

12 -- THE CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY (This study will cover chapters 8 and 9 of Daniel)

In our last lesson we examined carefully the work of the Day of Atonement. We discovered that this service points forward to Christ's final phase of His ministry, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. In the book of Daniel we will find the date for the heavenly judgment to begin. For the observant Bible student it doesn't take long to notice that there are incredible parallels between Daniel 2, 7 & 8. The prophecies contained in these chapters cover the same period of Earth's history and foretell the rise and fall of the same nations.

In Daniel 2 each change in metal type represented a change in earthly political empires (Daniel 2:38-40), so too in Daniel 7 & 8 the different beasts attacking and killing one another represent the various empires that would succeed one another through military conquest. In this lesson we wish to begin the unfolding of the whole concept of the judgment. The prophecy of Daniel 8, and its supporting chapter 9, contain the pivotal message found in the book of Daniel. Here Daniel gives us the longest time prophecy in the entire Bible. It is in this prophecy where we will find the starting point of the most solemn event in the history of our world, the judgment.

1. Daniel had an amazing vision in which he saw a ram with two horns. Whom does this ram represent?

Daniel 8:20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns--they are the kings of Media and Persia.

Note: History tells us that Medo-Persia was the ruling world empire from 539-331 B.C.

2. Next Daniel saw a goat with a great horn between his eyes. What does this mean?

Daniel 8:21, 22 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

Note: The male goat represents Greece and the big horn is a symbol of its first ruler, Alexander the Great. Greece was the dominant world power from 331-168 B.C. The four horns represent the four generals who took over parts of the empire when Alexander died.

3. What does Daniel see coming out of one of the four winds of heaven? What power did this "little horn" represent?

Daniel 8:9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. ..."

Note: The "little horn" that persecuted God's people, trampled holy things, and stood up against Jesus represented pagan Rome, but later "grew exceedingly great" and would become a major religious/political power which we will study on a later date. No other power except pagan Rome followed Greece. The iron monarchy of Rome enjoyed world supremacy from 168 B.C. to 476 A.D.

4. Daniel was told that this little horn would defile the sanctuary. How long until it would be cleansed?

Daniel 8:14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

Note: It would be 2,300 days. This is the longest time prophecy in the Bible, but the starting point is not given until the next chapter--in Daniel 9:25.

5. How did Daniel respond when he was told this?

Daniel 8:27 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.

Note: Daniel was so deeply grieved by what was to come upon God's people that he fainted and was sick for some time. But initially neither Daniel nor his friends understood the 2,300-day section of the vision.

6. In the next chapter, the angel explains the prophecy in greater detail. How long was the time period not previously described in the vision?

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, ...

Note: Several years after Daniel's vision about the 2,300 days, an angel of heaven flew quickly to his side to help him understand it. The angel also expanded the vision to include 70 prophetic weeks that were "determined upon," or allotted to, the Jews and the city of Jerusalem. God was giving His chosen nation another chance--a 490-year opportunity to accomplish its purpose of presenting the Messiah to the world (Daniel 9:23,24). Also, we find that the 2300 day prophecy can be broken into two segments. The first 490 days, or years for the Jewish nation, and the remaining 1810 years would bring us down to the time when the sanctuary would be cleansed.

7. What was the starting point for the 2,300-day and 70-week time prophecies?

Daniel 9:25 Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

Note: The angel told Daniel to begin counting the 2,300-day and 70-week prophecies from the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. God's people were in captivity in the Persian empire at this time. The decree was made in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes, who began to reign in 464 B.C. (Ezra 7:7). Artaxerxes' decree in 457 B.C. was the only one that specified restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem.

8. The angel said that if you count 69 weeks from 457 B.C., you will come to Messiah the Prince. Did this happen?

Acts 10:37, 38 ... that word you know, ... after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, ...

Note: Yes, it did. Hundreds of years before Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost, the event was foretold in prophecy! "Messiah" is the Hebrew word for "anointed," and the word "Christ" is the Greek equivalent. Luke 3:21, 22 says this special anointing by the Holy Ghost took place at His baptism.

Now here's the key. In bible prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). Adding 69 weeks, or 483 prophetic days ($69 \times 7 = 483$), to 457 B.C. brings us to the year A.D. 27.

483 years +
457 beginning date

A.D. 26
+ 1 year for 1B.C.- A.D. 1 (there was no zero year)

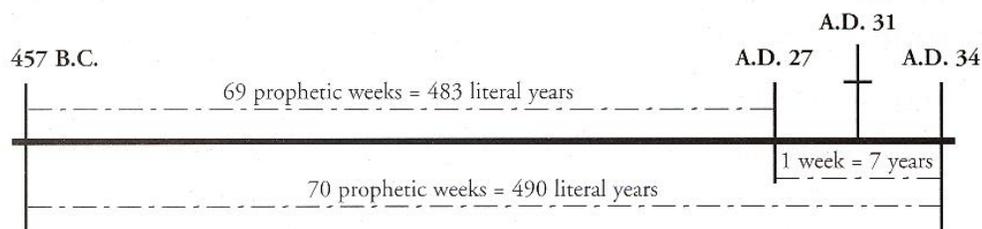
A.D. 27

Jesus began His ministry as the Messiah after His baptism in A.D. 27, exactly 483 years after the decree given in 457 B.C. This is why Jesus began preaching, after His baptism, that *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."* Mark 1:15. He was speaking of the time prophecy in Daniel 9:25!

9. What was to take place next in the prophecy?

Daniel 9:26, 27 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself... Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. ...”

Note: The prophecy next predicted that Jesus would be "cut off," or die, in this case be crucified, in the middle of the last week of the 70-week prophecy. Counting three and one-half years from His anointing in the fall of A.D. 27 would take us to the spring of A.D. 31, which is precisely when Jesus was crucified. At the time He died, the temple veil was torn into two sections from top to bottom (Matthew 27:50, 51), indicating that Jesus had caused the earthly sacrificial system to cease by His death as the Lamb of God. Refer to the timeline shown below.



10. Jesus told His disciples to preach first to which group of people?

Matthew 10:5, 6 ... Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, ... But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Note: Jesus insisted that His disciples preach first to the Jews, because they still had three-and-a-half years remaining of their 490-year opportunity to accept and proclaim the Messiah. The prophecy in Daniel 9:27 said that Jesus would confirm the covenant, or the great plan of salvation, with many for one prophetic week (seven literal years). But Jesus was crucified in the midst of that final week allotted to His chosen nation, so how could He confirm the covenant with them after His death? The answer is found in Hebrews 2:3: *"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."* Jesus' disciples preached to the Jews for that final three and a half years, until the nation officially rejected the gospel message in A.D. 34 when Stephen, a righteous deacon, was publicly stoned.

11. What warning did Jesus give to His chosen people?

Matthew 21:43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

Note: Jesus had made it very clear that the special status of the Jewish nation would be taken away if the people persisted in rejecting the Messiah.

12. So what is the other "nation" spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 21:43, which would become His chosen people?

Galatians 3:9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Romans 2:28, 29 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, ...but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, ...

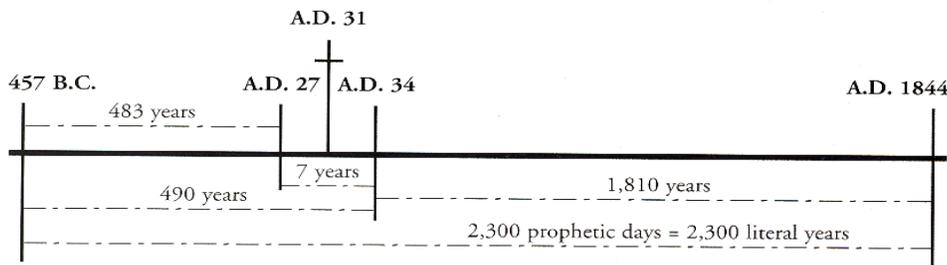
1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Note: As of A.D. 34 with the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58, 59), the literal Jewish nation in rejecting Christ could no long serve as His ambassador nation to the world. Because they consistently resisted God's plan for them, the nation of Israel is no longer the central focus of end-time prophecy. All who accept Jesus are His chosen people (Romans 9:6-8).

13. According to the angel who spoke with Daniel, what would happen at the end of the 2,300 years?

Daniel 8:14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

Note: In A.D. 34, there remained 1,810 years of the 2,300-day prophecy. (Study the diagram below and notice the dates.) Adding 1,810 years to A.D. 34 brings us to the autumn of 1844. The angel said that at that time, the heavenly sanctuary would be cleansed. (The earthly sanctuary was destroyed in A.D. 70.) Jesus, our High Priest in heaven (Hebrews 4:14-16; 8:1-5), began removing the records of sin from the heavenly sanctuary (Acts 3:19-21) in 1844.



14. Whose cases are being considered in the pre-advent judgment?

1 Peter 4:17 ... judgment to begin at the house of God; ...

Note: This first phase of judgment considers only those who accepted the Christ's offer of life, thus their sins have been transferred to the Heavenly sanctuary.

Thus, since 1844 Jesus has been conducting the final phase of His ministry as taught in the ancient Jewish sanctuary--His work of final judgment. In our next study we will look deeper into the Bible to learn what the judgment is all about. Remember, while Jesus conducts the judgment, He still intercedes for you and me (Lev. 16:23-25). He continues the work of mediation even while He conducts the final judgment. Praise God, our High Priest is not only our Judge, but also our Intercessor--He stands for us (1 John 2:1) .

Your Response

Are you glad that God has provided the sanctuary truth so we might know what Jesus is doing for us in the heavenly sanctuary?

ANSWER: _____