11. Why is this fact important at all, and why is it especially important for our understanding of Dan 12:11? Because something that happens to the daily marks the beginning of the 1290 days. "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days" (Dan 12:11). It should be clear that the daily can only be removed, in the required sense, at a time in history when it would otherwise be active.⁶ So when was it active? Between the cross and 1844, and at

⁶ Abolishing the daily in the sense of Dan 12:11 is not at all on the same level as what happens to the daily in 1844. The daily ends in 1844, not because mercy ends then, but because the daily is displaced by the corresponding yearly. Nothing the little horn does could actually bring

no later time – not now, not when the national Sunday law goes into effect, not at any time after 1844. If this point is ignored we start losing touch with what has guided us in the past. If this should happen, we are headed for a doctrinal train wreck. The reference to the "daily" in Dan 12:11 confines the 1290 days to a time before 1844 – not after. Our church's historic teaching on Dan 8:14 is crucially important at this juncture, as at every other. We must be clear on the "daily" or we will never be clear on the 1290 days.⁷

The word "days". Some argue that the word "days" in Dan 12:11-12 must be interpreted literally because it has less of a poetic flavor than the word "times" in Dan 12:7. This claim is becoming popular, but if the angel's intent really were literal, why wouldn't he just say three years and seven months? Saying "1290 days" might not be poetic, but it is certainly not literal. It is still unusual enough to be considered symbolic, despite the fact that "days" is a word we often use in other contexts.

For argument, however, let us say that "days" in Dan 12 is a reference to literal time. In this case, what shall we say about "weeks" in Dan 9? That also is a common word. There is nothing remotely poetic about it. Furthermore there is a potential contrast between "weeks" in Dan 9 and "evening-mornings" in Dan 8 that could make it appear that, while "evening-mornings" is symbolic, "weeks" must be literal. (I do not believe this, but for argument let us follow the line of reasoning through to its conclusion.) Furthermore, every time the word "weeks" is used in the Old Testament with a cardinal or ordinal number the meaning is literal – unless Dan 9 is an exception. So is this the case? Is Dan 9 an exception?

We can hope so, because applying the same principles of interpretation to the time periods of Dan 8 and Dan 9 has made us what we are as a people. Anyone who does this is a Seventh-day Adventist at heart. The term "weeks" in Dan 9 is clearly symbolic – even though no other Old Testament passage uses it symbolically. I submit that "days" in Dan 12 is symbolic as well – even though no other Old Testament passage exhibits just the same type of usage, and despite the fact that there is a potential contrast between "times" in 12:7 (which sounds poetic) and "days" in 12:11 (which doesn't). Statistical approaches are often useful, but every method has its limitations and must be applied wisely.

The numbers 1290 and 1335. We have talked about the word "days." Now consider the numbers 1290 and 1335. The claim being considered and opposed in the present paper is that

the daily to an end. But this is not required by the text. Instead the little horn diverts attention from Christ to itself. All the functions legitimately performed in the sanctuary are transferred to the earth and taken over by human priests. The sanctuary is cast to the ground in the sense that the truth about the sanctuary is cast to the ground. But the 2300 days are not over at this point.

⁷ The church has had to deal with a number of incorrect theories about the sanctuary. One is that the yearly service starts immediately after the cross. This makes the daily service into a yearly service. It moves the beginning of the judgment back 2000 years and moves the second coming forward indefinitely. Another theory is the logical opposite of the first, i.e., that the daily service continues on after 1844. This makes the yearly service into a daily service. It appears to have the effect of making the second coming not more distant but more urgent. However, in the end it will make people think they have more time than they have. (See the Spirit of Prophecy section of this paper, below.) So the effect in both cases is the same. Let the daily service be what it is, and let the yearly service be what it is. Let Scripture say what it says. We do need new definitions of Adventism. What we need are people who will believe and teach the message God has given us.

these periods apply in literal time to events in the future. If the events are future it follows that we must map them onto a modern calendar. How shall we do this?

The problem is that on a modern calendar months are 30 days long only four times a year (April, June, September, November), with no two 30-day months occurring next to each other. To make sense of the relationships among the biblical numbers 1260, 1290, and 1335, however, we need a calendar on which every month is thirty days long. This sort of time reckoning does not reflect a literal lunar cycle (it is approximately two days too long), nor does a year of 360 days reflect a literal solar cycle (it is approximately five days too short).

Nothing similar to this is available in modern times. Furthermore, nothing like it was ever available in antiquity. The required relationships are chronologically impossible, if what we're talking about is a literal calendar. For 1260 days to equal 42 months every month has to be 30 days long, and for 1260 days to equal three and a half years every year has to have 360 days. There is nothing remotely literal about such a scheme. But used symbolically it makes perfect and immediate sense. In such a case 1290 is $1260 + 30$ and 1335 is $1260 + 30 + 30 + 30/2$. This provides a straightforward extension of existing symbolic usage. So if we use the same symbolic calendar for the 1290 days that we used previously for the 1260 days, why should we not use the same symbolic principles of interpretation as well?

Section A'. Conclusion: Verse 13

(one verse)

Verse 13 is the chiasmic counterpart of vs. 5. It concludes the section that vs. 5 introduces. Here Daniel is told to go his way. He has done what God required of him and in the process has understood some things (10:1), but what the angel is saying in vs. 13 is that it will not be necessary for him to understand everything. A full understanding of the events the angel has described would only follow when the events occurred, and in Daniel's day they had not. So the understanding Daniel desired was not just unknown in his day and time; it was unknowable then. But not now.

The reason the prophecy was sealed "until the time of the end" (Dan 12:9) is that once that time arrives we would be able to look back on its predictions and understand them – no longer as prophecy, but as history. Here is the meaning of vs. 10, that "those who are wise will understand" (Dan 12:10). When would they understand? When the prophecies are fulfilled.⁸

Discussion

In figs. 2 and 3 (below) I show the relationships between major time prophecies – applied to a time before 1844. This speaks to the matter of balance and elegance. Separately, I suggest in this paper that Dan 12:1-4 has parallels at the end of chap. 11 during the time of the end, while vss. 5-13 point to events in the Middle Ages. How can we be sure? There is a way to answer the question. We can know what a passage points back to by documenting the words it uses and by showing where comparable terms are found. In this there is no guesswork. It is a simple matter to determine which words come from the same Hebrew roots. There will be more about this in table 3. But first consider figs. 2 and 3.

⁸ "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Cor 13:12).

How do the 1290 and 1335 days relate to other time prophecies?

When the 1290 and 1335 day periods are interpreted in a manner consistent with our prophetic interpretation of the 1260 days (42 months; time, times and half a time), the result is balanced, cohesive, and elegant. See fig. 2.

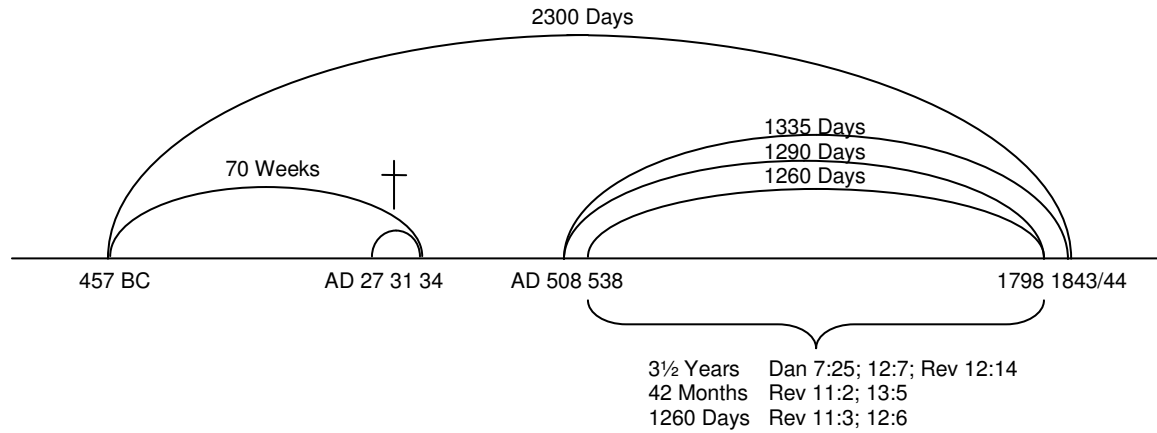


Fig. 2. Five major prophetic time periods drawn to approximate scale, where the 1290 days and 1335 days are taken together with the rest.

If one were to remove from this exhibit either the 1290 and 1335 days by themselves, or the 1260, 1290, and 1335 days as a group, it is fair to ask what the results would look like when all the major time periods are drawn to a similar scale. Here is what the first alternative would look like. See fig. 3.

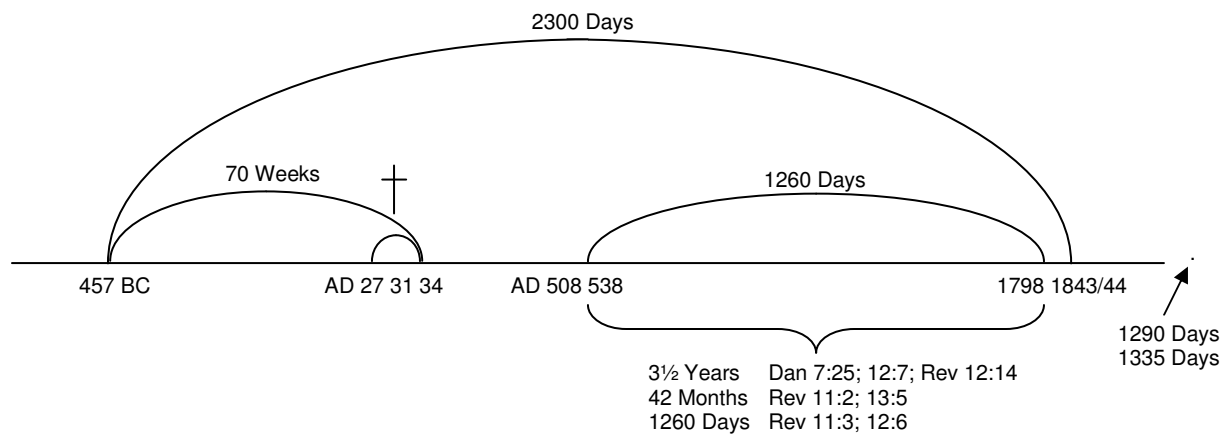


Fig. 3. Five major prophetic time periods drawn to approximate scale, where the 1290 days and 1335 days are separated from the rest by using literal rather than prophetic time.

In fig. 3 notice that the 1260 days are no longer anchored with respect to the 2300 days. One reason why the 1290 and 1335 days time periods exist as separate time periods is to lock the 1260 days into place so they can't be just any 1260 days (=years), but a particular bloc of time that cannot be moved either forward or back. By removing the 1290 and 1335 days from the Middle Ages we make it possible to relocate the 1260 days. Some have done this, moving them, along with the 1290 and 1335, into the future.⁹

Another different kind of problem arises when we remove the 1260, 1290, and 1335 days off the chart together, such that all three periods apply during the time of the end. But in this case how do we know what the time of the end is? If we move the 1260 days, they can no longer be used to help define this period. So on what basis would we know where to put them? It might be that we could find some other criterion for defining the time of the end, but looking for it takes us one step further away from historic Adventism.

Interpreting the "1,290 days" (Dan 12:11) and the "1,335 days" (Dan 12:12) in a way that is fundamentally different from the "time, times and half a time" (Dan 12:7) only a few verses earlier breaks the passage into conflicting sound bites and prevents the Holy Spirit from speaking with one voice.¹⁰ We now consider some objective reasons why the above passages belong together and must be understood symbolically using one set of exegetical principles.

Verbal parallels

We can verify that Dan 12:5-13 deals with events in an earlier period of history, and not the time of the end, by tracing the verbal parallels it contains. There are thirteen of these, involving primarily Dan 11:31-35, but with one each in 11:36 and 40 as well. Taken together this surely represents the greatest single concentration of verbal parallels between non-identical passages anywhere in Scripture. We consider these now in the order 11:40, 36, and 31-35.

Dan 12:6/11:40. The "end" referred to in Dan 12:6 and again in 11:40 both mark the same event.¹¹ The word is not "ends." There is one "end" and it occurs in 1798 at the close of the "time, times and half a time" or 1260 days, when the little horn was thinking to change "times and the law" (Dan 7:25). Dan 12:6 brings us up 1798, but not beyond.

Dan 12:6/11:36. If the "astonishing things" (NIV), or "awful things" (TNK), of vs. 6 (*happ^llā'ôṭ*) come to an "end" in 1798, it follows that whatever is "astonishing" or "awful" must have occurred earlier. If 1798 marks the end of a period, the period in question extends up to – but not beyond – 1798.

Dan 11:40/11:36. Grammatically there is no way to separate *qēṣ* ("end of") from *happ^llā'ôṭ* ("these awful things," TNK). The words *qēṣ happ^llā'ôṭ* in Dan 12:6 form a single grammatical unit called a construct chain. This is an important fact, since both parts of the expression have an earlier parallel in Dan 11. At issue is how these parallels relate to each other, i.e., whether 11:40 can be associated with 11:36 in some way through their common link to 12:6.

⁹ I suspect that no one will try to move the 1260 days into the future without including the 1290 and 1335 days as well. So long as the latter two periods remain in place, they work to secure the first.

¹⁰ There are ways to do anything wrong. If one were to propose a chiasm spanning Dan 11:1-4, that would take us nowhere, because vs. 1 properly belongs with a different chapter. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to protect us from seeing significance where there is none and from missing significance where it really is (see 2 Tim 2:15).

¹¹ For another pair of references to this same ending point, see section C below.

Notice two things in this regard. First, "end" is the same word in both Dan 12:6 and 11:40. Next, "awful things" (*happ^lā^oḏt*) in Dan 12:6 is a form of the same word as "awful things" (*nīplā^oḏt*) in 11:36. (NIV has "astonishing things" and "unheard-of things" in 12:6 and 11:36, respectively, while TNK has "awful things" both places.) These terms, being parallel to the same things, are parallel to each other. Verses 36 and 40 are bound together as tightly by the construct chain of 12:6 as the two parts of that chain are bound to each other. The "end" described in vs. 40 is the end of the events described in vs. 36.

These facts in turn are supported by vs. 35, which says, "Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time." What I draw from this is that there is no historical break between vs. 35 and vs. 40. Having said this, to which timeframe do the verses both belong? Do they belong to the "time of the end" because of their association with vs. 40, or to the period before the "time of the end" because of their association with vs. 36?

Dan 11:29-35/36-39. There is a question how Dan 11:29-35 (especially 31-35) and 36-39 relate to each other. Fortunately it is a question that can be answered directly from the text. Notice that the king mentioned at the beginning of vs. 36 is not "a king," but "the king" (*hammélek*), which would indicate that he has been introduced earlier. The backward reference to "the king" at the beginning of vss. 36-39 shows that he was already king in vss. 29-35. While vss. 36-39 are a new section, "the king" in vs. 36 is not a new king. If this is so, then both sections share one timeframe.¹² But which timeframe is that?

Notice that vs. 35 extends "until the time of the end" and that vs. 40 begins "[a]t the time of the end" Where does this leave vss. 36-39? They describe the king's attitudes, while vss. 29-35 describe his actions. Together the two sections offer a unified description of one period of time, and that one period is the 1260 days, ending in 1798.

Dan 12:6-11/11:31-35. The parallels documented in table 3 (below) form a consummately beautiful tapestry connecting Dan 12:6-11 to 11:31-35. Together they form an almost perfect chiasmic progression incorporating 13 terms and linking 11 verses.

Notice that I do not claim Dan 11:31-12:11 is a single unit of text and that it has chiasmic structure. What I do claim is that certain terms from chap. 11 and from chap. 12 derive from the same Hebrew roots and are therefore potentially parallel to each other. These terms are introduced in correspondingly opposite order, which is what the word "chiasmic" means. Thus, although found in noncontiguous sections of text (for the most part Dan 11:31-35 and 12:6-11), no verses have been left out because there is no section to leave them out of. We are not talking here about sections of text but about isolated verses and lexical items. See table 3.

¹² By "king" I do not mean an isolated individual person. It is the role and not the representative of the role that requires emphasis

Table 3
Summary of Verbal Links Connecting Dan 11:31-40
and Dan 12:6-11

Dan 12	Hebrew	English	Dan 11	Hebrew	English
Section B: Dan 12:6-7					
12:6	<i>qēš</i> ¹³	"end of"	11:40	<i>ûb^eēt qēš</i>	"and at [the] time of [the] end"
12:6	<i>happ^elāʔôt</i>	"the astonishing things"	11:36	<i>nīplāʔôt</i>	"unheard-of things"
12:7	(a) <i>ûk^ekallôt</i> ¹⁴ (b) <i>tiklênâ</i>	(a) "and when x ends" (b) "it will end"	11:35	<i>kâlâ</i>	"end of"
Section C: Dan 12:8-10					
12:9	<i>ʿad-ʿēt qēš</i>	"until [the] time of [the] end"	11:35	<i>ʿad-ʿēt qēš</i>	"until [the] time of [the] end"
12:10 (a)	<i>yitbār^erû</i>	"they will be purified"	11:35 (b)	<i>ûl^ebārēr</i>	"and to purify"
12:10 (b)	<i>yitlabb^enû</i>	"they will be cleansed"	11:35 (c)	<i>w^elalbēn</i>	"and to cleanse"
12:10 (c)	<i>w^eyīššār^epû</i>	"and they will be refined"	11:35 (a)	<i>lišrôp</i>	"to refined"
12:10	(a) <i>w^ehīršîʿû</i> (b) <i>r^ešāʿîm</i> (c) <i>r^ešāʿîm</i>	(a) "they will do wickedly" (b) "[the] wicked" (c) "[the] wicked"	11:32	<i>maršîʿê</i>	"those who act wickedly toward"
12:10	<i>w^ehammaškîlîm</i>	"and the wise"	11:35 11:33	<i>hammaškîlîm</i> <i>maškîlê</i>	"the wise" "[the] wise of (i.e., from among)"
12:10	<i>yābînû, yābînû</i>	"they will understand," "they will understand"	11:33	<i>yābînû</i>	"they will instruct"
Section B': Dan 12:11-12					
12:11	<i>šiqqûš</i>	"abomination"	11:31	<i>haššiqqûš</i>	"the abomination"
12:11	<i>šōmēm</i>	"desolating"	11:31	<i>m^ešōmēm</i>	"desolating"
12:11	<i>hûsar</i>	"is set aside, taken away"	11:31	<i>w^ehēsîrû</i>	"and they will set aside, take away"
12:11	<i>hattāmîd</i>	"the 'daily' [service]"	11:31	<i>hattāmîd</i>	"the 'daily' [service]"

¹³ There are two pairs of references to the word *qēš* "end" (12:6/11:40; 12:9/11:35). Historically all four examples refer to the starting point for the "time of the end" in 1798. There is only one "end," but there can be more than one reference to it.

¹⁴ Notice that the Hebrew words used in Dan 12:7 and 11:35 come from the root **klh* "to be complete, be at an end" (Qal), "to complete, bring to an end, finish" (Piel). This is different from the word *qēš*, translated "end" in Dan 12:6/11:40 and 12:9/11:35.

The angel has a point to make here and we would do well to notice what it is. What he is doing – with utmost skill, and I might add, with considerable emphasis – is binding the 1290 days of 12:11 to the "time, times and half a time" of 12:7. If there verses that are parallel both to Dan 12:7 and to 12:11, then they are parallel to each other. Table 3 provides a strong basis for placing the three periods of Dan 11 together in one single, unified era of history. The era in question is the Middle Ages, where the three prophetic time periods mutually support and reinforce each other.

Summary. On a structural level chap. 12 corresponds to chap. 10. This fact about the prophecy is entirely transparent and universally accepted. See table 4.

Table 4
Structural Roles of Dan
10, 11, and 12

Chapter	Relationship
Dan 10	A
Dan 11	B
Dan 12	A'

Having said this, it is noteworthy that for the most part the verbal parallels found in chap. 12 do not take us back to chap. 10, as might be expected, but to a particular section of chap. 11 (vss. 29-35) and within that section to vss. 31-35.

Spirit of Prophecy

So far I have used exegetical arguments to say that vss. 31-35 apply during the Middle Ages, but the Spirit of Prophecy strongly supports this conclusion as well.¹⁵ We now consider what Ellen White has to say about the use and misuse of time prophecy in the time following 1844. Below I present a small but representative sample of counsels from the Spirit of Prophecy on misuse of time prophecy in the period after 1844. Rather than brace ourselves we should thank God that He has not left us without instruction. The issues she deals with are upon us now. This is the time to be reading these counsels.

The counsels

The church has always looked forward to future unfulfilled time prophecies, so why should things be any different now? The reason is that we live in the time following 1844. Ellen White has much to say about the significance of this pivotal date. Consider the following:

The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the true time movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late. (4SP 290)

¹⁵ See *Great Controversy*, pp. 54, 266, 267, 306, 439.

It may be that the people described here do not see themselves as setting a definite time for the Lord's coming at all, because they don't know when the period leading up to it will begin. No date, no date setting. But by definition, once a period of known duration begins, a period of this same duration must follow. This time is definite because we know how long it lasts, even if we don't know when it begins. Thus, by applying the 1335 days (the longer of the two periods) just before the second coming, one is effectively setting a time for the second coming, even if no starting point is given. In such a view a hairsbreadth separates the end of the 1335 days from the second coming itself. Once the beginning date arrives – whenever that might be – a period of exactly three years, eight and a half months must pass before Christ can come. This is why she says, "Those who persist in this error . . . will be led to rest in a false security."

I have borne the testimony since the passing of the time in 1844, that there should be no definite time set by which to test God's people. The great test on time was in 1843 and 1844; and all who have set time since these great periods marked in prophecy were deceiving and being deceived. (LS80 222 [1880])

One could take the above statement to mean that the context is bound to the 2300 days and that no other time period can be mentioned. But she does not say, "no definite time [involving the 2300 days]"; she says, "no definite time."

There are periods involving specified lengths of time after 1844 in Scripture, e.g., the millennium, "silence in heaven for about half an hour" under the seventh seal (Rev 8:1), and "one day" (Rev 18:8) or "one hour" (Rev 18:10, 17, 19). But the key word is "test." These time periods all occur after the close of probation. After the close of probation all testing is over for God's people. So unless the national Sunday marks the close of probation, it is a mistake to imply that Ellen White can't really mean what she says because there are time prophecies after 1844. It is true that there are, but they cannot be used "to test God's people."

This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath [see Rev 10:6], is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of prophetic time, which should precede the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844. (7BC 971)

Discussion

Definite time. What does Ellen White mean when she says "definite time"? No one knows when the national Sunday law will be passed and so it is true in one sense that no one is setting dates when they say that the 1290 and 1335 days will start then, or whenever. One can misuse time prophecy without circling a date on a calendar. The warning has to do with setting "definite time." Time can be definite because we know when a period starts, or it can be definite because we know how long it lasts. The effect in either case is the same. So it is disingenuous to say, But I didn't set a date for the beginning of the period. If it's a period of known duration, and if it falls between 1844 and the close of probation, don't go there. It's a false message.

Many. Ellen White does not suggest that those who teach what she is warning against will have no arguments to support their positions. They will and do. More than this, some of the arguments sound really quite plausible. That is why large numbers of people will be deceived by them. If the arguments were unconvincing, few would be convinced. We can be sure that any reasons advanced for not heeding the above warnings will be convincing to those who are

willing to be convinced by them. It will seem to many that ignoring her intent is just what they ought to do. But in the end there is a trap of some sort having to do with a misapplication of time prophecy, and large numbers of people are going to fall into it. One thing we can learn from this is that the theories she warns against will become broadly popular within the church. This is one of their identifying characteristics.

It is true that the 2300 days figure prominently in the passages quoted above, but is anyone currently reinterpreting the 2300 days? If not, then she has something else in mind. Insisting that we respect context by making the 2300 days our great focus in these passages is not respect for context after all, but merely an effort to avoid a conclusion we do not wish to accept. How could 1844 be used as a cutoff point beyond which time prophecy will no longer be a test, without mentioning the 2300 days which mark the end of the 2300 days, and define the significance of 1844? No one I know of is reinterpreting the 2300 days. That is a dead issue by now, so that is not what she has in mind. What *does* she have in mind? I submit it's the popular reapplications of the 1290 and 1335 days that we are starting to encounter now.

False confidence. The "false confidence" Ellen White refers to does not derive from proposing a specific date for starting or ending the 1290 and 1335 days. Instead it derives from the known duration of time that comes between these points. When placed in the future any such period provides a time during which Christ cannot come. It provides a guarantee or safe haven, allowing us to say with what appears to be scriptural justification, "My lord delayeth his coming" (Matt 24:48) – in the present case for a period of not less than three years, eight and a half months, or 1335 literal days. The problem is that people will say this at a time when less than this amount of time remains. Souls will be lost because of this.

Conclusion

Anyone who is aware of these warnings and yet insists on urging a literal, future interpretation of Dan 12:11-12 upon others is playing with fire. It is dangerous enough to hold such views, but more dangerous to teach them. Let us learn what we can from the warnings the Lord has been pleased to give us and leave these prophetic periods where they belong – in a tight group along with the 1260 days, at the heart of the Middle Ages. If the past is not as new and exciting as we might prefer, it does not have to be. The church does not need something new to meet the needs of the current generation; it needs the truth, which robustly meets the needs of every generation (see John 14:6).

If we're allow ourselves to focus on future time periods we will lose sight of what God actually wants us to preach. Important things were happening during the Middle Ages. The popular churches tell us this is the "church period," and therefore irrelevant. But a church with amnesia cannot give the message of present truth. The truth in every age has always been based on God's instruction in still earlier times (see Isa 8:20). The historical issues exposed in prophecy involving the little horn power are no longer predictions. They have occurred as history and the record of what happened will not simply go away. God does not want the issues to fade from view as we move on into the future. He wants people to realize what the church was doing during the time when it had unlimited power. The issues are not merely historical. They are still very much with us today, because God has a people who need to come out of the churches which have followed in Rome's steps (see Rev 18:1-5). If this isn't present truth, what is present truth? So let us not be found telling people to focus on what He has asked us to set aside, and to forget what He clearly wants us to remember.