

The Sanctuary Attacked



SABBATH AFTERNOON

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

Memory Text: “Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down” (*Daniel 8:11*).

The vision in Daniel 8 is the climactic conclusion of the symbolic presentations in the book. Daniel 8, of course, is also where we have the seminal verse, “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,” the verse that forms the climax of the chapter and that played a key role in the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As we begin, one point must be made clear: The historical context of the chapter shows that it's talking only about the sanctuary in heaven, where Christ is now our High Priest (*Heb. 8:1, 2*). The key issues revealed here don't revolve around some military battle in which pagan armies defile the earthly sanctuary. The scope of the chapter goes way beyond any localized, earthly, political, or military struggle. The issues, instead, are spiritual; this chapter is a different view of the great controversy, one involving a massive religious system that has set itself up in opposition to the work and ministry of Christ and against His people.

And, as we'll see, God's judgment is not only in favor of His people but against the little-horn power.

The Week at a Glance: How was the earthly sanctuary defiled? What do the symbols in Daniel 8 represent? Who is the little-horn power that arises after the breakup of the Grecian Empire? What is the nature of his attack against God's people and sanctuary?

*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, November 27.

The Defilement of the Earthly Sanctuary (*Ezek. 5:11*).

How did the sin offerings defile the Old Testament sanctuary? *Lev. 4:1-7, 27-31*.

When a priest or the whole congregation had to bring a sin offering, the blood of the slain animal was taken into the sanctuary (*Lev. 4:6, 17*). The blood of the sin offering presented by a ruler or a common Israelite was placed on the horns of the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard (*vss. 25, 30*), but the priest had to eat a portion of the sin offering (*Lev. 10:17*). In this way, the priest symbolically bore the guilt of the sinner. When the priest then offered his own sin offering, he carried the blood that now represented the people's, as well as his own, sins into the Holy Place. In this way, everyone's confessed and forgiven sins were carried into the Holy Place, and the sanctuary was thereby "defiled." This is clearly implied in the language of Leviticus 16:16, when on the Day of Atonement the priest had to make an "atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins" (*NKJV*). This type of "defilement" was allowed by the Lord in order to atone for the sins of the repentant sinner. (*See also Lev. 15:31, Num. 19:20.*)

In what other ways could the earthly sanctuary become defiled? *Pss. 74:3-7; 79:1; Ezek. 23:37, 38*.

In the Old Testament, God's temple was desecrated when foreign armies came in and looted the temple treasures. Scripture says that God's enemies also defiled the sanctuary by destroying it (*Ps. 79:1*). Yet, even prior to the destruction of the temple, the Hebrews themselves defiled the temple, not by their confessed sins but by setting up detestable things "in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it" (*Jer. 7:30; see also Jer. 32:34*).

Thus, the Old Testament sanctuary could be defiled or polluted in different ways: (1) by the confessed sins of the people for atonement purposes, (2) through the illegal contact of ceremonially unclean persons, (3) through the desecration or destruction of the sanctuary by God's enemies, and (4) by the Israelites themselves in setting up idols and foreign altars in the temple. With this background in mind, let us now study Daniel 8.

Dwell a bit on this notion of defilement. What are some things that you, perhaps, by your own actions, might be defiling? How do you understand the concept of defilement? Does defilement always have to be physical? If not, why not?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

Key Text: *Daniel 8:11.*

Teachers Aims:

1. To understand how the heavenly sanctuary has been defiled by the little-horn power.
2. To understand the significance of knowing who the little horn is and what he is doing today.
3. To show how the little horn takes away the “daily sacrifice.”

Lesson Outline:

I. The Earthly Sanctuary Defiled (*Ezek. 5:11*).

- A. A study of how the sanctuary could become defiled helps us understand the symbolism in Daniel 8:9-14.
- B. The Old Testament sanctuary could be defiled, or polluted, by
 1. Sin offerings
 2. Foreign invaders who looted the temple
 3. Setting up profane idols and altars in it

II. The Ram, the He-Goat, and the Great Horn (*Dan. 8:1-8, 20-22*).

- A. Horns in Scripture represent political powers.
- B. Media-Persia (ram) was destroyed by Greece (he-goat).
- C. Alexander the Great (the great horn) of Greece (he-goat) conquered the world.
- D. The great horn broke (Alexander died), and four horns (Alexander’s generals) sprang up.

III. The Little-Horn Power (*Dan. 8:9-12, 24, 25*).

- A. It comes from one of the winds of heaven (the directions of the compass), not the four horns.
- B. Rome (the little horn) followed Greece and became exceedingly great.
- C. The little horn attacks the host of heaven (God’s people), the Prince of the host (Jesus), and the daily sacrifice (Christ’s ministry in heaven).

Summary: “The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

COMMENTARY

I. Christ and Antichrist.

Over the past few decades, novels and films have made the concept of the antichrist well known to most people. Many believe that

The Vision of the Ram and the Goat (*Dan.*

8:1-8, 20-22).

Daniel 2 presented in broad outline the political kingdoms that would dominate world history. Daniel 7 presented the same outline with different symbols and introduced us to the political activities of the little-horn power. In Daniel 8 we meet some of the kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7 again, but the focus is on the religious activities of the little-horn power.

According to the angel interpreter, what is represented by the ram, the goat, and the “great” horn that arises from the goat? *Dan. 8:20, 21.*

Alexander the Great (symbolized by the horn) first drove the Persians out of Asia Minor. Following his victories at Granicus (334 B.C.) and Issus (333 B.C.), he marched his armies down through Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine to Egypt, taking time to destroy the kingdoms along the way, including the great sea-power of the island city of Tyre (332–331 B.C.). After defeating Egypt, he turned east and did not rest till he had reached India. He marched his soldiers 10,000 miles in approximately ten years. When he returned to Babylon he was only 32 years old, and the world was at his feet. Yet, in 323 B.C., at the height of his glory, he died of fever and exhaustion.

What was symbolized by the four horns that in vision Daniel saw replacing the notable horn? *Dan. 8:22.*

Horns in Scripture, at times, represent political powers (*Dan. 8:21, Zech. 1:18-21*). Daniel predicted that the empire of Greece would be divided into four kingdoms—exactly what occurred. When Alexander died, power passed to his generals; yet, as the generals began to fight among themselves, the empire fell apart. The decisive battle among these generals was fought at Ipsus in Phrygia (301 B.C.). The victors divided the empire among themselves. Thus, the four horns represent the four kingdoms (*Dan. 8:22*) that arose from Alexander’s empire: Ptolemy took Egypt, Seleucus took Syria and the East, Lysimachus took Asia Minor, and Cassander took Greece. In his explanation, Gabriel also stated that these four kingdoms would not be as powerful as Alexander’s kingdom (*vs. 22*).

Look at how accurately Daniel predicted events that occurred years, even centuries, after his death. How should prophecies like this help increase our faith?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

the antichrist is a semimystical figure of supernatural evil who will arise at the end of the world.

People who otherwise appear to be completely free of religious or Christian tendencies enjoy speculating about who the antichrist is. It seems that it is even possible to believe in, or be entertained by, the antichrist while having no knowledge of, or interest in, Christ, without whom the antichrist would be completely pointless.

This is an ironic state of affairs, because the true meaning of antichrist as it is used in the Bible refers to anyone—possibly anything—that opposes or attempts to replace Christ: “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:3). Furthermore, in the minds of many people, the concept of the intriguing, mysterious, apocalyptic antichrist of popular culture has overshadowed Christ. This concept is also misleading in a number of ways.

First, the influence of the antichrist spirit has been evident throughout world history. According to 1 John 4:3, it was in the world during the author’s own time, the first century A.D. So, it is not strictly something that pertains only to the end time. It is also worth noting that the term itself is never used in the book of Revelation, and has no direct connection to the number 666 (*Rev. 13:18*).

Second, the antichrist cannot be said to be a single figure, or even a single institution. Rather, it is all figures or institutions that manifest the antichrist spirit. At times the antichrist may even be looking out at you from your mirror.

It is interesting to note that the term *antichrist* is used only four times in the Bible, and then only to warn us to stay away from what it represents.

II. Useful Quotes About the Antichrist.

“ ‘Antichrist’ and ‘antichrists’ appear in the Bible only in 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7 and are unknown elsewhere in Christian literature before Polycarp in the 2nd century. . . . Yet by the beginning of the 3rd century . . . the expectation of an eschatological Antichrist had become highly developed in Christian theology and has ever remained a topic of intrinsic [central] interest to many Christians.”—*The Eerdmans’ Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), p. 66.

“From Paul’s teachings, then, we derive the following points of instruction concerning the antichrist: 1. This ‘mystery’ is not simply a matter of the apostolic age but rather will be continuously operative from Paul’s time down to the end of time. Consequently, the incessant [endless] satanic activity does not permit us to locate ‘the mystery of lawlessness’ exclusively in a single isolated historical period in the past or in the future.”—*The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 2000), p. 868.

“The concreteness of their expectation of the antichrist has often

The Rise of the Little Horn

Daniel 8:8, 9 says when the large horn was broken, “in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came a little horn” (*NKJV*).

Most commentators assume that the little horn came out of one of four horns, but Hebrew grammar implies something else, that the “little-horn” power came from one of “the winds of heaven,” not from the four horns.

However, the last part of verse 8 says, “four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.” Thus the phrase “the four winds of heaven” is the nearest antecedent to “one of them,” not “the four horns.” The little horn, therefore comes out of one of the four winds (the directions of the compass) rather than from one of the four horns. Furthermore, the little horn grows toward three geographic entities, “the south,” “the east,” and “the Glorious Land.” This second activity of the little horn suggests that the first activity, “the coming out,” also belongs to the geographic plane, the four points of the compass.

From history we know that the power that came after the four Grecian empires was Rome, which arose from a point westward of these empires.

Look at the chart below. How do the parallels between the three chapters help us see why Rome must be the little-horn power in Daniel 8?

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylon	Babylon	_____
Media-Persia	Media-Persia	Media-Persia
Greece	Greece	Greece
Rome	Rome	Rome

The crucial point to remember is that, in Daniel, not a lot of distinction is made between pagan and papal Rome. Both are viewed as one power. This is seen clearly in Daniel 7, for instance, where the little horn (papal Rome) that arises out of the fourth beast is still part of the fourth beast, which was Rome, only in its pagan phase. The little-horn power in Daniel 8 arises after Greece and exists until the end time, when it is cut off without hand (*Dan. 8:25*). Pagan Rome rose after Greece and still exists, now, though, in the papal phase.

Take time to study the parallels presented above until you could give someone a Bible study on this crucial topic.

TEACHERS COMMENTS

led people to conclude on the basis of the existential situations in which they found themselves that the antichrist was presently in the midst of human life and that they faced an immediate eschatological confrontation with him. No longer was attention directed to the various unchristian or antichristian forces in human life; people thought of one human being, who, because of his completely antithetical [contrary] actions, could be judged to be a ‘sign’ of the end of time.”—G. C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ*, 1972), p. 261.

“The greater man’s influence for good, under the control of the Spirit of God, the more determined will be the enemy to indulge his

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: *Leviticus 4:1-7, 27-31, Daniel 8.*

- 1 Every government has its symbol of authority, whether it is the United States capitol building, the Russian kremlin, or the Vatican in Rome. Read Exodus 25:8, 9. How do you understand the ministry of the earthly sanctuary and how it represented the function of God’s government in heaven?
- 2 Without intending to, we all play a part in defiling the heavenly sanctuary with our misdeeds and rebelliousness. However, it is the mechanism God established to deal with sin and cleanse His people from their guilt. What is different about the defilement caused by the little-horn power? What is the same?
- 3 Read Daniel 8:9-12. These verses symbolically describe an earthly power assuming divine powers and privileges. Were historical figures deliberately trying to usurp that which belongs only to God? Or did they have less sinister motives? What might those motives have been? How might we be tempted to do the same thing? Read Matthew 23:13-15. Why are religious people so prone to disgrace God?
- 4 Daniel 8 is one of the Bible’s clearest demonstrations of how Satan uses earthly powers to try to block God’s purposes. What is our greatest protection against being deceived into thinking we are doing God’s will, when in fact we are serving the enemy? Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. How does your life demonstrate that you “love the truth” (*vs. 10, NIV*)?
- 5 The proper translation of *antichrist* means “instead of” or “in the place of” Christ. In what ways might we be in danger of demonstrating less than complete dependence on Christ? How is that dangerous for our spiritual development, as well as harmful to our spiritual influence?

The Activity of the Little Horn

The power that followed the Grecian kingdoms in history was Rome, pagan and then papal. The fact that prophecy says the little horn was to become exceedingly great, in contrast to Media-Persia, which “became great” (*Dan. 8:4, NKJV*), and Greece, which became “very great” (*vs. 8*), rules out the identification of the little horn with the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes, who was not greater than either Media-Persia or Greece. Rome—in both its pagan and papal phases—was. It’s clear, however, that Daniel 8 focuses mostly on the papal phase.

Read Daniel 8:9-12. Write down the activities of the little-horn power. What do you think this is talking about?

Notice, first of all, the spiritual nature of the little horn’s attack. He goes after “the host of the heavens” (*vs. 9, NIV*); he magnifies himself against “the Prince of the host” (*vs. 11, NIV*), and the “daily” is taken away. Whatever else the little-horn power does, it certainly seems to be a spiritual power doing things against God’s truth. In fact, verse 12 says it cast “the truth to the ground.”

What are some of the objects under attack by the little-horn power?

1. The “Prince of the host.” In Joshua 5:14 the Prince is Christ. The Prince of the host of God’s people must be the One called “ ‘Messiah the Prince’ ” (*Dan. 9:25, NKJV*), “ ‘Michael, your prince’ ” (*Dan. 10:21, NIV*), and “Michael . . . , the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people” (*Dan. 12:1, NKJV*), or Christ.

2. The “daily.” The Hebrew word *tamid* (“continual,” “perpetual,” or “daily”) appears 103 times in the Old Testament. It is frequently used in connection with the “daily” service in the sanctuary. This text shows that Christ’s daily ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is coming under attack by the little horn.

3. “The place of His sanctuary.” There are two sanctuaries in Scripture. The earthly (*Exod. 25:9, 40*) and the heavenly (*Heb. 8:1-6*). The Old Testament sanctuary was destroyed in A.D. 70. Yet, even at that time it was not “His [God’s] sanctuary” anymore (*Matt. 23:37-39; 27:50, 51*). The only sanctuary functioning as “His sanctuary” at the time of the little horn (the papacy) was the heavenly sanctuary. Thus, the attack of the little horn is an attack on the heavenly sanctuary itself.

Attacks don’t always have to be physical. By distorting something, we can attack it, as well. Dwell on this idea in the context of the week’s lesson. (See *Dan. 8:12*.)

TEACHERS COMMENTS

envy and jealousy toward him by religious persecution. But all heaven is on the side of Christ, not of Antichrist. Those who love God and are willing to be partakers with Christ in His sufferings, God will honor. Antichrist, meaning all who exalt themselves against the will and work of God, will at the appointed time feel the wrath of Him who gave Himself that they might not perish but have eternal life. All who persevere in obedience, all who will not sell their souls for money or for the favor of men, God will register in the book of life.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 950.

III. What the Bible Says About the Anti-Witnessing

Consider the following:

1. The couple living next door to you argues constantly. You can't help hearing the words they're shouting at each other. Some make you squirm, and some you do not even understand (and are not sure you would want to)!

2. You sort the laundry into dark and light piles, and in the process a pack of cigarettes hidden in your son's or daughter's jean jacket falls out onto the floor.

3. The evening news reports another child has been abducted. No suspects yet.

4. Racial slurs are found scrawled across the side of a church set on fire across town—the church is badly damaged, and authorities say they suspect arson.

What do all of the above scenarios have in common (besides being all too common in occurrence)? Each one represents a form of defilement. If you look up *defile/defilement* in the dictionary or thesaurus you will find it accompanied by such words such as *foul, blacken, spoil, ravish, degradation, dishonor*. Perhaps we have not thought of these actions in quite that way before, but we should. Whether we are the receiver or initiator of this type of behavior, the message circulated to others is a painful commentary on human weakness.

Defilement may occur in spiritual, physical, and emotional forms. Consider the counsel of Paul in 1 Timothy 1:9-11. When we deliberately humiliate someone, we behave in a degrading manner. When we do not eat and drink according to God's plan, we contaminate our bodies. When we are disrespectful, we dishonor others, including God.

You can be a powerful witness to those around you, not only by what you choose to do but by what you do not say, think, and do.

The Little Horn and the Daily (*Dan. 8:11, 12, 24, 25*).

How did the little horn take away the daily sacrifice and cast down the place of Christ's sanctuary? *Dan. 8:11*.

By placing the intercession for humans into the hands of the priests through the confessional and by sacrificing Christ anew in every Mass, the papacy has removed Christ's heavenly ministry from the thinking of humanity.

Daniel also saw that **“an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground”** (*vs. 12, NKJV*). What **“army”** was given over to the little horn (*Dan. 8:12*)?

In the Old Testament, the sanctuary had an “army” of ministering Levites. The little horn has its own army of ministers who serve the system.

“The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist [Mass] are one *single sacrifice*. . . . ‘In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.’ ”—*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), no. 1367, p. 381.

It is through this kind of teaching that the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary has been overthrown in the minds of many Christians and its place effectively taken by misleading substitutes. Through the Mass and the confessional, the minds of Christian believers are drawn away from a continual dependence upon the mediatorial ministry of the Savior in His sanctuary. By elaborate ceremonies, all in the name of Christ, the ministry of Christ is obscured and lost sight of.

The complete forgiveness that Christ wants to give to those who put their trust in His free and perfect righteousness has been usurped by a system that, in effect, takes the place of Christ Himself. Instead of relying directly on Christ and on what He has done for us, believers are taught to depend upon a church as the vehicle through which everything that Christ offers us is dispensed.

Imagine if you were taught that no matter what Jesus has done for us, if you want the benefits, you must receive them only through the mediation of the Adventist Church itself. In other words, all that Christ has done for us comes to us only through the vehicle of the church, which alone has the power to dispense God's saving grace. Why must all Christians reject such a notion, not just for our church but for any church?

TEACHERS COMMENTS

christ.

“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18, NIV).

“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist” (2 John 7, NIV).

“Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction” (2 Thess. 2:3, NIV).

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: Christ continues to stand before God as our Advocate. Imagine our fate without His presence. What possible method could we then use to approach God in our own defense? Or is such an attempt pointless without Jesus? Explain.

Thought Question:

We have the advantage of reviewing world history from our twenty-first-century perspective. Are you comforted by the accuracy of prophecy in foretelling earth’s historical events? Is it with fear or excitement that you anticipate the fulfillment of prophesied events yet to come? Give reasons for your response.

Application Question:

A young man was convicted and received a fine in court. The presiding judge happened to be a longtime friend of the young man’s mother. Learning of her son’s fine, she wrote to the judge, begging that he dismiss the fine. Otherwise, she would need to pay it, since her son was penniless. Greatly moved though he was, the judge still refused to dismiss the fine. He wrote back to the woman and explained that to dismiss the fine would be a great miscarriage of justice, and he could not allow that to occur. However, enclosed with his letter was a personal check in an amount large enough to cover all court costs, as well as the fine itself. What an example of justice tempered with mercy. One would be hard pressed to think of a better way than this to describe Christ’s own advocacy for us. The next time you pray, fervently thank your Savior for His perfect example of merciful justice, though we are unworthy of it.

Further Study: To understand better the issues of this week, here are quotes, all taken from the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In each place where the word *Church* is used, replace it with *God* or with *Christ*. This should give us a better understanding of what's happening in Daniel 8. As you read these quotes, think of 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

“It is in the *Church* that ‘the fullness of the means of salvation’ has been deposited.”—*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 824, emphasis supplied.

“Basing itself on Scripture and Tradition, the Council teaches that the *Church*, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation.”—No. 846, emphasis supplied.

“The *Church* . . . bears in herself the totality of the means of salvation.”—No. 868, emphasis supplied.

“There is no offense, however serious, that the *Church* cannot forgive.”—No. 982, emphasis supplied.

“Were there no forgiveness of sins in the *Church*, there would be no hope of life to come or eternal liberation.”—No. 983, emphasis supplied.

Discussion Questions:

❶ Why must Seventh-day Adventists—in this ecumenical age, when most churches work toward Christian unity—stand firm on its view regarding the identity of the little horn?

❷ It must be remembered that the word *antichrist* doesn't mean merely “against Christ” but, in fact, means “in place of Christ.” With this definition in mind, go back over those statements quoted above from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. What conclusions must one, then, draw regarding Rome?

Summary: The vision of the ram (Media-Persia) and the goat (Greece) form the backdrop to the rise of the little-horn power (pagan and papal Rome). The focus, however, is on the religious activities of the little horn. By substituting the confessional and the Mass for Christ's ministry in heaven, the little horn took away the daily and cast down or defiled the place of His sanctuary.