

29.02.2020 FROM CONTAMINATION TO PURIFICATION

“And he said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed’” Daniel 8:14

Our study this week is Daniel 8. As we study Daniel we find that Chapters 2, 7 and 8 are parallel chapters. They describe the same sequence of kingdoms on earth in all 3 chapters. In chapters 2 and 7, these kingdoms are described as secular political powers symbolised by unclean beasts. In chapter 8 the powers are described as spiritual powers symbolised by clean beasts (there was no separation of church and state in those times).

In these chapters, we find that after the 4th kingdom of Daniel 2 and 7 (pagan and papal Rome), the Kingdom of God is brought to view. In Daniel 2, it is the stone; in Daniel 7 it is the judgment of God where the beast is condemned and the saints are vindicated. In Daniel 8 it is the cleansing/restoring of the Heavenly Sanctuary. All these events in the kingdom of God take place after the 4th kingdom is described.

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylon	Babylon	-----
Media-Persia	Media-Persia	Media-Persia
Greece	Greece	Greece
Pagan Rome	Pagan Rome	Pagan Rome
Papal Rome	Papal Rome	Papal Rome
-----	Judgment in heaven	Cleansing of Sanctuary
Second Coming	Second Coming	Second Coming
[Stone cut out without hand]	[Saints get the kingdom]	[Destroyed without hand]

All these chapters tell us that we can live in the confidence that the persecuting powers of this world will be overthrown by the kingdom of God – the kingdom of glory.

The Kingdom of Grace (under the rule of God) and the Kingdom of this world (under the rule of Satan) exist simultaneously today. But the prophecies of Daniel assure us that the Kingdom of this world will be destroyed at the consummation – the Second Coming of Christ and the setting up of His immortal Kingdom of glory.

What is the Kingdom of Grace and the Kingdom of Glory?

‘The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ.

“The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand,” had been the disciples message. At the expiration of “the time”—the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel 9, which were to extend to the Messiah, “the Anointed One”—Christ had received the anointing of the Spirit after His baptism by John in Jordan. And the “kingdom of God” which they had declared to be at hand was established by the death of Christ. This kingdom was not, as they had been taught to believe, an earthly empire. Nor was it that future, immortal kingdom which shall be set up when “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High;” that everlasting kingdom, in which “all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” Daniel 7:27. **As used in the Bible, the expression “kingdom of God” is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is brought to view by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After pointing to Christ, the compassionate intercessor who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” the apostle says: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace.” Hebrews 4:15, 16. The throne of grace represents the kingdom of grace; for the existence of a throne implies the existence of a kingdom. In many of His parables Christ uses**

the expression “the kingdom of heaven” to designate the work of divine grace upon the hearts of men. So the throne of glory represents the kingdom of glory; and this kingdom is referred to in the Saviour's words: “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations.” Matthew 25:31, 32. This kingdom is yet future. It is not to be set up until the second advent of Christ.’ *Great Controversy: p. 347*

The Ram and the Goat

Daniel 8:1-2: The time of this vision is given – the 3rd year of Belshazzar’s reign, about 50 years since the captivity of the Jews began.

Daniel 8:3-4: The vision of the 2-horned ram, described in Daniel 8:20 as representing Medo-Persia.

Daniel 8:5-8: The vision of the goat, representing Greece (Daniel 8:21). We know from history that after Alexander the Great, the kingdom was divided into four.

The Little Horn: Daniel 8:9-12

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. And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.

In Daniel 7, the little horn's attack targets the Most High God, his saints, and the times regulated by the law. **In chapter 8, the same power wages war against the Prince of the host, God's faithful servants, truth, the foundation of the sanctuary and the services in the sanctuary.**

It is obvious that the little horn is waging war against Christ. Christ is the foundation of the sanctuary (Psalm 118:22, 1 Corinthians 3:11) and His work in salvation is revealed in all the services of the sanctuary. He is the Truth and the Way to God – all revealed in the sanctuary services. The little horn’s attacks are also directed against God’s people – His host, also called ‘the armies of the Lord’ (Exodus 12:41). Christ is the Prince of the host; the Captain of the Lord’s host (Joshua 5:14).

Pagan Rome was responsible for crucifying Christ, the Son of God. But Papal Rome undermined the work of Christ for our salvation. (Papal Rome refers to the hierarchy of the church, the Magisterium or the teaching church; the lay members are called the taught church). It displays the spirit of Satan in exalting itself to the place of Christ and offering its members an alternative to the all-sufficient merits of Christ (the anti-christ).

Some of these ‘in-place-of Christ’ teachings are *‘Salvation is not through Christ alone; it is through the church; Christ is not our only mediator/intercessor – human priests and Mary also have that privilege; the created (the priest) creates the Creator (Christ) at every Mass. God’s word which has the power to create and resurrect, is no longer the word by which we live; to it are added the teachings of the church fathers (tradition). Priests and Pope can take unto themselves the attributes of God – the power to forgive sins and infallibility.’*

However, it is not only papal Rome that is guilty of this sin. Any person or institution that takes unto itself the glory that belongs to God is also exalting itself to the place of God and is displaying the spirit of Satan. Any person who persecutes his neighbour has the spirit of Satan. Any person who casts aspersions on the character of God is exhibiting the spirit of Satan.

Later in chapter 8, Gabriel describes the little horn more fully:

In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked (when their sin is at their height), a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause

astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. NIV/ NLT.

“In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise.” Every nation falls when it deliberately and wilfully rejects Jehovah, the sovereign Lord who gave them their power and dominion.

He will become very strong, but not by his own power...The little horn, though ultimately under the sovereign hand of God, receives his power from Satan. He will use political power to enforce religious laws. Though God delegates authority to the church, this power will claim absolute authority for itself...‘salvation is not through Christ; it is through the Church’.

His rule is characterised by destruction and deception... *a master of intrigue who will cause deceit to prosper... He will cause astounding devastation.*

Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power...as an unseen hand wrote the judgment and condemnation of Babylon, so too this power will be supernaturally destroyed.

The Prophetic Timetable

Daniel does not understand the vision so God asks Gabriel to explain it to him (Daniel 8:15-18):

*And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, **Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.***

Again, Gabriel says to Daniel: **“Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.”** verse 19.

“The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.” Verse 26

What did he mean by “the time of the end”? There are only two interpretations to the last part of this verse. He could either mean the time of the end of the Jewish dispensation, which we know was 70 A.D., or it could mean the time of the end of the world. Which one did he mean? As far as Daniel was concerned, he was thinking about his people, (chapter 9 makes this clear). But, as we look at the passage carefully, we believe that Gabriel was talking also about the end of the world.

This vision therefore, takes us to the time of the end, the time of the Consummation.

How Long?

“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?”

And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred evening-mornings (days); then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”
Daniel 8:13, 14

I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding. 8:27

Gabriel had explained the ram, the goat and the little horn. But he had not explained the 2300 evening-mornings (days). Daniel had to wait about 14 years for the answer.

The answer to his question is found in Daniel chapter 9 which is our study for next week.

*Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation...You will bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which You have made for Your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established.
"The Lord shall reign forever and ever." Exodus 15:11, 13, 17, 18*

Additional Note:

The Spirit of Anti-Christ (*anti: in the place of...*)

Throughout history there have been people, kingdoms and institutions who have openly followed the spirit of Anti-Christ in taking unto themselves the authority of God – Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Tyre, Pagan Rome and Papal Rome. With regard to the last, it is essential to remember that this description as interpreted by the Reformers Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Cranmer and Knox refers to the Magisterium (the Pope and the Bishops) of the papacy, and not to the millions of genuine worshippers and seekers after God in that church. *'Vatican II taught (Dei Verbum # 10): "The task of authoritatively interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on [Scripture or Tradition], has been entrusted exclusively to the living Magisterium of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.'* *The Basic Catholic Catechism. PART FIVE: The Apostles' Creed IX – XII. Fr. William G. Most. (c) Copyright 1990 by William G. Most.*

Today we also see it in totalitarian governments, in dictatorships, in communism, in right-wing ideologies. **Christianity is hated in our society today because it is the one religion that calls us to deny and humble ourselves.** This is entirely contrary to the pursuit of power, wealth and influence so craved by society today. We see the effects of Satan's anti-law, anti-God work today – in secular humanism particularly, which states that man has in himself the capacity to achieve all that he wants to – to create peace on earth, to make laws (since God does not exist) *for whatever is thought to be good for society at the time* – no absolute standards of law, either or moral or civic are necessary. We see the effects in the materialism and consumerism of society today, the 'new theologies' which deny God, which see no need for salvation, the resulting permissiveness which has so affected marriage, the family, sex, the beginning of life and the end of life.

The most important question to ask ourselves is if we have been deceived by the subtle deceptions of Satan. Do I manifest the spirit of Anti-Christ by seeking my own glory, by refusing to deny myself, by refusing to have the mind of Christ who humbled Himself unto the death of the Cross? Do I love evil rather than truth (even in just one area of my life)? Do I seek to know the truth, so that I may be more and more like Christ who is the Truth? Or do I willingly choose ignorance of God's Word so that I do not have respond to what it asks of me? (see Hosea 4:1-9).

'The only way to avoid being deceived is to love goodness and truth'.

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour... But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 1 John 2:18, 20, 28
