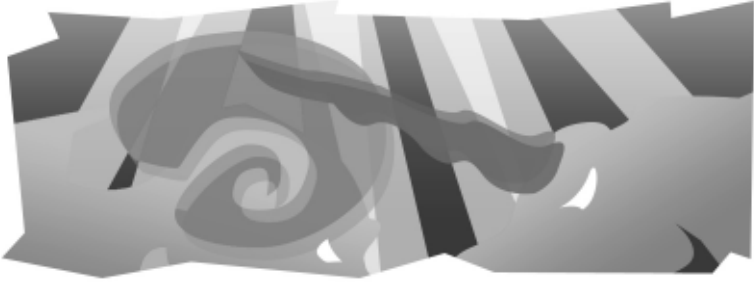


Daniel 8



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Daniel 8.*

Memory Text: “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (*Daniel 8:14*).

Daniel 8, as we'll soon see, covers much of the same ground as Daniel 2 and Daniel 7: It shows a flow of history, beginning in antiquity and going up through the “time of the end” (*Dan. 8:17*), the first time the phrase appears in the book of Daniel (but not the last). Along with the overwhelming evidence from previous chapters that Daniel deals with end-time events, Daniel 8 comes right out and says it, a problem for those who want to limit the events of Daniel 8 to a historical period in Israelite history that ended in the second century *before* Christ—a view that for this reason (and others) is untenable.

Also, like Daniel 2 and 7, Daniel 8 is divided into two sections: a dream/vision and then an explanation of that dream/vision. In Daniel 8, the first 14 verses deal with his vision, in which Daniel sees a ram, a goat, and a little horn, followed by the cleansing of the sanctuary. The rest of the chapter is the explanation given him regarding the ram, the goat, and the little horn. Interestingly enough, the part about the sanctuary being cleansed is not explained here. And, as we'll see—though specifically told that the vision of the sanctuary being cleansed “is true” (*vs. 26*)—Daniel says that he doesn't understand it (*vs. 27*). That's because it wasn't explained, as were the other elements in the vision. This point becomes important later, when we study the next chapter, in which an explanation is finally given.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 29.*

Animals, Again

Read Daniel 8:1-14. On the lines below, give a summary of the vision. Concentrate especially on the sequence of events as presented to Daniel.

After Daniel is given this vision of the ram, the goat, the little horn, and the sanctuary being cleansed, notice what happens in verses 15 through 18. Daniel says that he sought for the meaning of what passed before him in vision. A “man’s voice” then calls out and tells the angel Gabriel to “make this man understand the vision.” Gabriel then approaches Daniel. Notice, too, how the angel prefaces his words. Twice (*vss.* 17, 19) he tells Daniel that the vision deals with “the end.”

Read the rest of the chapter. What interpretation does Gabriel give Daniel?

In reference to both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, we said that Media-Persia and Greece were depicted as some of the great powers that would arise in world history. Here, now, there’s no guess: Gabriel comes right out and names them. (Unlike the other two visions, Babylon is not depicted here in Daniel 8; in a later week we will look at one reason why.)

After naming Media-Persia and Greece (*vss.* 20, 21), he gives an explanation of the little-horn power that arises next. Though we will look at it in more detail tomorrow, notice how this little-horn power is destroyed (*vs.* 25)—language very similar to how Daniel 2 described God’s supernatural intervention that brings the end of the world (*vs.* 34).

Thus, the events of Daniel 8 could be summarized like this:

Media-Persia
Greece
Little horn
Sanctuary cleansed

Daniel 8 is another place in the Bible that shows us that God ultimately is in control. How does this reality give you some hope amid whatever trials you are now facing?

The Little Horn

In our survey of Daniel, we've seen that it has dealt with five kingdoms, four of which have been named for us: Babylon (*Dan. 2:38*), Media-Persia (*Dan. 8:20*), Greece (*Dan. 8:21*), God's eternal kingdom (*Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 18, 22, 27*). The only one not specifically named is the one that, in all three visions, arises after Greece and exists until the time of the end. Below is a chart with all the earthly kingdoms depicted, those named and the one not named:

| Daniel 2 | Daniel 7 | Daniel 8 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Babylon | Babylon | — |
| Media-Persia | Media-Persia | Media-Persia |
| Greece | Greece | Greece |
| Next kingdom | Next kingdom | Next kingdom |
| Supernatural destruction at end | Supernatural destruction at end | Supernatural destruction at end |

From what you have studied so far, what is the identity of that little-horn power in Daniel 8? What reasons can you give for your conclusion?

The obvious answer, of course, is Rome (both pagan and papal). Here are just a few of many reasons why:

Looking at the parallels between the visions, one can see it was Rome in Daniel 2, Rome in Daniel 7; thus, obviously, it's Rome in Daniel 8.

The little-horn power comes up after Greece and extends to the time of the end, when it is supernaturally destroyed. What power, rising after Greece, still exists today?

Notice, too, that Media-Persia is depicted as "great" (*vs. 4*), and that Greece is depicted as "very great" (*vs. 8*). In contrast, the little-horn power is depicted as "exceeding great" (*vs. 9*). Though people can argue over whether "exceeding" great is more than "very" great, "exceeding great" is certainly more than just "great." Thus, this little-horn power is, at least, greater than the Medo-Persian Empire. Again, what power, coming up after Greece, existing until the end, could be depicted as greater than Media-Persia other than Rome?

We saw last week how that little-horn power in Daniel 7 was, clearly, papal Rome. We have here the same symbol in Daniel 8. Both, too, are described as persecuting powers, as well.

Study some of the attributes of the little horn. In what ways can we, as individuals, manifest the same spirit as the little horn?

The Little Horn (Cont.)

The evidence we've seen so far is overwhelming that the little-horn power arising after Greece in Daniel 8 is the same power that arises after Greece in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, and that's Rome, beginning as pagan Rome and then changing into papal Rome.

The two phases are seen in the imagery of all three chapters. In Daniel 2, as we saw, the iron that arises after Greece (the brass) extends to the end, though the form changes in the feet, when it becomes mixed with clay. While the emphasis here is political more than religious and the focus is on the various nations themselves, this change in Rome coincided with the rise of the papacy, both in time and location. If nothing else, in Daniel 2 we see the idea of Rome changing form at some point in history.

In Daniel 7, as we saw, the fourth beast came first, followed by the little horn, another phase of the same power.

Review the details of the little horn in Daniel 7. What are the religious elements that are revealed there in this phase of Rome?

In verse 8, after describing the breakup of Greece into various kingdoms, the little horn is depicted as coming from “‘up among them’”; that is, one of “‘the four winds of heaven’” (*vs. 2, NIV*), its immediate antecedent. Right after this, the two phases of the little-horn's activity are revealed, as well.

What is the directional activity of the little horn as depicted in Daniel 8:9? Contrast that directional activity with what the little horn does in verses 10-12. What difference do you see?

In verse 9, the little horn moves horizontally across the face of the earth, depicting military or political expansion (*compare with Dan. 8:4*). In the next few verses, the activity is depicted as vertical, heavenward, in an attack on the “host of heaven,” on the “Prince of the host,” even against the sanctuary itself. Though, obviously, the little horn does not reach literally into heaven itself, what this does depict is the religious nature of its attack. Thus, here in Daniel 8, as well, we are given two phases of the same power: first the pagan phase then the distinctly religious activity of the papal phase.

Sanctuary Cleansed

In review, what we have studied in Daniel 8, so far, could be summarized like this:

Media-Persia
Greece
Rome
Sanctuary cleansed

As shown earlier, everything in Daniel 8 had been interpreted by Gabriel except for the cleansing of the sanctuary. Though no specific explanation was given, a powerful hint is found in the chapter.

The vision of Daniel 8:14 ends with the sanctuary being cleansed after a depiction of the little-horn's activity in a certain historical period; after the depiction of the little horn (vs. 22-25), the explanation ends with a specific event (vs. 25, final clause). What is that event, and how does it help us come to some understanding about what the cleansing of the sanctuary involves?

If we were to parallel the vision of Daniel 8 with its explanation, it would look like this:

| Vision | Explanation |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ram | Media-Persia |
| Goat | Greece |
| Little horn | Rome |
| Sanctuary cleansed | Supernatural demise of little horn |

Whatever else the cleansing of the sanctuary involves, it results in the supernatural destruction of this last earthly empire, which is what happened in both Daniel 2 and 7, when God sets up His eternal kingdom. Thus, the idea that limits the cleansing of the sanctuary to some mere human event, such as the removing of enemies from the temple precincts in the second century B.C., falls apart. It's obvious from the context, especially when viewed in parallel to Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, that this cleansing of the sanctuary is an event of major importance. Indeed, the mere fact that it's linked with the rise and fall of three of what the Bible depicts as major world powers in and of itself testifies to the importance of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

What things in your own life need to be cleansed? What's the only way that can happen?

Judgment in Heaven

Below is a chart summarizing what we have looked at so far in the past few weeks. What does this tell us that the cleansing of the sanctuary is?

| Daniel 2 | Daniel 7 | Daniel 8 |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Babylon | Babylon | _____ |
| Media-Persia | Media-Persia | Media-Persia |
| Greece | Greece | Greece |
| Pagan Rome | Pagan Rome | Pagan Rome |
| Papal Rome | Papal Rome | Papal Rome |
| _____ | Judgment in heaven | Cleansing of sanctuary |
| Second Coming | Second Coming | _____ |

As we see all the way through here, there are parallels between the chapters. And not only are the nations depicted in parallel to one another, the judgment scene in Daniel 7—which transpires after a distinct time period regarding Rome (the 1,260 years)—directly parallels the cleansing of the sanctuary, which in Daniel 8 occurs after Rome, as well. In short, this heavenly judgment in Daniel 7—the judgment that leads to the end of the world—is the same thing as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. We are given here two different depictions of the same thing: the judgment, also known as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8.

According to this chart, where is this judgment, time wise, in relationship to the Second Coming?

The crucial point is the parallel between this massive judgment scene in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. The judgment scene in Daniel 7 is simply another way of expressing the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8, just as the depiction of the bear in Daniel 7 is another way of expressing the ram in Daniel 8. Each depiction adds to the other, elaborating on each other, together giving us a lot of information about the specific event. What’s undeniably clear is that it is a pre-Advent event; that is, this is a judgment that occurs before the Second Coming. Indeed, it’s this judgment itself that leads directly to the Second Coming.

What things in your life can be solved only by the second coming of Jesus; what things can be solved here and now? Why is it so important to know the difference between the two?

Further Study: Look at the parallels here between Daniel 7 and 8, this time with the approximate dates for the events depicted in the two chapters:

| Daniel 7 | Daniel 8 |
|--|--|
| Babylon (Ends early mid-sixth century B.C.) | _____ |
| Media-Persia (From early mid-sixth century to early mid-fourth century B.C.) | Media-Persia |
| Greece (From early mid-fourth century to mid-second century B.C.) | Greece |
| Pagan Rome (From mid-second century B.C. to fifth–sixth century A.D.) | Pagan Rome |
| Papal Rome (Phase of depicted persecution: From sixth century A.D. to eighteenth–nineteenth century A.D.) | Papal Rome |
| Judgment in heaven Second Coming | Cleansing of sanctuary Destroyed without hands |

What’s clear from the chart is that because the judgment in Daniel 7, which occurred after the 1,260 years, is the same as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8, then the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 occurred after the 1,260 years, as well. This fact, then, puts the cleansing of the sanctuary sometime *after* the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, yet *before* the second coming of Christ. Though these points help narrow down the time of the pre-Advent judgment, they still don’t give us an exact date. More information is needed; that’s why, as we’ll see, more information is given.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 As a class, go over the main points of this week’s lesson. Be sure everyone understands the parallels between the chapters. Try to answer whatever questions that arise as best as you are able.
- 2 The last verse of Daniel 8 teaches that certain aspects of the vision were unknown to Daniel. What lesson is there for us regarding the need to press on ahead in faith despite there being things we don’t yet understand?

The Raised Spear

J. H. Zachary

John Kiok is a Masai, a member of a semi-nomadic cattle-herding culture in eastern Africa. Several years ago when Kiok accepted Jesus as his Savior, he dedicated his life to sharing his faith with other Masai. When a small group of believers from the village of Nchoroi [n'CHO-roy] invited him to come and teach in their village, Kiok went.

Each evening 200 people gathered to hear the message of Jesus. However, the paramount chief of the region did not want a new religion in his territory. One night during the meeting the chief angrily confronted the pastor, waving his large spear menacingly over his head as he approached the crowd of listeners who were seated on the ground. Most of the listeners fled into the darkness when they saw the chief approaching. The chief, still brandishing his spear over his head, stared at Kiok and demanded, "Who are you and what are you telling my people?"

Kiok prayed for wisdom and protection, and then he calmly answered the chief's question. "I am a Masai. I am telling these people about the living God, the God who made the mountains, the trees, your animals—even you and your family."

"You have just one chance," the chief threatened. "Leave now. If you preach one more time, I will kill you with my spear."

"Sir," Kiok said quietly, "the people have come every day this week to hear about God. They want to know about the God who created them. I still have a week of meetings, and I want to invite you to come to listen and learn about this God too."

"I promise you, I will kill you if you preach another night!" the chief said. Then he turned and strode away.

The village elders told the chief that they had given Kiok permission to speak to the people about God. They told him that many who were listening were changing their lives for the better. They urged the chief to go see for himself.

The chief allowed the meetings to continue, and the chief saw the positive changes among his people. He listened to their testimonies of what Jesus was doing in their lives. In time the angry chief asked Kiok to study the Bible with him as well, and in time he and his family were baptized into God's family. Today the chief and his people worship in a small chapel in their village.

Until his death, J. H. Zachary was coordinator for outreach among Jewish and Muslim people in the North American Division.