

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?

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?

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.

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.)

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?

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:

1 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?

2 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.

Saying Yes to God

Agness Nhyama

I come from a family that worships gods of stone and wood. When my elder sister began attending the Adventist church, my parents saw the positive changes in her life and permitted the rest of us to attend church too. When we attended church, an hour's walk from our village, we stayed all day.

Some people objected to Christians living in our village. When the village elders told my father that we should not attend the Christian church, my father told us to stop going. My sister was afraid to disobey my father and stayed home to work on our family farm. But I got up early and went to church. When I returned that evening Father was angry. "If you are my daughter, then do not disobey me," he said.

But the next Sabbath I again went to church. And when I returned home, my father was waiting. "You said you are my daughter, but you do not obey me," he said. "Leave this house. Go and find someone who will keep you. You are no longer my daughter."

I stayed with my brother that night. But the next day my father sent for me. "You can attend church as you like," he said.

I wanted to attend secondary school, but my parents objected. They wanted me to marry and refused to pay my tuition. So I began selling literature to pay my way through school. They were so proud when I graduated; but when I told them I wanted to attend college, they thought I was crazy!

I learned about Tanzania Adventist College and applied to attend. I have sold books to pay my way through college. I was determined to learn as much as I could about God's will for me.

Saying yes to God has changed my life. When I think of where I came from, the challenges God has brought me through, and the joys I've experienced serving God, I do not worry about my future. I know God has a work for me to do. I love Him and want to serve Him all of my life.

I pray that one day my parents will give their lives to God. That will be the greatest day for me!



Agness Nhyama (left) has recently completed her studies at Tanzania Adventist College in Tanzania, East Africa.