A Little Horn

The twelfth chapter of Daniel presents three significant time periods. These are the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days. They appear to all have the same starting point but different terminal points. The 1260 days are referred to in a number of forms in Scripture including 1 Kings 17:1; Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5. The foundation of interpretation for the *"days"* of Daniel is laid in Volume 3 where Pastor Russell writes on page 68,

> "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 A.D. 539, where we shall show the Papal power began."

This stands at the mid-point between Constantine in 325 and Charlamagne in 800. This central beginning point is identified in Daniel 12:11 as, *"from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up..."* This in turn is a reference to the *"little horn"* of Daniel 8:8-11 and 11:31. In Volume 3 page 76 we continue to read,

> "As if by a preconcerted arrangement, the emperor at once (A.D. 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 A.D. 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." (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20-22, 25)

And finally on page 77 we read,

> "With the overthrow of the Ostrogoths, the Roman emperor was recognized for some time as the ruler of Italy, and was represented by Exarchs; but since these had their capital at Ravenna, and not at Rome, and since they had come to recognize the Papacy in the manner shown, it follows that from A.D.539 Papacy was recognized as the chief authority in the city of Rome; and that from that date (when it was "set up") it began to grow and thrive as a *"horn"* or power among other *"horns"* or powers, representing the formerly united power of Rome."

Our purpose here is to document the events of these transitional years, verify Pastor Russell's observations and to reflect on the significance of the year 539. We trust this will add substance to the foundation prophecies in Daniel the twelfth chapter that marks our Lord's return.

The important turning points in history are generally perceived only in retrospect over long periods by observing consequences and attributing competent causes. For the first 500 years of the common era "mystery Babylon" was growing and practicing its iniquity. However, it was always under the jurisdiction of acknowledged political supremacies. While we recognize Papacy commanding supreme political power in later centuries, our challenge is to identify just when the scales tipped in its favor, and it began to dominate the political entities.

The sequence of events was wrapped up in the expanding Roman empire. The capitol had been moved from the city of Rome to Constantinople. Here Justinian was able to dominate the eastern frontier. Rome was now exposed to military and cultural invasion from Germanic tribes. The Goths were Christians of Arian persuasion. Arius taught that the Father is separate from the Son. This Gothic dominance posed both a political and religious threat to Justinian's ambitions for Italy.

Pastor Russell quotes some of the correspondence between Justinian and Pope John II in 533-534 on pages 70-76. Pope John II died in 535 and was succeeded by Pope Agapetus. He lived for one year and was succeeded by Pope Sylverius. Belisarius was sent to Rome to turn back the Gothic presence and reassert the Justinian dominance. Belisarius deposed Sylverius and appointed Vigilius as the next Pope in 537. This Pope postured himself for ultimate dominance of the region and positioned the church for the next 1200 years.

Belisarius was the Byzantine military general of emperor Justinian I (527-565 AD), and one of the notable generals of history. Procopius was an advisor to Belisarius, and acted as a careful historian of the events of the Gothic wars between 533 and 541. He is the only historian of the period and is the one Gibbon used for his own history. The Greek writings of Procopius have been translated by H. B. Dewing and are part of the *Loeb Classical Library* published by the Harvard University Press. We have carefully examined the writings of Procopius, Henry Fynes Clinton in "*Fasti Romani*", and Gibbon in "*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*" To the best of our understanding, the following table represents the main events of the first five years of the Gothic wars: *

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* See the APPENDIX-A, for confirming evidence and further notes.

534 AD	Amalasuntha (daughter to Ostrogothic king Theodoric) designed to turn over Gothic Italy to Justinian in Constantinople. Her son, Athalaric, died after 8 years of rule. Theodatus (also spelled Theodahad, cousin to Amalasuntha) assumed the throne in Rome.
535 Gothic War 1	Theodatus reasserted Gothic independence. Banished and killed Amalasuntha. Belisarius sent by Justinian for Gothic war. 9th year of Justinian. Belisarius took Salones and Syracuse (Sicily) in Justinian's 9th year.
536 Gothic War 2	Theodatus was slain in his 3rd year of reign. Vitiges (also spelled Witiges) marched to Rome & assumed Gothic rule. Belisarius crossed to Italy, captured Naples thru an aqueduct. Siege on Rome just 60 years after Odoacer (476 A.D.). 11th (10th*) year of Justinian. Goths withdrew in December. Belisarius deposed Pope Silverius.
537 Gothic War 3	Vigilius installed as next Pope. Goths began a seige of Rome. Stalemate in Rome between Gothic and Belisarius forces. Vitiges broke off the siege in December. Retreated to Ravenna & fortified the city.
538 Gothic War 4	At the Summer solstice Belisarius left Rome and marched against Vitiges in Tudera & Clusium. Goths besiege Romans in Ariminum. Goths routed & retreat back to Ravenna. Vitiges devised a plan for 2 priests to entice Chosroes, king of Medes at Liguria, to oppose Belisarius. Justinianian sent envoys to Vitiges with proposal for a treaty to bring the war to a speedy end.
539 Gothic War 5	Belisarius captured Dorthon, isolated Auximus. Franks (Germanic) entered battle against both Goths & Romans. Belisarius polluted the Auximus water supply, Auximus surrendered. Belisarius moved on Ravenna; surrender secured by trickery.. Envoys from Justinian arrive to Vitiges; Vitiges was suspicious. Franks offered Vitiges terms. Belisarius feigned an offer to share the Western Empire. Accepted. Belisarius captured Vitiges and Ravenna.
540 Victory	At the Spring equinox Belisarius returned to Constantinople with Vitiges and the spoils.

* There is a notable exception in the accuracy of the narrative of Procopius. Concerning the second year of the war, he says: "Rome became subject to the Romans again after a space of sixty years, on the ninth day of the last month, which is called 'December' by the Romans, in the *eleventh* year of the reign of the Emperor Justinian." Sixty years after Odoacer's revolt occurred in 536 A.D. This was the 10th year of Justinian, not the 11th. Clinton explains this discrepancy. "The second year [of the war] was conumerary [reckoned] with the tenth of Justinian because the first was conumerary with the ninth, 535, which establishes the reading δέκατον [tenth] for ἐνδέκατον [eleventh] in Procopius." It will be noticed that there are only two Greek letters distinguishing these terms, *i.e.* ἐν, which is also a Greek preposition, "in."

The capture of Ravenna and seizure of Vitiges was a determinative event in the course of history. As Pastor Russell indicates, Justinian gave broad jurisdictional powers to Pope John II. This authority was in name only until the force of arms could uphold the Papal and Roman cause. Before the fall of Ravenna, it was by no means certain how committed were Roman arms to support Justinian's assurances, or if Ostrogothic culture and Arianism would prevail in Rome.

The capture of Ravenna by Roman armies came as a surprise to both Vitiges and the Roman army. We quote Gibbon on the profound circumstances surrounding the removal of the last obstacle to the new designated authority in Rome: *Decline and Fall*, Chapter XLI.

> "The multitudes which yet adhered to the standard of Vitiges far surpassed the number of Roman troops, but neither prayers nor defiance, nor the extreme danger of his most faithful subjects, could tempt the Gothic king beyond the fortifications of Ravenna. These fortifications were indeed impregnable to the assaults of art or violence, and when Belisarius invested the capital he was soon convinced that famine only could tame the stubborn spirit of the barbarians...Each of his officers gave a written opinion that the siege of Ravenna was impracticable and hopeless.
>
> "But the lieutenant of Justinian was conscious of his own rectitude; he entered into a dark and crooked path, as it might lead to the voluntary submission of the Goths; and his dexterous policy persuaded them that he was disposed to comply with their wishes, without engaging an oath or a promise for the performance of a treaty which he secretly abhorred. The day of the surrender of Ravenna was stipulated by the Gothic ambassadors; a fleet, laden with provisions, sailed as a welcome guest into the deepest recess of the harbor, the gates were opened to the fancied king of Italy, and Belisarius, without meeting an enemy, triumphantly marched through the streets of an impregnable city. Ravenna was taken in the latter end of 539."

It would seem that a timetable was governing this day of destiny beyond the expectations of Roman armies or the secure Ostrogothic defenses. Procopius recorded the day:

> "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 fifth year ended in this war, the history of which Procopius has written." (PROCOPIUS Volume IV, pp 133-134,147)

The rise of Papal Roman power cannot commence prior to Belisarius leaving Rome in A.D. 538 at the Summer solstice, nor hardly later than Belisarius departing Italy in 540 at the Spring equinox. Thus, by any calendar reckoning, we conclude the rise of Papal civil power began in AD 539, with the fall of Ravenna.

So the third and last of the three hindering horns were removed. These had prevented the little Papal horn from achieving political dominance. The Papal horn of Daniel 7:8,11,20-25; 8:10-11 was now unhindered in magnifying its own pride and ambitions. In Volume 1 page 258, these three horns are listed as the Heruli, the Eastern Exarchate and the Ostrogoths. In Volume 3 page 77 they are identified as the Western Empire, the Heruli, and the Ostrogothic kingdom, as the powers occupying Rome. Actually, the Western empire (in Rome) was an Exarchate (province) of the Eastern empire situated in Constantinople.

After the victory at Ravenna, not only were the Ostrogoths defeated, but it was demonstrated the church had armies at her disposal. This was a new precedent in history that cannot be taken lightly in retrospect. From A.D. 539, Papal Roman power rose rapidly. The historian, Latourette, observes that half a century later, Pope Gregory "raised armies, kept Rome inviolate from Lombard attacks, negotiated with both Lombards and imperial officials, and on his own authority made peace with the Lombards." The following time line illustrates the relative contending powers and events that led to the emergence of the little horn.

	Horns on the Roman Beast		Emperors of the West (Rome)	Popes	Emperors of the East (Constantinople)	
330	WESTERN EMPIRE	#1			Constantine I	324-337
~						
337			Constantine II	Marcus	Constantius	
~				Leo I	Leo I (Emperor)	457-474
474					Zeno	474-491
475			Romulus Augustus			
476	HERULI	#2	Odoacer (476-489)			
~				Felix III		
489			Theodoric Invasion			
490						
491					Anastasius	491-518
492				Gelasius		
493	OSTROGOTHS	#3	Theodoric			
~					Justin	518-527
526			Athalaric (Amalasuntha)	Felix IV		
527					(1) Justinian- Aug. 1,	527-565
528					(2)	
529					(3)	
530				Boniface	(4)	
531					(5)	
532				John II	(6)	
533					(7)	
534			(1) Theodatus		(8)	
535			(2)	Agapetus	(9) - - - - (1) Gothic Wars (Belisarius)	
536			(3) Vitiges (1)	Sylverius	(10) - - - - (2) Rome	536, Dec. 9
537			(2)	Vigilius	(11) - - - - (3)	
538			(3)	↓	(12) - - - - (4)	
539	LITTLE HORN	#4	PAPAL EMPIRE	▾	(13) - - - - (5) Ravenna	539, December
540			1260 Years	▾	(14) - - - - (6) Presents spoils before Justinian	
541				▾		

It seems a fitting climax to Daniel's vision of the *"time, times, and a half,"* or 1260 days, that at the end of 1260 years from those small beginnings in 539, Pope Pius VI, a successor to the Papal throne, died in exile far from Rome under house arrest in France in 1799.

General Louis Berthier accompanied Napoleon throughout the campaigns of 1797, and was left in charge of the army after the Treaty of Campo Formio. He was in this post in 1798 when he entered Italy, invaded the Vatican and organized the Roman Republic. The Pope resisted. On February 20, Berthier took Pope Pius VI prisoner and deported him to France at the order of the French Directory. In May of 1798 Napoleon set out for his expedition against Egypt.

Pius VI died in Valence, France on August 29, 1799. The death of the Pope dealt a major blow to the Vatican's political power. Will and Arial Durant writes "Observers innocent of history wondered whether the Papacy had come to an end." *The Age of Napoleon*, 541

Upon the Pope's death and hearing "tidings out of the east" concerning French troubles with rival empires (Dan. 11:42-44; C:42-46), Napoleon abandoned Egypt and returned to France in October 1799, to consolidate French power. After the Pope's death, Napoleon prevented election of any new Pope until March 1800. God's judgments are on time and address the transgressors.

As for the character that marked the rise of Papal power, Chambers Encyclopedia says the name Belisarius carries the meaning of *"white prince."* Belisarius was the conquering general on behalf of the kingdom of Antichrist. Daniel 12 presents the expected Michael just 75 years after the events of the 1260 day/years. It is perhaps equally remarkable that at the end of these 1335 days, a greater prince than Belisarius, is presented in Revelation 19:11-16. He goes forth to conquer on behalf of the true kingdom.

> "I saw heaven opened, and behold a *white horse*; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon *white horses*, clothed in fine linen, *white and clean*. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Of his kingdom there shall be no end.

APPENDIX-A
(James Parkinson)

Procopius' History: ca. A.D. 539

Procopius of Caesarea, "History of the Wars;" Loeb Classical Library, Vols. III and IV (Books V-VII), transl. H. B. Dewing; 1962, 1968.

V i 2 (Book V, ch. 1, vs. 2). [Opens with the reign of Zeno in Byzantium (A.D. 474-491).] (Romulus) Augustus, as a lad becomes emperor in Rome (July 31, 475 A.D.).

V i 5-6. Odoacer deposed [Romulus Augustus] (July 23, 476 A.D.); Orestes killed (July 28, 476).

V i 14. King Theodoric/Ostrogoths drives Odoacer from Rome to Ravenna (A.D. 489). Odoacer defeated and slain (493 A.D.).

V ii 2. Justinian becomes [East-Roman] emperor in Byzantium [erstwhile Constantinople] (527 A.D.).

V v 18. [General] Belisarius conquers Sicily from King Gelimer/Vandals (December 31, 535 A.D.).

V vii 37. End of 1st year of the Gothic Wars (536 Spring Equinox {Nisan 1}).

V xiv 14. Belisarius drives out Ostrogoths, conquers Rome (December 9, 536 A.D.)

V xvii – VI ii. King Vittigis/Ostrogoths besiege Rome (537 Winter).
End of 2nd year of the Gothic Wars (537 Spring Equinox).

V xxv 13. Belisarius deposes "chief priest" [Pope] Silverius and replaces him with Vigilius (537 A.D.)

VI iii 1. Famine and pestilence in Rome (537 Spring).

VI x 13. Ostrogoths lift siege of Rome (and flee northward) after 1 year and 9 days (537 Spring).

VI xii 41. End of 3rd year of the Gothic Wars (538 Spring Equinox).

VI xiii 1. Belisarius leaves Rome to pursue Ostrogoths (538 Summer Solstice).

VI xxii 25. End of 4th year of the Gothic Wars (539 Spring Equinox).

VI xxix. Belisarius subjects King Vittigis/Ostrogoths and their capital (Ravenna). (539/540).

VI xxx 30. Belisarius recalled, leaves Italy for Byzantium. End of 5th year of the Gothic Wars (540 Spring Equinox).

VII i 49. End of 6th year of the Gothic Wars (541 Spring Equinox).

Interpretation:

A pope could not have become a civil power until after East-Roman General Belisarius had driven out the Ostrogoths (who were Arian), and until Pope Silverius had been replaced (537 A.D.), nor likely until Belisarius had left Rome (538 Summer Solstice). But Pope Vigilius was in charge of Rome by the time Belisarius had tricked the Ostrogoths into submission and then left Italy altogether (540 Spring Equinox). While that leaves a span of 21 months during which Vigilius could have begun to exercise political power, a tentative date of about A.D. 539 should be approximately correct.

By the end of this century, Pope Gregory I "saw that Rome's poor were fed and that the church fabrics of the city were repaired and maintained. He managed the estates of the church so successfully that their revenues were increased, but with humane treatment of those who cultivated their lands. He raised armies, kept Rome inviolate from Lombard attacks, negotiated with both Lombards and imperial officials, and on his own authority made peace with the Lombards. During his pontificate he was the outstanding figure in Italy, in its political as well as its ecclesiastical life. He… insisted on the primacy of Rome, especially against the claims of the Patriarch of Constantinople." (Kenneth Scott Latourette, "A History of Christianity;" New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. p. 338-339.)

One may note a parallel 1260 years later: French General Alexandre Berthier drove the pope from the Vatican (he was in Florence in late February 1798), who died in Valence, France, July 28, 1799; Papacy had been terminated! Napoleon hastily returned from Egypt, took power, and prevented election of a successor until March 1800 – in Venice (far from Rome and outside French-occupied territory).

APPENDIX-B

In ***Studies in the Scriptures***, volumes: B296, 354-355 and C69-84 CTR examines A.D. 539 for the beginning of Papal civil power as the beginning point for the days of Daniel chapter 12.

ChatGPT weighs in on 539 AD. to the question:
In AD 539 recognizing the Exarchs in Ravenna, who was recognized as the chief authority in Rome?

ChatGPT said:

In **AD 539**, during the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) reconquest of Italy under **Emperor Justinian I**, **the Bishop of Rome (the Pope)** was recognized as the **chief local authority in Rome**, particularly in civil administration, although formally **under the sovereignty of the Byzantine Emperor** and his representative, the **Exarch of Ravenna**.

📜 Historical Context: AD 539

- **Background**: This was during the **Gothic War (535–554)**, in which Justinian's general **Belisarius** was retaking Italy from the Ostrogoths to restore imperial control.
- In **AD 538–539**, the Ostrogoths laid siege to Rome, which was defended by **Belisarius**, and the city suffered terribly.
- The **Gothic siege ended in 539**, and Rome fell under firmer Byzantine control.
- Soon after, **Byzantine civil and military administration** was formalized in Italy through the establishment of the **Exarchate of Ravenna**, with the **Exarch** serving as the imperial governor.

🧭 Who Was Chief Authority in Rome?

- **De jure (legal authority)**: The **Emperor Justinian I** was the supreme ruler, and his representative in Italy was the **Exarch of Ravenna** (though the Exarchate was not formally established until around 584 AD).
- **De facto (practical local authority)**: The **Pope** increasingly served as the **civil leader of Rome**, especially during times of crisis.

➤ In AD 539, the recognized chief authority *in Rome itself* was:

✅ **The Pope (then Vigilius)** – as the most stable and respected figure in Rome, the Pope exercised **practical leadership** over the city's administration, welfare, and defense, especially as imperial forces were focused on military campaigns and the Exarchate had not yet been fully formalized.

⚖️ Dual Authority Model

Authority Type	Holder	Notes
Imperial Sovereignty	Emperor Justinian I (via Exarch)	Legal ruler of Italy and Rome, acting through the Exarch
Local Civil Authority	**Pope Vigilius**	Handled daily governance, public order, aid, diplomacy

This **dual authority model** continued throughout the 6th–8th centuries, with the **Pope's local civil authority growing** as Byzantine power in Italy waned.

🟩 Final Answer:

In **AD 539**, while the Byzantine Emperor (through the Exarch of Ravenna) held formal sovereignty, the **Pope (Vigilius)** was recognized as the **chief local authority in Rome**, especially in practical and civil matters.