

8

Unsealing

DANIEL'S MYSTERIES

WITH MARK FINLEY

◆ Cleansed at Last ◆



ADVENTURES IN BIBLE PROPHECY



8

Cleansed at Last

The prophecies of Daniel outline history in advance. They cover the same time periods from different perspectives; they go over the same ground again. In Daniel 7, God's kingdom is under attack. Ruthless earthly rulers attempt to seize world dominion. A religious-political power—a strange combination of church and state—establishes its authority as supreme. God's law, the foundation of His government, is changed by this new, would-be world leader. Human traditions are substituted for Bible truth. Church councils replace Scripture as the ultimate authority in religious matters. An earthly religious power seeks to establish the kingdom of God on earth based on its own grand design.

In Daniel 8, God makes His final move to set all things right. He takes charge. Truth, cast to the ground, is restored. In earnest, heart-felt prayer, God's people confess their sins. They repent of their rebellion against His purposes. They are forgiven by His grace, transformed by His love, and renewed by His power. Kneeling before His heavenly throne, they seek Him. They surrender everything. The call of God's final judgment inspires them to a deeper spiritual experience. The drumbeat of eternity motivates them to be ready. Heaven's final appeal comes from the very throne of God in heaven's most sacred place—the sanctuary.

The Vision of the Ram and the He-Goat

1. Daniel's vision in chapter 8 is similar to which earlier vision the prophet received? Daniel 8:1.

We studied Daniel's earlier vision in chapter 7. It concludes with a magnificent scene at God's throne. Millions of angels gather to participate in heaven's final judgment. The vision in Daniel 8—like the one at the first, (verse 1)—also focuses on heaven's final judgment. It also directs our attention to the sanctuary.

2. What two symbolic animals does Daniel describe in chapter 8?
 - a. _____ Verses 3, 4.
 - b. _____ Verse 5.

Both the ram and the he-goat were sanctuary animals. They were especially used in the services on the last day of the Jewish year—the Day of Atonement. These symbolic animals point forward to the final end of sin. They speak to us of a day when the universe will be clean and the human race will be at one with God again.

3. What kingdom does the ram represent? Daniel 8:20.
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The Medes and Persians ruled from 539 to 331 B.C. Under Cyrus the Great, the Persian Empire became the dominant of the two powers, fulfilling the prophecy that the higher of the ram's two horns would come up last (see verse 3).

4. What kingdom does the he-goat represent? Daniel 8:21.
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5. Who does the large horn between its eyes describe? Daniel 8:21.
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• *The Medo-Persian empire fell to the conquering forces of Greece.*

Alexander the Great, the first king of Greece, aptly fits each detail of this prophecy. When he died at 33 years of age, his four generals divided the kingdom among themselves.

The Growth of the Little Horn

6. How does Daniel describe the he-goat power which succeeds Greece? Daniel 8:9-12.

This little-horn power grows in two directions. It moves geographically, attacking all armies in its path. This power grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land (Palestine). Pagan Rome defeated Greece and rapidly expanded its empire throughout the Mediterranean region. Rome became the single most feared power in the world.

Yet the power described here is not content with merely a political empire. Rome's political phase gives way to its religious phase. It reaches up to heaven itself to challenge the very government of God.

7. How high does the little-horn power attempt to exalt himself? Daniel 8:11.

“The Prince of the Host” is another name for Jesus Christ. This earthly religious power claims equality with the Lord of heaven Himself—the place of God's sanctuary “was cast down.” Earthly priests substitute their authority for that of Jesus, our heavenly High Priest.

Our True High Priest

8. Where is our true High Priest now? Hebrews 9:24.

9. Where is God's true sanctuary now? Hebrews 8:1, 2.

Any system which rivets our attention on earthly priests in ornate, elaborate, human temples is directing our attention in the wrong direction. Heaven's invitation is to direct our attention above to the true sanctuary where our real High Priest lives for us. The little-horn power cast to the ground the truth about Jesus as our real High Priest in heaven's sanctuary (see Daniel 8:12).

10. What question is asked in Daniel 8:13?

11. What answer is given in Daniel 8:14?

12. How long is a prophetic day in the Bible? Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6.

In Scripture, a day means a day. But when the symbolic language of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are used, one prophetic day equals a literal year. Thus the 2,300 days are 2,300 literal years.

13. To what general period of time does the vision of the 2,300 years refer? Daniel 8:17, 26.

The 2,300-year prophecy is the longest time prophecy in the Bible. It takes us down to the time of the end. We must wait until our next chapter, Daniel 9, to understand the real significance of this prophecy. In chapter 9, we will discover its beginning and ending points.

Heaven's True Sacrifice and Sanctuary

14. The Bible describes two sanctuaries—one on earth, built by Moses, and the other established in heaven by God. What specific instructions did God give Moses? Exodus 25:8.

Everything about the earthly sanctuary represented Jesus.

- The lamb, dying in the court, represented Jesus as our dying sacrifice.
- The priest, ministering in the Holy Place, represented Jesus, our Priest in heaven's sanctuary, offering forgiveness, mercy, and power for a new life.
- The high priest entering the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary and standing before God's law in the presence of God on the day of the cleansing of the sanctuary, represented Jesus our High Priest and His final work of judgment to do away with sin forever.

15. What is God's goal on this final Day of Atonement, this time of cleansing the sanctuary from sin? Hebrews 9:22, 23; Leviticus 16:30.

God's final goal is to purify or cleanse the universe from sin. Some individuals will be cleansed by fire. They cling to their sin. They fail to surrender their sin. Hardened in rebellion against God, they refuse to yield to His Lordship. In the presence of a Holy God, sin is combustible material. Our God is a consuming fire to sin wherever it is found (Hebrews 12:29). The fiery presence of God consumes sinners at the glorious brightness of His return.

Other individuals will be cleansed by blood. Today He invites us to come to Him. Today He invites us to accept His mercy. Today He desires to forgive our sins. Today He desires to change our lives. Today He longs for us to respond to the love that flows from an old rugged cross where the Saviour of the world, with blood-stained hands, was stretched out on a cross for us.

In light of the fact that we are living in the final moments of earth's history, would you like to respond to His gracious invitation to give your whole life to Him? If so, write Yes on the line below.
