

Elohist account, in its position in the context of the Pentateuch, and in its use in the New Testament. Modern readers may find the story religiously more significant and less difficult if they understand what its writers were trying to do and how they employed the materials which were available to them.

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A SHORT NOTE ON DANIEL 12:11-12

The two periods mentioned in Dan. 12:11-12 differ by 45 days.

Many scholars think that Dan. 8:14 refers to 2,300 evenings and mornings, meaning 1,150 days, and that it may refer to Antiochus's desecration of the Temple.

The abomination of desolation was set up in the Temple on 15 Casleu of the 145th year of the Seleucid era (1 Mac. 1:54). Pagan sacrifices started in the Temple on 25 Casleu of the same year (1 Mac. 1:59). The Temple was rededicated on 25 Casleu of the year 148 (1 Mac. 4:52-4), that is 3 years 10 days, or 1,105 days, after the abomination was set up. This differs from the 1,150 days of Dan. 8:14 by 45 days.

Although the Temple was rededicated after 1,105 days, perhaps the religious persecution did not finally cease till an extra 45 days had elapsed. This may be the same period as that referred to in Dan. 12:11-12.

In this case, the following will be the dates of certain events (years being reckoned as in 1 Mac.):

In June 145 (185 days before 15 Casleu), Antiochus's decree forbidding sacrifices (1 Mac. 1:45).

In Dec. 145, on 15 Casleu, abomination set up in Temple.

In Dec. 145, on 25 Casleu, pagan sacrifices started in Temple.

In Dec. 148, on 25 Casleu, rededication. This would be 1,290 days after the decree of June 145 (see Dan. 12:11).

45 days later, persecution definitely ceases. This would probably not be the date of Antiochus's death, for this took place in 149 (1 Mac. 6:16) and the new year probably did not begin until the spring. Before his death Antiochus did officially cease persecuting the Jews (2 Mac. 9, especially verses 10-17). This was during his illness which took place after the rededication (see 1 Mac. 6:7-8). It could therefore be 45 days after the rededication, in which case it

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

would be 1,150 days after the setting up of the abomination (see Dan. 8:14) and 1,335 days after the decree of June 145 (see Dan. 12:12).

Incidentally, either of the periods mentioned in Dan. 12:11-12 could be the same as the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years hinted at in Dan. 7:25 and 12:7 (if 'time' means 'year'), and in Dan. 9:27 (if 'week' means '7 years').

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## QUESTION AND ANSWER

### BIBLICAL INERRANCY AND GALILEO

*Leo XIII in his encyclical Providentissimus Deus stated that the sacred writers 'did not wish to teach men these truths (that is to say, the inner constitution of visible objects) which would not help any to salvation,' and hence we always insist that the Bible cannot be convicted of formal error in respect of the apparently scientific facts it contains. Why then did the theologians condemn Galileo?*

The simple answer would be that *Providentissimus Deus* was written in 1893 whilst Galileo was condemned in 1633 and that the seventeenth-century theologians were ignorant of the important principle here laid down by the nineteenth-century pope. But to give merely this simple answer would probably create an unjust impression, and in any case the unhappy incident provides a valuable illustration of the constant need for realising the precise import of the truths of faith, when faced by new circumstances.

Three years before the opening of the Council of Trent Copernicus had died as an honoured son of the Church. But he had sowed the seeds of knowledge which in the seventeenth century was to come into conflict with the theologians, a conflict culminating in the condemnation of Galileo. The Ptolemaic system of Astronomy had been unchallenged, a system in which the earth was at the centre of the universe, and around it there revolved in successive order the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and the fixed stars. But Copernicus had rejected this geocentric system in favour of the solar system, and it was under the influence of Galileo and Kepler that the majority of astronomers accepted it. The invention of the telescope at the beginning of this century facilitated the making of observations, and in 1611 Galileo was exhibiting the wonders of the heavens, under papal patronage in the gardens of the Quirinal palace.