

represent the advent of Christ.

But that's not the end of the prophetic story. "Thou must prophesy again," declared the angel, "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." After *The Great Disappointment*, those who continued to hope in the Lord gathered together to comfort one another and to search the Word of God to understand their disappointment. While they could find absolutely no alternative interpretation of the mathematical aspect of the 2300-year prophecy, to their joyful amazement they discovered that William Miller had misunderstood the nature of the event that was to occur. The cleansing of the sanctuary, they discovered, did not represent the cleansing of this earth by fire at the second coming of Christ. And yet, they understood that something of vital significance did, indeed, occur in 1844.

But what?

The Bible teaches that the Old Testament sanctuary, designed and built by Moses under the guidance of God, was merely a symbolic shadow of God's true sanctuary in heaven:

"Now the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8: 1-2). In verse 5, the author of the book of Hebrews tells us that the earthly sanctuary was an "example and shadow of heavenly things."

After having been crucified, Jesus was resurrected. He ascended to heaven to minister as our true High Priest in God's heavenly temple. As our Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus forgives our sins and writes His law in our hearts (see Hebrews 8:10-12; 10:16-20; 1 John 2:1-2).

Daniel's prophecy foretold that the heavenly mediation of Jesus Christ would be cast down to the earth and, therefore, obscured from the vision of the people through the desolating influence of the little horn. The Papal Church, in other words, through its earthly priesthood and salvation-by-works system of belief, would rob the world of the true gospel of Christ. In 1844, the Millerite revival led to a searching of Scripture that brought forth the truth of Jesus Christ as our heavenly High Priest before God. Once the eyes of God's children were directed to Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, they were prepared to discern a significant end-time aspect of the plan of salvation.

As a symbolic shadow of the true plan of salvation, the Old Testament sanctuary service brings to view two phases of God's plan. The daily service of the earthly sanctuary taught the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ and the sanctification of the believer through an ongoing faith relationship with God through Christ. The yearly Day of Atonement service, which occurred one day annually, was intended to teach the final cleansing of sin from the lives of God's people through the blood of Christ, as well as the final judgment of all mankind. The daily service occurred in the courtyard and holy place of the sanctuary. The yearly service encompassed the courtyard, the holy

place and the Most Holy Place (see Study 10 in this series).

In 1844, Jesus entered into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to take up the final phase of His redemptive work. The apostle John, in the book of Revelation, beheld the opening of the Most Holy Place of God's temple: "And the temple of God was open in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament" (Revelation 11:19). The ark of His testament is the single piece of furniture in the Most Holy Place. Within that ark is the holy law of God, the Ten Commandments. It is significant to note that the Adventist believers who studied the sanctuary in the wake of the Millerite disappointment were not only directed to understand the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, but also experienced a revival of understanding concerning the Ten Commandment law of God. Amid the prevailing belief that the law of God had been abolished at the cross and need not be kept by Christians, the Advent movement began to proclaim to the world that the law of God stands fast forever and will be kept by all who truly love and honor the Savior. They noted that God's end-time people, brought to view in the book of Revelation, are described as those who "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

The fourth commandment of the ten, concerning the worship of God on the seventh-day Sabbath, became especially important. Virtually the entire Christian world, they noticed, had followed the lead of the Papal Church in honoring Sunday to the neglect of God's Sabbath. Since the Bible nowhere commands the observance of Sunday as a day of worship, and since the Bible clearly teaches the observance of Saturday as God's holy Sabbath, the Advent believers concluded that they must reject Sunday observance as completely unbiblical and re-establish the honoring of the seventh-day Sabbath of God's Ten Commandments. Therefore, they became known as Seventh-day Adventists, those who believe in the second advent of Jesus Christ and keep holy the seventh day as God's Sabbath.

The angel Gabriel told the prophet Daniel, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14). The rise of the Advent Movement, restoring the truth of Christ's mediation in the heavenly sanctuary and proclaiming to the world "the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," presents to us the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy.

For a detailed history of the restoration of the sanctuary truth through the Advent Movement, request a free copy of *The Great Controversy* from the publishers of this study guide.

# The Unsealing of Daniel

Study Number 11



The eighth chapter of Daniel presents a truly astounding prophecy. Over one thousand years in advance God revealed the fundamental falsehoods of the papal church-state and warned of its prosperity as an enemy to the gospel (see the previous studies in this series). After seeing all this, Daniel heard a voice cry out, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily *sacrifice*, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" (Daniel 8:13). In other words, how long will this desolating system of counterfeit Christianity be allowed to prosper in its terrible crime of exalting itself in the place of the true gospel of Christ? How long will this false church promote transgression of God's holy Law under a disguise of Christianity?

In the next verse, Daniel heard the answer to the question: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14).

Here is given a prophecy that marks off a specific period of time. Daniel is told that at the end of the time designated, the sanctuary will be cleansed. In the original language the word translated as *cleansed* literally means "to make right" or "vindicate." The immediate context, which we have already considered in previous studies, clearly identifies what sanctuary it is that needs vindication and why. Daniel was told that the little horn kingdom (the papal church-state) would "magnify himself to [against] the Prince [Messiah] of the host [His saints], and by [from] him [Messiah] the daily *sacrifice* [continual salvation ministry of the Messiah] was taken away [hidden from the people], and the place of His [the Messiah's] sanctuary [in heaven] was cast down [to earth in the minds of the people]. And an host [a large following] was given him [the little horn] against the daily *sacrifice* [continual salvation ministry of the Messiah] by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth [of the true plan of salvation] to the ground; and it practiced and prospered" (Daniel 8:11-12; words in brackets supplied for clarity; italicized word *sacrifice* not in original Hebrew).

The sanctuary that needs vindication belongs to the Prince, Christ Jesus. It needs vindication because it has been downtrodden by the little horn. A false system of worship has been set up in its place, between Christ and the people. The papal church-state interposed itself between Christ and sinners, usurping His role as Mediator and intercepting their prayers for pardon.

But the darkness imposed by papal rule would not be allowed to continue forever. At the end of the 2300 days, the sanctuary of the Lord would be vindicated and restored to the people. It becomes crucial then that we understand the 2300-day prophecy.

## The Gospel Restored

Every element of the prophecy in Daniel 8 was explained by the angel Gabriel within the immediate context of the chapter, with one exception. The 2300-day time prophecy was not explained in chapter 8. The angel departed from Daniel with these closing words: “And the vision of the evenings and mornings [the time prophecy] which was told is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future” (Daniel 8:26, NKJV). Daniel ended his record of the experience with these words: “And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it” (Daniel 8:27, NKJV).

The portion of the vision that Daniel did not understand was the 2300-day prophecy. Everything else was made clear. Sometime later Daniel was engaged in earnest prayer for his people Israel. Chapter 9 records that prayer. Before he said “amen,” the angel Gabriel appeared again, the same angel who had communicated with him in chapter 8.

“And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (Daniel 9:20-23).

Gabriel now comes to explain the 2300-day time prophecy. He does so by breaking it down into smaller portions of time, identifying the starting date and certain key events that are of vital significance within the time period.

Gabriel begins the explanation by saying, “Seventy weeks [490 days] are determined upon thy people” (Daniel 9:24). The word here translated *determined* means to “cut off” or “separate.” In other words, seventy weeks of the 2300 days are segmented out for the Jewish nation as a probationary period. Before the end of the seventy weeks, Israel is to “finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy” (Daniel 9:24).

This is a clear statement that the Messiah, here called the *Most Holy*, would appear toward the end of the seventy weeks. The Jewish nation must prepare itself to receive the Messiah or close its probation as a people by rejecting Him.

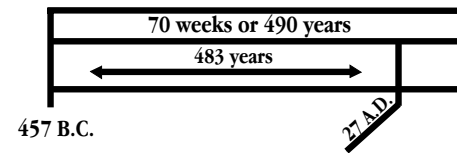
Next, the angel gives Daniel the starting date for the seventy weeks by naming a specific event. “From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks [69 weeks or 483 days]” (Daniel 9:25).

Ezra chapter 7 records the decree of Artaxerxes the first, made in the seventh year of his reign, granting the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem. The first year of Artaxerxes’ reign is one of the easiest to establish from historical and archeological sources. That year is 464 B.C. The seventh year of his rule would be 457 B.C. Therefore, 457 B.C. is the starting date for the seventy weeks and the 2300 days.

Before we start counting, there is a vital principle of Biblical interpretation we need to affirm. In Bible prophecy, one day is equal to one year (see Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34; Mark 1:15; Matthew 26:18; Luke 12:56; 21:8; Romans 5:6; 1 Timothy 2:6). If we were to use literal 24-hour days, the prophecy would reveal absolutely no significant events matching to what the prophecy foretells. But when we employ the day-for-a-year principle, our discoveries are truly astounding.

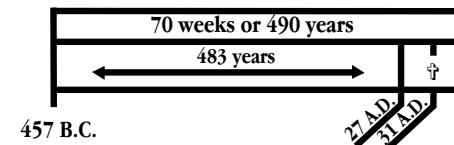
Gabriel told Daniel that the Messiah would appear sixty-nine weeks or 483 days from the command to rebuild Jerusalem in 457 B.C. Considering each day as a year, we count down through time 483 years from 457 B.C. Incredibly, we find ourselves at 27 A.D., which was the very year Jesus Christ began His public ministry as the Messiah

after being baptized by John the Baptist (see Matthew 3:16). As the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at His baptism, he was “anointed” by God as the true Messiah just as the prophecy had foretold (see Acts 10:38).

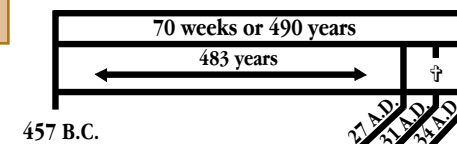


Daniel’s prophecy also foretold the very time of the Messiah’s sacrificial death on the cross: “After threescore and two weeks [sixty-two weeks or 434 days] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself . . . and He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the [seventieth] week He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:26-27).

The middle of the seventieth week would calculate to 31 A.D., which is the very year Christ was cut off by crucifixion. Once Christ gave His life, the sacrificial service of the Jewish nation ended (see Matthew 27:50-51), just as Daniel foretold.



The last year of the seventieth week is 34 A.D. The followers of Jesus preached to Israel to no avail. The stoning of Stephen in 34 A.D. marked the end of the seventy weeks and the close of probation for the Jews as a nation (see Acts 7:54-60).



It is almost unbelievable, and yet the prophecy is clear and undeniable. Hundreds of years in advance, Daniel foretold the year of the Savior’s anointing as the Messiah, the year of His crucifixion and the very year the Jews would cease to be God’s chosen people as a nation.

### The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Daniel’s time prophecy does not end with the seventy weeks. As you will recall, the entire time period is 2300 years, at the end of which the sanctuary was to be cleansed or vindicated (see Daniel 8:14). After the fulfillment of the seventy weeks, the angel explained to Daniel, there “shall come one who makes desolate” (Daniel 9:27, AB). That is to say, the desolating little horn power, which Daniel saw in his earlier vision of chapter 8, will arise sometime after the end of the seventy weeks, after the time of Christ. This makes perfect sense because the Papal Church arose out of “a falling away” or apostasy from the true gospel of Christ, according to the apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3-7). The Papal Church (the desolator) would continue its abominable cause against the truth “even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate [the desolator]” (Daniel 9:27, Aramaic). The consummation of the 2300-year prophecy will mark the beginning of the end for the little horn kingdom. When the 2300 years reach their conclusion, the

sanctuary truth will be restored to the people, which will constitute the death knell of the little horn.

Therefore, counting down 2300 years from 457 B.C., we should come to a time in history when there will be some significant restoration of gospel truth regarding the sanctuary ministry of the Messiah. The mathematics bring us to the year 1844 A.D.

Mathematics do not lie. There is absolutely no way around the fact that Daniel’s prophecy pinpoints 1844 as of some special significance. The accuracy of the other dates persuades us that the remainder of the prophecy must be accurate as well. Jesus *did* begin His Messiah ministry in 27 A.D. He *was* crucified in 31 A.D. Therefore, 1844 must as surely be the beginning date for “the cleansing of the sanctuary.”

What happened in 1844?

The year 1844 is extremely important in the history of the Protestant Reformation. In the wake of what became known as the Millerite Movement, Bible students from various denominations began to embark on a pathway of diligent Bible study. They were richly rewarded for their diligent efforts to dig for hidden treasure in the Word of God.

In the context of our study of Daniel 8 and the cleansing of the sanctuary, it is significant to note that these early Adventist believers were directed by the Holy Spirit to give special attention to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in connection with the Old Testament sanctuary service.

William Miller and his associates had studied the 2300-day prophecy in Daniel 8. The math of the prophecy was the easy part. Miller figured that something significant was to take place around 1843 or 1844. The question, of course, was an obvious one: What does the Bible mean when it says that the sanctuary is to be cleansed at the conclusion of the 2300 years? It is here that William Miller’s study failed him. While he had the right time, he did not understand the event. In common with the popular belief of his time, Miller assumed the sanctuary spoken of in Daniel’s prophecy must be the earth. He also assumed the cleansing of the sanctuary must mean the cleansing of this world with the fire of God’s final judgment preceding the second coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Miller concluded that the second coming of Jesus Christ would occur sometime in 1843 or 1844. But the time came and passed and the Savior did not return. The experience became known as *The Great Disappointment*. The disappointment was indeed great, for these earnest believers in the second advent of Christ really believed their Lord would come at the time specified by Daniel’s 2300-year prophecy.

Remarkably enough, Revelation 10 actually foretold the unsealing of Daniel’s prophecies and the bitter disappointment experienced by the Millerites. Verse 2 of Revelation 10 presents an angel with “a little book opened” in his hand. There is no question that the little book opened here is the book of Daniel, which had been sealed shut. Daniel had been told by the angel Gabriel that the vision given to him concerning the 2300 years and the cleansing of the sanctuary was to be “shut” or sealed up for “the end” (Daniel 8:26; 12:4).

The apostle John, in the book of Revelation, foretold the time when the little book of Daniel’s prophecies would be opened. John was told to “‘take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.’ And I went unto the angel and said unto him, ‘Give me the little book.’ And he said unto me, ‘Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.’ And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, ‘Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings’” (Revelation 10:8-11).

Here we have a prophetic message that foretold the incredible joy of Miller’s Advent Movement as they anticipated the return of Jesus Christ, as well as the intense bitterness of their disappointment when He did not return as they had expected. They had eaten up the prophecies of Daniel’s little book, but their disappointment was bitter due to the fact they did not understand the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary and assumed that it must