

Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 5



Rights Wins

- **During the closing days of World War II, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a young German theologian, was escorted from his cell in a Nazi concentration camp and hanged for the crime of high treason.**
- **At the time it seemed that Hitler's madness had mesmerized all of Germany. Very few people raised voices of protest against what was happening in Nazi Germany.**
- **But Bonhoeffer had not been able to bow before the swastika. He had helped to organize a group of believers into the Confessing Church that preached the lordship of Jesus Christ and His truth at a time when Nazi dogma seemed to be the only truth.**
- **Because he plotted against Hitler, Bonhoeffer was sentenced to death.**

Rights Wins

- **Decades later, in 1996, Germany had become a very different country. Germans were trying to confront Hitler's horrors and make amends for the terrible suffering the Nazis had caused.**
- **That year, a court in Berlin officially declared Dietrich Bonhoeffer innocent of the charge of high treason. He had not betrayed his country. Rather, he had taken a costly stand for justice.**
- **Daniel chapters 8 and 9 present a similar dramatic story—one that plays out on a very large scale. Satan has tried to mesmerize the whole world and keep it under his control.**
- **He is the accuser who constantly attacks God's character and His people. He is the father of lies. But God keeps telling the truth; He keeps working for peace and justice.**
- **And someday the whole universe is going to celebrate the triumph of God's truth in this world.**

Rights Wins

- **Do you sometimes feel that you're under attack? Does it seem that life is not treating you fairly? Maybe your marriage is causing you a lot of pain. Maybe it's a constant worry about finances—just when you think you have a little saved, the car quits running or the refrigerator breaks down.**
- **Maybe you can't seem to get ahead at work—someone else always gets the promotion. The Bible wants you to know that there's good news.**
- **Whatever injustices we may have to bear now, God's truth is going to triumph in the end. No act of mercy will go unrewarded; no deed of kindness will be forgotten.**
- **You can come out in the winners' circle if you just stick close to God. Daniel 8 and 9 are your chapters, written to prove that God is on your side.**

Rights Wins

- **Daniel 2 showed us broad outlines of the kingdoms which would dominate world history. Daniel 7 presented the same outline with different symbols.**
- **But it also highlighted how God's people would come under attack by a power that combines church and state, a power that substitutes man's thinking for Bible truth.**
- **In Daniel 8 we will cover some of the same history, but as we do we will see even more details.**
- **We'll see more of the triumph of truth as Scripture is restored, people are moved to repentance, judgment takes place, and God's people get ready for heaven.**

A Ram and A Goat

- **Chapter 8 shows us yet another vision God gave Daniel. In vision Daniel finds himself in the capital city of Susa, standing by the River Ulai.**
- **Looking across the river, he sees a ram poised on the far bank. This is no ordinary animal. Like other prophetic beasts it has interesting attributes.**
- **Two long horns grow out from its head. One horn comes in a bit later than the other, and it grows taller than the other.**
- **This ram is a powerful beast. It charges north, south, and west.**

A Ram and A Goat

- **As Daniel watches in fascination, a male goat comes trotting up from the west.**
- **This goat has a single horn between its eyes.**
- **The goat is powerful and moves like lightning; its feet don't even touch the ground.**
- **The goat charges the ram and breaks off both of its horns.**
- **Then he knocks the ram to the ground and tramples the animal.**
- **This “he-goat” (KJV) now becomes so powerful that no other beast can defeat him.**
- **But at the height of his power, his horn is broken off and four other horns grow in its place.**
- **Out of one of these horns grows a “little horn” (vs. 9).**

A Ram and A Goat

- **This “little horn” does several things. It:**
- **Expands to the south, the east, and the glorious land (vs. 9).**
- **Ascends to the host of heaven (vs. 10).**
- **Throws down some of the host and stars and tramples them (vs. 10).**
- **Exalts itself as high as the Prince of the host (vs. 11).**
- **Removes the daily sacrifices and degrades the sanctuary (vs. 11).**
- **Takes over the daily sacrifices and throws truth to the ground (vs. 12).**

A Ram and A Goat

- In his vision, Daniel next sees two angels talking with each other. One angel asks, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?”
- The other angel answers, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed” (vss. 13, 14).
- In other words, the first angel has observed what the “little horn” does, especially to the sanctuary and the sacrifices, and he wants to know how long it will be before the desecration of God’s holy place and its services will end and things be restored to what God intended them to be.
- The answer is that they will be restored after 2,300 days.
- **THOUGHT QUESTION:** The little horn that Daniel saw in vision in Chapter 8 exalts itself as high as the prince of the host. (False or True)
- The little horn power in Chapter 8 removes the daily sacrifice and degrades the sanctuary. (False or True)

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **READ DANIEL 8:15-19.**
- **Daniel says that after he “had seen the vision” he “was seeking the meaning” (Daniel 8:15).**
- **He didn’t understand what God was showing him, so the Lord sent the angel, Gabriel, telling him, “‘make this man understand the vision.’**
- **So he [Gabriel] came near where I [Daniel] stood, and . . . he said to me, ‘Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end. . . . I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time’ ” (vss. 16-19).**

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **READ DANIEL 8:15-19.**
- **The angel explained that the vision dealt with events from Daniel's day all the way down the stream of time to the end.**
- **He told Daniel, "The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece.**
- **The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king" (vss. 20, 21).**
- **The fact that one horn was higher than the other symbolizes the historical reality that Persia became the more dominating part of the Medo-Persian Empire.**

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **The large horn, or “first king,” represents Alexander the Great.**
- **He died at the height of his power, and his empire was divided among his four leading generals—Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy.**
- **These four generals are the four horns of verses 8 and 22.**
- **Gabriel went on to explain to Daniel further details about the vision. He said, “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.**
- **And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise. . . . He shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy . . . the holy people” (vss. 22-24).**

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **As we learned in Daniel 7, this “little horn” or “king” represents a combination of church and state—the combination of pagan and papal Rome.**
- **It would set itself up to oppose God and His people.**
- **“Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. . . . He shall even arise against the Prince of the princes; but he shall be broken” (vs. 25).**

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **Isaiah 9:6 describes the Messiah as the “Prince of peace.” In Acts 3:15 Jesus is called the “Prince of life.” So when this earthly religious power “rise[s] against the Prince of princes” (Daniel 8:25), it is really challenging Jesus Christ and trying to claim equality with God.**
- **This power takes away the daily sacrifices and casts down the sanctuary (vs. 11).**
- **The sanctuary service was a picture lesson of the forgiveness of sin and our salvation through Jesus, the Lamb of God. So this power is interfering with the gospel plan of grace.**
- **But note that God gives us a word of assurance here. He tells us that this power will be destroyed, but not by human hands.**
- **In other words, God Himself will act decisively; a supernatural event will bring this power down.**

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **In verse 26 the angel ends his explanation by referring Daniel back to the vision of the “evenings and mornings” (an evening and morning equals one day) which we read about in verse 14 (the 2,300 days).**
- **The angel tells Daniel that this vision is indeed true.**
- **Daniel was greatly upset by what the angel told him regarding the vision.**
- **He still didn’t grasp its meaning clearly. He says, “I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days. . . . I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it” (vs. 27).**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The he-goat that Daniel saw in vision represents the kingdom of Greece. (False or True)**

The Sanctuary

- **WHAT IS THE SANCTUARY?**
- **As we've seen, the central theme of Daniel 8 is the sanctuary and what the "little horn" does to it.**
- **In order to understand this chapter more clearly, we need to take a look at the sanctuary system.**
- **Studying the sanctuary will also help us understand the explanation of the 2,300 days that is given in Daniel 9.**

The Sanctuary

- **WHY WAS A SANCTUARY NEEDED?**
- **In the beginning there was no sin in our world. That meant no one ever hurt anyone else.**
- **No one ever suffered, got sick, or died.**
- **Unfortunately, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, and that opened the door to the plague of sin—and all the suffering that results from sin.**
- **Fortunately, Adam and Eve expressed sorrow for their sin, and right then God forgave them and promised that some day a baby would be born who would restore all things.**

The Sanctuary

- **WHY WAS A SANCTUARY NEEDED?**
- **Adam and Eve's descendants eventually spread over the Earth.**
- **They forgot about God and began sinking further and further into sin until God had to step in and stop the cruelty and suffering with a worldwide flood.**
- **As time went by and people once again began spreading over the whole Earth, God wanted to demonstrate to everyone that He loved them.**
- **He wanted to teach them about the blessings of being in a relationship with Him. He decided He could best communicate His love through a special nation.**
- **He planned to make the people of Israel an example to the whole world of how wonderful it is to follow the God of heaven.**

The Sanctuary

- **WHY WAS A SANCTUARY NEEDED?**
- **In addition, God wanted to show the world, through the Israelites, just how He planned to bring the tragedy of sin to an end. He wanted to teach all people about grace and forgiveness, about the hope of a Messiah, a Savior, who would one day sacrifice Himself for human sin so that men and women could have eternal life with God. God had a plan.**
- **As His principal means of teaching people all these things, God designed a sanctuary service for Israel. All the details of that service illuminated the plan of salvation. All the sacrifices pointed forward to the Messiah, the One who would pour out His lifeblood in order for our sins to be forgiven.**
- **Everything that happened in the Hebrew temple was an object lesson, a way to help human beings visualize and experience the fact that their sins were forgiven.**

The Sanctuary

- GOD TELLS MOSES HOW TO BUILD THE SANCTUARY
- **Much of the book of Exodus is taken up with the instructions God gave Moses regarding the sanctuary and its service.**
- **In some ways the Hebrew temple was similar to what we would call a church today.**
- **But when the Israelites gathered for religious festivals, they didn't go inside the sanctuary; they assembled in the courtyard outside.**
- **Only the priests went inside to present the blood of sacrifices before God.**

The Sanctuary

- **GOD TELLS MOSES HOW TO BUILD THE SANCTUARY**
- **Exodus 25:8 tells us God's essential purpose in having the sanctuary built: "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (emphasis supplied).**
- **You see, sin caused a tragic separation between human beings and their Creator.**
- **The sanctuary was God's way of showing how He can again live among us.**
- **Its ceremonies reveal how God communicates with us and how we can communicate with Him.**
- **Each morning and evening the people could gather around the sanctuary and establish contact with God in prayer.**

The Sanctuary

- **This may come as a surprise, but the Old Testament teaches the same gospel story as the New Testament. It does so in symbols.**
- **The sanctuary services actually depict the activity of Jesus Christ as the High Priest who ministers on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary.**
- **That Hebrew temple reveals what Jesus is doing now in the temple in heaven, and what He is doing now on Earth to guide and enrich each of us in our daily lives. (Hebrews 8:1-6)**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The sanctuary and its services in the Old Testament were designed by God to illustrate His plan of salvation. (False or True)**

The Parts of the Sanctuary

- **THE SANCTUARY FURNITURE**
- **Exodus 25-40 describe the services and ceremonies of the Old Testament sanctuary. Exodus 40:1-8 gives us a brief summary:**
- **Then the Lord said to Moses,... "Place the ark of the Testimony in it [the sanctuary] and shield the ark with the curtain. Bring in the table and set out what belongs on it.**
- **Then bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. Place the gold altar of incense in front of the ark of the Testimony and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.**
- **Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting; place the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it.**
- **Set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard.'"**

The Parts of the Sanctuary

- **COURTYARD OF THE SANCTUARY**

- **In the courtyard in front of the sanctuary stood an altar made of brass on which the priests offered sacrifices.**
- **Near it was a laver (basin) in which they washed.**
- **The sanctuary itself consisted of two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.**

The Parts of the Sanctuary

- THE HOLY PLACE

- **In the first room, or Holy Place, a seven-branched lamp burned continually.**
- **It represented Jesus as the never-failing “light of the world” (John 8:12).**
- **Near it stood a table on which loaves of bread (showbread) were placed.**
- **This symbolized Jesus as the “bread of life” (John 6:35) who satisfies our physical and spiritual hunger.**
- **Near the curtain dividing the two rooms stood a golden altar of incense.**
- **The rising cloud of incense represented prayers ascending to God.**

The Parts of the Sanctuary

- **THE MOST HOLY PLACE:** The second room, or Most Holy Place, contained the “ark of the covenant.” This was simply a rectangular wooden chest covered with gold. But it symbolized the throne of God. The lid of the chest was called the “mercy seat.” This represented God’s loving kindness.
- Below the mercy seat and inside the chest lay two tablets of stone. These were the tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments with His own finger.
- This symbolized the fact that the commandments are to be a part of the lifestyle of those who accept the Messiah into their lives. Two golden cherubim (representing angelic beings) hovered over the mercy seat at each end of the ark.
- A curtain (veil) hid the Holy Place from the view of the people as the priests ministered to them in the courtyard.
- A second curtain separated the Holy Place and Most Holy Place.

The Services of the Sanctuary

- **The Old Testament book of Leviticus describes in detail the services carried on in the sanctuary. Those ceremonies were divided into two parts—the daily services and the yearly services.**
- **In a typical daily service, someone feeling guilty for a transgression would bring a sacrifice, such as a lamb, to the temple as a sin offering.**
- **The individual would “lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering.” (Leviticus 4:29)**
- **After the animal was killed, the priest took the blood of the offering and placed some of it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering (Leviticus 4:30).**
- **These blood sacrifices conveyed the truth that sin results in death, that the sinner can escape ultimate death only by having another person die in his or her place.**

The Services of the Sanctuary

- **Let's look at how the heart of the daily sanctuary system focuses on the sacrifice of Jesus. First, the animal brought for sacrifice had to be "without blemish" (Leviticus 1:3).**
- **That's because it represented Jesus as the holy, harmless, and undefiled One (Hebrews 7:26). Second, the guilty person at the temple confessed his sin and symbolically transferred his guilt to the guiltless animal.**
- **This represents Jesus taking on our sins at Calvary. Jesus the "sinless One" became "sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Third, the animal had to be killed and its blood shed.**
- **Only in that graphic way could it point forward to the supreme penalty that Jesus suffered on the cross.**
- **Jesus' great saving act was represented over and over in the Old Testament sanctuary.**

The Services of the Sanctuary

- **The yearly sacrifices and ceremonies were concentrated on the High Priest's ministry in the Most Holy Place, the second room of the sanctuary.**
- **In a sense, the yearly sacrifices dealt with the accumulation of the daily sacrifices.**
- **As the people came to confess their sins day after day, the blood of the sacrificed animals was sprinkled on the corners of the altar (Leviticus 4:6-12).**
- **Through these symbols the confessed sins of the people were being brought into the sanctuary each day.**

The Services of the Sanctuary

- **And so once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the sanctuary itself was cleansed from all the sins confessed during the past year (Leviticus 16). In this special ceremony the High Priest sacrificed a goat. The High Priest carried the blood of the goat into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled it in front of the ark of the covenant.**
- **This was yet another symbol of the blood of Jesus, the coming Redeemer, who would pay the penalty for sin.**
- **The High Priest then ceremonially removed from the sanctuary all the confessed sins of the previous year and placed them on the head of another goat which was led out into the wilderness to die (Leviticus 16:20-22).**
- **This yearly service of the Day of Atonement cleansed the sanctuary from sin. The people regarded it as a day of judgment because those who refused to confess and seek forgiveness on this day were considered judged or cut off from God (Leviticus 23:29).**

The Services of the Sanctuary

- **The book of Hebrews compares what the High Priest did symbolically once a year to what Jesus does once and for all. And it shows us why Christ is a much superior High Priest in heaven. Jesus can offer complete forgiveness at the moment we ask. And He can assure us that everyone who places his faith in Him can have that assurance. During the investigative judgment, when the books are opened and your name comes up, your record can state that all your sins are forgiven. That's what Jesus can do as your High Priest. He wants to save you for all eternity. He wants to blot out the record of your sins forever. That's what He can do in the heavenly sanctuary; He removes forever the confessed sins of all who have accepted Him as Savior (Acts 3:19).**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: The Day of Atonement took place once each year and cleansed the sanctuary of its record of sin. This represents what Jesus, our High Priest, does for us in the heavenly sanctuary. (False or True)**

Symbols of the Gospel

- **What a fantastic plan of salvation! God has placed it all there in symbols in the Bible for you and me. The sanctuary expresses the heart of the Bible—the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- **Now, let's go back and look at Daniel and his reaction to the vision in chapter 8.**
- **Remember that he was appalled about the “little horn” “trampling” the services in the sanctuary (vs. 13). Now you can understand why.**
- **Daniel realized that the “little horn” power was trying to interfere with God's wonderful plan to forgive and save as symbolized in the sanctuary service.**
- **That's serious business.**

Symbols of the Gospel

- **Looking at history, we see that the Roman Church of the Dark Ages did indeed do the work symbolized by the “little horn.” The whole structure became a kind of “mechanical Christianity” that blurred the pure gospel.**
- **A system of indulgences and penance and rituals obscured the good news of forgiveness by grace alone. Believers didn’t feel they could go directly to Jesus for the free gift of salvation.**
- **In place of simple faith in the substitutionary death of Christ, complicated rituals were created as a means of earning merit.**
- **All this was predicted in the details of Daniel’s “little horn” vision. The prophet could see that here was a serious challenge to God’s plan of salvation.**
- **No wonder Daniel “fainted and was sick for days” and “was astonished by the vision” (Daniel 8:27).**

The Lamb of God

- In the sanctuary service there were sacrifices of rams, bulls, calves, kids, doves, pigeons, and even a cereal offering.
- However, the lamb was the main sacrifice; a lamb was offered on the altar twice a day.
- The lamb is the best representation of Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice.
- In fact, the New Testament refers to Jesus as “the Lamb of God.”
- “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).
- “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

The Lamb of God

- **Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God! He loved you so much that He was willing to leave heaven and come to Earth and die for you. He shed His blood to forgive your sins.**
- **The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Jesus had to die in order for us to be forgiven.**
- **It cost the Son. It cost God the Father. “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).**
- **What a fantastic promise! God loves you and me. He gave us Jesus. “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17).**
- **God loves you so much that He is willing to do whatever it takes to save you.**

Conclusion

- **During the Vietnam War a Navy doctor and nurse found themselves trying desperately to save an eight-year-old girl. She'd been critically wounded when a mortar round hit her orphanage.**
- **The child needed a transfusion immediately. They tried to explain the situation to the other orphans. The girl would die without blood. Would anyone be willing to help?**
- **The children stared back, very frightened. Finally a boy named Heng raised a trembling hand.**
- **The nurse quickly thanked him and swabbed his arm.**
- **As the blood was being drawn Heng clamped a fist over his mouth—trying to stifle his sobs.**
- **But when the nurse asked him if it was hurting, he shook his head no. Still, something was clearly wrong.**

Conclusion

- **Fortunately, a Vietnamese nurse arrived and began talking to the boy. After a while she explained, “He thought he was going to die. He thought you’d asked him to give all his blood so the little girl could live.”**
- **The Americans were astounded and humbled. The American nurse just had to know. “Why would he do that?” The Vietnamese nurse relayed back the boy’s simple answer: “She’s my friend.”**
- **That’s what a little Vietnamese boy was willing to do for a friend. That’s what the Son of God really did for you.**
- **He really did give all His blood. He really did die in your place.**
- **He did that because He cherishes you as a friend, and He longs to give you the assurance of living eternally face-to-face with God.**
- **What would you like to say to Jesus today?**