



DISCOVERING REVELATION

The Time of the End, Part 1

In **Daniel 8:1**, Daniel tells us he had a dream during the reign of Belshazzar. The first thing Daniel sees (**Daniel 8:2-4**) is a ram with two horns—one horn bigger than the other. Babylon is about to pass off history’s stage, and **Daniel 8:20** tells us explicitly that the ram represents the Medo-Persian empire. The Persians pushed to the west, north and south (**verse 4**) and devoured the Babylonian empire.

The second animal (**Daniel 8:5-7**) is a goat with a notable horn between its eyes that built a vast empire with amazing swiftness. The notable horn (Alexander the Great) is broken off and replaced by four horns (his four generals), just as the leopard had four heads. In **Daniel 8:20, 21** the angel tells us that the goat is Greece.

The next kingdom in this vision, of course, is Rome—we know that, historically speaking, this is a fact. **Daniel 8:9-12** refers to Rome as a “little horn.” We will study this in more detail in another lesson, but in **Daniel 7**, there is a vision similar to this one where the little horn is followed by a description of the judgment (**Daniel 7:13-14, 21-22, 26-27**). The progression of **Daniel 7** runs like this:

Babylon ➡ Medo-Persia ➡ Greece ➡ Rome & Little Horn ➡ Judgment.

In Daniel 8, the progression runs like this:

Medo-Persia ➡ Greece ➡ Little Horn ➡ ???

If you were to hazard a guess as to what comes after the little horn, what do you suppose it would be? The judgment? It would make sense. **Daniel 8:14** predicts the next event this way: “*Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*”

So the progression of events in Daniel 8 runs like this:

Medo-Persia ➡ Greece ➡ Little Horn ➡ Cleansing of Sanctuary

For all of the other parts of the vision (ram, goat, little horn), Gabriel elaborated and gave Daniel a lot of detail, even mentioning Medo-Persia and Greece by name. But when you look for Gabriel’s explanation of the sanctuary being cleansed in 2300 days (literally evenings and mornings), you don’t find much. In **Daniel 8:26**, Gabriel simply says: “*And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to many days in the future.*”

No further explanation is given. Does that mean we were never meant to understand it? Of course not. The Bible gives us a number of important clues to help us figure out what the “cleansing of the sanctuary” represents:

1. **Daniel 8:17** tells us that the vision has to do with the time of the end.

2. **Daniel 8:18, 19** tells us that the vision deals with an “appointed time.” **Acts 17:31** speaks about something “appointed” in connection with the time of the end—the judgment. The date for the judgment has already been set.
It all fits. In **Daniel 7**, the reign of the little horn was followed by the judgment. In **Daniel 8**, the same thing happens—except now we learn that the date for the judgment has already been set.
3. **Daniel 8:14** tells us this prophecy has something to do with the sanctuary. In fact, almost all of the language in this chapter alludes to the sanctuary and its services.

Everything in the ancient Israelite sanctuary pointed to Jesus Christ—the sacrifices, the furniture, everything. It was carefully constructed as an object lesson in the plan of salvation. In fact, in **Exodus 25:8, 9** and **Hebrews 8:5**, we discover that Moses constructed the tabernacle very carefully—according to exact specifications in a divine blueprint! The earthly sanctuary was a shadow, or copy of the heavenly sanctuary, where Jesus now serves as our heavenly High Priest (see **Hebrews 8:1, 2**).

What does the sanctuary have to do with the judgment? Everything! There were seven special feasts held each year in the sanctuary, and each of them pointed to something Jesus would do for us. For example, at the Passover, a lamb was slain, pointing forward to Jesus’ death on the cross. The Feast of Firstfruits pointed forward to the resurrection (see **1 Cor. 15:20**). These feasts are all described in **Leviticus 23**.

One of these feasts—known as the “Day of Atonement” (or Yom Kippur)—was especially solemn. It was known as a day of judgment. You had to be sure that everything was right with God, or you would be cut off from His people forever (see **Leviticus 23:26-29**).

Daniel 8 is directing our attention to this this solemn feast—a day of judgment. It was the day on which the high priest cleansed the sanctuary! All through the year, people would sacrifice animals (symbolically pointing forward to the cross), confessing their sins over them, and the blood would be taken into the sanctuary. This was symbolic of Jesus taking all of our sins on Himself and presenting His blood before the throne of God on our behalf.

There was only one problem with the arrangement. The sanctuary was also God’s dwelling place—and sin cannot dwell in the presence of God forever. So once a year, the high priest would cleanse the sanctuary of all the sins that had been symbolically transferred into it—on the day of judgment. **Leviticus 16:15, 16** provides a description of what happened. On the 10th day of the 7th month, every year, a special service was conducted to cleanse the sanctuary of sins. And one day, at the judgment, God is going to put a stop to sin forever. Time will eventually run out for sinners to claim the gift of salvation.

Daniel 8 points to the day of judgment—there is no question about it. God is warning us, in love, that time is going to run out. One day it will be too late to confess your sins and accept the free gift of salvation. One day it will be too late to follow Jesus. The court of Heaven will finish its work and all decisions will be final.

One day, it will be too late. When will that be? For certain, we don’t know when the judgment is finished, because we don’t know when the Second Coming will take place. But is God trying to tell us when the judgment would begin? Why did Gabriel say that the judgment would take place in 2300 days?

You will find out in our next lesson!