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Question: "Why do Daniel and Revelation give varying counts of 1,260, 1,290, and 1,335 days for the tribulation?"

Answer: The books of Daniel and Revelation are often studied together, because their prophecies concerning the end times dovetail with each other nicely. Both books mention a certain number of days during the tribulation:

Daniel mentions 1,290 days and 1,335 days; Revelation mentions 1,260 days, for a total "discrepancy" of 75 days ($1,335 - 1,260 = 75$).

Daniel 12:11–12 says, "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days."

Revelation 11:3 says, "And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

Both of these prophecies deal with specific time periods associated with the seven-year tribulation.

Another verse in Daniel establishes the length of two time segments in the tribulation: "[The prince who is to come] will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him" (Daniel 9:27). The "prince who is to come" is the Antichrist or the "beast" of Revelation.

According Daniel 9:27, the tribulation begins with the signing of a peace treaty between the Antichrist and Israel, intended to be for one "seven," that is, a set of seven years. But the "seven" is divided into halves: midway

through the seven years, the Antichrist breaks the treaty and sets up in the temple a sacrilegious object (the “abomination that causes desolation”). The phrase “in the middle” indicates that the first half of the tribulation lasts for 36 months (1,260 days, using a “prophetic year” of 360 days). Likewise, the second half of the tribulation lasts another 1,260 days (another 36 months), for a total of seven years. Revelation 11:3 specifically mentions 1,260 days, which corresponds exactly with Daniel’s prophecy of the abomination of desolation. In Revelation, we have an added detail: two divinely appointed witnesses will preach and perform miracles for half of the tribulation—the first half, according to the chronology of Revelation. These two witnesses are killed at the midpoint of the tribulation; their bodies will lie in the streets for three and a half days as the world celebrates their demise; then they will be resurrected and taken up to heaven (Revelation 11:7–13).

The 1,260 days of the second half of the tribulation begins as the Antichrist breaks the treaty, occupies the third Jewish temple, and sets up a profane and sacrilegious object of worship. This 1,260-day period ends when the Antichrist is defeated at the battle of Armageddon upon Jesus’ return to earth. At that time, the tribulation will be at an end.

Daniel 12:11 mentions 1,290 days, however, which is 30 days more than the second half of the tribulation.

Different ideas have been put forward to explain what happens in those 30 extra days. One likely theory is that the land of Israel will be rebuilt in that month after the devastation it endured during the tribulation.

Then, according to Daniel 12:12, there will be an extra 45 days, on top of the extra 30 days, after which something else will happen. Daniel does not say explicitly what will happen, but he says those who remain until the end of that segment (1,335 days after the breaking of the treaty and 75 days after the end of the tribulation)

will be “blessed.” The blessing here is entry into the millennial kingdom. What will take place during those 45 days? Very likely, this is when the judgment of the Gentile nations, described in Matthew 25:31–46, will take place. In this judgment, also called the judgment of the sheep and the goats, the Gentiles are judged for their treatment of Israel during the tribulation. Did they aid Jesus’ “brothers and sisters” (Matthew 25:40), or did they turn a blind eye to the Jews’ troubles or, worse yet, aid in their persecution?

So, those who survive the tribulation and survive the sheep and goat judgment will enter the millennium. This is a blessing, indeed.

In summary, here is the timeline as we see it:

- Sometime after the rapture of the church, the Antichrist enters a treaty with Israel. This begins the seven-year tribulation.
- At the midpoint of the tribulation (1,260 days later), the Antichrist breaks the treaty, desecrates the temple, and begins to persecute the Jews.
- At the end of the tribulation (1,260 days after the desecration of the temple), Jesus Christ returns to earth and defeats the forces of the Antichrist.
- During the next 30 days (leading up to 1,290 days after the desecration of the temple), Israel is rebuilt and the earth is restored.
- During the next 45 days (leading up to 1,335 days after the desecration of the temple), the Gentile nations are judged for their treatment of Israel.
- The dispensation of the millennium begins, and it will last for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:3, 5–6).

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