

## Rome and Antiochus



### SABBATH—AUGUST 26

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Isaiah 55:11; Matthew 13:10-13; Luke 2:1; Luke 21:20, 21; John 11:48; John 16:12; 2 Peter 1:19.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list [tax] be made of everyone in the whole Roman world” (Luke 2:1, NIV).

**THE SANCTUARY WAS THE KEY THAT UNLOCKED THE MYSTERY OF THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF 1844.**<sup>1</sup> “The sanctuary opened a complete system of truth. This truth shows that God’s hand had directed the great Advent movement. This truth showed the work of His people. After the terrible night of their suffering and disappointment, Jesus’ disciples were ‘glad when they saw the Lord.’ In the same way, those who had looked in faith for His second coming now rejoiced.”  
—Adapted from *The Great Controversy [War]*, p. 423.

The 1844 pre-Advent judgment<sup>2</sup> is a very important doctrine<sup>3</sup> of the Adventist Church. The judgment explains the disappointment of 1844. The judgment helps us understand who we are today and why we are a church. Our enemy, Satan, is always trying to destroy us. If he can destroy our belief in 1844, he will destroy us. So, it is important that Adventists be firmly rooted in this belief. We need to be prepared to answer challenges against it.

This week, we will continue to look at more Bible verses that will help us better understand the doctrine of the pre-Advent judgment. Understanding this doctrine will help us understand the wonderful saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will better understand what He has done for us at the Cross and is doing for us now in heaven.

<sup>1</sup>The disappointment of 1844—many Christians believed that Christ would come back in 1844. They were disappointed when He did not. They later discovered that they had misunderstood and misinterpreted the Bible. The first part of the judgment was to begin in 1844, not Christ’s return.

<sup>2</sup>the pre-Advent judgment—the judgment that will take place before Jesus’ second coming. Adventists believe that God’s judgment comes in three parts. The first part began in 1844 and is continuing until Jesus’ return to the earth. This is the pre-Advent judgment. The pre-Advent judgment is also called the investigative judgment.

<sup>3</sup>doctrine—church belief.

**SUNDAY—AUGUST 27****ROME IN THE NEW TESTAMENT  
(Matthew 22:17; Luke 2:1)**

So far, we have been studying the history of kingdoms, beginning with Babylon and ending with God's kingdom. We noticed that of the five kingdoms listed, four were named. The only one not named was Rome, both in its pagan<sup>4</sup> and papal<sup>5</sup> parts.

Rome itself might not have been mentioned by name in the Old Testament. But Rome's history and power is mentioned all through the New Testament. The Gospels,<sup>6</sup> the book of Acts, and the Epistles (letters) all come from a Roman background. Daniel mentions by name Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and God's final kingdom. But he does not name Rome. The New Testament openly names Rome, the power that arises after Greece and rules the world during Jesus' time and afterward.

**Which empire is clearly shown as the ruling power in the following verses? Matthew 22:17; Luke 2:1-5; Luke 3:1; John 11:48; Acts 25:21.**

Notice in Luke 2:1 that "all the world" should be taxed. Only a world power could tax all the world. Daniel 7:23 says that the fourth beast will

"devour [control] the whole earth." This means that the fourth beast is clearly a world empire, such as Rome.



**Even Joseph, Mary, and the unborn Jesus were affected by Rome's laws.**

Jesus was talking about how Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Jesus connected the Roman Empire to the book of Daniel. Jesus pointed to Rome and puts it within Daniel itself. The words "the abomination<sup>7</sup> of desolation"<sup>8</sup> spoken of by Jesus appear three times in Daniel (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:31; Daniel 12:11). So Jesus connects the Roman Empire to Daniel. Jesus even makes it clear that Rome is the great power that arises after Greece in Daniel 2, Daniel 7, and Daniel 8 and continues until "the end." As the Protestant Reformers<sup>9</sup> did, we let the Bible be its own interpreter. We find all four empires shown in Daniel named in

<sup>4</sup>pagan Rome—the political Roman Empire from 27 B.C. to A.D. 395.

<sup>5</sup>papal Rome—Rome during the Middle Ages (A.D. 500–1500); when Rome was ruled by the church of the Middle Ages; having to do with the pope, who is the head of the Catholic Church.

<sup>6</sup>the Gospels—the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called the Gospels.

<sup>7</sup>abomination—a disgusting, hateful thing.

<sup>8</sup>desolation—the act of destroying something.

<sup>9</sup>Protestant Reformers—Christians who rebelled against the Church of Rome, such as Martin Luther.

other parts of the Bible.



Martin Luther was a Protestant Reformer.

Look at how clear these prophecies are. How could God have made it any easier for us to believe? But we so often struggle with faith. Why? What things can you do daily to keep away doubt?

### MONDAY—AUGUST 28

#### THE TWO LITTLE HORNS (Daniel 7:8; Daniel 8:9)

In both Daniel 7 and Daniel 8, a little-horn power is an important symbol. Comparing<sup>10</sup> their characteristics shows that they are the same power. Comparing them helps make our position stronger on just what that

<sup>10</sup>comparing—showing how things are the same.

power is. More information is given about the two little horns than any of the other kingdoms listed. This should tell us that (1) these little horns symbolize an important power in the prophetic history of the world, and (2) God wants us to know exactly what power these horns symbolize.



The little horn of Daniel 7:8.

Below we look at how the two little horns are the same. As you study these verses, think about how the characteristics of the little horn support our interpretation of this power.

- 1. Daniel 7:8; Daniel 8:9.** Both are shown by the same symbol—a horn.
- 2. Daniel 7:21, 25; Daniel 8:10.** Both powers control by force.

3. **Daniel 7:8, 20, 25; Daniel 8:10, 11, 25.** Both claim to be equal with God.

4. **Daniel 7:25; Daniel 8:24.** Both target God's people.

5. **Daniel 7:25; Daniel 8:13, 14.** Both have parts of their work described.

6. **Daniel 7:25, 26; Daniel 8:17, 19.** Both continue until the time of the end.

7. **Daniel 7:11, 26; Daniel 8:25.** Both will be destroyed by God.

Here are two powers who are represented by a horn and who carry out the same basic actions in the same time slot in the flow of visions. So it is clear that the two horns are the same power. After studying the descriptions of the power, it is hard to interpret this power as anything but Rome.

**What Bible prophecies have helped you to have faith? Review these prophecies now. The more you study them, the more they will encourage you. Share them with someone who might need some encouragement.**

## **TUESDAY—AUGUST 29**

### **THE ROME PROBLEM (Daniel 12:4, 9; Luke 10:24)**

The last earthly power is clearly Rome. But why was this power not named in the prophecies of Daniel? How much easier it would be to explain

these prophecies if Rome had been named. As mentioned in lesson 3, some claim that Rome was not named because Daniel simply repeated history that already happened, instead of prophesying it before it happened.

**What idea is given in the following verses about the timing in which God shows certain truths to His people? Daniel 12:4, 9; Luke 10:24; Matthew 13:10-13; John 16:12; 2 Peter 1:19.**

God does not show all truth to all people at once. Truth is often given in parts or steps. More and more truth is opened according to God's perfect schedule.

Why, then, is Rome not named in Daniel? Because God knew that Rome would be in full control of the Bible for many hundreds of years. If the leaders in Rome had seen Rome clearly named in such a bad light, they could have destroyed the Bible or the book of Daniel. But because they were not sure what Daniel was talking about, they could give the horn kingdom any name they wanted to. Meanwhile, God kept the real name of the kingdom hidden. He knew that at the right time He would raise up people who would discover the true name of the kingdom (the little-horn power). These people were the Protestant Reformers (Daniel does say that his words would be "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" [Daniel 12:9]). Many of the Protestant Reformers did see Rome

in that kind of work!

In fact, Jews who lived during the time of the Roman Empire would often interpret these same prophecies like this: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Edom. Why Edom? The Jews were afraid of the Romans. So they called the little horn Edom instead of Rome. Edom became another name for Rome.

**What can we learn here about how we need to deal carefully with people? We need to be honest about who the little horn is. So how can we be wise and not say truthful things that others might not be ready to hear?**

### WEDNESDAY—AUGUST 30

#### THE DATE OF DANIEL (Daniel 8:1)

**At what time in history did Daniel live? Daniel 8:1.**

The prophecies in Daniel give powerful proof of God's control and of the Bible as God's Word. From the earliest days of the Christian church enemies have tried to destroy people's faith in the Bible and its prophecies. As we said earlier, somebody did try to claim that Daniel was not written in the time frame the book of Daniel places itself. But many hundreds of years later, Seventh-day Adventists refuse to accept this position.

**In what time frame does the**

**book of Daniel date itself? (Daniel 1:1; Daniel 2:1; Daniel 7:1; Daniel 8:1; Daniel 9:1). What can we say about the position of people who believe that the book of Daniel was written hundreds of years later? Read Isaiah 55:11; Mark 15:28; John 17:17; Acts 1:16.**

Many people date the book of Daniel many hundreds of years after the book dates itself. Because of their date, they also say the little horn in Daniel 8 is an old-time Greek ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes. Most students believe this ruler is the little horn.

Almost any modern commentary<sup>11</sup> also says this ruler is the little horn. Because this opinion is popular, we need to study it.

**How else can our faith in the Bible be destroyed? How can you defend yourself against anything that can weaken your trust in the truth and inspiration of the Bible?**

### THURSDAY—AUGUST 31

#### ANTIOCHUS (Daniel 8:5-8, 21, 22)

**Read the vision of the he-goat in Daniel 8:5-8. Now read Gabriel's interpretation of the he-goat in Daniel 8:21, 22. What happened to the he-goat?**

History shows that this prophecy was fulfilled correctly. The he-goat

<sup>11</sup>commentary—a volume (book) that explains about the Bible, its history, and its meaning.

was old-time Greece. After the death of Alexander the Great, Greece split into “four kingdoms” (Daniel 8:22) under four generals. One of the kingdoms was the Seleucid. The Seleucid kingdom lasted from about 301 B.C. until about 146 B.C. One of the Seleucid kings was Antiochus Epiphanes. He was the eighth Seleucid king (175–164 B.C.). Twenty more kings followed him. Through the victories of the kings before him, Antiochus took control of Judea for a short time. He polluted the temple in Jerusalem for about three years, and made the Jews suffer. He died in a later war (164 B.C.) after being driven out of Jerusalem. Most interpreters believe he is the little horn.

1. **The Medo-Persian ram became “great” (Daniel 8:4). The Grecian (Greek) goat became “very great” (Daniel 8:8). The little horn became “exceeding [very, very] great” (Daniel 8:9). How does this description and comparison<sup>12</sup> of empires show that Antiochus was not the little horn?**
2. **According to Daniel 8:17, 19, 26, the prophecy dealt with end-time things. The little horn was the last power in the vision. Antiochus died in 164 B.C. So why can he not be the little horn?**
3. **Daniel 8:25 shows the little horn would be “broken without hands.” In Daniel 2:34, 35, we**

**see a terrible destruction without any human cause. Why does Antiochus not fit these verses?**

**We have strong proof that Antiochus is not the little horn. But Adventists are almost alone in saying that he is not the little horn. What does this tell us about our need to stand firm in our beliefs? In what other ways do you have to stand firm for a position that is not popular?**

#### FRIDAY—SEPTEMBER 1

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** There is another way people try to make Antiochus the little horn in Daniel 8. It is based on the argument about the origin (beginning) of the little horn in Daniel 8:8, 9. Read Daniel 8:8, 9, King James Version. Some argue for Antiochus, saying that the little horn arose from one of the four horns. The four horns are the nations that arose from Greece after the death of Alexander the Great. They claim that would be Antiochus, not Rome.

But the argument falls apart. The last part of Daniel 8 is not “four notable ones,” but “four winds of heaven.” Right after this, Daniel 8:8 says that out of “one of them” came forth a little horn. One of what? The closest group of words is “the four winds of heaven.” So the little horn came out of one of the four winds. (Some argue that horns grow out of

<sup>12</sup>comparison—how things are the same.

horns, not winds. But when was the last time anyone ever saw a horn grow out of another horn?)

Second, Hebrew grammar connects “one of them [horns]” with the “four winds of heaven.”

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it so important that we know for sure who the little horn is? For example, if the little horn were Antiochus, then the whole prophecy of Daniel 8 would have been fulfilled and completed about 150 years before Christ. What would that mean for us, as Seventh-day Adventists? Why do you think that most Christians today accept this wrong opinion of the little horn?
2. Discuss as a class what it means to hold doctrines that most other Christians do not accept. Should this bother us? Discuss your answers.