

The Sanctuary

The Eschatological Day of Atonement

Lesson #10 for December 7, 2013

Scriptures: Daniel 8; 9:24-27; Revelation 14:6-7; Numbers 14:34.

1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church got its start from the advent movement of the early 1800s called the great religious awakening. People like William Miller studied the Scriptures including especially Daniel 7-9 and came to the conclusion that “the time of the end” was upon them. Later in this lesson, we will explore how they came to that conclusion.
2. In Daniel 7 we read about a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a fourth nondescript beast. Three of the horns of the nondescript beast are uprooted by a single small horn that makes claims and blasphemous boasts against God. We covered those stories in some detail in our last lesson. In Daniel 8 he talks about a ram, a he-goat, a little horn (again), and then moves on to talk about a prophecy of 2300 days/years. At the end of that period of 2300 days/years, the pre-advent judgment begins; and we enter “the time of the end.”
3. The historical context suggests that this little horn represents papal Rome. And what does papal Rome attack? It wages a religious war against the divine-heavenly Prince, His sanctuary, and His people. If we remember Revelation 12 and 13, we will recognize that behind this power lies the Devil himself. And what does the little horn do? It replaces the daily or *tamid* priestly mediation in the heavenly sanctuary with an earthly priesthood (Hebrews 7:25; 8:1-2) consisting of a mediating priesthood, the Eucharist or “sacrifice” of the mass, the confessional, and worship of Mary. Catholics believe that the wafer and wine they use in the mass is the actual blood and body of Christ. That doctrine is called transubstantiation. They believe that the priest is actually able to “create” God.
4. So, the question arises, “How long” can this trampling of the temple, this replacement of the daily priesthood of God continue? (Daniel 8:9-13; compare Revelation 12:7-12)
5. When looking at Scripture, it is clear that whenever the question “How long?” is asked, a change in the current situation is expected. (Exodus 10:3; Numbers 14:27; 1 Kings 18:21) Daniel was looking for an answer to his hopes of a return to Jerusalem that would take place almost immediately, but he was saddened by the idea that something which he was not able to clearly understand will take 2300 evenings and mornings or 2300 prophetic days/years.
6. Read Daniel 8:14. What does it mean to suggest that the sanctuary will be restored or cleansed? The Hebrew word is *zdg*. It has three major meanings: a) restoration (Isaiah 10:22); b) cleansing or purification (Job 4:17; 25:4); and c) legal vindication (Job 34:5). Since the temple on this earth no longer existed during the prophetic time period that we are talking about, he must have been referring to the heavenly sanctuary.
7. This reminds us that there was a cleansing of the earthly sanctuary described in detail in Leviticus 16, i.e., the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:20,30) Thus, the day of divine judgment described in Daniel 7 must be equal to the day of restoration in Daniel 8. Could this also parallel the time of God’s judgment in Revelation 14:6-7?
8. Through a careful study of the original languages and the imagery, we discover that Daniel 8 has many parallels with the Day of Atonement: Sanctuary imagery, purification of sanctuary and people, judgment, and creation. But, when the conflict is all over, God Himself and His people will be vindicated. He has not forgotten His promises. He can predict the future far in advance. Nothing is out of His control.

9. But, is it really possible that a prophecy given to a Jewish exile more than 500 years before Christ accurately predicted events down into modern times in A.D. 1844? There are many prophecies in the Old Testament that were completely fulfilled at the right time.
10. Read Daniel 8:3-11,17-19. What time period is being discussed? Clearly, Daniel had in mind a time far in the future. Several years went by between the events recorded in Daniel 8 and the events in Daniel 9. Daniel must have wondered many times about that vision that he had seen. Finally, Daniel began praying to God that very significant prayer recorded in Daniel 9, and God sent Gabriel to explain the prior prophecy to him.
11. Earlier in the book of Daniel, the prophecies were given; and then, later in the chapter, the explanation was given. However, in this situation there is no prophecy, there is only an explanation. Clearly, this links back to the prophecy of Daniel 8:14; and furthermore, Daniel 9:24 says a period of 490 years is to be "cut off" for Your people and Your holy city. Daniel 9:25 goes on to explain that "from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until God's chosen leader comes, seven times seven [i.e., 49] years will pass. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, and will stand for seven times sixty-two [i.e., 434] years, but this will be a time of troubles." (GNB) [Content in brackets is supplied.] This gives us a basis on which to determine the beginning of that prophecy. And when we realize that it is "cut off" from the much longer prophecy of 2300 days, we have the beginning date for both prophecies.
12. Since this is absolutely crucial to our understanding of William Miller's study and the beginning of the advent movement, we are including a separate handout on Daniel 9:24-27 which will spell out the details. We hope you find it useful.

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Last Modified: October 27, 2013

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