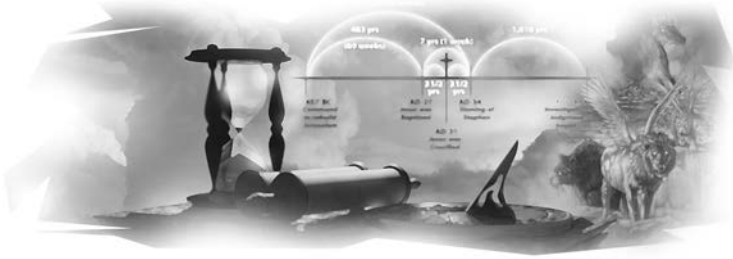


# The Eschatological Day of Atonement



## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week’s Study:** *Daniel 8; Rev. 14:6, 7; Num. 14:34; Dan. 9:24–27.*

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

For a better understanding of the sanctuary message, study this chart, which shows how the great judgment scene of Daniel 7 (studied last week) is the same event as the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14.

| Daniel 7                                      | Daniel 8                          | Interpretation                         |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Lion  | —                                 | Babylon                                |
| Bear  | Ram                               | Media-Persia                           |
| Leopard                                       | He-goat                           | Greece                                 |
| Fourth beast<br>Little horn                   | Little horn                       | Rome—pagan<br>Rome—papal               |
| <b>Pre-Advent Judgment</b>                    | <b>Cleansing of the sanctuary</b> | <b>Eschatological Day of Atonement</b> |
| Transfer of kingdom to saints (Second Coming) |                                   | Second Coming and beyond               |

This week we will study Daniel 8. We will discover the real issue of the conflict between the horn power and God, and we will see why the cleansing of the sanctuary, beginning in A.D. 1844, is God’s perfect answer to that challenge.

*\*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, December 7.*

## The Little Horn's Attack

**Read** Daniel 8, focusing especially on verses 9–14 and verses 23–25. What does the little horn power attack?

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The horn power interferes with the worship of the divine “Prince of the host” (*vs. 11, compare with Josh. 5:13–15*). It removes from Him (*Dan. 8:11, 12*) “the daily” (in Hebrew *tamid*)—a word that refers over and over to the daily sacrificial service in the earthly sanctuary service. Because the agent of *tamid* activities at the sanctuary is a priest, often the high priest, the horn sought to usurp the role of the (high) priest, command its own counterfeit “host,” and take away “the daily.” In this case, given the prophetic context (during the time of papal Rome), it’s obviously Christ’s high priestly ministry that is attacked.

The horn power thus usurps the responsibilities of the heavenly Priest and interrupts the continual worship of God on earth. It acts like another “captain of the host,” waging a religious war against the divine heavenly Prince, His sanctuary, and His people. It becomes an earthly instrument of Satan; it is said to be “mighty, but not by his own power” (*Dan. 8:24, NKJV*), and its activities reflect a cosmic war that is fought on two levels, the earthly and the heavenly.

The little horn follows right after the ram (Media-Persia) and the he-goat (Greece); therefore, it must be identified historically as Rome, which came after the kingdoms of Media-Persia (*Dan. 8:20*) and Greece (*Dan. 8:21*). Though the little horn started out as imperial Rome, the greater emphasis is on papal Rome, the primary focus of the vision.

As said before, the “daily” (*tamid*) refers to Christ’s continual, priestly mediation in the heavenly sanctuary (*Heb. 7:25; 8:1, 2*). The “taking away of the daily” by the horn power represents the introduction of such papal innovations as a mediating priesthood, the sacrifice of the mass, the confessional, and the worship of Mary, by which it has successfully taken away knowledge of, and reliance upon, the continual ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

**None of us is immune to the danger of trying to play God. How might you, however subtly, be doing the same thing?**

## “How Long?”

The presumption of the little horn leads to the cry for judgment. As the ram and the he-goat became great and then were broken (*Dan. 8:4, 7, 8*), so the horn power exalts itself (*Dan. 8:9–11*). Thus, the question comes, How long will the vision be?

**What** specific issues are prompting the question in Daniel 8:13?

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Although the question singles out a few activities of the horn, perhaps the most horrible ones, it still asks for the length of the entire vision; that is, it is asking about the events shown in the vision of Daniel 8.

In the Scriptures, the question “How long?” always asks for the present situation to be changed. It is found directed to people by God and by His prophets (*Exod. 10:3, Num. 14:27, and 1 Kings 18:21*). It is also directed to God by His people (*Ps. 94:3, Rev. 6:10*) and by the angel of Yahweh (*Zech. 1:12*). The angelic cry “How long?” (*Dan. 8:13, 12:6*) is a lament over continuous distress, a plea for change, and a call for divine judgment. Such a question expresses the expectation that God will finally triumph.

As in Zechariah 1:13, where Yahweh replied with “gracious words, comforting words” (*NASB*), the answer to the question in Daniel 8:13 comes right away: restoration will be underway beginning with a period of “2,300 evenings and mornings” (*vs. 14, NASB*).

Once we understand the human condition and the prophetic time in which we live, we cannot remain silent. The cry “How long?” needs to be put forth. As we look around at our world, how can we not plead for the Lord to come and usher in a new world “in which righteousness dwells” (*2 Pet. 3:13, NKJV*)? Although God is now at work, as promised in Daniel 8:14, we want Him to end the reign of evil here and return in the glory that He has promised time and again.

**In which situations have you asked God the question, “How long?” How do you maintain the assurance that God is indeed in control, however dismal your immediate prospects might seem and no matter “how long” it is taking to resolve the things you want changed?**

## Restoration of the Holy

**Read** Daniel 8:14. What happens at the end of the 2,300 “evenings and mornings”?

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The phrase “evenings and mornings” reflects language from the Creation account that signifies a day (*Gen. 1:5, 8, et cetera*). It implies that God, using His own creative force, will counter the destructive activities of the horn and its host. The Creator causes a change of situation, which is actually called for by the question in Daniel 8:13.

The answer in Daniel 8:14 can be read as, “Until 2,300 evenings-mornings, then will the holy [sanctuary] be restored [cleansed].” A study of the terms that are parallel to “restore” (from the Hebrew word *zdq*) shows that it has three major meanings: in a relational context, it denotes restoration (*Isa. 10:22*); in the context of the sanctuary, it denotes cleansing or purification (*Job 4:17, 25:4*); and in a legal context, it denotes vindication (*Job 34:5*). The same verb is used for God’s intervention in judgment when the righteous are vindicated, or declared to be righteous (*1 Kings 8:32, Isa. 50:8*). The word *holy*, used in Daniel 8:14 (often translated as “sanctuary”), is also used in association with holy people (*Dan. 12:7*). In fact, Daniel 8:24 makes it clear that the little horn power, like the little horn power in Daniel 7, attacks God’s “holy” people.

Thus, the restoration of the “holy” (or “sanctuary”) in Daniel 8:14 encompasses the solution to all the problems mentioned previously in the question. Not only will judgment be rendered against the little horn power, but the sanctuary will be cleansed, and God’s people and God’s sanctuary will be given their rightful state. This finds a parallel in what happened on the Levitical Day of Atonement (*Lev. 16:20, 30*).

The work of restoration in Daniel 8 equals the divine judgment in Daniel 7, where judgment was given in favor of the saints and against the evil little horn power.

The world needs to know that justice and judgment, as predicted in Daniel 8:14, will come and that now is the time to accept the salvation offered us in Jesus.

**Read Revelation 14:6, 7. How do these verses tie in directly with the judgment of Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8?**

## Day of Atonement in Daniel 8

The target of the horn's assault is God's heavenly sanctuary and His people. What does the future hold for them? That is what the question in Daniel 8:13 asks. However, only the Day of Atonement can bring the sanctuary and the people of God back to their rightful state and, thus, justify God in His dealings. So, the answer in Daniel 8:14 must be a Day of Atonement activity. In fact, the Day of Atonement is the only ritual day that shows the same combination of prominent themes as shown in the climax of the vision of Daniel 8: sanctuary imagery, purification of sanctuary and people, judgment, and creation.

There are also several terms in Daniel 8 that allude to the Day of Atonement. The horn acts in "rebellion" (*Dan. 8:12, 13, NIV*), a term that occurs specifically in Leviticus 16:16, 21 (*NIV*). It describes a defiant sin, and only on the Day of Atonement can the sanctuary be cleansed from it. The word *holy* (*qodesh*) explicitly links Daniel 8:14 with Leviticus 16, where it occurs to designate the Most Holy Place (*Lev. 16:2, 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, 33*). That the "holy" is restored to its rightful place is reminiscent of the Day of Atonement, when the "holy" is purified from "rebellion" (*Lev. 16:16, NIV*). The specific use of the animal imagery of the ram and he-goat also alludes to the Day of Atonement (*Lev. 16:5*), as does the further designation of the goat as the "shaggy" one (*Dan. 8:21, NASB*), a description used for the two goats at the Day of Atonement.

The horn's war in the realm of religion is countered and cut short by divine intervention carried out in the context of an eschatological Day of Atonement. At last, terror finds its end, and God's people, the true worship, and the sanctuary are restored to their rightful position and, in the final analysis, God Himself is vindicated. As God demonstrated on the Day of Atonement that He is just in His dealings and judgments by forgiving the loyal and judging the disloyal and rebellious, so the eschatological Day of Atonement will verify that God is just when He saves and when He punishes.

**Whatever else we can learn from Daniel 8:14, it should tell us that, even after all these long centuries, the Lord has not forgotten His promises to us and that He will punish evil and reward His saints. How can you learn to hold on to those promises, especially during times of trial? After all, without these promises, what hope do you have?**

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## Daniel 8 and 9

The term for “vision” (in Hebrew, *chazon*) in the question in Daniel 8:13 refers to the entire vision in Daniel 8:3–11 (see *Dan. 8:1, 2, 13, 15*) and encompasses the time of Media-Persia (ram), Greece (he-goat), and papal Rome (little horn). When the length of the vision is given as “2,300 evenings and mornings,” we should therefore understand it as covering the span from Media-Persia to the end time. The text repeatedly emphasizes that the vision pertains to the “time of the end” (*Dan. 8:17, 19*) and “many days in the future” (*Dan. 8:26, NASB*). Because of its length, a literal 2,300 days is nowhere near long enough to cover the time span of the vision. Therefore, we need to interpret it by the day-year principle as 2,300 years, following the example of Ezekiel 4:5, 6 and Numbers 14:34.

The question remains: When do the 2,300 years begin?

Bible scholars, both Jewish and Christian, have seen a strong link between Daniel 8:14 and Daniel 9:24–27, long viewed as a powerful prophecy pointing to the coming of the Messiah, Jesus.

**Read Daniel 9:24–27. What is happening in these verses? How is this linked to Daniel 8:14?**

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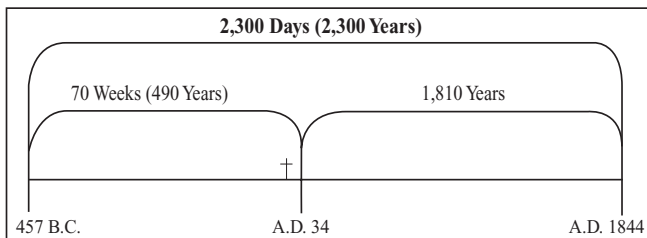
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While the word *vision* (*chazon*) refers to the entire prophecy of Daniel 8, another word, *mareh*, translated as “vision,” points specifically to the “vision [*mareh*] of the evenings and mornings” (*Dan. 8:26, NASB*). It is this *mareh*, that of the 2,300 days, that Daniel did not understand (*Dan. 8:27*). The angel had explained everything else.

Several years later, the same angel, Gabriel, appeared to Daniel to give him a message so that he would “understand the vision [*mareh*]” of the 2,300 days (*Dan. 9:23, NKJV*). The 70-week prophecy in those verses helps us to understand the prophetic time element of Daniel 8:14. It is the verb *decreed* at the beginning of Daniel 9:24, which is best translated as “apportioned” or “cut off,” that specifically suggests that the 70 weeks compose a part of the longer period of 2,300 days. Thus, the 70-week prophecy is “cut off” from the larger 2,300 day prophecy of Daniel 8:14. This gives us the starting point for the prophetic time period depicted in Daniel 8:14. (See tomorrow’s study for more details.)

**Further Study:** Ellen G. White, “What Is the Sanctuary?” pp. 409–422; “The Holy of Holies,” pp. 423–432, in *The Great Controversy*.

In Daniel 9:24–27, the beginning of the 70 weeks is marked by “the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” (*Dan. 9:25, NASB*). The book of Ezra reports on three decrees that concern Jerusalem and the temple, but the third, reported in Ezra 7:12–26, is the most effective one. The Persian King Artaxerxes I issued the decree in 457 B.C. It involves both the reconstruction of the temple and the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a political and administrative center (*Ezra 7:25, 26*). In the Bible, only this decree is followed by thanksgiving that praises God for influencing the king (*Ezra 7:27, 28*). Furthermore, only with 457 B.C. as a starting point do the 70 weeks (that is, 490 years) reach the time of Christ, the “Messiah, the Prince” of Daniel 9:25–27. Thus, the prophecy of the 70 weeks provides the precise event to date for the beginning of the 2,300 evenings and mornings. They start in 457 B.C. and end after 2,300 years in A.D. 1844.



## Discussion Questions:

- 1 If possible, get a more detailed explanation of the link between Daniel 8:14 and Daniel 9:24–27 and study the close connection between them. What should it tell us about the importance of the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 that it is so closely linked to such a major prophecy as Daniel 9:24–27?
- 2 Ellen G. White wrote: “The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 488. What do you think she meant by this? Why are these things so important for us to understand?
- 3 When talking about the little horn, the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 are dealing solely with Rome, and nothing else—not communism (as some have said in the past) or Islam (as some now say). How, though, do we remain faithful to our beliefs without causing undue hurt to others? Why must we show that our concern is with a system, not with the people caught up in it?

## Stubborn Atheist

I was an atheist. I taught physics and astronomy in a secondary school in Bulgaria and was responsible for teaching atheism. Then my brother became a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. I knew nothing about what he had gotten into, but I was sure it was trouble.

My brother told me of a man in his workplace who read his Bible during work breaks. He gave my brother some Bible literature and signed him up for a Bible course. My brother invited me to study the Bible course, too, but I refused to listen to one word about God. Karl Marx had said that religion is the opiate of the people, and I refused to be tainted by it.

He kept urging me to study the Bible, and I finally agreed to read the lessons, but only so I could show him the errors of these studies. I read through them quickly until I got to the lesson about the second coming of Christ. It caught my interest. I went back and reread the earlier lessons and even filled in the study sheet. I grew impatient for the next lesson to arrive.

I began to visit my brother's church. It was small and quite conservative. I experienced God's presence and love in that church. I was learning to love others just because Jesus loves them. He relies on us to be His light in this world.

In my attempt to prove my brother's new faith wrong, I found the Savior.

My brother eventually became a pastor, and I prayed that God would send me to a certain village to share my faith. God answered my prayer in an unexpected way. I was asked to become women's ministries director for the Western Bulgaria Conference. I had been thinking of teaching a few old ladies in a village, but suddenly the church entrusted to me the care of all women in western Bulgaria! I am amazed that God could trust me with such a responsibility.



God has used this new role to help me minister to mothers with children who are not in the faith and to families experiencing abuse and to help women find and fulfill their roles in ministry to their families, their church, and their society.

Your mission offerings help strengthen churches around the world and equip members to reach others for Christ. If my brother's colleague hadn't given him material to read, who knows where I would be today. Thank you.

*TATIANA MODREVA shares her faith in Vratsa, Bulgaria.*