

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Pastor Doug Baker, D.Min.

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## Introduction

There is another prophecy of the Antichrist in Daniel 8, which focuses on its religious work in some detail. For those who have not read our paper on “The Antichrist Prophecies” we will provide an exposition of this prophecy without regard to previous written material.

## Beasts in Daniel

Before beginning an interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel 8, we first will determine what symbolic beasts in chapters 7 and 8 mean. In Daniel 7, the four beasts introduced in verses 3-7 are identified as four *kings* (v. 17). In verse 23 the fourth beast is also identified as a *fourth kingdom* (cf. v. 24). Therefore, the term *kings* must refer to the kings as representing their kingdoms. Thus, the emphasis is on kingdoms rather than on individual kings.

In Daniel 8, two beasts are introduced in verses 3-8, a ram and a male goat. The ram is identified as *the kings of Media and Persia* (v. 20), a reference to the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia. The male goat is explained as *the king of Greece* (v. 21). However, it is better to say that the kingdom of Medo-Persia was by defeated by another kingdom. Thus, the term *king of Greece* is used to represent his kingdom.

The idea that beasts in Daniel are sometimes called kings only as representing their kingdoms is confirmed by the parallel chapter of Daniel 2 with Daniel 7. There a vision was given to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (technically Neo-Babylonia); see verses 1-7. The first four parts of this vision were parts of a man (vv. 31-33). The first part, or head (vv. 32, 38), represents Nebuchadnezzar or his kingdom (v. 38). Then the next three parts of the man are identified as *another kingdom, another, and the fourth kingdom* in verses 39 and 40. Thus, we see that all four parts are symbolic of kingdoms. Because all scholars see that the parts of this human image are parallel to the four beasts in chapter 7, we conclude that symbolic beasts in Daniel actually represent kingdoms.

## Horns in Daniel

Horns often appear on symbolic animals in the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8. What do they represent? The ten horns on the fourth beast of Daniel 7 (vv. 7, 24) are said to be ten *kings* (v. 24).

The little horn, also on the fourth beast (v. 8), is called *another horn* (v. 8) and *another horn* (v. 24), which implies that it is of a similar nature as the ten horns.

In Daniel 8, two horns on the ram (vv. 3, 20) are called *the kings of Media and Persia* (v. 20). This refers to the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia even though the word *kings* is used here, an interpretation adopted by all scholars. The male goat (vv. 5, 21) is identified as *the king of Greece* (v. 21). Although it is called a *king*, the fact that it is a symbolic beast means that the emphasis is on it as a kingdom (see the previous section). Therefore, it is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn between its eyes (vv. 5, 21) is called *the first king* (v. 21), which scholars agree is a reference to Alexander the Great. This confirms the interpretation of *the king of Greece* as the kingdom of Greece, for an individual king would not arise from an individual king. The four horns that arose after the large horn (Alexander) was broken (vv. 8, 22) are identified as *four kingdoms [that] shall arise out of that nation* (v. 22, cf. v. 23), meaning out of Greece. Finally, the little horn (v. 9) is clearly referenced in verse 23 as a *king*.

After examining the above data, we conclude that horns on symbolic animals represent kingdoms, with the word *kings* representing their kingdoms, unless the context requires the interpretation of a horn as an individual king (as in the first king of Greece).

### **The Action in Daniel 8**

Daniel 8 begins with a description of a ram conquering other symbolic beasts (vv. 3-4). This ram represents the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia (v. 20). Then a male goat appears and conquers the ram. The male goat represents the kingdom of Greece (v. 21). Then the demise of the goat is depicted in verse 8 by declaring that the notable horn on the goat (vv. 5, 8) would be broken, and in its place would arise four horns. This notable horn is identified in verse 21 as *the first king of Greece*, further identified in history as Alexander the Great. The four horns are identified as four kingdoms that would arise from the Greek kingdom and replace it (vv. 8, 22).

The focus of the prophecy, however, is on a little horn, whose activities are described in great detail (vv. 9-12). Daniel 8:9 states that the little horn would *come out of one of them*, referring either to *the four winds of heaven* (v. 8) or to one of the *four notable ones* (horns). The explanatory section of chapter 8 does not answer which one of these the little horn comes out of; it simply tells us that it would arise *in the latter time of their kingdom* (v. 25; cf. v. 24).

We understand it to come out of one of the four winds of heaven for at least two reasons. First, the more recent location mentioned to the little horn is to *the four winds of heaven*, so it would be the more natural choice. Second, immediately after mentioning that the little horn becomes exceedingly great (v. 9), the text describes its activities as extending *toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land*. Since these are compass directions, it amounts to stating that

the little horn came from another compass direction, which would be the west or northwest. Note that the *Glorious Land* is a similar description of Jerusalem and/or Judea given in Psalms 48:1-2, Psalms 106:24, Jeremiah 3:19, and Ezekiel 20:6, 15.

Verse 10 says that the little horn went *up to the host of heaven* and *cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them*. Notice the change in direction from the horizontal in verse 9 to the vertical in verse 10. The expression *host of heaven* sometimes refers to the multitudes in heaven, with an extended meaning of an *army* of angels. In Exodus 12:41, the same Hebrew word for *hosts* refers to the Israelites who left slavery in Egypt as *the hosts of the Lord* (KJV) or as the armies of the Lord (NKJV). When used symbolically, the word for *stars* can refer to angels (Job 38:7 in context; Revelation 12:4, 9). Likewise, sometimes God's people on earth are compared to stars (Deuteronomy 1:10; Daniel 12:3). Of course, the little horn could not possibly enter into heaven itself and literally cast angels to the earth. Fortunately, the explanatory section of Daniel 8 settles the issue by declaring that the little horn will *destroy the mighty, and also the holy people* (v. 24). Therefore, the little horn will be guilty of persecuting God's faithful people, who are figuratively in heaven (cf. Ephesians 2:6; Hebrews 12:22-23) but literally on the earth.

Note that Daniel 8:9 says the little horn became exceedingly great. Now we have sufficient data to identify the little horn in this prophecy. Just ask yourself what kingdom arose in the latter part of the divided Greek Empire, was at least as powerful or great as Medo-Persia (which was *great*, v. 4) and as Greece before its breakup into four divisions (Greece was *very great*, v. 8), and which was known for persecuting God's people. There can be no other power than Rome. Therefore, we conclude that in verses 9-10 the little horn is the Roman Empire.

In verse 11 the vertical motion of the little horn's activities continue, as it does three things: (1) He exalts himself as high as *the Prince of the host*; (2) He is responsible for taking away the *daily* from the Prince of the host; and (3) he attacks the *place* of the Prince's sanctuary.

Who is *the Prince of the host*? We already have understood the word *host* to refer to either God's army of angels in heaven or His people as an army on earth. In the explanatory section of this prophecy, this Prince is called *the Prince of princes* (v. 25), implying but not proving that He might be a divine Being. In Daniel 12:1-2, mention is made of *The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your [Daniel's] people*. And when he does so, the result is world history's greatest time of trouble against the wicked.

A more satisfying passage on this matter is found in Joshua 5:13-14, where Joshua met a being who used the same Hebrew expression in Daniel 8:11 to identify Himself. Joshua then fell on his face and worshiped Him, for which he was not rebuked. Therefore, this *Prince of the host* (or *Commander of the army of the Lord*) was indeed a divine Being. It is interesting to note that this

Being in Joshua 5 then tells Joshua to remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground (obviously made holy by the presence of the divine Being). Earlier in Exodus 3:5, a voice from the burning bush told Moses to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. The voice proceeds to tell Moses that he had been chosen to lead his fellow Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt. When Moses asked the voice who he should tell the people who sent him on this mission, he was told to tell them that *I AM has sent me to you* (v. 14). Jesus identified Himself as the *I AM* of the Old Testament in John 8:58. Therefore, we conclude that Daniel's *Prince of the host* is none other than Jesus.

The second activity of the little horn is stated as *by him the daily sacrifices were taken away* (v. 10). The prepositional phrase generally translated as *by him* can also be translated as *from him*. Since it is in the passive form, it should be understood as *from him*. This understanding is reinforced by the fact that the nearest possible antecedent to *him* is *the Prince of the host* rather than the little horn. Therefore, we conclude that the correct translation is *from him*.

The word translated as *sacrifices* throughout the prophecy of the little horn is absent from the Hebrew text; it was simply added by the translators because they thought it made more sense than to leave the adjective *daily* without a noun to modify. It is true that by the time of the writing of the Talmud, around the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., the word *daily* by itself was used exclusively to refer to the daily sacrifices in the Temple. However, that was several centuries after the book of Daniel had been written. In the Old Testament outside of Daniel, the Hebrew word (variously translated as *daily*, *continual*, *regular*, or *perpetual*) modifies the meat offering (Numbers 4:16), the burnt offering (Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28:3; Numbers 29:6; I Chronicles 16:40; Ezra 3:4), the burning of the candlestick (Leviticus 24:2), the showbread on the table of showbread (II Chronicles 2:4), and the incense burning on the altar of incense (Exodus 30:8). Therefore, the use of the same Hebrew word in Daniel 8 without any modified noun points to *all* of the regular or daily work in the sanctuary service. Since this *daily* service was taken away *from the Prince of the host*, the text must now be speaking about the sanctuary in heaven, which the books of Hebrews and Revelation teach is a real, literal sanctuary there (Hebrews 8-9; Revelation 8:1-5, 11:19, 15:5-8, 16:1, 17) in which Christ ministers as our High Priest on His people's behalf (Hebrews 7).

How does the little horn take away the daily from Christ? Of course, he cannot literally enter heaven and prevent Christ from ministering in the heavenly sanctuary. Therefore, he must operate a counterfeit priesthood that claims to do for believers what Christ actually does, thus undermining and obscuring His High Priestly ministry in the minds of many.

The third activity of the little horn is stated as casting down the *place* of Christ's sanctuary. Again, the text cannot be speaking of a literal geographical location for it is referring to the sanctuary in heaven. The Hebrew word for *place* is *makon*, which is not the normal word for *place*. Instead,

it is better translated as *foundation*, which fits the context because the little horn's attack must be on the spiritual *place* or *foundation* of the heavenly sanctuary. It is used at least twice in the Old Testament of the *foundation* of God's throne that consists of righteousness and justice (Psalms 89:14. Psalms 97:2). Since God's throne is in His sanctuary (Psalms 11:4; cf. Habakkuk 2:20), these statements are describing the spiritual foundation of the sanctuary as being His righteousness and justice. By undermining Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, the little horn is attacking His righteousness and justice, which are the very foundation of His government.

The statements in Daniel 8:11 clearly demonstrate that the subject of the little horn has morphed into a religious power. Rome's emperors did claim entitlement to worship as deities, but they did not challenge Christ as the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary; they simply ignored Christ as High Priest. Rome did attack and destroy the sanctuary in Jerusalem, and in that way, took away its functioning. But again, such an action in A.D. 70 was not exclusively aimed at the *daily* sanctuary services typified by the courtyard and the Holy Place, because the Most Holy Place was also destroyed. The symbol of the little horn did not change in verse 11, indicating that this religious power was somehow connected with Rome. What religious power associated with Rome claimed the prerogatives of God and acted against the interests of the heavenly sanctuary? Clearly, verse 11 has moved from Pagan Rome to Papal Rome, just as Papal Rome historically followed Pagan Rome as the most important institution in the former Western Roman Empire.

Daniel 8:12 seems to be a summary of what verse 11 describes as the little horn's work. It informs us that the little horn had an army (*host* in the Hebrew) which he uses to oppose the *daily*. As verse 11 implied, this must refer to the Catholic priesthood, for that is the organized force on the front lines performing the work of Christ before the people. This priesthood opposes the *daily* ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary through a variety of ways. It forgives people's sins through the sacrament of the confessional. In the mass, it claims to be reenacting the death of Christ, and in general constitutes the Church as the conduit for dispensing the spiritual blessings that flow from the cross. At least in these ways, the priesthood takes away the *daily* from Christ.

Verse 12 also declares that the little horn *cast truth down to the ground*. In this context, the truth is not an abstract truth but the truth involving the heavenly sanctuary and its meaning for the believers. Finally, verse 13 adds that the little horn tramples underfoot the sanctuary and the host. Again, the term *sanctuary* refers to the heavenly sanctuary, so this is a figurative trampling. The *host* must be what it is in verse 10, the faithful people of God, who are persecuted.

### **The Meaning of the Phrase "Then the Sanctuary shall be Cleansed" in Daniel 8:14**

Daniel 8:13 introduces two *holy ones* who discuss the time involved in the vision of Daniel 8. Evidently, these *holy ones* are angels. After one of them says that the end of the vision points to

the end of 2,300 days, he declares that *then the sanctuary shall be cleansed*. We will examine the meaning of this latter clause in this section and the meaning of the 2,300 days in the next one.

The verbal expression of the Hebrew in Daniel 8:14 is translated in a variety of ways, including *shall be cleansed* (KJV, NKJV), *shall be restored to its rightful place* (RSV, NRSV, ESV), *will be restored* (Good News Bible, Holman Christian Standard Bible), *will be properly restored* (NASB), and *will be reconsecrated* (NIV).

How can we know what a good translation is for this Hebrew verb? Any good translation must meet two criteria. First, it must be based on an actual dictionary definition of the root word or at least on an extended meaning of that word. Second, it must fit the context in which the word is located. All of the Hebrew lexicons agree that the essential meaning of the Hebrew verb in Daniel 8:14 is *to be just, to be right, or to be righteous*. These lexicons also tell us that the word is steeped in the context of God's law as the standard for judging what is just, right, or righteous. Thus, there is often both a moral as well as a legal context for this word.

In the legal context, a person who goes through a courtroom trial (a legal process) and receives a verdict of "not guilty" is said to be *declared* just, right, or righteous in the eyes of the law. Such a person is also *justified* or *vindicated* by the "not guilty" verdict. Therefore, it is appropriate to translate this Hebrew verb as *will be declared just, will be declared right, will be declared righteous, will be justified, or will be vindicated*. There is a strong connection between being vindicated and being restored, for the person who is found "not guilty" is restored to his or her previous state in society. Therefore, the Hebrew verb here may also be translated as *will be restored*. Furthermore, the idea of *to be clean* or *to be pure* is derived from an extended meaning of the Hebrew word, as illustrated by the poetic parallel in Job 4:17:

*Can a mortal man be more righteous than God?  
Can a man be more pure than His Maker?*

The Hebrew word for *pure* is parallel to the word for *righteous*, which is a dictionary definition of the Hebrew verb in Daniel 8:14. Therefore, *shall be cleansed* is also a valid translation of the verb in that verse.

All of the above possible translations are candidates for a good translation. But do they fit the context of the prophecy, the second criteria for all good translations? We will begin with *shall be cleansed* because that expression probably means very little to most believers in the context of the sanctuary. This translation makes a connection to the annual Day of Atonement in the Hebrew religious calendar, which is discussed in greatest detail in Leviticus 16. The background for this sanctuary service concerns the fact that worshipers brought sacrificial animals to the sanctuary in Biblical times. The worshiper would lay his hands on the head of the animal, signifying that his

sins were symbolically transferred to the animal (Leviticus 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 24, 29, 33), who represented Jesus as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world* (John 1:29; cf. Acts 8:32, I Peter 1:19). Then after the animal was sacrificed, the officiating priest would take some of its blood and sprinkle it on the altar of burnt offering (Leviticus 1:5, 11; 3:2, 8, 13) and in the Holy Place of the sanctuary (Leviticus 4:6, 17), signifying that the sins were symbolically transferred to the sanctuary.

Then on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would slay an animal and first take some of its blood and sprinkle it in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:14, 15), then move into the Holy Place and sprinkle some of the blood there (Leviticus 16:15, 16), and finally would sprinkle some of the same blood upon the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard (Leviticus 16:18, 19). This sprinkling of the blood in the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement represented the cleansing of the sanctuary from the symbolic sins of God's people. The Day of Atonement was a solemn day of judgment because there was a separation among those claiming to belong to God. Those who *afflicted (humbled)* themselves would pass the judgment and be allowed to remain part of God's covenant people for another year. Those who did not so humble themselves were *cut off* from the people of God (see Leviticus 16:29; 23:27, 29-30).

Referring to the Day of Atonement service we see that the translation *shall be cleansed* in Daniel 8:14 does indeed fit the context of the prophecy in that it is a response to the activities of the little horn. The little horn undermines and obscures Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. But when the sanctuary is cleansed, it demonstrates that the heavenly sanctuary is indeed an important and valid illustration of how Christ deals with the sin problem and saves His faithful people.

Before examining the other proposed translations of the Hebrew verb in Daniel 8:14, we should not overlook additional evidence that Daniel 8 is speaking of the Day of Atonement judgment. Besides the acceptable translation of *shall be cleansed* pointing to the Day of Atonement service, there are at least three other lines of evidence. First, the word for *sanctuary* in Daniel 8:14 is *qodesh*, a different word than used in verse 11. In the context, it must refer to the same sanctuary, however, that is, to the heavenly sanctuary. But its significance is that it points us to Leviticus 16 and its Day of Atonement discussion because nine out of nine times when *qodesh* refers to the actual sanctuary, it specifies the Most Holy Place. Of course, as we already noted, the Most Holy Place was not the only compartment of the sanctuary that was cleansed on the Day of Atonement. However, by switching to the word *qodesh*, Daniel 8:14 points us to Leviticus 16.

Second, it is significant that the prophecy of Daniel 8 employs two animals to represent kingdoms. Unlike the beasts in Daniel 7, which were not lifelike, the ram and the goat in chapter 8 are not only lifelike but Biblically clean animals. Moreover, the only time that a literal ram and a goat appear in the sanctuary context is on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:3, 5, 8-10, 15, 18, 21-22, 26-27).

Finally, a comparison with the prophecy in Daniel 7 shows that the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 is parallel to the judgment scene in Daniel 7, as follows:

<u>Daniel 7</u>	<u>Daniel 8</u>
Babylon (Neo-Babylonia)	_____*
Medo-Persia	Medo-Persia
Greece	Greece
Rome	Rome
Little Horn (Papal Rome)	Little Horn (Papal Rome)
Judgment scene (7:13, 21-22, 26)	Cleansing of the sanctuary
Demise of the Little Horn (7:26)	Demise of the Little Horn (8:25, last part)

All of this data more than demonstrates the connection between the cleansing of the sanctuary and the Pre-Advent (pre-Second Advent) Investigative Judgment (it involves record books in Daniel 7:10).

The other proposed translations also meet the context of the second criteria. Those concepts of being declared just, right, and righteous, being justified or vindicated, and being restored all point to the reality that the heavenly sanctuary is an important and valid illustration of how Christ deals with the sin problem and saves His faithful people. In doing so, they answer the little horn's attempt to make void Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary.

All of the above reveals that each of the proposed translations of the verb in Daniel 8:14 are good translations. But is there one that is better than the others? Without putting too fine a point on it, the translation of *will be restored* may be a better translation in the light of fact the little horn figuratively tramples the heavenly sanctuary underfoot. This seems to be confirmed by the nature of the relationship between vindication (representing all the other translations based on the actual dictionary definition of the word) and restoration. When a person is legally vindicated by a court of law, his vindication results in the restoration of his status in society. However, an object (like a sanctuary) is first restored, and then its importance and use is seen to be vindicated. Since restoration of an object occurs first, *will be restored* is a more accurate immediate answer to the little horn's activity. One can argue that the act of cleansing is also an act of restoring something, so that the translation *shall be cleansed* is superior to all the others except *will be restored*. However, *shall be cleansed* is probably not the easiest and quickest way for most believers to see it as a restoration.

\*Babylon is not represented in Daniel 8 because its time on the world stage was coming to an end when the vision was given (see Daniel 8:1; cf. Daniel 5:30-31).

## The Meaning of the 2,300 Days in Daniel 8:14

One of the two angels inquires as to the timing of the vision in chapter 8. Specifically, the literal Hebrew of Daniel 8:13 reads, *Until when the vision...?* Thus, the focus is not on the duration of time but on the terminus of the vision. The other angel provides the answer by saying that it will end at the end of 2,300 days. At that time, the heavenly sanctuary will be restored.

Preterist and futurist scholars agree that in light of their perceived focus on the daily sacrifice in the prophecy, and the fact that the literal Hebrew reads 2,300 *evening morning*, that the 2,300 days are to be understood as referring to 2,300 regular morning and evening sacrifices. Preterists differ in then viewing the 2,300 days as actually 1,150 days on the grounds that it only took 1,150 days for 2,300 morning and evening sacrifices to be conducted (one each morning and one each evening).

We reject the entire notion that the 2,300 days are based on the morning and evening sacrifices. First, as we already noted, the word for *sacrifices* is absent in the original Hebrew text. That meant that the *daily* referred to all of the activities conducted on a daily basis in the sanctuary services, not merely the sacrifices. Second, the literal Hebrew of Daniel 8:14 reads *evening morning* for the word *days*. However, the morning and evening sacrifices are always referred to in the Old Testament with the word for *morning* always preceding the word for *evening* (I Chronicles 16:40; II Chronicles 2:4, 13:11, 31:3; Ezra 3:3). Instead of referring to the morning and evening sacrifices, the unusual expression of *evening morning* echoes Genesis 1, when in Creation week each day began in the evening and extended through the next morning, as in *the evening and the morning was the first day* (vv. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).

The preterist view of halving the 2,300 days to only 1,150 days to constitute 2,300 morning and evening sacrifices misses the point in the Old Testament that these two sacrifices each day were viewed as a single unit. This fact is reflected in the two sacrifices being called a *continual burnt offering*—singular (Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28:3-4). Therefore, there is no basis for understanding the 2,300 days as 1,150 days.

Preterist and futurist scholars agree that the days, regardless of the precise number, are to be understood as literal days. However, historicists believe, for good reason, that the 2,300 days is symbolic of a much longer time period. The question asked in Daniel 8:13 was *Until when the vision...?* The vision began in the time of the Medo-Persian Empire. This is true because the vision there begins with the symbolic ram, which is explained as the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia (8:20). According to Daniel 8:17, the vision extends to *the time of the end*. In Daniel, *the time of the end* refers to a period of time which culminates in the world's greatest time of trouble and in resurrection (Daniel 11:40-12:2, especially 12:1-2). Therefore, a period of either 1,150 or 2,300 literal days falls far short of the end point of the vision.

If the vision points to *the time of the end*, then the 2,300 days must be symbolic of a much longer period of time. The Bible student should then ask himself if the Bible ever uses a day as a symbol for a longer period of time. It does and only in one sense, that a day represents a literal year. Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6 are the easiest passages to see this year-day principle. Some might object that those texts are not located in an apocalyptic context so they cannot be used to confirm the year-day principle. However, they do demonstrate that the only way that Scripture uses a day to represent a specific longer period of time is for a literal year. Therefore, we conclude that the 2,300 days symbolically are used to represent 2,300 literal years according to this year-day principle.

The explanation of the 2,300 days was never given by the angel in Daniel 8. At the end of the chapter Daniel is simply told that *the vision of the evenings and mornings...is true* (v. 26). The word for *vision* there is *mareh*, which means an *appearance*. This seems to distinguish the main part of the vision (*chazon*) from the appearance of the two angels, with the *mareh* applied to the conversation of the two angels concerning the time reference of the 2,300 days.

### **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**

Both preterist and futurist scholars identify the little horn in Daniel 8 as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a second-century B.C. Seleucid king from the region of Syria, one of the divisions of the Greek Empire after the death of Alexander the Great. He attacked Jerusalem, took over the Temple there, and desecrated it by, among other things, offering a pig on the altar of burnt offering. Antiochus' persecution of the Jews lasted from 171 to 165/4 B.C., a period of no more than six years.

However, we reject the Antiochus IV theory for at least six reasons. First, the comparative greatness of the little horn with respect to the Persian ram and the Greek goat does not describe Antiochus IV, who was infinitely less great or powerful than either of those empires.

Second, he did not match the military activities of the little horn in Daniel 8, which states that he *grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land* (v. 9). It was Antiochus III who moved south and successfully took Palestine from the Ptolemies (based in Egypt) in 198 B.C. Antiochus IV had some success in going after Egypt in the south during his campaign from 170-168 B.C., but Roman diplomacy turned him back in 168. Again, it was Antiochus III who extended Seleucid rule further east, all the way to the border of India during his military campaigns from 210-206 B.C. Most of these areas later rebelled, and when Antiochus IV attempted to reestablish Seleucid domination, he died having been unable to defeat the Parthians. Antiochus IV did not grow *exceedingly great...toward the Glorious Land* (v. 9) in the sense of conquering it because his predecessor had already accomplished that. In fact, under Antiochus IV, the Jews successfully harassed his forces (I Maccabees 3:57; 4:29) and eventually took back the

Jerusalem Temple in late 164 B.C. (I Maccabees 5:52). Thus, Antiochus IV ruled only one portion of the post-Alexander Greek empire for about eleven years and with only minor success.

Third, Antiochus IV's activities in Jerusalem do not line up well with the description of the little horn when you examine them more closely. It is true that he did take over the city and desecrated the Temple there. However, he did not actually attack the literal foundation even if one interpreted this prophecy as pertaining to the Jerusalem Temple (Daniel 8:11). Nor did he specifically *cast truth down* (v. 12).

Fourth, the rise of Antiochus IV to power does not match the description of the time period that the little horn is said to have arisen, *in the latter time* of the divided Greek kingdom (v. 23). Instead, Antiochus IV rose to power closer to the middle of that era, for the Seleucid dynasty officially began in 311 B.C. and lasted until 65 B.C., consisting of more than twenty different rulers. Antiochus IV was the eighth in the line, placing him in the first half of the dynasty. Measured by the dates of his rule (175-164/3 B.C.), he would be more accurately in the middle of the dynasty, within less than twenty years from the exact middle.

Fifth, the activities of Antiochus IV in and around Jerusalem does not match the period of either 2,300 or 1,150 days (v. 14). If one takes the number of days as applying to his general persecution of the Jews from 171-164 B.C., there is no evidence that places this persecution for a period of exactly 2,300 days. As for 1,150 days as applied to the time of the Seleucid actual control of the Jerusalem Temple per se, I Maccabees 1:54, 59 and 4:52, 54, describes this period as lasting for three years—or three years and ten days if you count the first ten days of setting up the pagan idol in the Temple before the actual pagan sacrifices began.

Finally, a sixth objection to Antiochus IV being the little horn was there was nothing unusual about his death. Daniel 8:25 states that the end of the little horn would come *without human means* (literally, *hand*). Lamentations 4:6 and II Corinthians 5:1 indicate that events or objects made without human hand are those things which God Himself does without human assistance. Also, with the establishment of God's Kingdom in Daniel 2:34, 44-45, such events tend to be rather spectacular in nature. Historically, I Maccabees 6:8-17 seems to assign the death of Antiochus IV to natural causes in early 163 B.C.

### **Calculating the Date for the End of the 2,300 Days**

Daniel 9 opens with the prophet Daniel praying to God, asking Him to keep His promise to limit the Babylon Captivity to 70 years as predicted by the prophet Jeremiah (9:2). At the end of his prayer, Gabriel comes to Daniel to explain *the vision* (9:20-23). This word for *vision* is *mareh*, which as we stated earlier refers to the *appearance* of the two angels in Daniel 8 discussing the time element of the 2,300 days. Note that there had been no *mareh* or regular part of a vision since

the vision recorded in Daniel 8. Therefore, this is the same *mareh* as in that chapter. Remember this is the part that Daniel did not understand. Then Gabriel begins his explanation by immediately referring to a time period, namely 70 weeks (v. 24). Therefore, there must be some kind of relationship between the 2,300 days and the 70 weeks.

Here we will focus on just enough of the chapter to determine the exact relationship between the 2,300 days and the 70 weeks so that we can determine the date for the end of the former. Briefly, the 70 weeks prophecy declares that 70 weeks are given for the Jewish nation to get right with God (*To finish the transgression and To make an end of sins*, v. 24). God's part is *To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy* (all in v. 24). During this time period the city of Jerusalem would be restored and built and *Messiah the Prince* would come (v. 25). Given the context, *Messiah the Prince* must refer to Christ, a conclusion reached by both historicist and futurist scholars; preterist scholars believe this Messiah to be a future priest but not Christ. Finally, after 69 weeks, Messiah would die (v. 26). Note that 69 weeks is deduced from the fact that verse 25 says that the 62 weeks is immediately preceded by the 7 weeks; thus 7 plus 62 equals 69. This puts Christ's death late in the period of the 70 weeks.

It should also be noted that the 70 weeks would begin with *the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem* (v. 25). Historicists and futurists alike acknowledge that a period of 70 literal weeks is far too short for all of the things in this prophecy to be fulfilled no matter how they are interpreted in detail. To remedy this shortfall, they note the context of Daniel contemplating the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy and conclude that Gabriel uses a kind of play on words to imply that his explanation consists of 70 weeks of years. Then 70 weeks of years is interpreted to mean 490 years on the grounds that a week of years constitutes a period of seven years. Furthermore, futurists understand that the word for *weeks* means *sevens* so that 70 sevens of years is seen even more clearly to refer to a period of 490 years. Futurists believe all of this is reinforced by a reference in Daniel 10:2, where the literal Hebrew refers to a period of three *weeks days*. The fact that the word for *days* is not present with any of the *weeks* in Daniel 9 is taken to mean that weeks of years are meant.

We acknowledge the likelihood that there is a play on words between the 70 years and the 70 weeks, a fact that implies the 70 weeks to mean weeks of years. However, to interpret the word *weeks* to mean *sevens* does not fit the evidence. First, the Hebrew word here translated by most translators as *weeks* is, in fact, the normal Hebrew word for *weeks*; and so it is always translated outside of Daniel 9. Thus, it should be rendered *weeks* here also. Second, the relationship between the 70 years and the 70 weeks confirms this conclusion. In the Hebrew text, 70 years is stated as *70 years*, while the expression for 70 weeks is literally stated as *weeks 70*. The juxtaposition of these two expressions confirms that *weeks* is the correct translation and understanding, as seen in the following outline:

70 years...weeks 70

Just as the two references to the number 70 are parallel, so must the other two words. Just as the word for *years* refers to a calendar period of time, so must the other word. To translate *weeks* as *sevens* destroys the relationship between the 70 years and the weeks 70. Therefore, we conclude that the weeks are indeed *weeks* and not *sevens*.

Regarding the evidence from Daniel 10:2, the inclusion of the word for *days* with the word for *weeks* is simply a Hebrew idiom for *full, whole, or entire weeks*, as many translators have written it. Therefore, the absence of the word for *days* in the weeks of Daniel 9 does not imply that the weeks are seven-year periods.

So how should we derive 490 years from 70 weeks (of years)? The 70 weeks are determined to represent 490 years on the year-day principle. A week of years is equal to 7 years because each day in the week is symbolic of a year. Furthermore, the Bible provides only one way that a symbolic day is used, and that is to represent a literal year. See Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6 for the easiest way to understand this evidence. Any objection that those texts are not located in an apocalyptic context so they cannot be used to confirm the year-day principle misses the point. The point is that they do demonstrate that the only way Scripture uses a day to represent a specific longer period of time is for a literal year. Moreover, we have demonstrated a link between Daniel 8 and 9, and chapter 8 is universally recognized as being an apocalyptic prophecy.

Now that we have determined that the 70 weeks is a period of 490 years, we are ready to understand the nature of the connection between the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days. Daniel 9:24 begins by saying that 70 weeks *are determined* on the Jewish nation. That is not the normal Hebrew verb for *are determined* or *are decreed*. The normal Hebrew word is found near the end of verse 26, translated as *are determined*. Instead, the primary meaning of the verb in verse 24 is *to cut off*, and *are determined* is only an extended meaning of that verb.

All linguists know that an extended meaning never precedes the root meaning. It is possible that an extended meaning was part of the meaning from the beginning. Or it might be that the extended meaning developed at a later point in the evolution of the language. But the extended meaning never precedes the root meaning. The fact that the root meaning of “cut off” was the primary meaning as late as the second century A.D., when the Jewish Mishnah (Oral Torah) was written down, implicitly means that “cut off” was definitely the root meaning in Daniel’s day, more than 700 years earlier.

Since a time period can only be cut off from a longer time period, and we have already established that there is a connection between the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days, we can safely deduce that the 70 weeks is cut off from the 2,300 days. But is it cut off from the beginning or from the end? If

it were cut off from the end of the 2,300 days, that would place the crucifixion of Jesus down into *the time of the end* (Daniel 8:17; 11:40-12:2), which is far too late to fit historically. Therefore, the 70 weeks must be cut off from the beginning of the 2,300 days. By determining the date for the *going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem* (v. 25), we can calculate the beginning date for both the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days.

There are four official statements from three different Persian kings that pertain to the rebuilding of part or all of the city of Jerusalem. They are outlined below:

Cyrus (538/537 B.C.)—a decree to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-4) under the leadership of Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2).

Darius I (520/519 B.C.)—a statement to confirm Cyrus' decree after Samaritan trouble (Ezra 6:1-12).

Artaxerxes I (458/457 B.C.)—a decree to allow the Jews to return in greater numbers and to appoint judges for both religious and political cases under the leadership of Ezra (Ezra 7:11-26).

Artaxerxes I (445/444 B.C.)—a statement giving permission to Nehemiah to return and supervise a rebuilding in confirmation of his earlier decree (Nehemiah 2:1-18).

It should be acknowledged that none of the decrees specifically mention the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. However, Ezra seems to have understood that it was implied in Artaxerxes' first decree, for Jerusalem was reestablished as the Jewish capital, and the Jewish nation was given a fair amount of autonomy, subject to ultimate Persian oversight of course, as a result of this decree. The testimony of Ezra 6:14 confirms this conclusion by referring to the three decrees of all three kings as one decree: *And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.* That means that not until the decree of Artaxerxes could the command to restore and build Jerusalem be said to go forth. Since the second statement by Artaxerxes was a confirmation of his earlier decree, and it had not been issued when Ezra made this statement, then we can safely infer that the command to restore and build Jerusalem was the first decree issued by Artaxerxes I.

### **The Date of Artaxerxes' First Decree**

Note that Daniel 9:25 specifies that the beginning of the 70 Weeks prophecy is dated from *the going forth of the command*, and Ezra 7:6-8 states that it was Ezra who led the exhibition from Babylon to Jerusalem with Artaxerxes' decree in his possession (Ezra 7:11). Therefore, the going forth of this command from Babylon to Jerusalem is the beginning of this prophecy, and not necessarily the same date that the king issued the decree. According to Ezra 7:7-8, Ezra and

company prepared to leave Babylon on the first day of the first month, actually left on the twelfth day of the first month (8:31), and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month.

The questions to ask are two in number: (1) Does Ezra use the spring-to-spring year for Artaxerxes' seventh year or the fall-to-fall year to determine his seventh year?; and (2) Does Ezra use the religious calendar (spring-to-spring) or the civil calendar (fall-to-fall) to reckon the months of the year?

We know that the Persians counted the reigns of their kings on the basis of a spring-to-spring year. If that is the case for Artaxerxes I, then his seventh year ran from the spring of 458 to the spring of 457 B.C. If that was the seventh year in Ezra, then the first day of the first month could not have been in the spring, because it is totally unreasonable to believe that he would have been able to organize the journey on the very same day that Artaxerxes I issued his decree. So under the spring-to-spring system of his seventh year, the first day of the first month would have had to be the first of the civil year, which was in the fall of 458 B.C. Since it took about four months of travel before they reached Jerusalem, that would make their arrival in that city be in our January of 457 B.C. Therefore, the going forth of the decree would be in 457 B.C. (with the actual decree issued in late 458 B.C.).

On the other hand, if Ezra uses the fall-to-fall reckoning for Artaxerxes I's seventh year, that year would run from the fall of 458 to the fall of 457 B.C. Under that system, the first day of the first month must be in the spring of 457 B.C. because again it is totally unreasonable to believe that Ezra and company could have left on the very first day of Artaxerxes' decree. In that case, they would have arrived in Jerusalem in the summer of 457 B.C. Therefore, the going forth of the decree would also be in 457 B.C. (with the actual decree issued either in late 458 or very early 457 B.C.).

The aforementioned evidence demonstrates that under either the spring-to-spring or the fall-to-fall dating methods for Artaxerxes' seventh year, *the going forth* of his decree would have been in 457 B.C.

The end of the 2,300 days can now be calculated using simple math.  $2,300 - 457 \text{ B.C.} = \text{A.D. } 1843$ . But when moving from B.C. to an A.D. date, we must add one year because there was no year zero (0). Therefore,  $1843 + 1 = 1844$ . This means that the end of the 2,300 days was in 1844, and that date was the beginning of the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment in heaven.

### **Significant Spiritual Lessons Illustrated by the Investigative Judgment**

There are probably more than these, but we can identify five significant spiritual lessons that are illustrated by the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment right now:

- *First*, it underscores the importance of the heavenly sanctuary and Jesus as our High Priest’s work there on our behalf—which tells us that the benefits of the cross must be applied to an individual in order for it to be effective for anyone. In other words, while Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, we do not individually get credit for His righteousness unless we come to God the Father through the merits of Jesus our Savior and High Priest.
- *Second*, it reminds us that ultimately it is God who is on trial and who will be ultimately vindicated. Remember that the great controversy over sin began in heaven with a good angel who decided one day that he wanted the worship that is owed to God alone. So he slandered God and began a war in heaven, resulting in his expulsion to earth (Revelation 12:7-9). After this, he has attacked God by attacking human beings who were made in God’s image. But the real conflict is between God and Satan, even more specifically between Jesus and Satan. The result is that in order to maintain the loyalty of His intelligent creatures (angels and other worlds), God did not immediately destroy Satan, but allowed himself to be put on a kind of trial before the universe. And it is Jesus who will eventually be vindicated completely so that sin will never rise in the universe ever again.
- *Third*, it helps keep Christians balanced in their understanding of the relationship of faith and works *if* they understand the gospel and the judgment itself. That relationship is that salvation is by grace through faith alone—that no one can add anything to his salvation by what he does or does not do—but that good works is the necessary *result* of being in a saved relationship with Jesus!
- *Fourth*, it reminds us that there is no such thing as “once saved, always saved.” Instead, it is how one *ends* his spiritual life, not how he begins it, that matters most. And if a person turns his back on the Lord, God will sadly allow that person to pay for his own sins. Thus, even though his past sins had been fully forgiven, if he insists on paying for them himself, then it is like the person himself has resurrected those sins in order to pay for them with the loss of his eternal life.
- *Finally*, since the 2,300 day-years extends into Daniel’s “time of the end” (Daniel 8:17; 11:40-12:3), it informs us that we are indeed living in the “time of the end.” Therefore, can the Second Coming of Jesus be far behind?