



THE MIDDLE EAST KEY TO THE END TIMES

BATTLE BETWEEN A RAM AND A GOAT

In the eighth chapter of Daniel is found a vision concerning two beasts; a ram and a goat. As can be discovered in Daniel 7:17, 23 a beast is used in Bible prophecy to symbolize a kingdom. This same rule applies to this ferocious ram, as can be seen from the words of Gabriel: "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." Daniel 8:20. These two horns have their parallel in the two arms of silver in Daniel 2, and their significance is found in the fact that the kingdom of Medo-Persia consisted of a union between the kingdoms of Media and Persia. Of these two horns (or kingdoms), one was said to rise up "higher than the other, and the higher came up last." Daniel 8:3.

The fulfillment of this portion of the prophecy is easily found in the fact that of the two kingdoms the Persians eventually became predominant, ultimately absorbing the Medes, and becoming known as the Persian Empire; even though it was the Median king Darius who assumed control of Babylon after its fall. (Daniel 5:31; 10:1).

As Daniel beholds this mighty ram he suddenly sees a goat come from the west and destroy the ram. Just as the belly of brass in Daniel 2 and the leopard of Daniel 7 represented the kingdom of Greece, so here the goat symbolizes that same power. Here, however, we are given even greater detail by the introduction of the "notable horn", representing the first king; Alexander the Great. "And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." Daniel 8:21. Imagine, this prophecy was given 200 years before the birth of Alexander, or the existence of the kingdom of Greece, and yet God has given such intricate details.

As the goat was pictured coming from the west with great speed, so it was with Alexander and his Greek soldiers in their rapid conquest of the world.

"In 334 B.C. Alexander crossed the Hellespont and entered Persian territory with only 35,000 men, the meager sum 70 talents in cash, and but one month's store of provisions." However, within just three short years, by 331 B.C., he was able to deal the Persians their fatal blow. "The Persians took their stand near Arbela, east of the junction of the Tigris and great Zab rivers, but their forces were defeated and routed. The fabulous riches of the world's greatest empire lay open to the young king, 25 years old."

The reign of Alexander was destined to be nearly as short as his conquest was rapid, for within a few short years, after having conquered the world, this young monarch died in a drunken stupor, in 323 B.C.. After his death his kingdom was eventually divided between his four leading generals; Seleucus, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Ptolemy. Thus, as the leopard-like beast in Daniel 7 had four heads to symbolize the division of Alexander's empire, so here, the parallel is found in the four horns

which are the "four kingdoms" which stood up "out of the nation, but not in its power." However, Greece also was to cease to exist as a world empire; and as we have previously seen, it was replaced by the kingdom of Rome in 168 B.C.

Whereas Rome is symbolized by the "legs of iron" in Daniel 2, and the "dreadful and terrible beast" in Daniel 7; in Daniel 8 it is portrayed as a "little horn". The prophet says that the Roman empire was to arise, "out of one of them." Now, the question arises, who, or what, is referred to by "them"? Some commentators have attempted to make "them" refer to the "four notable horns", or the four divisions of the Greek empire; thus claiming that the "little horn" is Antiochus Euphianes.

There are several reasons why such an application is unacceptable. For one thing the word translated "them" is masculine, whereas the word "horns" is feminine, but the word "winds" can be either masculine or feminine; thus in all probability the antecedent is "winds". Therefore, what Daniel is saying is that out of one of the four winds, or four points of the compass, another power would arise that would become "exceeding great".

A second reason for rejecting the interpretation that it is Antiochus who is here referred to is that although he did create some difficulties for the Jewish people for a short time, in no way can it be said that he ever became "exceeding great". Notice, in verse 4 the kingdom of Medo-Persia is said to have become "great"; then in verse 8 the kingdom of Greece became "very great"; and now here the little horn is declared to be "exceeding great". Therefore, it is utterly absurd to apply this little horn to Antiochus who himself had been subjugated by Rome.

A third reason is that Daniel 8:25 says this power was to "stand up against the Prince of princes". This is the same person identified as "the Prince of the Host" in Daniel 8:11 and refers to none other than Christ. Once again this cannot apply to Antiochus for he had been dead 164 years before the birth of Jesus.

As can be seen, Antiochus does not meet the specifications of this prophecy in any way.

WHY GABRIEL RETURNED

The vision of chapter 8 had such an effect upon the prophet that he actually fainted and became sick. But even more amazing is that he says he "was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." Had not this vision been explained to him?

We have already seen that verses 3-8 were explained by Gabriel in verses 20-22, and verses 9-12 were explained in verses 23-25. The only portion of this prophecy that was not explained to Daniel were verses 13 and 14; where it had been declared that "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed".

Immediately after this Gabriel appeared with the command, "Understand, O son of man, for at the time of the end shall be the vision" Daniel 8:17. He then explained to Daniel everything that he had seen up to verse 12; at which point the prophet fainted. Because Daniel fainted Gabriel was not able to explain the meaning of verses 13 and 14, and as such, he "was astonished at the vision, but none understood it".

The purpose of Daniel chapter nine is to explain the vision of chapter eight. Apparently Daniel believed that this 2300 day period applied to the Babylonian captivity of his people and feared that their 70 years captivity was to be extended even longer. (cf. Daniel 9:2; Jeremiah 25:11). With this great fear in his heart Daniel begins his prayer to God. From verse 4 through verse 19 we have recorded the prayer of this most humble servant of the most High. Then suddenly Daniel's prayer is interrupted by Gabriel, who declares he has come to give him "skill and understanding". Imagine! At the beginning of Daniel's prayer Gabriel is told to go to him, and before Daniel can finish that prayer Gabriel has left the throne room of heaven and is standing at the prophet's side.

Daniel refers to Gabriel as the one he "had seen in the vision at the beginning". This is a very important statement, for now we must of necessity look for a previous vision in which Gabriel was presenting something to Daniel. To further substantiate this we need only to look at the words of

Gabriel who told Daniel to "Understand the matter, and consider the vision."

What matter had Daniel failed to understand? What vision had he previously received which required further consideration? What other vision had Daniel had in which he had the assistance of Gabriel? The answer to each of these questions can be nothing other than the vision of Daniel 8. However, as we have seen, the only portion of that prophecy which was left unexplained was the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. Therefore, it is this portion of the prophecy that Gabriel now begins to explain to Daniel.

THE BIBLE'S MOST AMAZING PROPHECY

This prophecy of Daniel 9:23-27 declares that 70 weeks were to be "determined" or "cut off" (margin) from the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 for Daniel's people; or for the Jews.

Since this time period is found in the setting of Bible prophecy, we must calculate it according to the prophetic time formula given by God when He said, "I have appointed thee each day for a year" Ezekiel 4:6. Thus, the 70 weeks would be 70 prophetic weeks or 490 years. (7 days x 70 weeks = 490 days or years). This 490 year period was to be "cut off" from the 2300 years for the Jewish people, during which they were to make an end of sins, be reconciled to God, and prepare to receive the "Messiah the Prince." That they failed to do so is evidenced by their rejection of Jesus and their ultimate crucifixion of the Son of God.

In verse 25 heaven announces to Daniel, and to us, that the "going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" would mark the beginning of this time prophecy. This decree was given by the Persian king Artaxerxes, in the seventh year of his reign, or 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:7-13). From the issuing of this decree until the anointing of the "most Holy" or the coming of "the Messiah the Prince" was to be 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 years (69 x 7 = 483); bringing us to A.D. 27. (There is no year 0 between B.C. and A.D.).

According to Luke, Jesus was baptized "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" or A.D. 27. Luke 3:1, 21, 22. Thus, it was in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy "that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan", and declared "the time is fulfilled." Mark 1:9, 15. However, this prophecy does not end here, but goes on to inform us of the exact time of the crucifixion of Jesus, the taking of the Gospel to the Gentiles; and even foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans.

After his baptism Jesus was to "confirm the covenant with many for one week." This one week period has been used by Satan to bring so much confusion to many Christians today. He has deceived multitudes by leading them to believe that there is going to be a second chance, seven year tribulation period, after Jesus "sneaks" back to secretly take his people away. During this time those who did not make it the first time are to get ready to try again.

Although most are not aware of it this devilish doctrine, of a "secret rapture" and seven year period of tribulation when all the lost receive a second chance after the second coming of Jesus, is based almost solely upon an erroneous interpretation of Daniel 9:27.

After the first 69 weeks, or 483 years, Jesus was to be baptized; however, there is still one week, or seven years left of the 70 weeks which were determined upon the Jewish people. This prophetic week would be seven years, and in the midst of this week, or after 3 1/2 years, the Messiah was to be "cut off, but not for himself" and the sacrifices were to cease.

By taking 3 1/2 years and adding it to the fall of A.D. 27 (when Jesus was baptized) it brings us to the spring of A.D. 31, which is when Jesus was crucified. Jesus died on Calvary, but not for Himself. He gave up His life for our sins, He was "cut off" that we might receive life eternal. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7.

As Jesus hung on the cross on that Passover, breathing his last, the High Priest stood in the temple preparing to offer the evening sacrifice. As he raised the knife to plunge it into the throat of the lamb "Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain

from the top to the bottom." Mark 15:37, 38. At that moment, Jesus, "the Lamb of God" had died for "the sin of the world", thus, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Colossians 2:14.

For centuries the ordinances of the sacrificial system had been pointing to this very moment and now that it had arrived "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" and "this he did once, when he offered up himself." Hebrews 9:28; 7:27. He had been offered for us, and the sacrifices were to end.

The Messiah was cut off in A.D. 31, in the midst of that last week, or exactly 3 1/2 years after his baptism. This leaves us with a remaining 3 1/2 years of the 70 week prophecy, which brings us to A.D. 34, at which time the Jewish Sanhedrin culminated their rejection of Christ by the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen.

From this point the Gospel was to go to the Gentiles. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, along with Barnabas, later made the awesome pronouncement upon the Jewish nation that "it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46.

The Jewish nation had fully rejected Christ and now He finally rejected them as a nation. God's people today are not of any one nation: "for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:28, 29. (See also Romans 2:28, 29; 9:6-8).

As can be seen, this prophecy pinpoints the exact dates for Christ's baptism and crucifixion, as well as His rejection of the Jews as a nation and the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles. However, this 70 weeks, or 490 years, is just a portion of a longer prophecy which takes us right up to the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which is currently in process, as we shall now discover.

THE BIBLE'S LONGEST PROPHECY

The longest prophecy in the Bible is found in Daniel 8:14 where we read: "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

We have been considering the 70 weeks or 490 year prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, which, as we have seen, was "cut off" from this prophecy of 2300 days, or years. We further discovered that this prophecy was to begin in 457 B.C. with the decree of Artaxerxes to "restore and to build Jerusalem."

Since this prophetic time table began in 457 B.C. and the 490 years ended in A.D. 34 we still need 1810 years to reach the end of the 2300 year prophecy. (2300 - 490 = 1810). Therefore, we must add 1810 years to A.D. 34, which would bring us to the year 1844.

Now we must ask, what took place in 1844? What is meant by the cleansing of the sanctuary? In the years just preceding 1844 many Bible students understood this verse to mean that Jesus was coming to destroy this world by fire in the fall of 1844. There developed a great religious movement, generally referred to as the "Great Advent Awakening," which shook not only this continent, but the entire world. Tens of thousands of people from every faith looked forward in eager anticipation for the coming of their Lord. The experience of God's people at that time was like that of the prophet Jeremiah who declared, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jeremiah 15:16. However, the Apostle John had foretold a bitter disappointment God's people would pass through. (cf. Revelation 10:1-11). These sincere seekers of truth had been absolutely correct in their calculation of the prophetic time table, but had misunderstood the significance of the event that was to take place. The time period had been right, but the event misunderstood. They had come to the conclusion that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 referred to this earth; and that the cleansing referred to its destruction and purification by fire at the second coming of Jesus (cf. 2 Peter 3:10-13). However, one very important fact that they had overlooked was that nowhere in the Bible is this earth ever referred to as a sanctuary. As a matter of fact the Bible refers to only two sanctuaries.

The first of these is found in Exodus 25:8 where the Lord, speaking to Moses, says: "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" and continues by telling him that it is to be made "according to...the pattern of the tabernacle" he was shown.

The second sanctuary is found in Hebrews 8:1-2 where we read: "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." Verse five goes on to say that this "sanctuary...which the Lord pitched" was the pattern that Moses was shown when he was "admonished of God" to "make all things according to the pattern" shown him. As can be seen, the Lord had two sanctuaries; one in heaven where Jesus now ministers as our High Priest, and one on earth which Moses patterned after the heavenly sanctuary.

The earthly sanctuary was destroyed in A.D. 70 when the Roman General Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem and has not existed since. Thus, it is the heavenly sanctuary referred to in Daniel 8:14, the "greater and more perfect tabernacle" (Hebrews 9:11), where Jesus now ministers as our High Priest that was to be cleansed in 1844.

What is meant by the cleansing of the sanctuary? Why is it so important that Jesus has given so much detail to it? Where is Jesus now? What has He been doing since 1844? Why hasn't He come back yet? What is He waiting for? These very important questions which demand our attention.

WHEN JESUS CHANGED JOBS

In the eighth chapter of Daniel is found a vision concerning two beasts; a ram and a goat. These two symbols represented the Medo-Persian and Greek empires. Daniel 8:20-21. The "notable horn" referred to Alexander the Great the first king (Daniel 8:21) and the four that came up in its place refers to the four generals (Seleucus, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Ptolemy) which took his place. Daniel 8:22. Rome is symbolized as a "little horn" which came from one of the four winds. Daniel 8:9, 23.

This vision had such an effect upon the prophet that he actually fainted and became sick and concludes the chapter by stating he "was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." Verses 3-8 were explained by Gabriel in verses 20-22, and verses 9-12 were explained in verses 23-25. The only portion of this prophecy that was not explained to Daniel were verses 13-14; where it had been declared that "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed".

In Daniel chapter nine Gabriel returns to give Daniel understanding of the only portions of the vision of chapter eight that have not been explained. Daniel refers to Gabriel as the one he "had seen in the vision at the beginning" and is told to "Understand the matter, and consider the vision." What matter had Daniel failed to understand? What vision had he previously received which required further consideration? What other vision had Daniel had in which he had the assistance of Gabriel?

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They had failed to recognize that the Bible only refers to two sanctuaries. The first of these (the earthly sanctuary) is found in Exodus 25:8, 9 and the second (the heavenly sanctuary) is found in Hebrews 8:1, 2, 5. The earthly sanctuary was destroyed in A.D. 70 when the Roman General Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem and has not existed since. Thus, it is the heavenly sanctuary referred to in Daniel 8:14, the "greater and more perfect tabernacle" (Hebrews 9:11), where Jesus now ministers as our High Priest that was to be cleansed in 1844.

In order to discover the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary we must look at the ceremonies involved in the earthly sanctuary and find its parallel in the heavenly. In the earthly sanctuary (as well as the heavenly) there were two apartments, referred to as "the holy place and the most holy." Exodus 26:33. Of these two "the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year." Hebrews 9:6, 7.

This daily ministry of the priest in the holy apartment of the sanctuary was the offering of the daily sacrifices, which ended at the crucifixion of Jesus (see Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14). Beyond any doubt the Son of the Living God became our Sacrifice to cleanse us from sin, for "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. But the good news of the Gospel of Christ is that He was more than just a Sacrifice, He did more than just die for us, He now lives for us as well. He burst forth from that tomb victorious and He declares: "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." Revelation 1:18. Death could not hold the Son of God, who is now "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Hebrews 8:1. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25. Herein lies our hope, for there is but "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all." 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

Jesus died as our Sacrifice; but, He ascended to heaven to minister as our Intercessor, our Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary. There He began the first apartment phase of His ministry, that of the forgiveness of our sins through the merits of His own shed blood. (Read Hebrews 9). Without this ministry of Jesus where would we be? "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" and "the wages of sin is death." Romans 3:23; 6:23. But praise God, Jesus is there, "and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous", and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 2:1; 1:9.

This present ministry of Jesus had its parallel in the daily ministry of the priests in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. But, as we have seen, it was only once each year that anyone was permitted to enter the most holy place, and that was the high priest alone. This yearly service is described in Leviticus 16, where we find that on that day there were two goats brought before the door of the tabernacle; one was referred to as the Lord's goat and the other as the scapegoat. Upon slaying the Lord's goat the high priest would take the blood of the sacrifice and enter into the most holy apartment "and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat" (which represented God's throne), then backing out into the holy place he would continue sprinkling the blood until he arrived back at the alter. Leviticus 16:7-9, 15, 16.

Now, let us consider the symbolism involved here. Every day of the year the people would bring their sacrifices to the sanctuary where they would confess their sins upon them, thus transferring their sins to their sacrifice. They would then kill the animal and the priest would take the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it before the veil which separated the holy and the most holy places, thereby symbolically transferring the sin into the sanctuary. As this service continued day after day, throughout the year, the sanctuary became symbolically polluted.

At the end of the year, the high priest would take the blood of the Lord's sacrifice and sprinkle it throughout the entire sanctuary, thus symbolically removing the accumulated sins of the past year. Having cleansed the sanctuary of these accumulated sins the high priest then placed his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, symbolically transferring these confessed sins to the scapegoat, who is then driven into the wilderness to die. Leviticus 16:20-22. Here we find a parallel to Jesus placing the confessed sins of His people upon Satan, who, at the end of the millennium will suffer the penalty for those sins.

During the time that the high priest was cleansing the sanctuary of the confessed sins which had accumulated there, the people were to be engaged in a period of deep soul searching, of making certain their lives were in harmony with God's will. Leviticus 23:27, 28. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." Leviticus 16:30. If anyone had failed to confess their sins, and had not brought their lives into harmony with God's will he was to "be cut off" or put to death. Leviticus 23:29. As can be seen, not only was this an act of cleansing, it was also an atonement. A time of at-one-ment with God. A time of judgement. It was this phase of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary that Jesus began in 1844, the act of judgment. Revelation 14:6, 7.

One day very soon this judgment will be completed and Jesus will declare, "It is done." Revelation 16:17. Then as He lays aside His priestly robes heaven will resound with the most awesome pronouncement. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12.

Are you ready for that day? If not, won't you accept what He offers you while there is still time? Hebrews 4:14-16.

STUDY HELPS

- Daniel 8:27 ----- How many understood the vision?
Daniel 8:1-12 ----- What did Daniel see?
Daniel 8:20-22 ----- What did the ram, goat, and horns represent?
Daniel 8:14 ----- What was the only thing not explained?
Daniel 9:21-23 ----- What matter and vision? (2300 days)
Daniel 9:24 ----- How much time was set aside for the Jews?
Ezekiel 4:6 ----- What does one day equal in prophetic time?
There are seven days in a week (7x70=490), 490 prophetic days equal 490 years.
Daniel 9:25 ----- When was this time prophecy to begin?
NOTE: This decree was given by the Persian ruler Artaxerxes in 457 B.C..
Daniel 9:25 ----- How long after this before the Messiah is anointed?
NOTE: 69 weeks equal 483 years (69x7=483), which brings us to A.D. 27.
Luke 3:1, 21, 22 ----- When was Jesus baptized?
NOTE: The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar was A.D. 27.
Mark 1:15 ----- What did Jesus say was fulfilled?
Daniel 9:27 ----- How much of the covenant was left for the Jews?
NOTE: One week would bring us to A.D. 34 (27+7=34).
Daniel 9:26, 27 ----- What happened in the midst of the last week?
Ephesians 2:15 ----- What became of the ordinances?
Colossians 2:14 ----- When did this happen?
NOTE: Jesus was crucified in A.D. 31, 3 1/2 years after His baptism, and the sacrificial system came to an end (Mark 15:37-38).
Matthew 10:5, 6 ----- What did Jesus tell the disciples?
Matthew 21:43 ----- What did Jesus tell the Jews?
Acts 13:46 ----- What did Paul declare to the Jews?
Galatians 3:26-29 ----- Who are God's people today?

THE CLEANSING OF THE SANCTUARY

- Daniel 8:14 ----- What was to happen at the end of the 2300 days?
The Bible only refers to two sanctuaries, one on earth and the other in heaven.
Exodus 25:8, 9 ----- After what was he to build the sanctuary?
Hebrews 8:1, 2, 5 ----- Where is the location of the original?
Exodus 26:33 ----- How many apartments did it have?
Hebrews 9:6 ----- How frequent was the ministry in the first?
Hebrews 9:7 ----- How frequent in the second?
Leviticus 16:29 ----- When did the high priest do this?
Leviticus 16:30 ----- What was he doing?
Leviticus 16:7-9 ----- How did he do it?
Leviticus 16:15, 16 ----- What did he do with the blood?
Leviticus 16:20-22 ----- What did he do with the sins?
Leviticus 23:27, 28 ----- What were the people to be doing?
Leviticus 23:29, 30 ----- What happened to those living in sin?
NOTE: Jesus has begun the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, or the blotting out of the record of confessed sins there as well as from our lives here.
Revelation 22:11, 12 ----- What pronouncement will He soon make?
2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 ----- What happens to those still sinning?
1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 ----- What happens to the righteous?
Matthew 7:21-27 ----- Which group will you be found in?

Hebrews 4:14-16 ----- What assurance do we have?