

A New Look at Daniel and the Sanctuary

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Section One: Introduction

Chapter 1. Missional Reading and Reflection: An Introduction

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Tim. 3:16-17

The Bible is the word of God written in human language. Reading the Bible is one of the prescribed ways for us to listen to the voice of God, know His will and understand the duty of mankind. The Bible not only tells us about things in the past, but reveals the future, especially the events that will take place in the end of the world and how we should be prepared for that.

People often come to the Bible with different perspectives and purposes. However, more often than not, the Bible is approached from a theological point of view. Some study the Bible in order to find support for a specific doctrine or to formulate a theology. This is also true of the studies of Daniel and Revelation. Two approaches are commonly seen in these studies. One seems to focus more on comparing Daniel and Revelation with history, and as a result, it often turns out to be merely a study of history. The other seems to be just the opposite, focusing more on the text itself, devoting energy to word and grammatical studies, having much less to say about history. Both are concerned with either doctrinal investigation or theological formulation. Christian missions seems to be pushed to the side unconsciously. Bible study most of the time has become a study of doctrine, while the mission of God advanced in these books is rarely mentioned.

As important as doctrines are in their own right, the mission of God, God’s method of doing mission, the transformation of human character, the signs of the times, these

are equally important, if not more so. To be better informed and enlightened in all of these areas calls for a missional reading and reflection of the Scriptures.

A missional reading of Daniel and Revelation, like reading any other books in the Scriptures, is not to produce theologians, but rather transform missionaries of Jesus, who are seeking to understand their distinct identity, the timely message for this time and mission. Ellen White put it so succinctly when she wrote, “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”¹ They are to be like Daniel and his three friends and the beloved John and his apostolic friends, and study the truth, walk in the truth, proclaim the truth and be ready to die for the truth!

¹ Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p.195.

A. God Is A Missionary God

God is love!

He is the only self-existent Being who does not rely upon anything outside of Himself for His own existence. Rather He is the source of all other existence.

The family of God consists of God the Father, the Son of God and Spirit of God.

It was out of impenetrable and insurmountable love that God designed to create three domains: the heavens for His angelic messengers, the other worlds for unnumbered inhabitants and this world for the human race. It was His plan to establish laws which reflect His character and wisdom to govern and guide His creation and safeguard the harmonious order and peaceful operation of the entire cosmos. The laws would also help His moral creatures know what is right and what is wrong, and where the limits and boundaries are. At the same time, the Creator would place the highest value on the freedom of choice and grant each moral agent the paramount privilege and power to exercise that inalienable freedom which allows them space to ever be growing into His very own image and likeness throughout the endless ages of eternity.

It would also be as plain as the sun that should just one of these moral agents even dissipate the graciously granted privilege and choose to go against the will of God, disorder and calamity would be the sure result. As a result, provisions would need to be in place to meet with crisis of this nature. The Bible says, “for every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.” (Heb. 3:4). To build a house, one needs to “*sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?* ” (Luke 14:28). For God to create the

universe and maintain peace and order in it throughout eternity, He certainly would need to count “the cost”.

Fully aware of the above-mentioned vulnerability and potential danger of disaster, the God of love still chose to carry out His plan of creation and was ready to meet with any crisis that might arise. At the same time, He placed every created moral agent upon probation for the needed test before immortal life would be granted to them.

From the immemorable past to the unmeasurable future of eternity, it has been the one and only mission of God to create and sustain such an environment so that a free flow of unselfish love can be circulated throughout the three domains of His created worlds. To achieve that mission, God was willing to pay whatever it would take.

The Bible unveils a story about the highest angel in heaven called Lucifer who went astray, and one third of the angels rebelled with him. At that critical time, the LORD God created this universe and placed the forefather of humanity, Adam, in the Garden of Eden, the garden of God on earth (Eze. 28:13), and made a help mate for him (Gen. 2:18-22). The rebellious angels were driven out of heaven and cast down to the newly created earth. However, Satan tempted the first human parents by means of the serpent concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and as a result both Adam and the woman fell and were deprived of free access to the tree of life and expelled from the Garden of Eden.

Though there were only two people involved in a seemingly little sin on earth, the ramifications of it were directly related to the entire universe, determining its safety and threatening its very existence. If not handled properly, it would breed a universe-wide rebellion that would lead the other worlds to an abyss of doom and destruction. Should the fallen

humanity be permitted to live without impunity, it would embolden Satan and his followers to resist God. The creation of God would never be thrown into a never-ending vortex and turmoil.

Satan's hideous intent was to trap God in a dilemma: either to exterminate all sinners and thus end the circle of love forever, or to allow rebellion to endure an endless existence. To the surprise of Satan and the on-watching worlds, God revealed a great plan that was designed "before the foundation of the world", to separate sin from fallen man and redeem them, while at the same time place the universe on a foundation of eternal peace and security (Eph. 1:4; cf. 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:20).

"The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of 'the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.' Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, 'that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John 3:16. "²

Sin separated man from God. But through the sacrifice and ministry of Christ Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of man, the communication between God and the human race was preserved, and a free flow of unselfish love would continue to flow between heaven and the earth at the cost of the life of Jesus. A probation was extended to man. The provision wrought

² Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

through Jesus made it possible to place everlasting life within everyone's reach again.

The fall of the human race made the mission of God be exhibited in a visible, tangible and specific manner in Christ Jesus. Its overarching vast and far-reaching connotations was boiled down to a single goal that God would do everything necessary to bring the human race back to the Garden of Eden so that they could still have free access to the tree of life and forever enjoy unbroken communion with their Maker. For this purpose, the only begotten Son was given to the world to reconcile God and man, to unite the finite with the infinite. Christ Jesus is the medium through which the mission of God would be accomplished.

The great controversy that moved from heaven to earth gave rise to the following four fundamental questions in the universe:

- 1) What is the character and governing principles of God and His government?
- 2) What will be the final fate of Satan and all who follow him?
- 3) What is the future of mankind?
- 4) What is the future of the creation, the heavens and the earth that was contaminated by sin?

It is through Christ that these questions are addressed. The condescension of Christ at his first advent and his death on the cross manifested the love of God, vindicated the character of God, and validated the foundation of the government of God. The second advent of Christ will give an answer to each and everyone's final fate. The third coming of Christ at the end of the millennium is the time that Satan and all those who rebel with him will be punished and exterminated. And finally, the sin-polluted heavens and earth will pass away. Christ will once again make a new heavens and a new earth.

To limit the mission of God only to the salvation of mankind is a narrow-minded perspective.

The mission of God is multi-dimensional and all inclusive. It encompasses the redemption of not only man but all that is on earth, as well as angels and the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds.

To view the mission of God applied only within the timeframe of the great controversy seems near-sighted. As mentioned above, the plan of redemption was designed before the creation of this world. The suffering of Christ “did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God.”³ Knowing the end from the beginning, God would have known the rebellion of Satan and the subsequent fall of Adam. Who would have known for sure from when His sensitive divine heart started to feel the pain and suffer for the sins of His creatures? When the cosmic conflict is finally finished, the sins of the redeemed will be forever blotted out, and the sin of the wicked will be rightfully punished, and justice of the law will be met. Yet at the beginning, who could have comprehended the long-lasting effect sin has brought upon the Son of God, and who could have known how he would remain to be the Son of man with the scars of crucifixion on the resurrected body forever.

In this regard, Ellen White writes the following statement:

“But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence

³ Ellen White, *Education*, p.263.

upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin."⁴

What is more, the cross of Jesus will not only be the center of praise and study of the worlds but the ballast to prevent any possible rebellion from occurring again throughout the endless ages.

"The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. In Christ glorified they will behold Christ crucified. Never will it be forgotten that He whose power created and upheld the unnumbered worlds through the vast realms of space, the Beloved of God, the Majesty of heaven, He whom cherub and shining seraph delighted to adore--humbled Himself to uplift fallen man; that He bore the guilt and shame of sin, and the hiding of His Father's face, till the woes of a lost world broke His heart and crushed out His life on Calvary's cross. That the Maker of all worlds, the Arbiter of all destinies, should lay aside His glory and humiliate Himself from love to man will ever excite the wonder and adoration of the universe. As the nations of the saved look upon their Redeemer and behold the eternal glory of the Father shining in His countenance; as they behold His throne, which is from everlasting to everlasting, and know that His kingdom is to have no end, they break forth in rapturous

⁴ Ellen White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 68.

song: ‘Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His own most precious blood!’’’⁵

B. Missional Reading and Hermeneutics

The understanding that the God of the Bible is a missionary God will naturally lead to viewing the Bible as a missionary book, and consequently read it with a focus on the mission. This reading and interpretative principle will change some of the popular definitions derived from reading and interpreting the Bible from a theological or other perspective.

1. The interpretative standard

First of all, reading the Bible as a missionary book helps keep the mission of God ever before our eyes and highlights the foundation that safeguards the ceaseless continuation of the cycle of love in all domains of God’s creation throughout eternity. This foundation is none other than the law of God, the transcript of His character and will. It is immovable and immutable. Should this foundation be shaken, the mission of God would also fail.

The first missional hermeneutic is built upon this very foundation. All interpretations have to be done in light of the law of God. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isa. 8:20). It construes that “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” is fundamental when comparing anything with the law of God, which is spiritual (Rom. 7:14). Spirituality is the total sum of thoughts, words and actions that are in harmony with the law. Spiritual life, therefore, is also a life that is lived by the law of God. In the same way, a missionary for God is one who keeps the commandments of God and has the faith of

⁵ Ibid., *The Great Controversy*, p. 651.

Jesus. Anyone who falls short of that is not a Christian missionary.

2. The principle of two and two

The missionary perspective sees all three members of Godhead involved in the work of creation and redemption. The opening statement of Genesis reveals how God, the Son of God and the Spirit of God worked together in the creation of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1, 2). This cooperation and support are also seen in the redemptive work. God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but He also made his brother Aaron “be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.” (Ex. 4:16). In this case, Moses represented Christ and Aaron represented the Holy Spirit who speaks the word of God. Christ and the Holy Spirit have been working closely in the plan of redemption. Jesus also sent out his disciples “by two and two” (Mk. 6:7; Lk. 10:1).

A fundamental principle thus derived from this most essential revealed fact is that it takes two or three witnesses to establish something (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 1 Cor. 13:1).

This was reflected in the dreams given to Pharaoh about the coming famine. “And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” (Gen. 41:32).

It was also demonstrated in the law of God. Two versions of the Ten Commandments were spoken “unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly” (Deut. 10:4), one version is recorded in Exodus 20 with a focus on creation, and the other version in Deuteronomy 5 focusing on salvation. The Scriptures were established by two testaments.

David was anointed twice, first by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:13) and later by the elders (2 Sam. 2:4, 5:3). In the same way, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at baptism, but

was anointed again at the Pentecost as the King of grace.⁶ When the probation is closed, Jesus will receive the kingdom to be the King of glory (Dan. 7:14; Rev. 11:15-17), but He will have the final coronation again after the holy city descends from heaven at the end of the millennium (Rev. 19:7-9, 21:2)⁷.

That the Bible is its own interpreter is a further play of this principle of two and two. One text will be explained by another scriptural text. The words of Isaiah well expounded the two and two principle when he wrote, “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” (Isa. 28:10).

This principle will find good application in the study of the book of Daniel and Revelation. The events to come was shown to Daniel and again it was revealed to John. In the book of Daniel, we have sets of visions presented by two and two. Similar situations also appear in Revelation, where the end-time Babylon is shown in Revelation 13 and again in Revelation 17 & 18. The 144,000 also appears more than once. The testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of prophecy is also established by two or more witnesses (Rev. 12:17, 19:10, 22:9). The wrath of God and the second coming of Jesus also appeared more than twice in the vision.

3. The Spirit not tools is the deciding factor

A quick glance of the Bible would reveal, the light of truth has always been given to mission-minded people, those who were humble and honest before God, and were deeply concerned about the welfare of their country and people. For instance, angels were sent to Daniel to help him understand. This can also be seen in the case of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and other prophets each of which were strongly mission-minded.

⁶ Ellen White, *Acts of Apostles*, p. 38.

⁷ Ibid., *The Story of Redemption*, p. 425.

Interestingly enough, the scribes and lawyers who were equipped with updated exegetical tools often failed to unlock the mystery in the Scriptures, while common people with simple faith and the right spirit often received divine help. Typical examples were the shepherds in the field to whom angels revealed the great tidings of the newborn King and the Ethiopian eunuch (Lk. 2:8-15; Act. 8:26-35).

“The spirit in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the assistant at your side. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self-sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God’s word in a perverted light.”⁸

That was the case in ancient times, and it is still true in modern days, as can be shown in the case of William Miller (1782-1849).

“God sent His angel to move upon the heart of a farmer who had not believed the Bible, to lead him to search the prophecies. Angels of God repeatedly visited that chosen one, to guide his mind and open to his understanding prophecies which had ever been dark to God’s people. The commencement of the chain of truth was given to him, and he was led on to search for link after link, until he looked with wonder and admiration upon the Word of God. He saw there a perfect chain of truth. That Word, which he had regarded as uninspired, now opened before his vision in its beauty and glory. He saw that one portion of Scripture explains another, and when one passage was closed to his understanding, he found in another

⁸ Ellen White, *Gospel Workers*, p.127.

part of the Word that which explained it. He regarded the sacred Word of God with joy, and with the deepest respect and awe.”⁹

A considerable number of new interpretative tools of Biblical hermeneutics were devised during William Miller’s time, today we have even more. But Miller did not employ many of them or may not even have been aware of them. He simply followed this principle of two and two, otherwise known as the “proof text method”. His spirit and attitude which he went into his Bible study brought the heavenly aid close to him and truth was revealed to him.

“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Mt. 11:2

4. Historical setting for illustrative purposes

Reading the Bible as a missionary book will deeply impact our concept of the so-called biblical world. Readers will no longer think that the biblical world refers only to the ancient Israel and its neighboring countries, or even limited to this earth, but encompasses rather the entire universe, including the earth, the angels in heaven and the unfallen worlds.

This understanding will place many Israel related things in a different light. Israel as God’s chosen people will not be viewed as God’s only people. They were chosen for a specific purpose in order to better illustrate and make known the plan of God’s salvation to the rest of this world and the watching cosmos. What Israel experienced can be an example for the whole world. At the same time, God’s promises to the Israelites are not meant for Israel only, but for the rest of the world as well.

Therefore, when the Bible is seen through this set of glasses, the readers’ focus will not be centered on those historical or background settings of any given book, but rather

⁹ Ibid., *The Story of Redemption*, p.356.

be directed to understand the point which the Revelator of the Bible desires to make through those particular settings. Once the point is caught, the illustrative background becomes less important.

“The will of God is revealed in his written word, and this is the essential knowledge. Human wisdom, familiarity with the languages of different nations, is a help in the missionary work. An understanding of the customs of the people, of the location and time of events, is practical knowledge; for it aids in making the figures of the Bible clear, in bringing out the force of Christ's lessons; but it is not positively necessary to know these things.”¹⁰

For instance, it could be helpful to know some of the historical background, culture and customs of Egypt when reading the book of Exodus. However, once readers understand that by leading the Israelites through the wilderness and into Canaan, the temporary model for Eden, God was utilizing the opportunity presented from the particular experience of the Israelites to illustrate the plan of salvation and the path back to the garden of Eden, then the specific historical knowledge about the wilderness or mount Sinai becomes less significant.

A similar teachable moment appeared when the Israelites were taken into captivity. Their desire and dream would have been to return back to Jerusalem. God wanted to use it as another impressive opportunity to illustrate the way back to the New Jerusalem. So, the historical setting was recorded as a means to help drive home the point of returning to Eden or the New Jerusalem more vividly.

5. End-time focus

Reading the Bible as a missionary book will also affect our perspective of the times in which a particular book is applicable. Prophets were inspired with visions in particular historical settings, however, their writings were not always written for that particular time. As a matter of fact, more often than not,

¹⁰ Ellen White, *Christian Education*, p. 84.

the writings of prophets contain more messages for the future generations than for their own time. For instance, prophecies concerning Babylon in the book of Jeremiah were more often meant to be applied to the end-time spiritual Babylon than for the historical Babylon. A portion of the words in Daniel was sealed explicitly for the end-time. In the same way, a greater portion of Revelation was not written for the 1st century believers, though it was written at the end of the 1st century. It is so because the Revelator was taking that historical setting to reveal things concerning the future, especially the final events at the end of the world. Understanding this principle helps us not look for a complete fulfillment of everything in a prophetic book during the historical time it was written and come up with forced and erroneous interpretations.

6. Integrated theme

Understanding that the mission of God remains the same from the beginning to the end would help the reader interpret the Bible with constancy. There is no distinction between what it meant and what it means, notwithstanding applications may differ in different times. The seed of the woman promised to Adam is the same seed promised to Abraham (Gen. 3:15, 15:4; Isa. 7:14, 9:6; Mt. 1:1; Gal. 3:16). The beast coming up out of the earth in Revelation 13 is the same earthly power (Rev. 13:11). It matters not whether one interprets it from the 1st century or from the time of the end. True, interpreters' perspective might be affected by the time period in which they lived. But that does not change the intended referent the Revelator had in mind when that prophecy was given.

7. Focus on the mission

Fourthly, when a Bible student understands that the Bible was given to reveal and carry out the mission of God, this helps them seek to understand the mind of God through His revealed words, rather than speculate about what the writer's or author's intent was. The Bible authors were moved and inspired to write

based upon the inspiration given them, not their own intent, for the mission and the battle is the Lord's, not theirs.

Furthermore, understanding the Bible as a missionary book from God will help readers to recognize that the Bible is a revelation from God concerning His mission in creation and redemption for the past, present and future. God would use human writers to express His missional ideas in human languages. However, human languages are not God's language, be it Hebrew or Greek. Therefore, lexiconic and grammatical meanings should be understood within the framework of God's redemptive plan. A missional interpreter of the Bible will not equal the meaning of any given words in a particular original language to mean exactly what God intended, but rather to apply lexiconic and grammatical rules within the missional framework of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture, and allowing the Scripture to interpret the Scripture.

Because of the ambiguity of language, sometimes one phrase may have multiple meanings, grammatically speaking. For instance, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" could either mean a "revelation about Jesus" or "revelation from Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1), grammatically speaking. Following the grammatical meaning, one would say the book of Revelation is about Jesus. True, all Scriptures testifies of Jesus (Jn. 5:39). At the same time, the danger of primarily following this interpretation can be that the reader may skip altogether those prophecies in Revelation which do not reveal Jesus, such as prophecies about the beasts. The very next phrase clarifies this by stating that "the revelation of Jesus Christ" is about the "things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1). This revelation is otherwise called "this prophecy" (Rev. 1:3, cf. Rev. 22:7, 10 and 18) or a "book of prophecy" (22:19). In the end, we should allow the context to rule over the grammatical variables. Missionally speaking, the book of Revelation is also a book of mission. It follows that the revelation of Jesus Christ is more about the mission of God rather than a description of himself, even though Jesus is certainly involved in this mission.

8. A blueprint of the mission of God

Last, but not the least, as a missionary book, the Bible outlines the blueprint for God's mission from the beginning to the end. Therefore, missional readers should expect to find different emphasis for different times, though the general mission remains the same for all. Thus, one finds the special timely message, or present truth, for Noah's time. The same was also true to the generation at the first advent of Jesus. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, had a special mission for his time. In the same way, there would be a special message, a special present truth, for the generation awaiting the second advent of Christ. Therefore, it becomes important to identify the time one lives in and look for the present truth for that specific time period.

To locate the time of the age in the course of the redemptive history, missional readers of the Bible will take it upon themselves to watch for the signs of the times and compare that with the timely Bible prophecies, seeking to understand where they are in the course of history and what is the prescribed present truth for their time. Thus, missional readers would embrace approaches that are compatible with the passage of time, or technically known as historicism.

They would also understand that while truth of eternal quality remains the same for all times, present truth varies from time to time. What is present truth in one specific block of time may not be present truth for another time. This can be easily seen in that the present truth of the flood was relevant for Noah's time, yet cannot be applied to Jesus' time. What was acceptable during the dark ages may not be the same standard at a time when the Bible is widely circulated and so easily accessible at the time of the end. The church living at the time of the end should search for and be loyal to her special mission for her time.

C. Missional Reflections

Missional reflection is an ongoing conscious exercise to reflect on the mission practices in the light of a constantly changing context. These reflections are often motivated by an impelling desire within Christians to better carry out the mission prescribed for their time. As Adventists, missional reflections are often related to the book of Daniel and Revelation.

From its very beginning, Adventist mission has been the result of an ongoing conscious theological and missional reflection. Heart-searching and profound reflections on the great disappointment of October 22, 1844 led the Adventist movement to a new development phase with a new understanding of the sanctuary which opened arenas for new missional direction and emphasis appropriate to the time of the end, to prepare a people for the second coming of Christ.

The pen of inspiration vividly portrayed the experiences and reflections of those who devoted themselves to the Adventist movement.

“The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people. As the disciples of Jesus after the terrible night of their anguish and disappointment were "glad when they saw the Lord," so did those now rejoice who had looked in faith for His second coming. They had expected Him to appear in glory to give reward to His servants. As their hopes were disappointed, they had lost sight of Jesus, and with Mary at the sepulcher they cried: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Now in the holy of holies they again beheld Him, their compassionate High Priest, soon to appear as their king and deliverer. Light from the sanctuary illumined the past, the present, and the future. They

knew that God had led them by His unerring providence. Though, like the first disciples, they themselves had failed to understand the message which they bore, yet it had been in every respect correct. In proclaiming it they had fulfilled the purpose of God, and their labor had not been in vain in the Lord. Begotten "again unto a lively hope," they rejoiced 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'"¹¹

The same feelings and emotion still accompany those who are led to a true understanding of the 2300 days prophecy and the sanctuary message. This understanding brings to them not only novel excitement and emotion, but also a strong sense of urgency and mission.

The holy and solemn judgment in heaven commanded obedience and awe in the hearts of those whose understanding were enlightened. Their eyes were opened to see that the pointer of history had begun to shift from the temporary kingdom of grace towards the everlasting kingdom of glory.

The heavenly given cosmic conflict perspective opens to the Adventists unseen scenes of the cosmic conflict between good angels and evil angels. Angels, like humans, also have unresolved questions. The merciful Lord engages them in carrying out His mission, sending them "forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14), to help humans as well as themselves at the same time. Bible students see in the heavenly angels an integral link in the chain of the salvation for the human race. Through them, the revelation of God came to the holy men of God to reveal the character and purpose of God to the church, and then through the church to the fallen world (2 Pet. 1:21, Rev. 1:1). They ministered to the life and ministry of Jesus at every step. They are the messengers going up and down between heaven and earth on the ladder of Christ (Jn. 1:51). People come and go, generation after generation. However, the loyal angels have been faithfully standing at their posts, serving nonstop the needs of mankind for thousands of years! In a sense, the mission of God has

¹¹ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 423.

become theirs. Angels carry out everything they are entrusted with and are empowered to bring the alienated human race back to the garden of Eden, back to the tree of life.

Interestingly enough, the message entrusted to the people living at the time of the end is even called the three angels' messages (Rev. 14). Those who proclaim the second advent of Christ see in themselves the prophesized extension in the chain of salvation from heaven to the earth. They are to work closely together with the angels of God, as angels had worked closely with Daniel during Babylonian and Persian times and the beloved apostle John on the isle of Patmos in the first century.

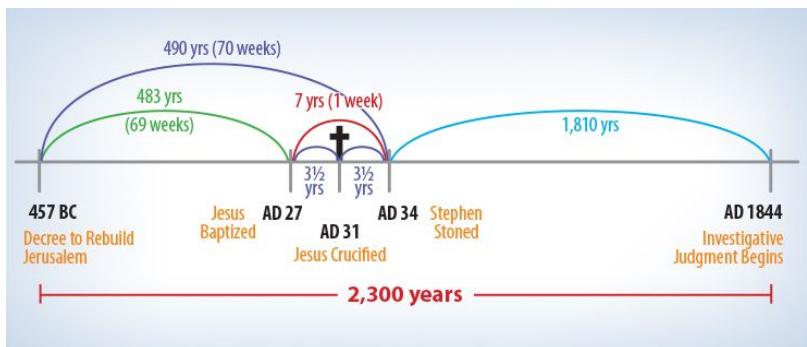
“All who engage in ministry are God’s helping hand. They are co-workers with the angels; rather, they are the human agencies through whom the angels accomplish their mission. Angels speak through their voices, and work by their hands.”¹²

Early Adventists took on themselves the responsibility of proclaiming the three angels' messages and the burden of awakening a sleeping world with the call of the everlasting gospel, the same gospel that was passed down from the garden of Eden. Their attention was especially drawn to the books of Daniel and Revelation. From these sacred pages, early Adventists found their own identity, message and mission.

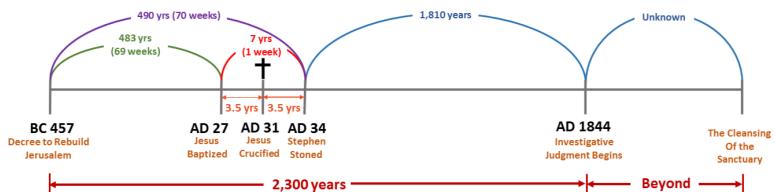
Looking back, we can see traces from ongoing missional reflections upon Adventist theology and mission left by times and timely issues. During the early days of the Adventist church after the great disappointment, the young church was seen busy explaining the legitimate biblical reasons for the great disappointment and the biblical ground for the heavenly sanctuary. The Seventh-day Adventist Church inherited its interpretation of the 2300 days prophecy from the Millerite movement, differing in their understanding of the event which took place at the end of the longest time prophecy. The effort of defending the dating and day-year principle and the proving of the existence of the heavenly sanctuary was so great that almost all energy was spent on the first half of Dan. 8:14,

¹² Ellen White, *Education*, p. 271.

namely, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days,” leaving the second half of Dan. 8:14, “then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”, less visited or totally unattended. It seems that what was emphasized during that period of time was that at the end of 2300 prophetic days (years), or 1844, Jesus went from the holy place to the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to start the final phrase of his ministry, the investigative judgment. Little or nothing was touched on the second part of the message of Dan. 8:14, i.e., the cleansing of the sanctuary. Gradually, the investigative judgment and the cleansing of the sanctuary were taken as one and the same thing.



What was commonly missed is that though Dan. 8:14 includes the 2300 days prophecy, however, its emphasis is placed beyond 2300 days. Its message extends from the end of the 2300 day prophecy to the cleansing of the sanctuary as shown in the following chart.



With the passing of time, a shift was seen in the reading of Daniel and Revelation in the Adventist circle. Take Daniel for example, some fifty years later after the great disappointment, there were people who realized that Dan. 8:14 was not an isolated text, but rather an answer to the question raised in Dan. 8:13, which basically was asking when will the wicked power and its evil activities be contained. The focus of traditional Adventist interpretation on Dan. 8:14 is placed on the investigative judgment of the saints who have confessed Christ in their lives, with Adam standing at the head of the line. Questions were raised how could the investigative judgment on the saints relate to the punishment of the wicked? It seems the logical connection between the traditional interpretation and the question in the previous verse is not that strong. Not able to find faults with the interpretation of the 2300 days prophecy, these people sought to resolve the issue by re-explaining Dan. 8:13, especially, the meaning of “the daily”. The introducing of new views on the daily brought about heated debates in the Adventist church to the extent that theological differences in such a non-testing issue led to the weakening of missional outreach.

The controversy over the daily continued to fester in later years. Under the shadow of the new view of the daily, readings and reflections on the book of Daniel moved from a new twist on the daily in Dan. 8:13 to the questions of the sanctuary in Dan. 8:14, reaching the point of open and direct denial of investigative judgment as traditionally understood. The 1980s witnessed the turmoil brought into the Adventist church by the late Dr. Desmond Ford (1929-2019).¹³

Though Ford’s credential was revoked and his employment with Adventist educational system was terminated, his theology and influence continued to exert tracible impact upon Adventist scholarship as well as common church members. People who embrace Dr. Ford’s views may not go as

¹³ Desmond Ford: *Daniel 8:14: The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment.*

far as he did in completely denying the investigative judgment, but some already failed to see it in Dan. 8:14. To them, Dan. 8:14 is still about judgment, just not over the saints but against the little horn.¹⁴

Similarly, other interpretations which are vastly different than those of the Adventist pioneers are emerging constantly. What was once held unmovable historical landmarks are now becoming loose and being removed. One of these changes can be seen in the understanding of the seven trumpets, especially the sixth and seventh trumpets.

During the Millerites' time, the sixth trumpet was considered to be fulfilled on August 11, 1840. This interpretation was endorsed by Ellen White as "another remarkable fulfillment of prophecy."¹⁵ Consequently, October 22, 1844 was then considered to be the beginning of the seventh trumpet. As late as 1989, this remains the church's official interpretation of the seventh trumpet.¹⁶ However, entering the 21st century, diverse views began to surface in official church publications.¹⁷ A prominent conservative minister also departed ways with traditional interpretation and placed the beginning of the seventh trumpet at the close of the probation.¹⁸ The confused theological understanding will inevitably lead to confused missional praxis. The trumpet has lost its certain sound. In some cases, members are divided because of doctrinal differences. Under the circumstances, ongoing missional reflection is a must to ensure that Seventh-day

¹⁴ George Knight, *The Apocalyptic Vision and the Neutering of Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub., 2009), p.69.

¹⁵ Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, p.334.

¹⁶ Josephe J. Battistone, *Adult Sabbath School Lessons: Present Triumph-Future Glory* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association), p.85.

¹⁷ Ranko Stefanovic, Adult Sabbath School Lesson, *Revelation*, <https://ssnet.org/lessons/19a/less07.html>

¹⁸ Stephen Bohr, *Studies in Revelation – The Seven Trumpets*, p.162-163. www.SecretsUnsealed.org.

Adventists have a distinctive timely message and clear purpose of mission, and can stand with a united church to carry out that mission!

As it is well known, the Seventh-day Adventist church originated from the rediscovery of the heavenly sanctuary. The sanctuary message has thus become a part of the distinctive message for this time. However, the sanctuary has always been the subject of heated discussion and even controversy. Due to the fact that some of the essential message of the sanctuary truth has started to become blurry, it might be the right time to have a fresh look at the sanctuary before entering the missional reading and reflection on the books of Daniel and Revelation. To that we shall now turn.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How would viewing the Bible as a missionary book change our perspective?
2. What new insights will a realization that God is a missional God bring to us?
3. How should we understand the mission of God from the perspective of the great controversy?
4. What are the major problems in the universe resulting from the cosmic conflict? In what way is Jesus the solution to these problems?
5. What role does historical background information play in helping us understand the Bible?
6. How is reflection on the sanctuary theme related to the development of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
7. What lessons can we learn from “the daily” controversy in the Adventist Church history? How should we try to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past and not be sidetracked by some non-essential issues?

Chapter 2. Quest for the Sanctuary (I)

“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Dan. 8:14

A. The Heavenly Sanctuary and Unresolved Issues

The Millerite movement may have been the flint that ignited the quest for understanding the sanctuary. Influenced by the popular understanding of mistaking the earth as the sanctuary, the Millerite movement encountered the great disappointment at its climax. The painful missional reflection over the great disappointment set Adventists on a quest to understand the true sanctuary, the results of which were astounding and inspiring. The true sanctuary was not the earth after all, but the heavenly sanctuary.

Adventists normally start their quest for the sanctuary from a commonly known verse in the book of Exodus, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” (Ex. 25:8). This man-made sanctuary is but “the figures of the true” (Heb. 9:24), “the example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5). “The true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” is not the earthly tabernacle, but the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8:1-2).

Adventists understand that “unto two thousand and three hundred days”, that is, at the end of the 2300 days prophecy, or October 22, 1844, Jesus was not to come to this earth but pass from the holy place into the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to begin the last phase of his ministry. When the work of atonement is finally finished, Christ will emerge from the heavenly sanctuary and come back again to receive his followers, and then the believers shall “ever be with the Lord”. (1Thesol. 4:17).

Adventists understand that in the sanctuary model given to Moses is outlined the blueprint of redemption. The sanctuary

structure provides great visuals that help explain the work and mission of Jesus and makes it more intuitive.

However, there are questions which are not addressed, such as:

- Yes, the true tabernacle was pitched by the Lord, but when was it pitched?
- What was the pattern shown to Moses which is in heaven? How did it get there in the first place?
- Jesus is now ministering in the sanctuary to intercede for his people, when the intercession finishes and the sanctuary shall be cleansed, he will come out of the sanctuary and come back for the second time. How will the redeemed relate to the heavenly sanctuary after that?
- The Bible begins with the garden of Eden as the central stage of the earth in Genesis. The sanctuary and the temple of God play the key role in the rest of the Old Testament, including the book of Daniel. When it moves to the New Testament, the emphasis is given to the kingdom of heaven. Yet, Revelation ends with the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven. How do all these themes relate to each other?
- What is the sanctuary anyway?

B. What is the Sanctuary?

Although Ex. 25:8 is often quoted at the beginning of Bible studies on the topic of the sanctuary, it is not the first time the word “sanctuary” appears in the book of Exodus. As a matter of fact, it is only the first time the word “sanctuary” appears being used in the sense of a model. The original sanctuary and the pattern that was shown on the mount appears in the song of Moses after the crossing the Red Sea.

“Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established.” Ex. 15: 17.

The Sanctuary mentioned in Ex. 15:17 was the place made by the LORD for Himself to dwell in. Even though the Israelites was led into the land of Canaan under the leadership of Moses, inspiration reveals that the final destination was the true Sanctuary “the place which thou hast made for thee to dwell in”, “the Sanctuary which thy hands have established.” (Ex. 25:17). The Sanctuary was “thy holy habitation” (Ex. 15:13). It should also be noted that this Sanctuary was “the mountain of thine inheritance.” (Ex. 15:17).

Having initially settled the question of what is the sanctuary, we can now move to other questions, such as when and where were the Sanctuary established

“A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.” (Jer. 17:12)

The Bible reveals only one beginning, the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth. During the creation week, “And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” (Gen 2:8). Eden was the “garden of God”(Isa. 51:3; Eze. 28:13). As a matter of fact, Ezekiel not only calls Eden the “garden of God”, he also refers to it as “the holy mountain of God” and the “sanctuaries” (Eze. 28:14, 18).

In view of the above, it can be safely concluded that the garden of Eden was the place of the Sanctuary of God, and it was setup at the beginning. It was the garden of Eden, the holy mountain of God, and His own inhabitation. Simply put, the Sanctuary “which thy hands have established” was the garden of Eden. The garden of Eden and the Sanctuary are one in the same and are interchangeable.

C. Eden in the Beginning

What is the garden of Eden? In many people's understanding, it was a garden, maybe similar to a park they have near their home. However, the garden of Eden was far different from that.

1. The Throne of God

First of all, as just mentioned above, the throne of God was in it. "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." (Jer. 17:12).

2. The Legislative Court

It is worth noting that it was in the garden of Eden that the marriage institution and Sabbath institution were both established. These two institutions, when expanded, became the basis of the ten commandments. The garden of Eden was where these laws were passed. This very fact witnesses that the garden of Eden was God's legislative court. So it's only logical that the Garden of Eden would become the God's Judgment Hall. It is little wonder that it was right here in the garden of Eden that the Lord God pronounced judgment on the Serpent, Adam and the woman after the fall. It also should not surprise anyone that the future judgment on humanity as a whole and the fallen angels will take place here as well.

3. Worship and Fellowship Hall

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. "The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men." (Ps. 115:16). However, God planted the garden eastward of Eden. It was "the garden of God" as mentioned above (Eze. 28:13). It was planted so that God could dwell among men, to be with man and to have fellowship and direct communication with them. It was right here in the garden that our first parents worshipped God and had communion with Him. It was the sanctuary on earth.

Commenting on this, Ellen White wrote, “It was under the trees of Eden that the first dwellers on earth had chosen their sanctuary. There Christ had communed with the father of mankind.”¹⁹

4. The Kingdom of God

It should not take a rocket scientist to observe that the garden of Eden was the kingdom of God on earth, the capital of the earth. As already mentioned above, it was the garden of God. The throne of God was placed in the garden. It was in Eden that God established His law for man. God is the King of the earth. Adam and the woman were His subjects and the citizens of His kingdom. It was the kingdom prepared for men from the foundation of the world (Mt. 25:34).

5. The Holy Mountain of God

It may come as a surprise to many that the garden of Eden was not a plateau but a great mountain, because “a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.” (Gen. 2:10). It does not require much imagination to figure out that only water coming from high mountain can turn into big rivers and flow wide and far. That was the case back then, and it is still the case today.

6. Two Special Trees

The garden of Eden was full of trees. However, there were two special trees located in the midst of the garden: the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Both of these trees served as identifiable landmarks. The tree of knowledge of good and evil can be viewed as the visible sign for the authority and dignity of the law of God. Any violators of the expressed will of God will be punished with death. On the other hand, the tree of life is the natural agent to sustain the life of man forever. It was through these two trees that the condition for eternal life was marked and declared.

¹⁹ Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 290.

7. Schoolroom for the Universe

As aforementioned, the rebellion of Satan has plunged the entire cosmos into a crisis. The creation of the heavens and the earth, especially the setting up the garden of Eden, was meant to be a spectacle for the on-watching cosmos. The big universal educational program did not only involve humanity, but angels and the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds.

“The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.”²⁰

8. The Blueprint of the Plan of Redemption

In addition to the aforementioned features, it would not be complete without reference to the point that the blueprint of the plan of redemption was embedded in the Eden Sanctuary. One of these embodiments is the creature of the woman.

Adam was made of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). Then, “the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” (Gen. 2:15). Evidently, Adam was outside and then moved inside the Garden of Eden.

It should be noticed that the woman was made after Adam was caused to go into a “deep sleep” (Gen. 2:21), and then a rib was taken from his body (Gen. 2:22). In the Bible, Adam “is the figure of him that was to come.” (Rom. 5:14); “sleep” is used as a symbol for death (1Kgs. 22:50; 1Cor. 15:18; 1Theso. 4:14). It follows that deep sleep could well represent the death

²⁰ Ellen White, *Education*, p.20.

and sacrifice of the Second Adam Jesus, and a rib is obviously a part of the whole body. It is then not difficult to see that the formation of the woman was made possible because of the death and sacrifice of Jesus to become a part of His body and to be one with him.

When the woman was brought to Adam, apparently, Adam woke up from his sleep, which symbolically could represent Jesus after his resurrection. Adam named his wife, pointing to the new name Jesus will give to the overcomers in His church. (Isa. 62:2; Rev. 2:17). Then Christ and the church shall become one and never be separated again.

Table 1. Comparison of the First and the Second Adam

The First Adam	The Second Adam
Body made of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7)	“but a body hast thou prepared me” (Heb. 10:5)
Made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 28)	express image of God (Heb. 1:3)
And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam (Gen. 2:21)	And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8)
and he slept (Gen. 2:21)	even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:8)
and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (Gen. 2:21)	“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water;” (Jn. 18:34)
And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman (Gen. 2:22)	For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (Eph. 5:30)
and brought her unto the man. (Gen. 2:22)	The resurrection of Jesus. (Mt. 28:5-6; Mk. 16:6; Lk. 24:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:3-4)

“The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of “the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times

eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V."²¹ Seeing it this way, one could graciously detect the plan of redemption and the roadmap for the mission of Christ in the process of the making of the woman. It is the death and resurrection of Jesus which makes it possible for the church to be born and to be eventually united with Christ forever in the garden of Eden! (Eph. 5:32). It is worth reiterating that the church was born in the Eden Sanctuary and will be reunited with the Second Adam in the same Eden!

Describing the scene of a long overdue reunion, the pen of inspiration wrote the following:

"Before the ransomed throng is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There they behold the Paradise of God, the home of Adam in his innocence. Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying: 'Your conflict is ended.' 'Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"²²

Notice also how Mrs. White connects the "Paradise of God" with "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Yes, the Eden Sanctuary is the kingdom of God.

D. Paradise Lost but Remains on Earth

The fall of man deprived them of the privilege to access the tree of life, which is more or less like the power source to the commonly used cellphones of today. When the battery is low, looking for the power plug is the priority, or our phone will die. Needless to say, expelled from Eden, the life dream for Adam and Eve was to return back to the garden of Eden and the tree

²¹ Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p.22.

²² Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p.646.

of life. "How can we hope for a kingdom that cannot save!" (Lam. 4:17). The only kingdom Adam hoped for is the one with the tree of life, one of the identifiable landmarks.

After Adam and Eve were expelled from the paradise, the garden of Eden remained on the earth. According to the genealogy of Genesis 5, 1,656 years would have passed before the flood came when Noah was six hundred years old (Gen. 6:6). During those years, generation after generation of people came to the eastern gate of Eden to offer sacrifices. On this point, we find the following quotation by Ellen White:

*"The advantages enjoyed by men of that age to gain a knowledge of God through His works have never been equaled since. And so far from being an era of religious darkness, that was an age of great light. All the world had opportunity to receive instruction from Adam, and those who feared the Lord had also Christ and angels for their teachers. And they had a silent witness to the truth, in the garden of God, which for so many centuries remained among men. At the cherubim-guarded gate of Paradise the glory of God was revealed, and hither came the first worshipers. Here their altars were reared, and their offerings presented. It was here that Cain and Abel had brought their sacrifices, and God had condescended to communicate with them."*²³

To the antediluvians from Adam down to Noah, the Eden dream was a perceptible reality, for the glorious garden was standing right within their sights. That was an age of great light with the actual Eden in front of their eyes, and Adam was there to tell of his account of the beauty of the garden, the temptation and fall, the promise of the coming Savior and the plan of redemption, as a personal witness. The purpose and mission of

²³ Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p.83.

life was encapsulated to the one single and clear objective: return to the garden of Eden.

After Adam passed away, Enoch became the first man to cross the “boundary” of the holy mount (Act. 17: 26), and successfully returned to the garden of Eden. The example of Enoch was a fulfillment of the restoration promise which could be realized in all who would choose to be obedient and loyal to the God of heaven.

“They saw in his example the blessedness of such a life; and his translation was an evidence of the truth of his prophecy concerning the hereafter, with its award of joy and glory and immortal life to the obedient, and of condemnation, woe, and death to the transgressor.”²⁴

However, sin did not stop but went deeper and deeper. The Lord God had to use a flood to destroy that wicked generation, all except those who would hide their lives in the ark which Noah and his family built. The garden of Eden was then withdrawn from the earth to be preserved in heaven till the appointed day to return to the earth again.

E. The Sanctuary after the Flood: Pattern and Model

Without the actual and visible Eden on earth, how could the Eden dream be kept before the people and the path of returning to the Eden home be continuously revealed?

The Lord called Abraham and designated a place called Canaan to be a temporal model for Eden. That Abraham was called to leave his homeland and migrate to the land of Canaan

²⁴ Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p.88.

was reminiscent of the antediluvians leaving their dwelling place and come to the garden of Eden. The altar Abraham built was east of Bethel, “the house of God”, just like sacrifices were offered at the eastern gate of Eden before the flood (Gen. 12: 8).

The promise to “make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” was more to the “seed of the woman” than to Abraham.

Table 2. Eden Sanctuary through Abraham’s Experience

Adam	Abraham
Came to Eden. Gen. 2:15.	Called to transfer to Canaan. Gen. 12:1-3.
The seed of the woman promised. Gen. 3:15	The seed promised. Gen. 12:7; Gal. 3:16
Adam killed the first sacrificial animal.	Abraham almost killed his son. Gen. 22:10.
Adam worshipped at the eastern gate of Eden	Abraham built an altar east to Bethel.

Abraham’s experience was used to highlight the Lamb of God, illustrating how God was going to provide himself as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:8), Isaac exemplified the “the only begotten son” of God, while Ishmael hinted what the age of the Lamb of God would be when he died, for Ishmael was born when Abraham was 86 years old, thirteen years older than Isaac, and Abraham was 120 years old when Isaac was offered.²⁵

²⁵ Ellen White wrote at the time when Abraham received the command to offer Isaac, he had reached the age of a hundred and twenty years.” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p.147.) That means Isaac was 20 years old. Since Ishmael was 13 years older than Isaac, Ishmael was 33 years old. Together, the two brothers typified that the Only Begotten Son of

However, the Eden dream taught through Abraham's experience was again forgotten in the course of time, especially after the Israelites went down to Egypt and were enslaved. The LORD had to activate a design to preserve the Eden dream before the people, to bring the era of light before the flood back to the world again. He first called Moses to lead the Israelites to come out of Egypt, and then gave him the sanctuary model on Mount Sinai.

When the Israelites were enslaved in the land Egypt and had forgotten about the God of their ancestors, God sent Moses to lead them out. During the process of the exodus, the path in the sanctuary was again taught through their living experience as shown in the following table.

Table 3. The Exodus Experience and the Path in the Sanctuary

	Exodus Experience	Path in the Sanctuary
1	Passover lamb	Altar of Offering
2	Crossing of the Red Sea	The Laver
3	Manna from heaven	Show Bread in the Holy Place
4	Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments	The Ark of Testimony in the Most Holy Place
5	Moses and Aaron	Jesus the Lamb and High Priest

The LORD can discern what is within the human heart and how forgetful we are. He well understands how readily unregenerated humans could fall back into idolatry. Before Moses was sent down the mountain, the people of Israel had already

God would die at the age of 33 as the Lamb of God for the sins of the world.

started worshiping the golden calf. The Lord knew that the symbolic implications of their experience could not be retained long in their memory. He showed Moses a pattern after which a sanctuary model should be built (Ex. 25:40). “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” (Ex. 25:8).

The people of Israel were given the privilege to build a sanctuary. It was built to both magnify the name of God as well as serve as a place for the Lord to “dwell among them.” What a contrast it is with the tower of Babel builders who wanted to build them “a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven”, and to make them a name! (Gen. 11:4-5). For the sanctuary of God is where His name is placed (Deut. 12:5), or His law is placed, therefore it is called “the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony” (Num. 9:15). A name indicates authority and glory. A name also carries with it the connotation of the lawmakers, in other words, the one who set up the rules.

Table 4. Eden and Its Miniature

	Adam	Moses
1	Spent time with God on the holy mount of Eden	Spent 40 days on the mount with God
2	Taught of the sacrificial system	Taught of the sanctuary and its services
3	Came down the mount with two institutions	Came down mount Sinai with two tables of testimony
4	The two institutions made and kept in the garden of Eden	Instructed to make a sanctuary according to the pattern shewed on the mount to accommodate the Ten Commandments
5.	Called the son of God	Covenanted with the people of God

When Adam was sent out from the holy mount of Eden, he “brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise” two institutions, marriage and Sabbath.²⁶ In a similar manner, Moses came down from Mount Sinai with “the two tables of testimony” (Ex. 32:15). Though not recorded, from the fact that Adam and his sons made sacrifices at the gate of Eden it can be inferred that he was instructed about the sacrificial system before being expelled.²⁷ Similarly, Moses was instructed about the ceremonial and other civil laws which were written in the book of Moses. What differs is that the two original institutions were kept in the original legislative court, the garden of Eden, but there was no place to readily put the two tables of testimony on the mount in the wilderness. Therefore, a miniature model of the garden of Eden needed to be pitched so that “the words of the covenant, the ten commandments” (Deut. 34:28) could be placed there.

It should always be remembered that “the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands;” (Act. 7:48; 17:24) He dwells among men through His divine law. In like manner, our bodies are “the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you” (1 Cor. 6:19), because it is “the Spirit of the living God” who puts His “laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts”, “not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart”, thus “and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” (2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10; 10:16).

The wilderness sanctuary was portable, and its structure was delineated item by item in the book of Exodus from chapters 25 to 40. The author of the book Hebrews gives a simple and clear description of it.

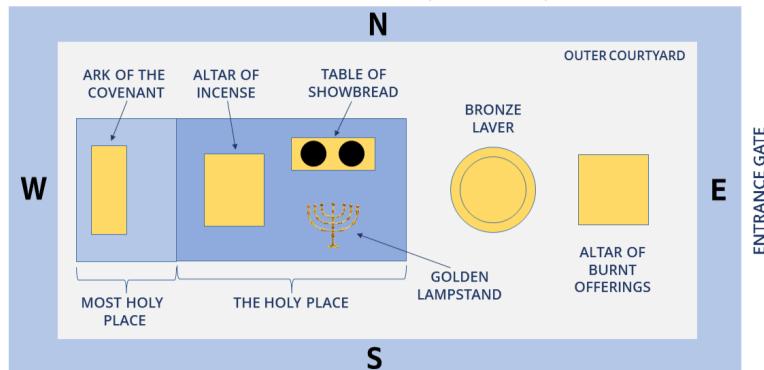
“For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is

²⁶ Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p.46.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p.67.

called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.” (Heb. 9:2-5)

THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES (EXODUS 35-40)



The above diagram is well known to all Bible students. Many people can even expound at length on the symbolic meanings of each piece of furniture and show how they relate to the plan of salvation. However, it is not unusual that many find it difficult to explain the correlation between the type and its pattern, not knowing what exactly the pattern was. Most people, if not everyone, can see very clearly that the sacrificial animals were types for the real Sacrifice Jesus Christ and have no difficulty in seeing how the altar in the outer courtyard points to the cross.

Understanding that Eden is the pattern and the tabernacle of Moses was a miniature of it will help us see a great deal of the correlation between the two.

The very fact that the cherubim guarding the path to the tree of life could stop Adam from entering the garden again

indicates that Eden was a closed city with only one gate open to the east. It was at the eastern gate where Adam and his children came to worship through offering sacrificial offerings. In a similar manner, the wilderness tabernacle was a closed tent with only the eastern gate opened. The altar of burnt offering was situated to the eastern gate of the sanctuary, just like the original offering was conducted outside the eastern gate of Eden.

From Eden flows four rivers (Gen. 2:10-14), hinting to the east, west, north and south. It can be further inferred that Adam and his family originally lived along the side of the eastern river. They were also separated from the garden of Eden by a river which finds its origin in the mount of Eden. This can be further confirmed by the fact that Cain “went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.” (Gen. 4:16). Cain’s life was spared, but his confrontation and communication with the LORD came to an end. After that, he moved away from the presence of the Lord to live a life of roaming and wandering (Nod).²⁸ It should be noted that Cain wandered along the eastern side of Eden, presumably along the river flowing from east of Eden. In a similar manner, a laver was set between the altar of offering and the eastern gate of the sanctuary in the tabernacle of Moses.

When God sent Adam out of the garden, “he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” (Gen. 3:24). The Cherubims were placed at the eastern gate of Eden, so Adam was denied access to the tree of life, which is “in the midst of the garden” (Gen. 2:9). Along with this special tree, “of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat”(Gen. 2:16). It is interesting to see that beyond the laver is the first

²⁸ Martin Kessler, Karel Adriaan Deurloo, *A commentary on Genesis: The Book of Beginnings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), p.66.

apartment of the model sanctuary. In it is found “the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread” (Heb. 9:2). Priests could eat in this place (Lev. 7:6). What is even more startling is the tree-shape candlestick. “And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch.” (Ex. 25:32-33). The six branches, the knops and the flowers on each branch clearly presents itself as a tree! It does not take a rocket scientist to associate the candlestick with the tree of life.

Though the tree of life is in the midst of the garden, the focal point to which access can be made from all directions for sustenance and perpetuation of life, however, is the tree of knowledge of good and evil that was the meditation of Adam and the woman day and night, for it concerns life and death. Of this particular tree, saith the Lord, “thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Gen. 2:16). Evidently, the law of God is mysteriously connected with this tree, for death is the wages of sin, and sin is the transgression of the law (Rom. 6:23; 1 John 4:3). It is “a tree of commandment.”²⁹ It should be noted that “thou shall surely die” “did not imply that they were to die on the very day when they partook of the forbidden fruit. But on that day the irrevocable sentence would be pronounced.”³⁰ As Pentiuc puts it, it means you shall “surely begin to die.”³¹ Adam lived 930 years before he died.

What is mysterious about this tree is that life is conditioned to the beholding and contemplating at the tree that was associated with death, something God wished man to avoid

²⁹ Ibid, p.26.

³⁰ Ellen White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, p.60.

³¹ Eugene J. Pentiuc, *Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible* (New York : Paulist Press, 2006), p.27.

from the very beginning. On the one hand, the law of God is embedded in this particular tree. The death penalty given for any violators demonstrated the honour, power, dignity and authority of the Lawmaker. The life which extended to the obedient also exhibited the grace of the Lawmaker. Here in one tree the law and grace were organically interwoven. On the other hand, it was a tree for the garden dwellers to exercise faith, for the reason behind the forbidden consumption of its fruit was not explained. It had to be taken by faith. It is the first truth, even righteousness by faith, ever taught in Eden, before the implementation of the marriage and Sabbath institutions. In contrast, the temptation of the serpent was the first reversion of the first truth, the first false righteousness by faith, removing the condition for righteousness and life.

How were these concepts conveyed in the model sanctuary? First, we see the ten commandments, though graven on two tables of stone, were kept in the wooden ark (Ex. 25:16; 37:1), neatly reflecting the notion that the law was embedded in the tree. The throne of God, mercy seat, was set on top of the ark of covenant, indicating the law, or righteousness of God, is “the habitation of thy throne” (Ps. 89:14). There, “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”(Ps. 85:10).

In the tent made by Moses, no stones were used to make the walls. However, in the temple built by Solomon, great stones were used to make the walls. If all were stones, the representation of the garden of Eden would have been ruined. Careful instructions were given so the picture of the garden could be retained. Though the walls of Solomon were made of stones, in the most holy place, both the floor and the walls were covered with boards of cedar (1 Kg 6:16), “And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long. And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.” (1 Kg 6:17-

18). Whether from outside or inside, all one could see was wood and flowers, strongly suggestive of a natural garden.

Table 5. Eden, the Pattern and the Sanctuary Model

	The Pattern	The Model
1	The garden of Eden was a closed mount with one gate open on the east side.	The sanctuary was a closed tent with one door open on the east side.
2	Offering at the Eastern Gate of the garden of Eden.	The altar of burnt offering was situated at the eastern door of the sanctuary.
3	Four rivers flowed from Eden where people were supposed to dwell.	Twelves tribes of Israelites were scattered on four directions of the tent.
4	Water separated the altar from Eden.	The laver was placed between the altar and the sanctuary.
5	Fruit of every tree and the tree of life in the midst of the garden were meant for food. Garden dwellers had access to these fruit on a daily basis.	The showbread and the tree-shape candlestick were in the holy place where food could be consumed. Priests could enter this apartment on a daily basis.
6	The tree of knowledge of good and evil carried the commandment of God, exhibited the dignity and power of the Lawmaker, and combined the law and grace.	The ten commandments were placed in a wooden ark. The top of the ark also served as the seat for the throne of God, a symbol of the dignity and power of God. Together

		grace and the law were combined.
7	The forbidden tree shows God's good wish for man to live, leaving death to Himself should man ever disobey the expressed command.	The mercy seat testifies God's will that He does not wish anyone to be lost. It points to the death of the Son of God as the source of grace.

Let it be reiterated that the purpose of building a sanctuary model was to reproduce the era of light before the flood when Eden still remained on earth. The sanctuary model served as a miniature garden of Eden, be it portable or at a fixed location, to ever remind mankind of the purpose of life which was to re-enter the garden of Eden, have access to the tree of life, restore the humanity's relationship with God, and illustrate the path to reach it.

Solomon's temple was destroyed. Ezra took the leadership and built the second temple, yet it was one without a revealed pattern and on a much smaller scale. Many "that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice." (Ezr. 3:12). More importantly, there was no ark of covenant in the most holy place, it was an empty temple. The corresponding feature to the original pattern, the garden of Eden, was thus lost. The connection between the sanctuary and the garden of Eden was gradually forgotten, so much so that Jesus' disciples were only impressed with the stones of the temple, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" (Mk. 13:1) If we understand that the stone building does not represent the garden of Eden, then it is easier to conceive the answer from Jesus, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Mk. 13:2). When the model in no way represents the pattern, it loses

its ground to continue standing before the people. The enlarged temple of Herod was completely destroyed in 70 A.D., true to the prophecy of Daniel 9 and the words of Jesus.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What is the sanctuary and when was it pitched?
2. Briefly outline the important functions of the garden of Eden and support your conclusions with biblical texts.
3. How do we know that the plan of salvation was not an afterthought? Give your reasons.
4. Where was the Sanctuary before the flood? How did the Sanctuary get to heaven?
5. How did the call of Abraham show the path of returning back to Eden?
6. Why did God give Moses the sanctuary model on the mount? Can you list some of the corresponding features between the sanctuary model and its original pattern?

Chapter 3. Quest for the Sanctuary (II)

F. Other Names for the Sanctuary

It is common knowledge that different names can often be used to describe the same object in literature. That rule also applies to the Bible. In the Bible, multiple names are employed to refer to the same sanctuary.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus told the disciples that He was going to go to “my father’s house”, and He further affirms that “that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2-3). Based on this description, we can safely say where we will be, that is also where Jesus is today.

What John calls “my Father’s house”, the author of the book of Hebrews describes as “the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2). Jesus was depicted as going “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24).

Understanding that where we will be is where Jesus is now, we find other names for the sanctuary in Hebrews, “mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22).

Of the heavenly Jerusalem, Revelation has more to say, describing it as a “great and high mountain”, “great city, the holy Jerusalem”, “having the glory of God” (the rainbow-like appearance, cf. Eze. 1:28) (Rev. 21:10-11). Using the name holy mount to refer to the sanctuary is evinced in texts like “O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.” (Ps. 43:3).

Again, we see in the Old Testament, the city of God is also an expression which refers to the sanctuary, as shown in “there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High” (Ps. 46:4). It is worth noting that a river is shown in the city of God and the tabernacle of the Most High. Revelation describes the holy city as not only having a river but explains the origin and what is on both sides of the river. “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life” (Rev. 22:1-2).

Here we see that the river, the throne of God and the tree of life are all there in the city of God, the tabernacle of the Most High. It resonates strongly with the river in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10), the tree of life in the midst of it (Gen. 2:9), and the glorious high throne from the beginning in the place of our sanctuary (Jer. 17:12).

The river, the trees and the throne of God are not only the components of the city of God, or the tabernacle of God in Revelation 21 and 22, but a more direct connection was mentioned in Ezekiel 47, where is seen the eastern gate, the trees and more specifically the river “issued out of the sanctuary” (Eze. 47:12).

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.” Isa. 33:20-21

Table 6. Different Names for the Sanctuary

No.	Other Names for the Sanctuary	Text
1.	My Father's House	Jn. 14:2
2.	The True Tabernacle	Heb. 8:2
3.	Heaven	Heb. 9:24
4.	The Presence of God	Heb. 9:24
5.	Mount Sion	Heb. 12:22
6.	The City of the Living God	Heb. 12:24
7.	The Heavenly Jerusalem	Heb. 12:24
8.	A Great and High Mountain	Rev. 21:2
9.	The Great City	Rev. 21:10
10.	The Holy Jerusalem	Rev. 21:10
11.	The Holy Hill	Ps. 43:3
12.	The Tabernacle of Most High	Ps. 46:4

The implications of this understanding are manifold. One of the key implications is the congruency of the Bible can be seen and better appreciated. The human race was expelled from the garden of Eden, but the plan of salvation is to bring it back to Eden. This goal remains the same throughout the entire Bible, though expressed in different terms. It would also make the meaning of some of the seemingly ambiguous texts obvious. We cite a few instances.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help” (Ps. 121:1) Why, because “the hills” refers to the holy places of the Most High, where the throne of God is and where help would come.

“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Ps. 127:1). The house the LORD built was the garden of Eden, which was withdrawn from the earth and kept by the LORD until the day when it will descend from heaven.

“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 58:13-14).

The Sabbath was made in the garden of Eden. Those who honor the Sabbath of the Lord are promised to be restored back to Eden. They will “ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father”. What is “the high places of the earth”? The holy places of the most High, the holy mount, the garden of Eden. What is “the heritage of Jacob thy father”? It is the sanctuary, the holy city of God, the garden of Eden which was designed and pitched to be the original home for the human race.

The holy place and the most holy place, or the location of the tree of life and that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, are on two different levels which can be seen from the temple of Solomon. “And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD,” “the height thereof thirty cubits” (1 Kg. 6:2). “And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof” (1 Kg. 6:20). In other words, the difference between the holy place and the most holy place was 10 cubits in height in the temple of Solomon. That helps us to understand why the garden of Eden is called “high places of the earth.”

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” (Isa. 2:3).

This verse is loaded with different imageries and names, but in reality, they all refer to the same place, the garden of Eden, the sanctuary of the most High. It was “at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee” (Ex. 29:42). The path of the just is outlined in the sanctuary. It is from the most holy place where “I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel”(Ex. 25:22).

Even the well-known Psalms 23 will be read and appreciated with fresh new meaning after understanding the connection between the garden of Eden and the sanctuary. Our first set of parents went astray like a sheep from the garden of Eden. The shepherd came and looked for the lost sheep, to bring it back to the “green pastures” and “still waters” of Eden. The path of righteousness is well depicted in the sanctuary. The rod, the table and the oil are all imagery of the sanctuary. “The house of the LORD” is to be restored back to the garden of Eden. The lost sheep finally found its eternal home. This poem does not only project poetic imagery, but definite and tangible meaning.

Through different imageries and names, the Bible is expounded with one and the same focal theme, restoration of the garden of Eden on earth. Whatever was required of Adam to go back to Eden, the same requirement is placed upon all generations. No difference is made between the old testament times and the new testament times, for all are going to the same destination! There is only one way, one path, for there is only one gate opened till the restoration plan is completed.

But this journey is not complete without determining the relationship between the garden of Eden and the kingdom of God. This is what we will now turn our attention to.

G. The Garden of Eden and the Kingdom of God

The above discussion should have made it evident that the garden of Eden was the Sanctuary, the true tabernacle “which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2) from the beginning. In fact, it should also have been easy to conceive the garden of Eden as the kingdom of God on earth, for it was the only inhabitation of humans on earth. That was where the throne of God was located and where God dwelt with humans.³² With the understanding that with the Father of lights there is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:7), what the kingdom of God was in the beginning will remain being the kingdom of God forever. However, just like the understanding of Eden being the sanctuary on earth was lost sight of, in like manner, the concept of the kingdom of God has also gotten blurred over time to the extent that we have to prove this to be factual.

The burden of the gospel of Jesus was the kingdom of God from the very beginning. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mk. 1:15). In teaching His disciples how to pray, the supplication begins with “Thy kingdom come”, and ends with “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Mt. 6:10, 13). His parables are mostly about the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 13, 22, 25; Mk. 4). In all his teachings, Jesus made it clear that the final destination is to enter this kingdom (Lk. 16:16). Even at the very end of His ministry on earth, His burden was still about this kingdom, “And this

³² Loraine Angela Dixon, *Kingdom Living!: From the Garden of Eden to the Tabernacle to the Human Body* (Xlibris Corporation, 2012), p.34.

gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mt. 24:14). The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are interchangeable. In terms of its nature and ownership, this is the kingdom of God. But in terms of its location, it is called "the kingdom of heaven", because it is now sitting in heaven and waiting to descend to this earth, while being kept by the Lord for His people till the plan of redemption is accomplished.

When Adam was expelled from the garden of Eden, the Bible used the same word which also means "divorce" to describe the separation of Adam from the garden. "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Gen. 3:23). The Hebrew word for "sent forth" is "shaw-lakh", which also appears in Malachi 2:16, where it was used in the sense of "putting away", separating or divorcing. In this regard, Adam was the bridegroom, and Eden the bride. The exile of Adam is vividly described as him being separated or divorced from his wife the Eden. If the first Adam was divorced because of sin, then the second Adam will marry back the Eden on behalf of humanity in the plan of redemption. For this reason, the imagery of wedding and marriage is constantly being employed by Jesus and his disciples to describe the process of the return of the garden of Eden, or kingdom of heaven, to the earth.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come" (Mt. 22:2-3). In this parable, the king represents the Father, his son Jesus Christ is the bridegroom, "his servants" messengers of the gospel, and "they" are the invited guests, referring to the world. Who is the bride that the son is going to marry? The kingdom of heaven!

In Matthew 25, Jesus told another parable to illustrate the kingdom of heaven. Again, the imagery of a wedding is used. “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish” (Mt. 25:1-2). While the bridegroom tarried, “they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him’” (Mt. 25:5-6). The parable ended with the wise shut in and the foolish kept out. “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:13).

In this parable, the Son of man is the bridegroom, the virgins are all guests for the wedding. What is missing is the bride, which is exactly what the parable is all about, the kingdom of heaven. This thread is continued to be woven into the fabric in the book of Revelation where the bride is clearly uncovered. Writing about Matthew 25, Ellen White had a clear delineation of the events as shown in the parable and Revelation:

In the parable, when the bridegroom came, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." The coming of the bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Said the angel to John: "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." "He carried me away in the spirit," says the prophet, "and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" Revelation 21:9, 10. Clearly, then, the bride represents the Holy City, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church. In Revelation, the people of God are said to be the guests

at the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9. If guests, they cannot be represented also as the bride. Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom;" He will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," at His table in His kingdom (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.³³

Evidently, Christ is the bridegroom, the church are the guests, the bride is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the capital and representative of the kingdom. In the parables of Matthew 22 and 25, the bride is the kingdom of God. In Revelation, it is clearly revealed as the New Jerusalem. The wedding takes place between Jesus, the second Adam and the bride, the New Jerusalem. It is to give Christ the legal right to marry the New Jerusalem. And it needs to be noted that although wedding and marriage are closely related, it is important to realize that the wedding, the receiving of the bride goes before the marriage, the reception by Christ of His kingdom, the final coronation of Christ as the King of the city and the earth.

How does the kingdom of God relate to the garden of Eden? Besides what we have already discussed above regarding the connections of the New Jerusalem with the garden of Eden through the river, the tree of life and the sanctuary, the invitation extended to the faithful at His second coming also points to the garden of Eden as the kingdom which the redeemed will enter. "Then shall the King say unto them on his

³³ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p.426.

right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). What was prepared for man from the foundation of the world? The garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8).

The dominion, the glory and the kingdom will be given to Jesus at the close of the investigative judgment. "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:14). The dominion and the sanctuary are synonymous, as seen in "Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion" (Ps. 114:2). It should be noted that Jesus only shared the throne of His Father at His ascension (Heb. 8:1, 12:2), but the promise to the overcomer is to sit in his own throne, indicating He becomes the King at some point. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21, emphasis supplied). At that point, the sanctuary, or the kingdom, is no longer just the kingdom of God the Father alone, but also the kingdom of Christ, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). The redeemed shall be called not only the "priests of God", but also "priests of Christ", because Christ will receive the kingdom, the glory and the dominion, or the sanctuary (Ps. 114:2; Dan. 7:14), "and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

Thus it is evident that whether starting from the holy city, the New Jerusalem, or from the sanctuary, we will arrive at the same conclusion that the kingdom of God is none other than the garden of Eden. As a matter of fact, the New Jerusalem is the sanctuary, the true tabernacle of God. After seeing the holy city "coming down from God out of heaven," John heard "a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God

is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:2-3).

H. Adventist Pioneers and Ellen White’s Views on the Eden Sanctuary

It may come as a great surprise for many that the conclusion presented in this paper is not altogether novel to the writings of the founding fathers of the Seventh-day Adventist church, especially nothing new to Ellen White, who consistently wrote about the Eden theme in all her writings.

In 1846, Joseph Bates published a pamphlet entitled, “The Opening Heavens” in which he wrote the following lines:

John says, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17, 2, 7). Then this “Holy City, new Jerusalem, the Zion of God, the Tabernacle of God, the Bride the Lamb’s Wife, the Mother of us all,” is a City, enclosed with a wall one hundred and forty-four cubits high, which embraces the “garden of Eden, the Paradise of God.” And God calls it his “SANCTUARY.”³⁴

Here Bates connected the Holy City, new Jerusalem, the Zion of God, the Tabernacle of God, the Bride the Lamb’s Wife all with the Paradise of God, and equals it to the sanctuary of God.

A year later, James White wrote more succinctly that the sanctuary model in the Old Testament was patterned after the

³⁴ Joseph Bates, “*The Opening Heavens*”, https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_BP1.¶=972.1, accessed April 13, 2020.

Paradise, the garden of Eden, which was taken up from the earth at the time of flood. He wrote the following:

“Therefore it is clear that Old Jerusalem, its Temple, and the furniture of that Temple, have distinct antitypes in Paradise. That Paradise was taken up from the earth after the fall of man, is plain, as there is no such place on the earth which answers the description of it given by Moses.”³⁵

This understanding did not go away with the founding fathers, but continued to appear in the writings of Adventist pioneer authors. In his “The Sanctuary and Twenty Three Hundred Days”, J. N. Andrews wrote:

“Beyond this time of trouble, such as never was, the scenes of the earth made new rise before us. In the midst of that paradise of God, where his saints will ever remain, we behold his glorious sanctuary (Eze. 37; Rev. 21:1-4); and here we leave it, content, if we may be of the number who shall serve God in that temple, forever and ever. Revelation 7:13-15. The prophetic views of Moses and of Nathan, respecting God’s sanctuary, will then be fully realized; the Lord will reign forever and ever, and Israel will be planted, to be removed no more. Exodus 15; 1 Samuel 7.”³⁶ (emphasis supplied).

The Eden sanctuary theme can be found throughout the writings of Ellen White. Notice how she describes the first parents of mankind chose their sanctuary, making a connection between the trees and the sanctuary, as demonstrated above in this study:

³⁵ James White, “*A Word to the Little Flock*”,
https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_AWLF.1¶=1998.2 , accessed April 13, 2020.

³⁶ J. N. Andrews, *The Sanctuary and Twenty Three Hundred Days*,
https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_S23D.1¶=1200.2, accessed April 13, 2020.

“It was under the trees of Eden that the first dwellers on earth had chosen their sanctuary. There Christ had communed with the father of mankind. When banished from Paradise, our first parents still worshiped in the fields and groves, and there Christ met them with the gospel of His grace.”³⁷

Ellen White has made it clear that the plan of salvation is to restore humanity back to their original Eden home.

“He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father, and had obtained permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race, to bear their sins, and take the sentence of death upon Himself, thus opening a way whereby they might, through the merits of His blood, find pardon for past transgressions, and by obedience be brought back to the garden from which they were driven. Then they could again have access to the glorious, immortal fruit of the tree of life to which they had now forfeited all right.”³⁸

Again, in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*, Ellen White wrote the following about the purpose of the plan of salvation:

“But God gave His own dear Son—one equal with Himself—to bear the penalty of transgression, and thus He provided a way by which they might be restored to His favor, and brought back to their Eden home. Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan.”³⁹ (emphasis supplied).

To be restored back to Eden is the keynote of the Bible, especially of the second coming of Christ.

³⁷ Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p.290.

³⁸ Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p.126.

³⁹ *Ibid, Patriarchs and Prophets*, p.69.

“The doctrine of the second advent is the very keynote of the Sacred Scriptures. From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer’s power and bring them again to the lost Paradise. Holy men of old looked forward to the advent of the Messiah in glory, as the consummation of their hope.”⁴⁰ (emphasis supplied).

The purpose of the second coming is the same with that of the investigative judgment.

“The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth. The divine Intercessor presents the plea that all who have overcome through faith in His blood be forgiven their transgressions, that they be restored to their Eden home, and crowned as joint heirs with Himself to “the first dominion” Micah 4:8. Satan in his efforts to deceive and tempt our race had thought to frustrate the divine plan in man’s creation; but Christ now asks that this plan be carried into effect as if man had never fallen. He asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne.⁴¹ (emphasis supplied).

Where is the investigative judgment being conducted? While the author of Hebrews points to the sanctuary, the true tabernacle of God, Ellen White plainly wrote it is in the New Jerusalem in the following statement:

“I believe the Sanctuary, to be cleansed at the end of the 2300 days, is the New Jerusalem Temple, of which Christ is a

⁴⁰ Ibid, *Great Controversy*, p.299.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 483.

minister. The Lord shew me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the Day-Star, Extra, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra, to every saint.”⁴²

To Ellen White, the New Jerusalem is evidently the garden of Eden, because of the identifiable mark—the tree of life, for it is found in both places.

“In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave. Restored to the tree of life in the long-lost Eden, the redeemed will “grow up” (Malachi 4:2) to the full stature of the race in its primeval glory.”⁴³

With exuberant passion, Ellen White describes the future picture of when the redeemed go to heaven. Notice how she connects the Holy City, the Paradise of God and the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world all in one paragraph and all refer to the same place:

“Before the ransomed throng is the Holy City. Jesus opens wide the pearly gates, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There they behold the Paradise of God, the home of Adam in his innocence. Then that voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, is heard, saying: “Your conflict is ended.” “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom

⁴² Ellen White, *A Word to the Little Flock*, p.12.

⁴³ Ellen White, *Great Controversy*, p.644.

prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”⁴⁴ (emphasis supplied).

The long-lasting unchanging love of God is manifested in the fact that He keeps the garden the way it was when Adam was sent forth so that he will be able to recognize it when he finally is brought home.

“Transported with joy, he beholds the trees that were once his delight--the very trees whose fruit he himself had gathered in the days of his innocence and joy. He sees the vines that his own hands have trained, the very flowers that he once loved to care for. His mind grasps the reality of the scene; he comprehends that this is indeed Eden restored, more lovely now than when he was banished from it. The Saviour leads him to the tree of life and plucks the glorious fruit and bids him eat. He looks about him and beholds a multitude of his family redeemed, standing in the Paradise of God.”⁴⁵ (emphasis supplied).

The above quotations should be sufficient to show that the pioneers and Ellen White understood very well that the sanctuary Jesus ministers in today is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the kingdom of heaven, the lost paradise, the garden of Eden. Our sanctuary message is the same with the gospel of the kingdom. The plan of salvation is to restore humanity back to their Eden home. The seventh-day Sabbath was made in the garden of Eden. The glorious second coming of Christ is to bring the redeemed back to Eden. The diagram of the sanctuary was given to simplify the gospel and the plan of salvation. How is it that what was originally designed to make the gospel simple and clear became tedious and complicated to the extent

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 646.

⁴⁵ Ibid., *Great Controversy*, p.648.

that our sanctuary message has lost the beauty of clarity and simplicity? That calls for humble, honest and sincere reflection.

I. And I Saw No Temple Therein

According to tradition, the beloved John wrote Revelation around 95 AD, more than 60 years after the Lord's ascension. As for Daniel, who was shown events onwards from the point of time he lived, John was also shown two major visions on "things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1, 19). First John saw Jesus walking among the candlesticks (Rev. 1:12), or in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, where he sent his messages to the seven churches (Rev. 2 and 3). Then in chapter 4, John was called to "Come up hither". As shown above, the most holy place was on a higher ground than the holy place in Solomon's temple (1 Kg. 6:2, 20). So, the sight of John moved from the holy place (the location where the candlestick belong) to the most holy place where the throne of God is located. From there he was shown "things which must be hereafter", that is, after 95 AD, not going back 60 years before then.

In these visions, John saw the temple furniture, such as the candlesticks (Rev. 1: 12), the throne of God (Rev. 4:1-3, 5:1, 7), the altar and golden censer (Rev. 8:3), the temple of God, the altar, the court which is without the temple (Rev. 11: 1-2), and the ark of his testament (Rev. 11:19). However, in the closing chapters of Revelation, John wrote, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Rev. 21:22), the familiar temple had disappeared, together with its furniture.

As traced above, there was not any temple furniture in the beginning when the garden of Eden was planted (Gen. 2:8-14). The altar, the courtyard without the temple and temple furniture were implemented because of the need to atone for sin. In other

words, the fall of man activated the provisional mechanism which God had prepared beforehand. “God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency.”⁴⁶

What is significant in Revelation is that the furniture in the temple loses its function as soon as that stage of service finishes. In chapter one, Jesus walked among the candlesticks (Rev. 1:12), however, the service in the holy place was closed in Chapter 3, “and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7). At the same time, the door to the most holy place was opened. “Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it” (Rev. 3:8). Notice why Ellen White makes a connection between Rev. 4:1-3 with Rev. 3:8, the opening of the most holy place:

“There is One who sees it all, and He says, ‘I have set before thee an open door’ [Rev 3:8]. Through this [door] was shown the throne of God, overshadowed by the rainbow of promise [Rev 4:1-3], the token of the everlasting covenant, showing that mercy and truth are together, and drawing from the beholder praise to the Lord” (Ms 27, 1891).

Just like the son of man was brought to the Ancient of Days in Dan. 7:13, “a Lamb as it had been slain” was brought to “him that sat upon the throne” and took the book out of his right hand (Rev. 5: 6-7), which was “written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals” (Rev. 5: 1).

The opening of the seven seals corresponds to the investigative judgment (Dan. 7:10). When the process is over, the sanctuary is ready to be cleansed, and probation closes, “the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the

⁴⁶ Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

earth”(Rev. 8:5), indicating another phase of service finishes in the most holy place.

What follows is the seven last plagues and the second coming of Jesus. The sanctuary furniture is again seen in Revelation 20, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them” (Rev. 20:4). The redeemed will sit on the judgment seats to judge the wicked for one thousand years according to “those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:5-6, 12).

In like manner, when the millennium judgment ends, the work in the heavenly temple comes to an end. The entire mechanism for dealing with sin will be completely removed. The sanctuary will then be completely restored to its original state before the fall of man. The New Jerusalem, the garden of Eden is eventually “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev. 21:2). Having finished their work in the temple, Jesus and the redeemed will then move out of the city.

“After the judgment of the wicked dead had been finished, at the end of the one thousand years, Jesus left the city, and the saints and a train of the angelic host followed Him. Jesus descended upon a great mountain, which, as soon as His feet touched it, parted asunder and became a mighty plain. Then we looked up and saw the great and beautiful city, with twelve foundations and twelve gates, three on each side, and an angel at each gate. We cried out, "The city! the great city! It is coming down from God out of heaven!" And it came down in all its splendor and dazzling glory, and settled in the mighty plain which Jesus had prepared for it.”⁴⁷

The marriage supper of the Lamb will then be held before the entire universe. Because of sin, Adam was divorced from the garden of Eden, now Jesus will be married to the holy city,

⁴⁷ Ellen White, *The Story of Redemption*, p.416.

and take her back on behalf of mankind. The marriage supper represents the final coronation of Jesus as the King of the kings, King of the garden of Eden, and King of the earth. He is then enthroned and empowered to act as the King of kings, to welcome the redeemed to the beloved city and to punish the wicked with the second death (Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8). When justice has met its requirement, Jesus will create the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1). “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5; cf. Ps. 115:16). Then, the double inheritance of the firstborn will be finally realized, to inherit both the holy city and the new earth!

“And I saw no temple therein” (Rev. 21:22). What John saw in the vision was that the restored Eden was detached from any mechanism of atonement for sin. However, slight changes can still be detected, while the tree of life remains, the tree of knowledge of good and evil disappeared. A ray of light shines on the middle of the forbidden tree. Jesus was compared to a tree, the vine, and “a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground” (Isa. 53:2). Just like the law was contained in the forbidden tree, so was the law hidden in his heart, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8). The death as associated with the tree of knowledge of good and evil was reserved specifically for and executed on the Son of God. Jesus was hung on the tree, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24). The very evidence Satan used to accuse God of being selfish turned out to be the strongest proof and argument for the unselfish love of God. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was “a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col. 2:17). After stating there is “no temple therein”, John continued to write, “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Rev. 21:22). Yes, the Son of God will remain in the holy city as “the Lamb”, “which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29), permanently retaining his

human form with scars and a hole in his side (Jn. 20:27). Jesus will be the living tree of knowledge of good and evil, forever and ever.

“Throughout eternity He will bear in His hands the prints of the cruel nails by which He was transfixed to the cross of Calvary....”⁴⁸ writes Ellen White. The prints the cruel nails will serve as perpetual reminders of the consequences of the sin experiment, and “tell the story of man’s wonderful redemption and the dear price by which it was purchased.”⁴⁹

John ended his description of the holy city with such a promising picture, “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him” (Rev. 22:3). At that time, a full circle will have been completed. Ellen White penned the following:

*“Heaven is a school; its field of study, the universe; its teacher, the Infinite One. A branch of this school was established in Eden; and, the plan of redemption accomplished, education will again be taken up in the Eden school.”*⁵⁰

J. The Sanctuary Theme in Daniel and Revelation

In this study, even though the journey has been long, the conclusion is simple and clear. The garden of Eden which the LORD God planted in the beginning is the sanctuary, the true tabernacle of God. It was the dwelling place of God and also the original home of our first parents. However, sin changed everything, and a mechanism for atoning sin was activated to be attached to the beautiful garden. Adam and Eve were expelled from the paradise and lost their authorized access to

⁴⁸ Ellen White, *Our Father Cares*, p.187.

⁴⁹ Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p.179.

⁵⁰ Ellen White, *Education*, p.302.

the tree of life. Through the plan of salvation, a way was opened to bring man back to the garden of Eden. Adam and his descendants came to the eastern gate of Eden to offer sacrifices and worship God. The garden of Eden remained on earth for over sixteen centuries before it was withdrawn from the earth at the time of the flood.

Throughout the ages, God has tried to use different ways to keep alive the Eden dream before his people, by placing the rainbow in the sky, by personal encounters with Abraham, even the Exodus experiences. However, these were easily forgotten. Consequently, the Lord designed a way to keep the garden of Eden before the eyes of the people by giving them the pattern to build a sanctuary model in the wilderness, later, the temple of God at Solomon's time, which unfortunately was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

The captivity of the Israelites to Babylon provided another teachable moment, similar to the time of Moses, for the Lord to expound on the mission of returning back to the Eden Sanctuary. For Daniel and his people in the land of Babylon, their only hope was to go back to Jerusalem. In the book of Daniel, two lines of thinking are outlined: Daniel was thinking about going back to the earthly Jerusalem, and the Lord continued to reveal the path back to the heavenly Sanctuary.

In time, the city of Jerusalem and temple of God was rebuilt, however, the pattern was lost. The second temple did not reflect the garden anymore, but rather was replaced with impressive stones, leaving the impression that the temple of God was a stone building to the point that Jesus' disciples were proud of the stones of the temple. When the original purpose was completely lost, there was no more legitimate reason for its existence. That empty temple was finally destroyed in 70 AD.

To continue the Eden dream, the Lord gave His beloved disciple John a vision on the isle of Patmos. Through him, the revelation of Jesus Christ was revealed to the church to show the final events of world history that would transpire before the garden of Eden would finally be brought back to the earth, only with a new name, New Jerusalem, in response to those whose hearts were saddened because of the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem temple.

The ascension of Jesus brought the eyes of His followers to the heavenly sanctuary, the real temple of God which is in heaven, the garden of Eden which has long been lost from sight, kept there from the time of the flood. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus on earth and his heavenly ministry made manifest the hidden mystery which was kept secret from the beginning.

Because the garden of Eden was set on the high places of the earth, the Bible writers also used different names to describe it, such as the holy mount, the mountain of God, the holy city, the temple of God, the sanctuary and true tabernacle of God, the kingdom of God and the New Jerusalem. All these names refer to one and the same thing, the garden of Eden.

Understanding that the garden of Eden is truly the sanctuary that was rediscovered after 1844, we can now answer with confidence provided by the biblical history and Spirit of Prophecy that it was pitched in the beginning of the creation week by the Creator Himself. It was taken to heaven and kept there at the time of flood. It is the only kingdom which saves lives, because in it is the tree of life. The goal of salvation is to bring Eden back to earth and bring us into it.

The understanding of Eden to Eden provides congruence to the entire Bible. The human race came from Eden, and to Eden they will return by means of the plan of redemption. The

sanctuary was given to make the gospel simple and clear. Unfortunately, some of us in the process of studying the sanctuary and its structure have gotten lost in the many details and cannot find our way out. We can see the trees but not the forest, as the Chinese saying goes. As a result, the clarity and simplicity of the everlasting gospel is lost, and its power hindered. If we could realize that we are actually returning to the garden of Eden, it would make much more sense to start living a life as close as possible to that in Eden before sin crept in, being it the vegetarian diet lifestyle or observance of the Sabbath. The study of the sanctuary structure enriches the gospel. The realization that the sanctuary is none other than the garden of Eden restored brings back the power and beauty of the clarity and simplicity of the everlasting gospel.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What are some of the other names used in the Bible to refer to the Sanctuary? How would this understanding help readers to appreciate the consistency and wholeness of the Bible?
2. How could the understanding that the temple of God is none other than the garden of Eden change our perspective of Psalms 23 and connect it with the mission of God?
3. What is the kingdom of God? Share your thoughts on how this new light can help make the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom simpler and clearer.
4. How does the understanding that the kingdom of God is the garden of Eden help us to understand the parables Jesus told about the kingdom of God?
5. Why is there no more temple in the holy city at the end of Revelation? What comforting message does it deliver?
6. How is the sanctuary theme reflected in the book of Daniel and Revelation?

Chapter 4. An Overview of Daniel

A. God's Method of Communication

A picture is worth a thousand words.

Yes, pictures normally are very effective vehicles for communication. This is why God employed this method in His communications with humans, especially with men of God.

Before the seven year famine that occurred during the time Joseph was in Egypt, the Egyptian pharaoh had two dreams, which were later interpreted by Joseph. This story brings out the missional hermeneutic principle discussed in previous chapters called “the principle of two and two”, which not only establishes a matter (Deut. 17:6, 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1), but also shows that the established things will come to pass quickly, as it is written, “And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” (Gen. 41:32).

B. Two Sets of Visions in the Book of Daniel

The book of Daniel consists of 12 chapters, divided by two sets of major visions, i.e., visions centred on the kingdom of God, marked out by the timeline in the changes of the earthly empires in Chapter 2 & 7, and visions centred on the punishment of the wicked along with the deliverance of God’s people, measured by the events which took place in heavenly places in Chapter 8 & 10-12.

	Chapter 2	Chapter 7
Babylon	Gold Head (Dan. 2:32, 37-38)	Lion (Dan. 7:4)

Persian	Silver Chest (Dan. 2:32, 39)	Bear (Dan. 7:5)
Greece	Brass Waist (Dan. 2:32, 39)	Leopard (Dan. 7:6)
Rome	Iron Legs (Dan. 2:33, 40)	4 th Beast (Dan. 7:7, 20)
Papacy	Feet of Iron & Clay (Dan. 2:34, 41-43)	The Little Horn (Dan. 7:8, 20-25)
Nations	Feet and Toes (Dan. 2:34)	
Invest. Judgm.	In the days of the kings (Dan. 2:44)	The judgment was set, and the books were opened (Dan. 7:10)
Kingdom Received	Setup a kingdom (Dan. 2:44)	Dominion, glory, and a kingdom were given to the one like the son of man (Dan. 7:14)
Second Advent	A stone cut out without hands breaks them to pieces (Dan. 2:34, 44)	The Ancient of Days arrives (Dan. 7:22, 27)
Second Death	No place was found for them (Dan. 2:35)	To consume and to destroy it unto the end (Dan. 7:27)
New Heaven and New Earth	Became a great mountain, and fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:35)	Saints possess the kingdom for ever (Dan. 7:18, 27)

	Ch. 8 & 9	Ch. 10-12
Persians	Ram with two horns ram (Dan. 8:3, 20)	Yet three kings in Persia (Dan. 11:2)
Greece	He-goat (Dan. 8:5, 21)	Greece (Dan. 11:2)
	Specific horn (Dan. 8:5, 21)	A mighty king (Dan. 11:3)
	Four notable ones (Dan. 8:8, 22)	Divided toward the four winds of heaven (Dan. 11:4)
Pagan Rome	Little horn (Dan. 8:9, 11, 23)	The robbers of thy people (Dan. 11:14) King of the north (Dan. 11:15)
The Daily	The daily (Dan. 8:11-13)	The daily (Dan. 11:31; 12:7)
Core Character	The anointed cut off (Dan. 9:24-26)	The prince of the covenant (Dan. 11:22)
Papal Rome	The little horn (Dan. 8:10, 12, 23- 25)	King of the north (Dan. 11:36-45)
Key Question	How long (Dan. 8:13)	What shall befall thy people in the latter days (Dan. 10:14)
Key Answer	Cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14)	Michael stands up (Dan. 12:1)
Chazown	Shut up the vision (Dan. 8:26)	Yet the vision is for many days (Dan. 10:14) Seal the book till the time of the end (Dan. 12:4, 7-9)

Mareh	2300 days vision is true (Dan. 8:26)	Standing for the people before and after standing up (Dan. 12:1)
Jerusalem	Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24)	A raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom (Dan. 11:20)
	Destroy the city and the sanctuary (Dan. 9:26-27)	

C. The Central Theme of the Book of Daniel

Throughout the book of Daniel, although there is a great deal of focus on the changes in history, the underlying theme revolves around the kingdom of God.

Jerusalem was destroyed and the Israelites were taken into captivity. Daniel and his three friends were among them. Mountains and rivers remain the same but the kingdom was no longer. The young Daniel and his friends were chosen to be trained in the palace of Babylon, and they went through various trials and tribulations in their lives. Daniel's dream to return to his homeland did not diminish with the passing of time. Three times a day, he faced the direction of his homeland and raised his prayers to heaven, anxiously longing for the day he could return to Jerusalem.

God, who is infinitely loving, deeply understood Daniel's feelings, and took this opportunity to reveal to him that God's heart was just as passionate, or even more intense, for the return of His children to heaven. However, such a return requires a certain price, certain procedure, and close cooperation between God and man.

Daniel's resolute will, diet choices, prayer life, faithfulness, perseverance, wisdom, prudence, openness, tactfulness, and deep concern for his people and country are all good examples for those who wish to return to the family of God to emulate. Daniel cherishes deep concern for his people and country, but his concern was interwoven with firm hope and trust.

God, who has seen the end from the beginning, and who knows that the rebuilt-Jerusalem would be destroyed again one day, naturally knows that the return to Jerusalem is not the final destination. So from the beginning, he revealed to Daniel the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten: every seemingly strong empire on earth will eventually fall, and so would be the fate of Jerusalem. But the kingdom of God, which will be established, will never perish but endure forever. (Dan. 2:44-45) And through discipline, it was made clear to King Nebuchadnezzar, that "the Most High reigns in the kingdom of men, and gives the kingdom to whom he will, or sets up a very lowly man to rule over it. (Dan. 4:17) This "very lowly man" is none other than the one who "came on the clouds of heaven and was brought before the Ancient of Days" to receive "power and glory" and a kingdom that will never fail (Dan. 7:13-14). But he will have to pay a great price, to "be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:26), but rather for the kingdom and the people.

This "Son of Man", however, was not to inherit the kingdom alone, but share it with his people. Daniel prophesied of the tribulation that God's people would go through on earth. "Nevertheless, the holy people of the Most High shall have the kingdom to enjoy for ever and ever. " (Dan. 7:18) The book of Daniel not only reveals when God's holy Son will pay the price for this kingdom; it also reveals when God will begin to select a qualified people for this eternal kingdom, what kind of trials they will have to go through before they enter the kingdom, and so on.

Daniel's accurate prophecy of the wars and changes of the nations on earth provides the reader with ample evidence that the prophecy of God's undefiled kingdom will also be fulfilled. This is the ultimate destiny of mankind!

It is no wonder that the Lord Jesus, at the outset of His preaching God's gospel, pointed directly to the prophecy of Daniel, illuminating the theme of God's kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near! Repent and believe in the gospel." (Mk. 1:15) Before ending his earthly mission, he commanded his disciples, "This gospel of the kingdom of heaven shall be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall come." (Mt. 24:14). He also taught them saying, "You saw the words of Daniel the prophet, 'The abomination standing in the holy place that destroys' (he who reads this Scripture must be aware of them)" (Mt. 24:15). A clear and unmistakable connection between the "gospel of the kingdom" and the book of Daniel, which highlights the theme of the book of Daniel!

Thus, through responding to Daniel's longing to return to his native land, the way for the redeemed to return to the paradise of Eden, which was lost as a result of the sins of our first parents, the "kingdom" that God prepared for mankind "from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34) was sequentially unfolded. The process would be filled with suffering, but the prospect is glorious and fascinating.

D. The Outline of Each Chapter

Chapter 1

The book of Daniel begins with the fall of Jerusalem, the captivity of the people of Israel and the Temple vessels taken to Babylon; it centres on Daniel and his three friends choosing to eat clean food during their initial training in the Babylonian courts, and ends with God giving wisdom to the young

Hebrews over the Chaldean wise men. The final line points to the fact that Daniel was still around when the Persian empire came to power 67 years after the captivity, illuminating Daniel's desire to return to Jerusalem at the end of 70 years in Babylon. It shows that God was still with His people, even though Babylon seemed to be winning. This raises the question: who will be the ultimate winner: Babylon or Jerusalem?

Chapter 2

This chapter revolves around the strange dream and interpretation of the king of Babylon. The plot has many twists and turns, and is dramatic and thrilling. The prophecy of the succession of earthly kingdoms leads to the central theme of the book, which is the kingdom of God that will never be destroyed, clearly answering the question implied in Chapter 1. The heavenly Jerusalem will prevail over Babylon and all the rest of the kingdoms of the earth. This in turn leads us to a further question: To whom does this kingdom belong? What kind of people can enter it? What experiences would someone go through before entering this kingdom?

Chapter 3

The king of Babylon made a golden statue. On the occasion of its dedication, the king ordered all officials to worship the statue when the music began to play. Daniel's three friends refused to bow down to the golden image. As a result, they were thrown into the fiery furnace, but were miraculously delivered by one who looked like the Son of God, and were not harmed. Their experience demonstrates how those who wish to enter the kingdom of heaven must go through difficult trials. Yielding to idolatry or not will be an unavoidable test on the road to the kingdom of heaven. However, the appearance of the Son of God points to the source of protection for those who would go through great tribulation in the time of the end.

Chapter 4

The vision in this chapter reveals the fact that God reigns in the world. Only the humble and meek may inherit His kingdom. The lessons drawn from the experiences of king Nebuchadnezzar further illustrate that pride always leads to a definite fall. However, should one desire to come out of Babylon, be it the king or anyone else regardless of their social status, healing and restoration will be the sure end. The story also shows that there is a considerable correlation between the repentance of the Babylonian king and a radical change to a natural lifestyle. At the end, a decree was issued to pay respect to the God of heaven.

Chapter 5

The historical story as recorded in Chapter 5 makes it clear that the wine of Babylon was closely associated with idolatry. Heaven's warnings appear on the wall and judgment follows in no uncertain terms. Those who were drunken by the wine of Babylon could not even read the judgment as it was written on the wall. But Daniel, undefiled by the wine of Babylon was able to read and correctly interpret the judgment from heaven.

Chapter 6

The Persian dynasty was in power, but Daniel was placed at the top echelon of government, which evoked jealousy of some treacherous Persian ministers. A hideous plot was devised to trap Daniel and put him to death. Daniel ignored the evil intended decree and continued to pray as he always did. As a result, he was thrown into the lions' den, but was protected by an angel. God's name was glorified.

Chapter 7

Time passed. Now a new king reigned, and Daniel had a vision, in which the changes of kingdoms were laid out that in turn led to the judgment scene in heaven and the kingdom of God being given to the Son of man and the events that followed. The main theme of the kingdom of God continues in Chapter 7. In the end,

the saints of the Most High will also receive the kingdom. The forces of evil that persecute God's people will eventually be destroyed and destroyed forever. The vision revealed the coming and going of empires, but nothing was mentioned about the return of God's people to Jerusalem after seventy years of being in captivity, plus it foretold the long persecution God's people were to endure. After seeing all this, Daniel was perplexed.

Chapter 8

Two years later, Daniel had another vision. Similar scenes were shown to reflect the changes of empires, but with an emphasis on the little horn power and its offenses to God and persecution of His people. Then Daniel heard the conversation between two angels, which brought in the longest time prophecy in the Bible, ending with the cleansing of the sanctuary. As mentioned in previous chapters, what concerned Daniel the most was the return of his people to Jerusalem after 70 years in captivity. But again, nothing was mentioned about that. Instead, the evil powers seemed to prosper and practice. The sanctuary would be cleansed only after the 2300 days prophecy came to an end. This made Daniel even more troubled, causing him to become ill for days, being unable to understand the meaning of the vision.

Chapter 9

The earthly Jerusalem was still dear to Daniel's heart and he misunderstood the cleansing of the sanctuary to mean the cleansing of the temple of Jerusalem. The desire to go back to build the city and temple became ever stronger. When the 70 years approached, Daniel fasted and prayed, confessing his sins and pleading with God to act quickly to bring the Israelites back to their homeland. Daniel's prayer was heard, and the angel Gabriel was commanded to come and help Daniel understand. The angel then used Daniel's concern to rebuild Jerusalem as a time reference to bring in the appearance and mission of the Messiah. But to Daniel's bewilderment, Gabriel

ended his explanation with the tragic destruction of the rebuilt Jerusalem.

Chapters 10~12

After several visions, Daniel saw that the holy people of the Most High would suffer persecution and misery for an extended period of time, and it seemed that the return to reconstruction was far off. The loving God gave Daniel yet another vision. Daniel was saddened. For three weeks he lost his appetite and had no peace of mind. Gabriel was then sent to explain the great details of the people and events that appeared in the vision. Again, he assured Daniel that the evil forces, though powerful for a time, will end in total destruction. In the end, the archangel Michael shall stand up. The time of trouble would strike the evil forces, but the people of God will be protected and delivered. Out of abundant love and mercy, the vision concerning the end-time was sealed. Gabriel reassured Daniel to rest in peace. When the time came, the seal would be broken. And Daniel would stand in his lot.

E. Daniel and the Mission of Jesus

All books in the Old Testament have prophecies about the coming Messiah and His mission. However, the book of Daniel is the only book that outlines a clear timetable for His life and mission.

At the start of his public ministry, Jesus announced, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” (Mk. 1:15). The concept of fulfilled time and the kingdom of God were both derived from the book of Daniel. He addressed himself as “Son of man”, and talked about forgiveness for 70 times 7 (first judgment to be forgiven), to be followed by the second judgment of being punished (Mt. 18:21-34; cf. Dan. 9:24-26; 7:13-14; 8:14) He cleansed the temple both at the beginning and end of his

earthly ministry (Jn. 2:13-16; 21:12-17; cf. Dan. 8:14). At the end of his ministry, Jesus called the disciples' attention to the book of Daniel and prophesied about the fall of Jerusalem, the time of trouble, and his second coming with the Father. (Mt. 24; cf. Dan. 9:26, 27; 7:14; 22).

Not only were the messages of Jesus deeply rooted in the book of Daniel, but his mission closely followed the timetable as outlined in the book of Daniel. In a nutshell, the book of Daniel was a mission book for Jesus.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. How is the book of Daniel structured?
2. What is the central theme of the book of Daniel? How does a grasp of this theme help in accurately conveying Daniel's message without getting lost in the many details?
3. Make an outline of each chapter of Daniel in your own words.
4. How does the book of Daniel relate to the gospel of Jesus? Can you list some of the connections between the message and mission of Jesus with the book of Daniel?

Section Two: The Book of Daniel

Chapter 5. Making the Right Choice

A. The Story

The first chapter of Daniel provides the historical context of the entire book. Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, the south kingdom collapsed, the temple services stopped, and the people of Israel were taken into captivity. These dramatic changes set the tone for the book of Daniel.

The Israelites lost their sovereignty as a kingdom and were now back in a similar situation to what they were in a thousand years before in Egypt. Both the city and the temple fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. The temple service was suspended. The pride and glory unique to being God's chosen people became a bleak reality with a dim future that gave rise to a series of unanswered questions in the minds of the Israelites.

Would God forsake them forever? Where could the Israelites go to ask for forgiveness of their sins? Would the promise to return back to Jerusalem after seventy years be realized, under what conditions? How could the kingdom of the Israelite nation be rebuilt again? When could the temple of Jerusalem be rebuilt, and its services be resumed? In the time of Exodus, God sent Moses to lead the Israelites to march to the promise land. Who would God send to lead the people in captivity back to Jerusalem? Who will be the final winner, Jerusalem or Babylon?

Would the mission of God be put on hold? What role will the people of God play under the circumstances? What would be their experience in the land of Babylon? Where was their hope?

Needless to say, the pain of the captivity and the brutal reality would strike the hearts of the captives, calling for a

spiritual awakening and repentance in their souls. Sometimes people do not appreciate what they have until after they lose it. Adversity may serve as a compelling motivation for renewed resolution. The mission that could not be carried out in peaceful Jerusalem was to be carried out more sincerely and diligently in Babylon. A longing to return would instantly become the driving force that would characterize everything they did in the land of their captivity.

As the following table shows, Israel's situation and mentality at this time was very similar to that of Adam, who was expelled from the Garden of Eden.

	Adam and Eve	Daniel and His Friends
1	The Garden of Eden was planted by the Lord in the beginning, and was the capital city of the earth.	Jerusalem was the capital city for the people of God.
2	Adam and Eve were the first couple of created humanity, the people of God.	Israelites were the chosen people of God.
3	However, because of the first couple's disobedience in yielding to the temptation and eating the forbidden fruit, they were expelled from Eden.	Israelites sinned against God, and were taken into captivity.
4	Eden became empty.	Jerusalem became empty. (Lam. 1:1)
5	Adam desired to go back to Eden.	Daniel and his friends desired to return to Jerusalem.

While the minds of Daniel and his kinsmen may have been filled with questions concerning their return to their homeland, the earthly Jerusalem, the Lord was going to take this golden

teachable moment to show the way back to the heavenly Jerusalem, the garden of Eden, the original and eternal home of the human race. These two lines of thinking would run through the book of Daniel.

As mentioned above, Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden for eating the forbidden fruit, in turn, it could reasonably be expected that those who desired to return back to Jerusalem would gain their victory over the battle of food. That is exactly the main story narrated in the first chapter of Daniel.

Daniel and his three friends were among the captives but were chosen to study in the Babylonian school for three years. They were provided with the king's food, and their names were changed. However, Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the king's food and wine, and chose rather to eat more wholesome food.

He tactfully and respectfully sought the permission from the superintendent to test his proposal for ten days. The result was clearly visible, and Daniel's request was granted. At the end of the training, they were tested by King Nebuchadnezzar and found 10 times smarter than all the magicians and enchanters in the Babylonian kingdom.

Chapter 1 ends with the change of monarchs, the Babylonian empire would eventually be gone, but Daniel would still remain alive.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verses 1-2. Historical Setting

1. Verses 1-2: “[1] In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. [2] And the Lord gave Jehoiakim

king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.”

Note:

- 1) Jehoiakim, originally known as Eliakim, was the second son of king Josiah (1 Ch. 3:15). Pharaoh Nechoh made him king of Judah and “turned his name to Jehoiakim”(2 Kg. 23:34).
- 2) Daniel links “the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim” with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon’s first bout with Jerusalem, in 605 B.C., 490 years, or 70 times 7, after king Saul became the king of Israel in 1095 B.C..
- 3) It seems that Daniel and Jeremiah used different reckoning methods, while Daniel appears to use the accession-year method, that is, reckoning the first official year of a king’s reign with the celebration of the first New Year festival after his accession to the throne, Jeremiah uses the non-accession-year method and dated the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar “the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah” (Jer. 25:1; cf. 46:2).
- 4) Babylon was called “the hammer of the whole earth” (Jer. 50:23). Jeremiah sent the warning that the Lord “will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.” (Jer. 20:4). And now Nebuchadnezzar came to besiege the city and conquered Jerusalem (2 Kg. 24:10-11)
- 5) Paraphrase: In 605 B.C., the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, Babylon king Nebuchadnezzar came to besiege Jerusalem.
- 6) “*The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand*”: this indicates that the Lord allowed this to happen. All events are still under his control.
- 7) “Part of the vessels of the house of God”: This refers to the utensils and furniture of the temple (cf. Jer. 27:19-20; 2 Ch.

36:7). These are mentioned again in Dan. 5:2 and Ez. 1:5-11, some of which were erected during the time of king Solomon (1 Kg. 7:51), were brought to Babylon.

- 8) “*Land of Shinar*”: it alludes to the tower of Babel. A rebellious group of people “found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there” (Gen. 11:2). They later started to build the tower of Babel there. The land of Shinar thus became associated with false worship and idolatry, especially affiliated with making a name for oneself. (Gen. 11:4)
- 9) “*He brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god*”: a gesture of Nebuchadnezzar reporting his victory to his god, a public expression to show that his god is stronger than the God of Israel. This also points to a mixture and confusion in the spiritual realm in Babylon.
- 10) It should be noted that the Lord did not give Nebuchadnezzar the most important item in the Jerusalem temple, the ark of God, symbolic of His authority and governance. Since the law is the foundation of a kingdom, this very fact shows that God is still in control of this world. His law stands firm even though it not seen by the naked eye.
- 11) Ellen White writes, “With His own finger God wrote His commandments on two tables of stone. These tables were not left in the keeping of men, but were placed in the ark; and in the great day when every case is decided, these tables, inscribed with the commandments, will be placed so that all the world will see and understand. The witness against them will be unanswerable.”⁵¹
- 12) Sadly, as we will see in Daniel 9, the rebuilt Jerusalem would later be destroyed. This brings us to the true holy city in heaven, which is named the "New Jerusalem". The ark of the testimony will be seen again as the standard to judge the righteous (Rev. 11:19) and punish the wicked (Rev. 15:5).

⁵¹ Ellen White, Letter 30, 1900 (Manuscript Releases 19:265).

Part Two: Verses 3-7. Daniel and Friends Selected to Attend the Babylonian School

1. Verses 3-4; “[3] And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; [4] Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.”

Note:

- 1) Unfortunately, the warning and prophecy given to king Hezekiah came true, “And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”(Isa. 39:7), together with the children of Israel and that of the princes. Babylonians picked “the prime” of Hebrew youth to be trained to serve the king, and probably help manage the captives as well.
2. **Verse 5:** “[5] And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. . [6] Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: [7] Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

Note:

- 1) The Babylonian monarch decreed that his meat and wine be given to these captive students, showing the kind side of

King Nebuchadnezzar as well as the well-intended expectation from the king.

- 2) Daniel: God is my Judge. Hananiah means "YAHWEH is gracious". Mishael: Who is like God? And Azariah: "YAHWEH has helped".
- 3) Belteshazzar: "Protect the Life of the King." Shadrach: "I am put into much fear." Meshach: "I am of little account." Abednego: "Servant of the shining one."⁵²
- 4) The act of giving names may indicate rulership, as in the case of Adam naming the animals (Gen. 2:19-20), recognition of character transformation, as in the case of changing the names of Abraham, Jacob (Gen. 17:5, 32:28), and ownership, as in the case of the overcomers (Rev. 2:17, 3:12). Regardless of whether the changing of Hebrew names to Babylonian names was for practical purposes or had spiritual connotation, Daniel and his friends remained faithful to God.

Part Three: Verses 8-16. Test of Food

3. **Verses 8-13:** "[8] But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. [9] Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. [10] And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse

⁵² p.-R.Berger, "Der Kyros-Zylindermit dem Zusatzfragment BIN I1 Nr. 32 und die akkadischen Personennamen im Danielbuch," ZA 64 (1975):224-225, who renders the name in German as "ich bin sehr in Furcht versetzt." Quoted by Gerhard Hasel, *THE BOOK OF DANIEL AND MATTERS OF LANGUAGE: EVIDENCES RELATING TO NAMES, WORDS, AND THE ARAMAIC LANGUAGE*, Andrews University Seminary Studies, Autumn 1981, Vol. 19, No. 3, 211-225 (1981 by Andrews University Press).

liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. [11] Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, [12] Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.[13] Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.”

Note:

- 1) Verses 8. Daniel made a firm choice to not be defiled by Babylonian food and wine that was forbidden in the law of Moses, and chose to eat “to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). It is worth noting that Adam and Eden lost the Paradise because of eating the forbidden fruit, Daniel chose to eat the right food, because he wished to return back to Jerusalem. Our first set of parents failed on the issue of eating, and those who wish to return to the garden of Eden will need to be overcomers in food and drink.
- 2) Verse 9, Daniel made a choice and God worked it out according to His good will.
- 3) Verse 10-13. The concern of the prince of the eunuchs was not groundless. However, Daniel’s request was simple, reasonable and tactful. The vegetarian diet Daniel proposed was not hard to provide, and ten days was not long. It was at least worthy of giving it a try without risking anybody’s life. After ten days, the contrast was obvious and resulted in Daniel’s request being delightfully granted. The tactfulness of young Daniel set a good example for us to make wise and reasonable requests when dealing with conflict concerning our faith so as not to endanger others while we follow God’s calling.

Part Four: Verses 17-20. Results Made Known

4. Verses 17-20: “[17] As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.[18]Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. [19] And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. [20]And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Note:

- 1) It is encouraging and uplifting to see how God was able to give the Hebrew youth knowledge and skills in spite of their being trained in Babylonian programs and environment.
- 2) Their achievements were far greater than “all the magicians and astrologers in all his realm.” Remaining faithful is the key, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of true wisdom.
- 3) The excellency of the Hebrew young men enabled them to stand before the king and presented them with opportunities to be a good witness before the most powerful man in Babylon.

Part Five: Verse 21. Monarchs Change, but Daniel Remains Alive

1. Verse 21: “And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.”

Note:

- 1) The first year of king Cyrus was 538 B.C. Daniel must have been about 84 years old by this time, because, according to Ellen White, “Daniel was but eighteen years old when brought into a heathen court in service to the king of

Babylon".⁵³ Daniel benefited greatly from his healthy lifestyle.

- 2) Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 B.C., and 538 B.C. was 67 years after the captivity, only three years short of the seventy years exile in Babylon as prophesied by Jeremiah the prophet. It reveals Daniel's anxious desire to return to Jerusalem, a point which highlights his passion and anticipation. It sets the tone for readers to understand Daniel's responses to visions given him throughout the whole book.

C. Missional Reflections

1. Dramatic changes can always happen in our lives, just like the dramatic change occurred in Daniel's time. We may lose the most precious things in our lives just as the Israelites lost their most precious temple, which, though it was rebuilt later, would never be the same.
We should cherish the peaceful time we have on hand and improve it for the sake of carrying out God's mission and bringing him glory.
2. From the fact that it was God who "gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand", "brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs" and "gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom", it is crystal clear that God is in control. His hand is mysteriously directing the affairs of this world.
3. Adversity may not always be a bad thing to the mission of God. Those who determine to remain loyal to God can serve Him and be His faithful witness even in adversity.
4. Daniel and his friends' learning a foreign language and culture at a young age laid a good foundation for their future performance in government. Learning a foreign language and

⁵³ Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p.570.

culture at a young age, if possible, in the mission field, can be very effective and impactful for future missional outreach.

5. Daniel set a good example for those who desire to go back to the New Jerusalem. The first step lies in making good choices in the right food. Where Adam failed is where the heavenly seeker must triumph.

“With Christ, as with the holy pair in Eden, appetite was the ground of the first great temptation. Just where the ruin began, the work of our redemption must begin. As by the indulgence of appetite Adam fell, so by the denial of appetite Christ must overcome.”⁵⁴

6. In choosing the simple and wholesome food, Daniel and friends demonstrated excellent health and their outstanding performance before King Nebuchadnezzar. Their story must have widely spread across the Babylonian empire and prepared the hearts of Babylonian people to come in contact with further light.
7. From the missional perspective, the book of Daniel opens with a health message and health reform, which serves as the right hand of the gospel of the kingdom, loosening the soil of people’s hearts.
8. For Daniel, the importance of his choice was not only in requesting the right food, but choosing to serve the True God, which corresponds to the 1st angel’s message in Rev. 14:6-7.
9. In ancient times, God was with His faithful people physically living in Babylon. Today, He is calling His people to come out of spiritual Babylon.
10. In Daniel’s case, health reform lead not only to good health, but to great wisdom. This is also true for us today.
11. Daniel was very prudent in making his request, which is also a good example for us today. When facing challenges, difficulties, or even persecutions, we should learn to be cool-headed and prudent, depending on God.

⁵⁴ Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p.117.

Through the comparison, we can see why Daniel was chosen to write this very important book. The similarity between Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden made it possible for God to use Daniel and his desire to go back to Jerusalem as a good opportunity to reveal His plan to take His people back to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Garden of Eden.

Since Adam and Eve ate the wrong food and lost the paradise, Daniel and his friends were found determined to eat the RIGHT food, a visible step in the journey of returning back to Jerusalem.

The first chapter opens with the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonian kingdom, and focuses on the training of Daniel and his three friends in the land of captivity, and the trials they endured in the process of choosing food and the result of the training. The closing line of the chapter is simple and straightforward on the surface, yet a burning nostalgia of the author for his home country can still be felt.

Jerusalem has long since fallen, and Babylon was in the ascendant. What would become of the world? Where would be the final destination of God's people? The answer will be revealed in Chapter 2.

Questions for Thought and Discussion:

1. Why did God choose Daniel to reveal His great plan of salvation after the Israelites were taken into captivity?
2. Why do bad things happen to the people of God and what lessons can we learn from that? Think about ways you can relate this to people from different religious persuasions?

3. Daniel chapter one starts from a young lad and ends with an old yet still energetic senior. What inspiration can we get from Daniel's healthy lifestyle?
4. Daniel and his three friends learned a foreign language and culture at a young age which helped them to function well in the foreign land. What lessons can the young people of today draw from their experience for equipping themselves to carry out the mission of God?
5. What comfort and encouragement can we receive from the fact that it was God that gave the Hebrew youth wisdom and skill even though they were trained in the Babylonian environment?
6. What can we learn from Daniel's tactful ways in dealing with the problem of food?
7. In what way does Chapter 1 set the theological and missional stage for understanding the rest of the book?
8. In light of the determination of Daniel and his three friends, how should we encourage our truth seekers to make a decision for the kingdom of God in an age of global secularism and materialism?

Chapter 6. Interpreting the Forgotten Dream

A. The Story

Chapter 2 of Daniel reveals that the mission target of God was not limited to the Jews only but included also Babylonians and beyond. By His inclusive missional strategy, the Lord chose to show a vision to King Nebuchadnezzar. Through a series of providential events, the transience of the earthly kingdoms and the stability and God's eternal kingdom were revealed.

Soon after the conquest of Jerusalem and in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, the merciful Lord gave a dream to King Nebuchadnezzar, as another direct missional outreach to transform his ambitious pursuit for an earthly empire to that of the heavenly kingdom. But the king totally forgot the dream the next morning.

Troubled by the dream, the king asked his magicians and the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell him not only the dream but also the interpretation. He warned them that failure to do so will bring life-threatening calamity to all wise men in the land. At this critical moment, Daniel and his three friends appealed to the king for time and were granted it.

Daniel and three friends prayed for “mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.” (Dan. 2:18). The secret of the dream and its interpretation was given to Daniel, and Daniel told the king his dream and its interpretation.

The crisis was over. The king was satisfied. Daniel was promoted to be “ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.”(Dan. 2:48). At Daniel’s request his three friends were also promoted.

The great wisdom and excellent foreknowledge of Daniel’s God are highlighted in the straightforwardness of the exposition.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verses 1-13. Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream and the Tension It Caused

1. Verses 1-3: “[1] And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. [2] Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. [3] And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.”

Note:

- 1) *“The second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar”*. The exact date here was not clear. In view of Daniel’s promotion after interpreting the King’s dream, it seems that his three years’ training had already finished by this time.
- 2) “Dreamed dreams”. The plural “dreams” here probably indicates the fact that there were several segments of the dream rather than the same dream appearing several times, or else the king would have remembered it.
- 3) The magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans composed all the wise men in Babylon. It was of little wonder that the king was angry when all of these groups failed to help him one after another.

Verses 4-6: “[4]Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. [5]The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.[6] But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.”

Note:

The Chaldeans were confident of their knowledge and skills in interpreting dreams. Unfortunately, the king forgot the content of the dream. So, he commanded them to tell him both the content of the dream and its interpretation, with promises of wealth and honor on the one hand if they told him, and threats of death on the other hand if they could not.

2. Verses 7-9: “[7] They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. [8] The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. [9] But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.”

Note:

1) The second round of dialogues. King Nebuchadnezzar became increasingly impatient and angry, having seen through their craftiness.

3. Verse 10-13: “[10] The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. [11] And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. [12] For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. [13] And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.”

Note:

- 1) The way the Chaldeans answered the king carried with it a sense of blaming the king as being unreasonable, which further irritated the king. A death decree went out because of their inability to respond to the dream the king had. Looking at the story from a cosmic conflict perspective, Satan wanted to get rid of the four Hebrew young men through killing all the wise men, in case one of them would be “the seed of the woman” as announced in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15).
- 2) “Except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh” exhibits major characteristics of paganism, in contrast to the God of Israel whose desire is to dwell among men. (Ex. 25:8; Isa. 7:14)

Part Two: Verses 14-24. Daniel Intervened and Received Revelation from God

1. Verses 14-16: “[14] Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: [15] He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. [16] Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would

give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.”

Note:

- 1) “With counsel and wisdom”, at such a young age, probably 16 or 17 years old, Daniel demonstrated again unusual calmness and prudence in the face of crisis, as he did in the previous year.
- 2) “Then Daniel went in”. It shows the young Daniel’s resourcefulness, calmness, and strong faith and trust in God.

2. Verses 17-19: “[17] Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: [18] That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. [19] Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.”

Note:

- 1) What Daniel and friends faced was a life and death issue. Earnestly they prayed to God for mercy, and more specifically for God to reveal to them “this secret”. In answer to their prayers, “a night vision” was shown to Daniel.

3. Verses 20-23: “[20] Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: [21] And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: [22] He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. [23] I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what

we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter."

Note:

- 1) The prayer of Daniel shows that he was not only expressing his gratitude and praises to God, but he fully understood the vision and its implications.
- 2) Daniel's prayer strongly declared that changing "the times and the seasons" is entirely God's prerogative. In Daniel 7, it will show there is another power trying to "change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25). There are basically two kinds of times, the probationary time and eternal time. God is the One who alone can decide when the probationary time will be closed before moving on into eternity.
- 3) "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings." This acknowledgement shows how Daniel truly understood what was revealed to him in the night vision.
- 4) Contrary to Dan. 2:11, Daniel clearly showed that the God of Heaven is "God of my fathers" who knows "what is in the darkness."

4. Verse 24: "[24] Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation."

Note:

- 1) Saving lives was Daniel's priority. He wanted to make sure the wise men of Babylon were spared. Daniel's concern for the Babylonian wise men reflects the essence of the mission of God.
- 2) Secondly, the very fact Daniel requested from Arioch an appointment with the king gave evidences that Daniel knew the importance to act by procedure.

Part Three: Verses 25-30. Daniel Went in to See King Nebuchadnezzar

1. Verses 25-30: “[25] Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. [26] The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? [27] Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; [28] But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; [29] As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. [30] But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.”

Note:

- 1) “I have found a man of the captives of Judah.” This was ironically surprising. When all the wise men of Babylon failed, a captive from Judah, a young kid still in training, “that will make known unto the king the interpretation.”
- 2) The very first thing Daniel did was to find ground for the king to spare their lives, even before acknowledging and exalting God who revealed the secret.
- 3) “Maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days”. This line made it clear enough that the whole thrust of the dream was “what shall be in the latter days.” (NASB, NKJV). Other versions put it as “at the end of days” (NRSV), “in the final days” (NJB), and “in the

future” (TEV). The emphasis of the dream is not the events happening in the course of the process, but the final events at the end.

This summary given by Daniel highlighted the central theme of the book of Daniel, that is events in the latter days. Keeping this in mind will be very helpful to us not only in understanding the dream and its interpretation in chapter two, but the rest of the book in general. Often times, much attention is given to the events that take place in the process, while neglecting the final destination these events lead to. As a result, people are usually caught up in the accurate historical fulfilment of the changes of the monarchs, not realizing the foci of the dream is not the changes of monarchs, but the kingdom of God.

By giving this dream, God meant to prepare Nebuchadnezzar for the kingdom of God.

- 4) The king was pondering “what should come to pass hereafter”, and God “maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.” One is reminded of Rev. 1:1 where Jesus also revealed to John “things which must shortly come to pass”, also with a focus on events that would take place in the latter days.
- 5) “This secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living.” The dream was revealed to me not because I was smarter than others, but to serve you the king. Daniel’s meekness and humility was well demonstrated, showing the characteristic of the citizens of God’s kingdom.

Part Four: Verses 30-35. The Dream Described

1. **Verses 31-33:** “[31]“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.[32]This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly

and his thighs of brass, [33] His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”

Note:

- 1) A description of the image from head to the toe is shown to Nebuchadnezzar.
- 2) It should be noted that there is some “continual element” exhibited in the image, the quality of metal, that goes from the head to the legs. It becomes diverse when it comes to the feet, a mixture of metal and clay.

2. Verses 34-35: “[34] Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. [35] Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

Note:

- 1) In these two verses, three events of the latter days are brought to view, namely: (1) the smiting of the image’s feet by the stone; (2) all the materials of the image were carried away and could not be found; and (3) the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Part Five: Verses 36-45. Interpretation of the Dream.

1. Verses 36-38: “[36] This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. [37] Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. [38] And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold.”

Note:

- 1) *“For the God of heaven hath giveth thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.”* This line echoes verse 21, “he removeth kings, and setteth up kings”, showing God’s sovereignty in the affairs of the world.
- 2) The golden head represents the kingdom of Babylon.
- 3) “The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally.”⁵⁵

2. Verses 39-40: “[39] And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. [40] And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”

Note:

- 1) The golden head represents the kingdom of Babylon, while silver, brass and iron represent the three subsequent kingdoms, each of which conquered their predecessor but were replaced later by another successive kingdom. These four kingdoms, though different, were all represented by metals, indicating they were of the same characteristic, namely, they were all secure pagan empires.
- 2) “Babylon passed away because in her prosperity she forgot God, and ascribed the glory of her prosperity to human achievement.”⁵⁶
- 3) “The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God’s law was trampled

⁵⁵ Ellen White, Manuscript Releases, Vol. 1, p.50

⁵⁶ Ibid.

under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption.”⁵⁷

- 4) “The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt. They deteriorated because they cast off their allegiance to God. As they forgot Him, they sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral value.”⁵⁸
- 5) “The vast empire of Rome crumbled to pieces, and from its ruins rose that mighty power, the Roman Catholic Church. This church boasts of her infallibility and her hereditary religion. But this religion is a horror to all who are acquainted with the secrets of the mystery of iniquity. The priests of this church maintain their ascendancy by keeping the people in ignorance of God's will, as revealed in the Scriptures.”⁵⁹

3. Verses 41-43: “[41]And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. [42] And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. [43] And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.”

Note:

- 1) Unlike the metals in the previous powers, the feet and toes were made of “part of potter's clay and part of iron”. “We are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” (Isa. 64:8; cf. Jer. 18:6). Therefore, the materials of the feet are suggestive of a combination of a religious/spiritual entity and political/pagan state. “They

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ellen White, *Manuscript Release*, Vol. 1, p.50.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" is the verdict given. Efforts would be made to achieve this end, but no real union would ever be able to exist.

- 2) "We have come to a time when God's sacred work is represented by the feet of the image in which the iron was mixed with the miry clay. God has a people, a chosen people, whose discernment must be sanctified, who must not become unholy by laying upon the foundation wood, hay, and stubble.....The mingling of church craft and state craft is represented by the iron and the clay. This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the state will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God's forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy. But the time will come when God will punish those who have made void His law, and their evil work will recoil upon themselves."⁶⁰
- 3) "Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers regarded themselves as independent of God and ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement. The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven because in it God's law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the vast majority of people. Wickedness and corruption prevailed. The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt; and these sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral worth."⁶¹

4. Verses 44-45: "[44] And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms,

⁶⁰ Ellen White, Ms 63, 1899, p. 12, 13. (Untitled Manuscript, April 22, 1899.)

⁶¹ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p.501.

and it shall stand for ever.[45] Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

Note:

- 1) "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom". It should be noted here that a kingdom needs to be in place first before it can be given to the Son of man (Dan. 7:14), and the "setting up a kingdom" involves a process. It seems that the content of "setting up of a kingdom" can be seen in the light of the second half of the sentence, "and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." That is to decide who will be qualified to enter this kingdom "which shall never be destroyed". Therefore, the approval of the candidacy for the kingdom seems to be the main concern of "setting up a kingdom", which could be equivalent to the investigative judgment as shown in Dan. 7:9-10. That will be processed "in the days of these kings".

After Jesus received the kingdom, He will come back to take the people of God to this kingdom. Eventually, Jesus will set up this kingdom on earth. Ellen White writes:

"Our kingdom is not of this world. We are waiting for our Lord from heaven to come to earth to put down all authority and power, and set up His everlasting kingdom. Earthly powers are shaken. We need not, and cannot, expect union among the nations of the earth. Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together. Prophecy shows us that the great day of God is right upon us. It hasteth greatly."⁶²

- 2) All these kingdoms will be broken and consumed. The only kingdom that will stand on the earth is the kingdom of God.

⁶² Ellen White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, p.360.

- 3) According to verse 34, it is during the stage of the feet and toes that the stone would come out of the mountain to smite the feet and “brake them to pieces.” But here in verse 45, “iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold” will also “brake into pieces”. This suggests that these powers will be brought back in the second resurrection and receive their final destruction.
- 4) Daniel did not give a direct interpretation to the dream as laid out in verse 35. But it can be inferred that it is the people who will inherit the kingdom that was set up in heaven who will fill “the whole earth” with no other people or power to be found anywhere on earth. (v. 35).
- 5) “The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter”. Verses 44-45 show the purpose and conclusion of the dream God gave to the king.
- 6) “And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.”⁶³

Much has been written on the historical fulfilment of these symbols in this prophecy. Readers who desire to know all details in historical events please consult materials with that information. We will simply outline the symbols and their interpretation here.

Table. Symbols and Their Fulfilment

Text	Symbols	Historical Fulfilment
v.32	Gold Head	Babylon
v.32	Silver Chest	Mede-Persia
v.32, 39	Brass Waist	Greece
v.33, 40	Iron legs	Roman Empire
v.33, 41	Iron and Clay Feet	Papacy

⁶³ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p.548.

v.44	Setting up a Kingdom	Investigative Judgment
v.34, 45	Stone Out of Mountain	Second Coming of Jesus
v.35	Fill the Earth	From the New Earth to Eternity

Part Five. Verses 46-49. The King Rewards Daniel

1. Verses 46-47: “[46] Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. [47] The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.”

Note:

- 1) Obviously, Nebuchadnezzar was satisfied with Daniel’s account and interpretation. He paid great respect to Daniel according the Babylonian culture.
- 2) Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the God of Daniel as “a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets”. This shows the initial positive reaction of the Babylonian king to the dream and its interpretation.

2. Verses 48-49: “[48] Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. [49] Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

Note:

- 1) Daniel was rewarded and promoted to be “the ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.”
- 2) Daniel did not forget his friends. They were all part of the answer to the king, and were also promoted.

C. Missional Reflections

1. The story in Chapter 2 shows that the missionary God took the initiative to work on this special mission target, the king of Babylon. The God of mysteries wished to redirect his ambition from the temporal kingdom to the everlasting kingdom, in an attempt to transform his ambition from the earthly to the heavenly. To do this, He showed him the course of and the inevitable and irreversible end of history.
2. Regarding the purpose of the dream, Ellen White made the following comment, “The dream of the great image, opening before Nebuchadnezzar events reaching to the close of time, had been given that he might understand the part he was to act in the world's history, and the relation that his kingdom should sustain to the kingdom of heaven.”⁶⁴ It would take many years before Nebuchadnezzar finally became a firm believer in the God of heaven and a promoter of the kingdom of God.
3. Nebuchadnezzar's story shows that, often times an individual may not accept the truth and become a believer after one or two missionary efforts. Christian mission takes time.
4. Nebuchadnezzar's experience demonstrates the principle that “We love him, because he first loved us.” (1 Jn. 4:19) can also apply to Christian missions. In Christian outreach,

⁶⁴ *Prophets and Kings*, p.503.

it is always God who takes the first step. His people only follow in His footsteps and cooperate with Him.

5. As noted above, the focus of the dream is on “what shall be in the latter days” (Dan. 2:28). Thus, it can be safely inferred that the book of Daniel was written more for the people in the latter days than Daniel’s own time. The historical timeline was given to mark out the time of the kingdom of God.
6. The Babylonians believed that “the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh” (Dan. 2:11), while the biblical notion of God is that “God be with us” (Isa. 7:14). His presence is with those who are in afflictions and troubles. The following two verses from Isaiah are especially comforting in this regard:

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” (Isa. 43:2)

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” (Isa. 63:9)

The following chapters of the book of Daniel would furnish more concrete examples that demonstrate this important uplifting reality.

7. The Immortality of the Soul.

Daniel 2:35 reveals a stark contrast between the ultimate end of the two classes of people, those who are with the earthly kingdoms whom “the wind carried them away, that no place

was found for them”, while those who can enter the kingdom of God will be with the stone, and fill “the whole earth”. It is worth noting that the wicked will not be found, indicating the utter annihilation or destruction. There will be no immortal soul who will suffer forever in the burning hell. When the punishment is completed, justice will be satisfied, the fire will go out and the wicked will be no more.

8. Praises

Daniel praised God for giving him the dream and interpretation (Dan. 2:19), he also sent praises to Him before unlocking the mystery to the king (Dan. 2:20).

Praises are in integral part of Christian life. Our Creator and Savior is to be praised for all He has done for us. Praising God in all circumstances shows our gratitude and keeps us humbly walking before God. It is soul-lifting not only to the one who praises but exerts a positive influence to those who heard the praises.

9. Change Times

God is not only the Creator of heavens and the earth, He is also the Creator of time. There are only two times, probationary time and eternal time. He is the One who “changeth the times and the seasons”. He “removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Dan. 2:21). In a word, God is in control. When time is up, He will close the probationary time and ushers in eternity.

10. Mysticism and Revelation

The God of Daniel knows the end from the beginning. What is mystical to the human mind is not a mystery to God. “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children

for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deut. 29:29) Mysticism has no place in biblical religion, for God reveals mystery according to His divine purpose.

11. People of Prophecy

One of the key points to be noted is that Daniel received both the dream and its interpretation. All Babylonian wise men knew nothing of it. It reveals a distinctive characteristic of the people of God. They are the ones who receive the prophecy and know also its interpretation. That makes them very different from the Babylonian wise men. It will become a visible marker that distinguishes the people of God from the people of Babylon in the end time (Dan. 12:10).

12. Final Reward

It is interesting to notice that Daniel was promoted as a result of his revealing the dream and its interpretation to the king. But he requested the king, and his three friends were also appointed to important positions. These rewards foreshadow the reward of Jesus as the One who will sit next to God, but his followers, or friends, will also share the kingdom with Him.

Questions for Thought and Discussion:

1. What encouragement and implications can we find in knowing that God was the One who took the initiative for advancing His kingdom as shown in Daniel 2?
2. How would you use the story of Daniel 2 to help your friends see that salvation is not limited to the Jews and Christianity is for the whole world?
3. Why did God reveal this dream of four successive empires to Nebuchadnezzar?

4. How does the vision in Daniel 2 help the world see that all this world can offer is impermanent, while the only everlasting object is kingdom of God?
5. What is one of the key difference between the real people of God and the fake wise men of the world as demonstrated from Daniel 2?
6. Why is it that the iron and clay do not cleave one to another? How should the people of God prevent themselves from compromising with the world?
7. How can we use the revelation from Daniel 2 to help our friends to understand there is no immortality of the soul, the very foundation for many different religions?
8. How can we distinguish the true God from the false gods according to Dan. 2:11? How can we apply this principle in our mission outreach?

Chapter 7. The Test of Being Thrown into A Fiery Furnace

A. The Story

The story recorded in chapter three happened after the experience in chapter two. In chapter two, Daniel not only helped bring back to King Nebuchadnezzar's mind his dream, to his surprise and satisfaction, but also gave its interpretation. The king immediately acknowledged the greatness of the God of Daniel as "a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets" (Dan. 2:47). For a period of time after that event, Nebuchadnezzar felt the impact of the fear of God. However, worldly ambition and a desire for self-exaltation was still deeply rooted in his heart. In time "he ceased to honor God and resumed his idol worship with increased zeal and bigotry."⁶⁵

Babylon was interpreted as the gold head, having higher value than other metals. At this juncture, the wise men of Babylon proposed that "he make an image similar to the one seen in his dream and set it up where all might behold the head of gold, which had been interpreted as representing his kingdom."⁶⁶

Nebuchadnezzar took the suggestion and made an image of gold. All the officials of Babylon were summoned to attend its dedication of the image. When music sounded, everyone was required to bow down to the image. All, except Daniel's three Hebrew friends, bowed to the image at the sound of the instruments. Their behavior was reported to the king, which made him very angry. Nebuchadnezzar gave them a second

⁶⁵ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 503.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.504.

chance, but told them if they still did not comply, they would be thrown into the burning furnace.

The Hebrew young men flatly refused to bow down to the image. As a result, they were thrown into the furnace, but were protected and delivered. In the end, the king acknowledged the God of the three Hebrew youth and praised His marvelous delivery.

In the end, the three Hebrew youth were promoted.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verses 1-7. Dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's Image

1. Verses 1-2: “[1] Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. [2] Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellers, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.”

Note:

- 1) Chapter 3 opens with “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold” (Dan. 3:1), indicating Nebuchadnezzar’s aspiration that Babylon would be “an eternal, indestructible, all-powerful kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms and stand forever.”⁶⁷
- 2) The size of the image was huge, “height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits” (Dan. 3:1). It was placed “in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.”

⁶⁷ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p.504.

(Dan. 3:1). That was definitely the greatest image ever built in Babylon.

2. Verses 3-7: “[3] Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellers, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [4] Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, [5] That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: [6] And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. [7] Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.”

Note:

- 1) The princes, governors, and captains, the judges, treasurers, counsellors, sheriffs, and all the rulers of the province were summoned to the dedication of the image and asked to “fall down and worship the golden image.” (Dan. 3:5).
- 2) In this attempt, the king was trying to tie idol worship, i.e. worship of the image, to the state, making “the glory of Babylon and its magnificence and power” an object of worship, designing an additional step to trap people into falling into the already flooded idolatry, as well as show their supreme loyalty to the kingly power. Attaching so much meaning to this image worship, the king also announced the punishment, “and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” (Dan 3:6).

- 3) The impact of the decree with the threat of burning to death was shown in the fact that “all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image.”

Part Two: Verses 8-23. The Three Hebrew Youth Accused and Punished

1. **Verses 8-12:** “[8] Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.[9] They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.[10] Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: [11] And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. [12] There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Note:

- 1) Certain Chaldeans came to the king Nebuchadnezzar and accused the Jews he appointed over the governmental affairs of betraying the king’s trust in that they disobeyed the decree of the king, showing no respect to the king or his gods. The implied meaning here is that the king should not have trusted the Jews and promoted them in the first place.
- 2) With the accusation was the reminder that any violators “should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.”
- 3) It should be borne in mind that missionaries of God are His witnesses. There are always eyes on them. For good or for bad, every move they make will be watched and thus exerts an unexpected impact one way or another.

2. **Verses 13-15:** “[13] Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then

they brought these men before the king. [14] Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? [15] Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Note:

- 1) The accusation made Nebuchadnezzar very angry, for he felt that the Jews, the captives from Judah, had misused his trust. As a result, he decided to deal with them himself.
- 2) Interestingly, only Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brought before the king, Daniel was spared, either because he had already won the trust of the king and these accusers dared not to mess up with him, or he was not there for some reason.
- 3) The king held back his anger and was being fair with his young officers by giving them another chance to prove themselves.
- 4) If they would fall down and worship the image which the king had made, all would be well. The accusation would be dropped, and they would be forgiven as if nothing had happened.
- 5) If these Hebrew youth still chose not to comply, "a burning fiery furnace" would be their fate.
- 6) "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" The king strongly believed that he was the one fully in charge of his territory.

3. Verses 16-18: "[16] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.[17] If it be so, our God

whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.[18] But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

Note:

- 1) This intimidation did not frighten the three Hebrew young men. They were not afraid to answer the king, but expressed great confidence and trust in the God they served.
- 2) The threat of death would not bring them to their knees or cause them to forfeit their faith. The teachings of the law of God were deeply engraved in their hearts, and nothing could waver them.
- 3) The frank answer given by the Hebrew youth demonstrated the true spirit of a missionary for God, being always ready to die for the truth.

4. Verses 19-23: “[19] Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. [20] And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.[21] Then these men were bound in their coats, their hose, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. [22] Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. [23] And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.”

Note:

- 1) Now Nebuchadnezzar was really angry, his face changed. Immediate punishment was the only resort. The furnace

was heated “seven times more than it was wont to be heated.”

- 2) The three Hebrew young men were tightly bound and cast into the furnace. This detail was given because later they would be found walking around loose inside it. Unfortunately, the fire was so hot that the flames slew the men who put them into the furnace.

Part Three: Verses 24-30. Deliverance and Decree

1. **Verses 24-27:** “[24] Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. [25] He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. [26] Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. [27] And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.”

Note:

- 1) To the king's astonishment, he saw “four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they were not hurt; and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God.”
- 2) Judging from the fact that King Nebuchadnezzar recognized the Son of God, Daniel and his friends must have made known to the king prophecies about the Son of God.

- 3) This scene was a fulfilment of God's promise in Isaiah, "When thou passest through the waters, I [will be] with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. 43:2). The true God is with His people at all times, especially in crisis and tribulations.
- 4) The anger of the king disappeared in his amazement. He addressed them as "servants of the most high God", showing a positive affirmation of their faithfulness in serving their God.
- 5) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fiery furnace unscathed. Fire did not do any harm to them, and everyone present were eye-witnesses.
- 6) The bravery of the young Hebrews bore the best testimony to the Lord. And the publicly witnessed deliverance manifested God's power to protect his people.

2. Verses 28-29: "[28] Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. [29] Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

Note:

- 1) Daniel's three friends stood firm against the test and bore a convincing witness for "their own God". The name of God as a God of deliverance was made known throughout the kingdom of Babylon. The fear of God was commanded with a severe punishment. The gospel of the everlasting kingdom was thus spread far and near.

3. Verse 30: “[30] Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.”

Note:

- 1) As a result, the three Hebrew worthies were promoted in the province of Babylon.
- 2) Those who are faithful in big things or small duties, will be rewarded in the kingdom of God.
- 3) “The present is a season of solemn privilege and sacred trust. If the servants of God keep faithfully the trust given to them, great will be their reward when the Master shall say, "Give an account of thy stewardship." [Luke 16:2.] The earnest toil, the unselfish work, the patient, persevering effort, will be abundantly rewarded. Jesus will say, Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends. [See John 15:15.] The approval of the Master is not given because of the greatness of the work performed, but because of fidelity in all that has been done. It is not the results we attain, but the motives from which we act, that weigh with God. He prizes goodness and faithfulness above all else.”⁶⁸

C. Missional Reflections

1. As Chapter 2 brings to view the everlasting kingdom, Chapter 3 demonstrates through historical experience that tests and tribulations will attend those who desire to enter the kingdom of God and are determined to live by its principles, as rightly stated by Paul when he declared, “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (Act. 14:22). These tests will help shape the pilgrims’ character as it is well expressed in the saying that “The grind of stone sharpens the blade, the bite of frost sweetens the winterglory.”

⁶⁸ Ellen White, *Gospel Workers*, p.267.

2. In a world of the great controversy, true worship has always been counterfeited by false worship. The image worship imposed by King Nebuchadnezzar reminds us of the false worship of the children of Israel at the foot of mount Sinai on their way to the promise land. The story is also a foretaste of the false worship that will occur at the end-time as revealed in Revelation 13.

	Golden Calf at Mt. Sinai	Golden Image in Babylon	Image of the Beast
1	Ancient people of Israelites were marching through the wilderness.	People of God were taken into captivity to ancient Babylon.	End-time people surrounded by spiritual Babylon.
2	Rebellious people built a golden calf.	A heathen king built a golden image.	The land beast will build an image of the beast.
3	People worshiped the golden calf.	People worshiped the golden image.	The people of the earth will worship the image of the beast
4	Moses intervened and interceded for the people.	One like the Son of God intervened and protected the three Hebrew young men.	God will send angels to intervene to protect the remnant.
5	God was praised.	God was praised.	God will be praised.
6	Moses was honored to see God's glory after He walked by.	The Hebrew young men were promoted.	The remnant will be promoted.
7	People celebrated and danced.	Music was mingled with false worship. But the experience of the Hebrew young men was a song of deliverance,	False worship will be connected with false music. But God's people will sing a new

		a song dedicated to their true God.	song and song of Moses.
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3. Suffering before glory is one of the keynotes expressed throughout the entire book of Daniel. This theme will be repeated again in Chapter 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12.
4. This image worship crisis came not long after the food test during Daniel and his three friends' first year in the Babylonian school. This stands to show that faithfulness in little things paves the way to faithfulness and audacity in crisis.
5. Judging from the fact that King Nebuchadnezzar recognized the Son of God, Daniel and his friends must have previously explained to the king prophecies about the Son of God.
6. Like the Hebrew young men, the last generation of God's people will sing a song no one else knows. "And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." (Rev. 14:3)
7. God's name is exalted whenever crisis is met with deliverance.
8. "Important are the lessons to be learned from the experience of the Hebrew youth on the plain of Dura. In this our day, many of God's servants, though innocent of wrongdoing, will be given over to suffer humiliation and abuse at the hands of those who, inspired by Satan, are filled with envy and religious bigotry. Especially will the wrath of man be aroused against those who hallow the

Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death.”⁶⁹

9. “As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble--tribulation such as has not been since there was a nation--His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God's saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a “God of gods,” able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him.”⁷⁰

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What is your biggest takeaway from this chapter?
2. Visible and invisible idolatry is everywhere. How should we keep ourselves separate from it? How should we train ourselves on a daily basis so that we would be willing to pay any price to stand for principles?
3. What role do trials play in the Christian witness? How should we cope with tests and trials?
4. What are the implications of verses 17 and 18 for our lives?
5. In carrying out Christian missions, should we tell seekers and new believers about the coming tribulation, persecution, betrayal and trials? If so why, and if not why not? State your reasons.

⁶⁹ *Prophets and Kings*, p.512.

⁷⁰ *Prophets and Kings*, p.513.

Chapter 8. The Most High Reigns

A. The Story

Chapter 4 is a flashback of King Nebuchadnezzar's own experience. It was retold seven years after he was given another dream, this time, the dream was about himself. Born and trained in Babylon and eventually becoming the head of an idolatrous people, Nebuchadnezzar had nevertheless an innate sense of justice and right, and this characteristic God was able to use to punish the rebellious and fulfill His divine purposes.

However, his conquest of nation after nation added more and more to his fame as the greatest ruler of the age. His passion as a builder and his successful achievement in making Babylon one of the wonders of the world fueled his burgeoning pride. He was negatively affected by these victories and achievements to the extent that his record as a wise ruler was spoiled and God could not continue to use him as an instrument for the carrying out of His divine purpose.

As we saw in Chapter 2, God had mercifully revealed to Nebuchadnezzar things that would take place in the near future to the very end of the world. The passage of time did not change the good intent and patience of the Lord. God continued to work with the Babylonian king and to warn him of his impending peril and of the snare that had been laid for his ruin.

In His unsearchable mercy, God gave Nebuchadnezzar another troubling dream. He called all the wise men to tell him the meaning of the dream, but none of them could. Then Daniel was sought after to interpret the dream for the king.

The dream was about Nebuchadnezzar himself. Through the dream, God in his mercy was warning the king that he might be cast out of the palace for seven years and live like any beast

in the field, but finally he would regain his senses and realize that God is the Ruler of all.

The main thrust was emphasized three times that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32). Besides sending a warning to the king of Babylon, this vision added another dimension to the kingdom which the God of heaven set up, namely, the quality of the kingdom recipient. The pride of the heart will exclude anyone from entering the everlasting kingdom.

While interpreting the dream, Daniel also gave his personal advice to the king with the hope to reverse the verdict as appeared in the dream. Unfortunately, it was not heeded. As a result, things happened just like what were shown in the dream. In the end, Nebuchadnezzar’s health and wisdom were restored, and he was reinstated to the throne of Babylon. He also praised God for who He is and what He did, having learned the lesson “those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” (Dan. 4:37).

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verses 1-3. Introduction

- 1. Verses 1-3:** “[1] Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. [2] I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. [3] How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.”

Note:

- 1) A wonderful testimony to the God of heaven given by the most powerful king at that time to all people, nations, and languages, dwelling in all the earth, that is within the boundary of Babylonian empire.
- 2) God knows how to carry out His mission so that “from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Mal. 1:11)

Part Two: Verses 4-9. Looking for an Interpretation of the King's Dream

1. Verses 4-7: “[4] I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: [5] I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. [6] Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. [7] Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. [8] But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, saying, [9] O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.”

Note:

- 1) Nebuchadnezzar was “at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace” (verse 4). In mercy God gave the king another dream which made him afraid and troubled.

- 2) The king made a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon to interpret the dream for him, but that was futile. Then he turned to Daniel for help.
- 3) Nebuchadnezzar sought help from the wise men of the land first, even though he knew from past experience that Daniel would be a better option. From here we can see that customs and culture have a profound effect on people, influencing the way they react to situations that we are being dragged through today. It takes the power of the Holy Spirit to fundamentally change our way of thinking and acting.
- 4) Here again is seen one of the characteristics of God's people—ability to interpret secrets or prophecies. It is essential for believers today to study prophecies in the Bible in order for them to have a more profound personal transformation and be better witnesses for God.

Part Three: Verses 10-18. The Description of the Dream

- 1. Verses 10-12:** “[10] Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. [11] The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: [12] The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.”
- 2. Verses 13-17:** “[13] I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; [14] He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: [15] Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: [16] Let his

heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.[17] This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”

Note:

- 1) The account of the dream was pretty straight forward. Nebuchadnezzar had a deep impression and fresh memory.
- 2) “A watcher and an holy one came down from heaven”, means a messenger, a guardian, an angel came down from heaven. “While I was in bed, having this vision, a holy angel came down from heaven” (Contemporary English Version).
- 3) The purpose of the vision is highlighted in verse 17. “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” (Dan. 4:13-17).
- 4) As mentioned above, this key idea was repeated twice in verse 25 and 32. It emphasizes not only that God is still in control, but also teaches us the kind of character one should have to be entrusted with the kingdom of God, namely, “the bases of men.” This reminds us of Moses who was said to be “very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” In other words, the recipient of the kingdom of God should be someone like Moses, very meek, even the basest of men. Fast forward, Chapter 7 brought forth the recipient of the kingdom, and Chapter 9 shows he was truly “the basest of men”.

- 3. Verse 18:** “[18] This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to

make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee.”

Note:

- 1) Nebuchadnezzar realized that Daniel was wiser than all the wisest men of his kingdom. That was because “the spirit of the holy gods” was in him. The king acknowledged God as the source of all wisdom. Naturally, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of true wisdom.

Part Two: Verses 19-27. Daniel’s Interpretation and Advice

1. **Verse 19:** “[19] Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.”

Note:

- 1) “Astonied for one hour.” The hesitation and pause speaks of Daniel’s goodness. “His thoughts troubled him” portrays Daniel’s deep concern and care for the king.
- 2) King Nebuchadnezzar’ life was seasoned with maturity and sophistication that allowed him to deal calmly with anything that came his way in life.
- 3) Daniel's response was kind, tactful and decent, and came from a heart full of genuine concern for the monarch.

2. **Verses 20-23:** “[20] The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; [21] Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: [22] It is thou, O king, that art

grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.”

Note:

- 1) Daniel repeated the first part of the dream to the king and explained that he was the tree in the vision.
- 2) The growth of the tree indicates the development and prosperity of Babylon during his reign.

3. Verses 23-27: “[23] And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; [24] This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: [25] That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. [26] And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. [27] Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.”

Note:

- 1) Despite his previous success, because of pride, the king would be driven from men and live with the beasts of the field, and eat grass as oxen for seven years, “till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” (verse 25).

- 2) When Nebuchadnezzar learned the lesson and came to understand that “the heavens do rule”, he would be reinstated to his kingdom (verse 26).
- 3) Daniel further counselled the king to “break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor”, hopefully to prolong peace in his life.
- 4) It shows Daniel understood that “God is no respecter of persons.” (1 Pet. 1:17), He will judge everyone according to their works. He is a merciful God, who also had an abundance of mercy for non-Jews.

Part Three: Verses 28-33. The Dream Comes True

1. Verses 28-30: “[28] All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. [29] At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. [30] The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?”

Note:

- 1) Twelve months later, as Nebuchadnezzar was strolling through the palace, captivated by the splendor before his eyes, a sudden surge of intense pride and self-exaltation arose in his heart. The king could not help but take credit and attribute the prosperity and glory of Babylon to himself. The well-meant warning in the dream was totally forgotten.
- 2. Verses 31-33:** “[31] While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, “O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. [32] And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” [33] The same hour

was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

Note:

- 1) "While the word was in the king's mouth", not spoken out yet, there came a voice from heaven. This voice should come from the angelic watcher (v.13, 23). The God of heaven read the heart of the king, and heard its whisperings of self-gratulation.
- 2) "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar." Heaven's visitation was immediate. His reason was taken away instantly, and he became as a beast. Eventually, he was locked up outside of the palace, "did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."
- 3) "For seven years he was thus degraded. For seven years he was an astonishment to his subjects. At the end of this time his reason was restored to him, and looking up in humility to the God of heaven, he recognized the divine hand in his chastisement. The transformation had come. The mighty monarch had become the humble child of God, obedient to His will. The despot had been changed into the wise, compassionate ruler. ⁷¹"

Part Four: Realization and Restoration

1. **Verses 34-37:** "[34] And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: [35] And all the inhabitants of the

⁷¹ Ellen White, Manuscript Releases, Vol. 7, p.68.

earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? [36] At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. [37] Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

Note:

- 1) At the end of seven years, the king’s understanding returned to him and he was reinstated to the throne of Babylon again, deeply realizing “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing”, the will of God is carried out by his army (verse 35).
- 2) The chapter closes with Nebuchadnezzar’s praise to “the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” (verse 37), which also explains the reason behind his issuing a decree to honor God in the beginning of the chapter (verse 1-3).

C. Missional Reflections

1. King Nebuchadnezzar was given two dreams each of which had a different focus. Both are connected with the missional emphasis on the kingdom of God. His dream in Chapter 2 focused on the establishment and long-reign of the kingdom of God, while the focus of the dream in Chapter 4 is the quality of the receiver of that kingdom.
2. Three times, the main point was reiterated (verse 17, 25, 32). It is significant for all times. Though the world may

seem to be in a state of constant change, God is still in control. He has a kingdom, but only the humble are qualified to enter it. Pride and the Kingdom of God are not compatible. God's kingdom is based upon the principle that Jesus announced in the first beatitude of the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 5:3).

3. The basest of men is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:6-8).
4. The contrast between King Nebuchadnezzar and the basest of men is obvious to all. Those who desire to enter the kingdom of God should learn a lesson from the life experience of King Nebuchadnezzar, to walk humbly before God. It teaches us that the missional emphasis should also be placed on humility in us and the audience we are reaching out to.
5. Though pride led to the fall of King Nebuchadnezzar, God's love for him was not finished. He continued to heal him and work with him. As the head of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar came out of Babylon and had a complete lifestyle change, eating only grass and living in the open air for seven years. As a result, his wisdom was restored and he was reinstated.
6. When warnings of mercy were sent to Nebuchadnezzar, he was also given a probationary period of twelve months before the judgment was executed. We all need to know

there is a limit to the probation of grace before the judgment of God falls. Repent today while there is still an opportunity.

7. Angelic watchers play an important role in the communication between heaven and earth. They are faithful messengers, and we are to work with them closely in carrying out the mission of God for our own salvation and that of our fellowmen.

“When we engage with all our hearts in the work, we are closely allied to the angels; we are co-workers with the angels and with Christ; and there is a sympathy with heaven and with us, a holy, elevated sympathy. We are brought a little closer to heaven, a little closer to the angelic hosts, a little closer to Jesus. Then let us engage in this work with all our energies.”⁷²

8. What is also amazing is that King Nebuchadnezzar’s conversion came after his health was restored. This maybe the case for many today. The health message and health reform may help restore vitality to the sick, awaken their souls and bring about conversion.
9. Finally, it should be borne in mind that even the king of Babylon could come out of it and be saved. In the same way, it is encouraging to know that even the head of spiritual Babylon is given opportunities to be saved to God’s kingdom.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Why was Nebuchadnezzar given a vision concerning his personal life? What can we learn about God from this incident?

⁷² Ellen White, *Evangelism*, p.292.

2. What is the thrust of the vision? What implications does that have for our day?
3. Why didn't Nebuchadnezzar call Daniel first to interpret his dream? How should Christians deal with daily challenges? Is it right to follow your cultural norm or not? Why or why not? State your reasons.
4. Is King Nebuchadnezzar's experience an encouragement or an intimidation to you? Why?
5. In Daniel 4, king Nebuchadnezzar was dethroned, driven out of the palace of Babylon and supplemented it with a natural way of life, which resulted in not only healing and the return of wisdom to his mind, but also a withdrawal of pride and a return to repentance. What does this tell us about God's people living in the last days?
6. Pride brings a fall. Do we have the right to humiliate people in order to make them humble?
7. How do you usually react to arrogant people? How would you treat such a person?
8. How was the kingdom of God advanced through this experience?

Chapter 9. The Fall of Babylon

A. The Story

Times changed. King Nebuchadnezzar passed away, now his grandson, Belshazzar, became the co-regent king, and as a result the kingdom was on its way to a quick and sure dissolution. Daniel was also retired and no longer serving in the palace.

Belshazzar held a banquet to a thousand of his lords and ordered the vessels from the temple of Jerusalem be used as cups for drinking wine. The wine of Babylon lured them to praise “the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.”

All of a sudden, there appeared a hand writing on the wall of the palace. As the mysterious characters slowly formed on the wall, before the drunken men and women, “as in panoramic view, the deeds of their evil lives; they seemed to be arraigned before the judgment bar of the eternal God, whose power they had just defied.”⁷³ The boisterous group became hushed. Upon seeing the mysterious hand on the wall, Belshazzar was greatly frightened and seized with inexplicable terror. He turned to the wise men of Babylon for help, but none could understand the handwriting, even though he offered the third place in his government.

Daniel was sought after and brought to the palace to interpret the writing. He scolded Belshazzar and concluded his interpretation by announcing that “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting”, and “Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” (verse 26-28).

⁷³ Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Kings*, p.524.

Belshazzar fulfilled his promise and promoted Daniel to the third place in his empire. However, he was killed the same night, “and Darius the Median took the kingdom.”

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verses 1-4. Belshazzar's Feast

1. Verses 1-4: “[1] Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. [2] Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. [3] Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. [4] They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.”

Note:

- 1) Belshazzar blindly trusted the fortification of the city wall of Babylon, and “made a great feast to a thousand of his lords” and drank before them.
- 2) Carried away by the wine, he ordered that the Jerusalem temple vessels be brought and used as cups for his guests to drink. This was open blasphemy against God.
- 3) The wine of Babylon excited the crowd, making them even crazier for idolatry.

Part Two: Verses 5-9. The Handwriting on the Wall

1. Verses 5-6: “[5] In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the

hand that wrote. [6] Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

Note:

- 1) "In the same hour". Justice came right in time. "Fingers of a man's hand", this most likely refers to the hand of the angelic watcher that appeared several times already in Chapter 4.
- 2) Verse 6 vividly portrays the terror of the frightened king. The handwriting on the wall sobered him up instantly. The king went from complacency to panic.

2. **Verses 7-9:** "[7] The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. [8] Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. [9] Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished."

Note:

- 1) In the midst of the extreme tension and panic, the king cried out for the wise men of Babylon to interpret the writing on the wall to pacify his terror.
- 2) The king offered an extraordinary reward to whoever would explain the mysterious writings, even to be "the third ruler in the kingdom", the other two being Belshazzar (553 – 539 B.C.) and Nabonidus (who ruled 555 – 539 B.C.).
- 3) As usual, the Babylonian wise men had no wisdom nor did they know anything about justice from heaven. The king became even more troubled.

Part Three: Verses 10-24. Daniel Was Called to Interpret the Handwriting

1. Verses 10-12: “[10] Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: [11] There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; [12] Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.”

Note:

- 1) At this junction, the queen came to the aid of the young monarch and suggested to call Daniel to interpret the writings. The very fact that she could come in without being summoned indicates that she had a unique position in the royal palace.
- 2) Judging from the familiarity of the queen with Daniel's interpreting of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, it is reasonable to believe she must have been the wife of king Nebuchadnezzar, the grandmother of Belteshazzar.
- 3) Her description of Daniel shows that she was a woman of experience and good understanding.
- 4) Ellen White confirms that the queen was the grandmother of the king. “He [Belteshazzar] had known of his grandfather's banishment, by the decree of God, from the society of men; and he was familiar with

Nebuchadnezzar's conversion and miraculous restoration.”⁷⁴

2. Verses 13-16: “[13] Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? [14] I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. [15] And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: [16] And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

Note:

- 1) Sixty plus years after Israel's captivity into Babylon, Daniel was an old man by now. The way Belteshazzar used his Jewish name to call him seemed to indicate the king was trying to identify his authenticity, a real Jew brought to Babylon during the time of Nebuchadnezzar, his grandfather.
- 2) Belteshazzar mentioned that he had heard good reports of Daniel, and further confessed that it was futile for the wise men of Babylon to interpret the writing on the wall.
- 3) In addition, Belshazzar encouraged Daniel and re-emphasized the reward for interpreting the writings.

3. Verses 17-24: “[17] Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to

⁷⁴ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p.522.

him the interpretation. [18] O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: [19] And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. [20] But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: [21] And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. [22] And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; [23] But hast lifted up thyself against the LORD of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: [24] Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.”

Note:

- 1) Daniel recounted the seven years' experience of king Nebuchadnezzar and re-emphasized the point which was highlighted three times in Chapter 5. That which Nebuchadnezzar had finally gained at the cost of untold suffering and humiliation, Belshazzar passed by with indifference.
- 2) He then scolded Belteshazzar for his pride, his intemperance and idolatry before interpreting the writings for him, which was a message of judgment from heaven.

- 3) This pattern would be repeated in the case of Stephen before heaven took away Israel's special privilege to be God's chosen people (Act. 7). And it would also be seen in Revelation. Heaven would review the history through the seven trumpets before pouring out the seven last plagues.

Part Four: Verses 25-31. Judgment and Its Execution

1. **Verses 25-29:** “[25] And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. [26] This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. [27] TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. [28] PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. [29] Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

Note:

- 1) Daniel interpreted the judgment of heaven announced through the writings on the wall. “God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it”, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting”, and “Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”
- 2) It should be noted that the way Daniel interpreted these writings may not fit in well with any known exegetical tools discovered or developed by modern hermeneutic scholars, but that was the way he did it and it was written in the Bible.
- 3) This explanation did not bode well with the king, but he made good on his promise. Daniel was promoted to the third place in the soon-destroyed kingdom. Daniel did not have much chance to serve the Babylonian kingdom anymore, but his newly rewarded position made him known to the Persians, who as a result placed him in a prominent position in the succeeding empire.

- 4) From the fact that Belshazzar honored his words for the award, it could be detected that he came back to his senses and accepted the divine judgment. In this regard, Ellen White wrote, “I have been shown what man is without a knowledge of the will of God. Crimes and iniquity fill up the measure of his life. But when the Spirit of God reveals to him the full meaning of the law, what a change takes place in his heart! Like Belshazzar, he reads intelligently the handwriting of the Almighty, and conviction takes possession of his soul. The thunders of God's word startle him from his lethargy, and he calls for mercy in the name of Jesus. And to that humble plea God always listens with a willing ear. He never turns the penitent away comfortless.”⁷⁵
2. **Verses 30-31:** “[30] In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. [31] And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.”

Note:

- 1) Belshazzar was slain the same night. Like the thief on the cross, he accepted Jesus at the last minute. This story was written in the Bible as an example for later generations to show that it is never too late to repent and come to the Savior while probation is still open.
- 2) Babylon was history now and replaced by the Mede-Persian Empire.

C. Missional Reflections

1. Chapter 5 depicts how drinking dragged people deeper and deeper into deep idolatry, fornication and blasphemes against God in historical Babylon. In the same way, the wine of spiritual Babylon will lure nations into deep

⁷⁵ *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 4, p.14.

defilement and idolatry at the very end of world history. To wake people up is the responsibility and mission of the last generation of saints.

2. The fact that writing appeared on the wall of the Babylonian palace reveals the truth that when evil is committed on earth, there are always unseen witnesses present to record them for a final judgment. Each person's character is being weighed in the balance of the heavenly sanctuary.
3. As evidenced by the terrified paralysis of Belshazzar at the sight of the handwriting on the wall, those who presumptuously and audaciously offend God will not escape the intensity of their terror at God's judgment. "Fear God and give glory to Him" is the calling for now.
4. The fact that the wise men of Babylon understood neither the prophecies given in the vision nor the unusual warnings that appeared on the wall testifies to the fact that the wicked cannot understand the prophecies and warnings concerning the final events, as expounded in Daniel and Revelation (Dan. 12:10; Rev. 13:18). It takes the people of God to interpret His prophecies and give the warnings to the people of the earth.
5. As proud, disrespectful and evil as Belshazzar was, there still was room for him to return to God, even at the last minute before his probation closed. But no one should wait till the last minute, for they know not for sure which will come first, tomorrow or an accident. Now is the time for us to come to the Lord just as we are.
6. The wine of Babylon intensified false worship in ancient times. Today, the spiritual wine of Babylon leads to unclean spiritual worship.

	Ancient Babylon	Spiritual Babylon
1	Wine of Babylon led to blaspheme against God.	Wine of spiritual Babylon will lead to committing blasphemous sins against God.
2	Wine of Babylon encouraged false worship.	The spiritual wine of end-time Babylon encourages false worship, worship of the beast and his image, and receiving his mark on the hand or head.
3	Writing on the wall	The second and third angel's message, the most severe warnings.
4	Daniel did not drink the wine of Babylon nor commit fornication with her.	While the kings of the earth and the inhabitants of the earth drank Babylon's wine of fornication, the remnant people of God had no part in it.
5	Babylon fell.	Babylon will be destroyed at the second coming of Jesus. Rev. 19.

7. The reward of this world cannot last long, even though it is given to God's people like Daniel as he was promoted to be the third in the kingdom. This was removed when the kingdom came to an end that night, together with the killing of the king. It teaches us how short-lived the rewards of this world are. What we should seek first is the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33).

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Should Christians drink wine?
2. Why could not the wise men of Babylon read the handwriting on the wall? Do you see the handwriting on the wall for today?

3. In Daniel 5, we see that destruction follows idolatry. What lesson should the world learn from it?
4. Explain the meaning of the words written on the wall in Daniel 5:25.
5. How should we guard ourselves against drinking the wine of Babylon in our day?
6. Did Belshazzar repent and have hope of salvation? What lessons can we learn from his life?

Chapter 10. A Night in the Lion's Den

A. The Story

Coming to Chapter 6, Babylon has already become history, and we have entered the era of the Persian empire. As a man of wisdom, experience and integrity, Daniel was appointed as the first of three presidents, overseeing other princes in the kingdom, thus arousing the evil envy from other officers. Failing to find any faults in Daniel, they made a plot to trap him “concerning the law of his God” (verse 5). It was proposed to the king that he sign a firm decree “that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.” (verse 7). Without knowing the hidden agenda of the officers, King Darius signed the writing and the decree which could not be changed or altered thereafter, according to the law of the Medes and Persians. (verses 8-9).

The Babylonian empire was replaced by the Persian empire in 539 B.C., already 66 years after Daniel was taken into captivity and only a few more years before the fulfillment of the 70 years prophecy and promise found in Jeremiah for the Israelites to return to their homeland (Jer. 25:11, 29:10, cf. 2 Ch. 36: 21). It is not hard to imagine how earnest Daniel must have been waiting for that day to come, as can be seen from Daniel’s earnest prayer in Chapter 9 when the end of the 70 years was actually approaching (Dan. 9:1-19). The burning desire to return was so strong that nothing could have prevented him from praying to the Lord to make it happen. The imposing of the man-made law on religion did not make any difference to him. He prayed as usual, three times a day, giving thanks before his God.

This was reported to the king. Finally coming to the realization of what was the real intent of the decree, the king

was displeased, but it was too late. Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. The king could only hope that the God of Daniel would deliver him.

True to the good wish of the king, an angel was sent to protect Daniel, in spite of the fact that the mouth of the den was sealed with a stone. In the end, Daniel was delivered, and his accusers and their families were thrown into the den and killed by the lions.

Like Nebuchadnezzar, the Persian King Darius made a decree to exalt the God of Daniel and praised His wonderful delivery. The mission of God was further spread, the name of God “shall be great among the heathen” (Mal. 1:11).

Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verses 1-9. The Plot against Daniel

1. Verses 1-3: “[1] It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; [2] And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. [3] Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.”

Note:

1) Daniel was chosen as one of first of three presidents over all the princes. The thought was to give him more responsibility over the whole realm, “because an excellent spirit was in him.”

2. Verses 4-5: “[4] Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. [5] Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”

Note:

- 1) Daniel was just an old Jewish man, how could he hold such an important position? Jealousy and envy filled the hearts of the other presidents and princes. They sought in vain to find mistakes or faults in Daniel’s handling of government business.
- 2) They made a plot to trap Daniel concerning the law of his God.

3. Verses 6-9: “[6] Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. [7] All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. [8] Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. [9] Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.”

Note:

- 1) These jealous presidents and princes trapped King Darius in having him pass a decree on limiting prayers for thirty days to any god or man except the king. The offender of this law would be cast into a den of lions.

- 2) Flattery and vanity confused the king's mind and blurred his judgment. Without seeing through the hidden agenda and heinous animosity revealed in the decree, the king signed it, thus making it unalterable.

Part Two: Verses 11-18. Daniel in the Lion's Den

1. **Verses 10-11:** “[10] Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. [11] Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.”

Note:

- 1) Daniel ignored the man-made decree and continued to pray three times a day, facing Jerusalem, “as he did aforetime.” It should not be an exaggeration to say that not a moment passed in Daniel's heart that he did not think of Jerusalem.
- 2) He had been constantly praying and making supplications before God for his people and the holy city.
- 3) The plotters watched Daniel for an entire day and found what they wanted.

2. **Verses 12-13:** “[12] Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; “Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. [13] Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.” [14] Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till

the going down of the sun to deliver him. [15] Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.”

Note:

- 1) The next morning, they rushed to the king and reminded him of the recently signed decree and the punishment for any violators.
- 2) Still oblivious to what they were after, the king affirmed that truly the signed decree could not be altered, probably dimly seeing some ominous sign already.
- 3) The plotters then smugly pointed out Daniel as the violator.
- 4) One can imagine how regretful the king must have felt! From morning to sunset, the king tried to save Daniel from the punishment. But he was confronted with the law of the Persians.

3. Verses 16-18: “[16] Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. [17] And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. [18] Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.”

Note:

- 1) There was no way out of carrying out the punishment according to the decree. Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den. However, before throwing Daniel into the lion’s den, the king uttered his good wish that the God of Daniel would deliver him.

- 2) A stone was brought to block the mouth of the den. Both the king and the lords sealed it with their signets to make sure the case was irreversible. In a sense, Daniel's case was sealed.
- 3) With a deep sense of guilt and helplessness, the king was troubled the whole night.

Part Three. Verses 19-28. Three Outcomes

1. Verses 19-23: “[19] Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. [20] And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? [21] Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. [22] My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. [23] Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.”

Note:

- 1) Early the next morning King Darius hastened to the den to find out Daniel's situation. He cried out loud, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?”
- 2) Daniel answered with his usual grace and courtesy, “O king, live for ever.” Daniel did not forget proper etiquette, even in the den. He reported to the king why and how he was saved.
- 3) An angel was sent to shut the lions' mouths because Daniel was innocent before God and before the king. Daniel was taken up out of the den. His faith saved him.

2. Verse 24: “[24] And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.”

3. Verses 25-28: “[25] Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. [26] I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. [27] He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”

Note:

- 1) The whole event developed into three outcomes.
 - First outcome: Daniel was lifted out of the lions' den.
The king's first feeling "was great joy, and he commanded that Daniel should be tied up from the pit. So Daniel was tied up from the pit, unharmed, trusting in his God." (verse 23). When the king brought Daniel up, his sorrow turned into joy. Daniel being lifted up out of the lions' den was the first outcome.
 - Second outcome: the accusers were punished.
The accusers were thrown into the lions' den: as soon as Daniel came out, the king ordered his accusers to be punished, together with their families. Those who harm others harm their own lives! "He that diggeth a pit, himself shall fall into it; and he that rolleth a stone, it shall roll back upon him." (Prov. 26:27) "What a man sows, that he also reaps." (Gal. 6:7).

In many pagan countries, the guilt of a transgression of one man is often connected to their families. The nation

of Persia was no exception, and these men should have been aware of this punishment's existence when they first set out to frame Daniel. In contrast, Israel's law was more reasonable: "Thou shalt not kill the father, neither shalt thou kill the son for the father's sake: every one that is killed is guilty of himself." (Deut. 24:16; cf. Num. 18:20)

- Third outcome: God is glorified.

Mal. 1:11 "For My name will be great among the Gentiles." Again, we see that God's name was made known to the world through another gentile monarch, with a focus on his everlasting kingdom and power of deliverance.

4. **Verse 28:** "[28] So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

C. Missional Reflections

1. The fact that old age did not prevent Daniel from serving the state as an important officer reveals that Daniel must have been a lifetime health reformer and enjoyed vibrant health. His experience, wisdom and sound judgment must have been obvious to all, and commanded awe, respect and trust. Christians, as God's missionaries, should also practice a healthy lifestyle and bear good witness in this regard.
2. Daniel worked diligently and conscientiously, not missing a beat in his career. He was faultless in the sight of the king and innocent before God. Daniel set a noble example for later generations to follow. Doing everything to the glory of God is itself practical and visible missionary activity.
3. Daniel was a man of prayer. He could not bow down to man-made laws or stop his prayers. Like Daniel, we should also pray under all circumstances, especially when confronted with man-made laws to worship the beast and

the image of the beast as we are approaching the second coming of Jesus and returning back to the heavenly Jerusalem.

4. Even though Daniel was trapped, God protected and delivered him. For the believers living in the end-time, there will be traps designed by Satan, and they may suffer, but God will protect and deliver them in the end.

“God did not prevent Daniel's enemies from casting him into the lions' den; He permitted evil angels and wicked men thus far to accomplish their purpose; but it was that He might make the deliverance of His servant more marked, and the defeat of the enemies of truth and righteousness more complete. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee" (Psalm 76:10), the psalmist has testified. Through the courage of this one man who chose to follow right rather than policy, Satan was to be defeated, and the name of God was to be exalted and honored.”⁷⁶

5. Just like there was a king caring for Daniel, there is a King of kings and Lord of lords who cares for His people in the time of trouble at the end.

“Heaven is very near those who suffer for righteousness' sake. Christ identifies His interests with the interests of His faithful people; He suffers in the person of His saints, and whoever touches His chosen ones touches Him. The power that is near to deliver from physical harm or distress is also near to save from the greater evil, making it possible for the servant of God to maintain his integrity under all circumstances, and to triumph through divine grace.”⁷⁷

6. Daniel serves as both a type of Jesus and the end-time believers.

⁷⁶ *Prophets and Kings*, p.543.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.545.

Daniel and Jesus

	Daniel	Jesus
1	Betrayed by his colleagues	Betrayed by His friends
2	Arrested because of his praying	Arrested while praying
3	Thrown into a lion's den innocent	Crucified on the cross innocent
4	Slept peacefully in the den	Rested in the tomb
5	Came out of the den	Came out of the tomb
6	The plotters were punished	The wicked will be punished.
Conclusion	Daniel served as a type of Jesus. His three friends also served as types of the three close disciples of Jesus.	

Daniel and End-time Saints

	Daniel	End-time Saints
1	Not allowed to pray to God and only permitted to pray to a human-power	Not allowed to buy or sell except they have the mark of the beast
2	Daniel was trapped by his colleagues	The remnant will be persecuted by other nominal believers
3	The mouth of the den was sealed.	The remnant will be sealed with the seal of the living God.
4	An angel protected Daniel from being harmed by lions, being found innocent before God and man.	Angels will protect God's remnant from being harmed by Satan, the roaring lion, and their sins shall be cleansed from the sanctuary.
5	Daniel prospered with king Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire.	The remnant will prosper with the King of kings.
6	Daniel prayed under all circumstances, especially close to the end of the 70 year prophecy, the time	The remnant should pray earnestly as Daniel did as the return of Jesus approaches.

	God's people were to return to Jerusalem.	
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7. Our words represent our character. Three different languages were used in Daniel 6.

- 1) Enemies: despise. Verse 13: "Daniel of the captives of Judah."
- 2) Darius: affirmative. Verse 20: "Daniel, the servant of the living God."
- 3) Daniel: courtesy. Verse 21: "Long live the king!" These were the first words Daniel uttered when he heard the king calling to him in the lion's den. The king called and said, "Will the God whom you always serve save you from the lions?" He thought Daniel might be alive in there, hoping that he would still be able to speak, or that he might happen to answer him. Daniel was thankful to God, but he also still remembered the courtesy a king deserves and so responded in a polite manner.

8. The story in Chapter 6 also demonstrates three attitudes demonstrated in life.

- 1) Take everything in stride. Daniel remained calm, as he often did, and did not react strongly to the changing circumstances around him. In other words, he remained as unperturbed as usual in that wonderful spirit of his. And what about the king's attitude?
- 2) Flattering, despising, and framing. On the one hand, Daniel's accusers did their best to flatter and elevate the king before him; on the other hand, they reduced Daniel to the lowest position. They despised Daniel, calling him the captive slave of the lost nation.
- 3) Planning for deliverance. The king's attitude was to come up with a plan for Daniel's deliverance, for he was intent on saving Daniel.

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Why was Daniel chosen at such an old age by the Persian government to be the first chief president of the Persian empire?
2. When civil law contradicts the law of God, what should we do?
3. Why was Daniel delivered? How do we know we will also be protected and delivered in the time of trouble?
4. Do you ever pray for your country and your kinsmen? What do you plan to do to help your people?
5. How was Daniel a type of Jesus as well as the saints living in the end-times?
6. How was the kingdom of God proclaimed through this incident in Chapter 6?

Chapter 11. A Panoramic View of the Future

Daniel 7 is a counterpart of Daniel 2. It has the same sequence of events and focus, differing only in symbols. Like Daniel 2, the focus of Chapter 7 is on the setting up, the establishment and the advancement of the kingdom of God. In similar ways, the prophecies on the evolution of history is intended to delineate the time for the establishment of God's kingdom and to provide visible evidence for people to place their faith and hope in the everlasting kingdom of God.

A. The Story

The time was the first year of the reign of Belshazzar. Like king Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel had a dream while sleeping on his bed. The vision was not long. Daniel used fourteen verses to describe it and fourteen verses for its interpretation.

Four beasts were deployed to represent four successive kingdoms, starting from the kingdom of Babylon. The first three beasts and the first phase of the fourth beast were basically similar in nature, but the second phase of the fourth animal was diverse. The fourth beast attracted Daniel's attention, prompting him to inquire an explanation from the standing angel. It turned out this was the power that would persecute God's people and think even to change God's law.

However, it was during the second phase of the fourth animal that the Ancient of Days would sit in judgment, and books would be opened to conduct an investigative judgment. When this process shall be finished, the dominion, kingdom and glory will be given to the Son of man. The Ancient of Days would come to give judgment to the saints of the most High, and they will possess the kingdom forever and ever. In the end,

the fourth beast and all previous wicked powers will be destroyed. At that time, the people of God will inherit the kingdom and serve God forever.

Daniel was greatly troubled after seeing the vision, but kept these things in his heart.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verses 1-14. The Vision

1. Verse 1: “[1] In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.”

Note:

- 1) In 553 B.C., the first year of the reign of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream on his bed which was similar to King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream half a century ago. The visions are divided into two parts, each pointing to a specific event.
- 2) Literal structure. Various proposals have been presented on the structural analyses of Daniel 7. However, for practical purposes, Dan. 7:2-14 can be viewed as the following table.

The Corresponding Structure of Dan. 7:2-14			
Earthly events marking out the timeline for the heavenly event	Verses 2-8	Verses 11-12	Earthly events occurring as a result of heavenly events
Heavenly Events	Verses 9-10	Verses 13-14	Heavenly Events

Basically, verses 2-8 layout the timeline for the event that is taking place in heaven during verses 9 and 10. However, for a symmetrical structure, verses 11-14 were reversed. That is, verses 11 and 12, which are actually events that will take place as a result of the heavenly events in verses 13 and 14, were placed before them.

2. Verses 2-8: “[2] Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. [3] And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. [4] The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. [5] And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. [6] After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. [7] After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. [8] I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

Note:

- 1) Verses 2-8 describe the changing scenes on earth. The four beasts are a lion, bear, leopard, and a nameless beast, which is to be followed by a little horn power.
- 2) As mentioned above, the lion, bear, leopard and nameless beast have something in common, they are all beasts. In

other words, there was something “continual” in these symbolic representations, something of the same nature continued from one power to the next.

- 3) However, the fourth beast was “diverse from all the beasts that were before it.” Its diversity does not refer so much to the first phase of the nameless beast, but rather the little horn that appeared during its second phase.
- 4) Like the other beasts before it, the little horn did something similar to the previous beast, conquering three of the first horns, “plucked [them] up by the roots”. It also exhibited something totally different in nature from the previous beasts. The little horn power had “eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

3. Verses 9-10: “[9] I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. [10] A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”

Note:

- 1) When it comes to the little horn power, the scene shifted from earth to heaven, where Daniel saw thrones cast down and the Ancient of Days sit surrounded by countless angels. He was also shown that “the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” (verses 9-10). It seems that this is a judgment involving checking books or investigating books. It can be conveniently called “the investigative judgment”, differentiating it from the judgment of the wicked during the millilumen.
- 2) It should be noted that the correlation between these two seems to be that the motion on earth is revealed to locate the timing of the heavenly event, namely, the investigative

judgment, a part of setting up the kingdom in heaven to identify its candidates. The Ancient of the Days is the One who officiates the judgment.

- 3) The word “thrones” is in the plural form. Evidently there were more than one throne which were put in place. In comparison with Revelation 4-5, it is clear that twenty-four elders were sitting on thrones, besides the Ancient of days, or God the Father. Further studies will show that the redeemed will also sit on thrones after their resurrection at the second coming of Christ. (Rev. 4-5, 20:4-5).
- 4) Sometimes it is thought that Jesus was the one who took charge of the investigative judgment process, for “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.” (Jn. 5:27). But the immediate context reveals that this judgment is directly connected with resurrection (Jn. 5:28-29).
- 5) “The books were opened.” These may mean several books.
 - The complete record book of human history. This is the book held in God’s hand (Rev. 5:1).

“Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.”⁷⁸

- One such book is the book of life, as mentioned in Daniel 12, “and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” (Dan. 12:1; cf. Lk. 10:20; Rev. 3:5, 21:27). It should be noted that the book of life has only the names of those who confess their sins and accept Jesus, but does not necessarily record their deeds. When the investigative judgment is over, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and

⁷⁸ Ellen White, *Christ Object Lessons*, p.294.1.

I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3:5), and his sins will be blotted out from the record book of heaven (Rev. 5:1). Consequently, Jesus will erase the name of the person who does not overcome from the book of life. Their sins will remain in the record book for further judgment.

- Also, "a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name." (Mal. 3:16). This is the book to record the good deeds of the righteous.

"Every impulse of the Holy Spirit leading men to goodness and to God, is noted in the books of heaven, and in the day of God the workers through whom He has wrought will be commended."⁷⁹

- 6) "Thus was presented to the prophet's vision the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered 'according to his works.' The Ancient of Days is God the Father. Says the psalmist: 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.' Psalm 90:2. It is He, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, in number 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,' attend this great tribunal."⁸⁰ (underline added).

4. **Verses 11-14:** "[11] I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. [12] As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.361.

⁸⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p.479.

dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. [13] I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. [14] And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

Note:

- 1) After the thrones were put in place and the Ancient of days did sit in verse 9, the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and was brought near before the Ancient of Days in verse 13.
A common error in reading verse 13 is to mistake the event described here as the second coming of Christ in the glory of the Father. However, what verse 13 described was the Son of man coming “near before him”, the Ancient of Days who was sitting on the throne in the judgment hall in heaven, not descending from heaven to the earth with the Father!
Details count!
- 2) Verses 9 and 13 are both descriptions of scenes in the beginning of the solemn heavenly investigative judgment.
- 3) Comparing this passage with Revelation 5, it can be seen that the Son of man was standing, like a high priest in the earthly sanctuary, in the midst of four living creatures and the twenty-four elders “stood a Lamb as it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6). The standing position is contrasted by the sitting position of the Judge on the throne (Dan. 7:9).
- 4) “Jesus will appear as their advocate, to plead in their behalf before God. ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ 1 John 2:1. ‘For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.’ ‘Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by

Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.’ Hebrews 9:24; 7:25.”⁸¹

- 5) “ ‘And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.’ Daniel 7:13. . . . The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of days in heaven to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God . . . to perform the work of investigative judgment, and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.”⁸²
- 6) Verse 10 parallels with verse 14. In Verse 10, we see thousands of thousands of angels attending the judgment. The books were opened, indicating the start of the process of investigation. On the other hand, verse 14 follows the process in verse 10 and signifies the event after the investigative judgment ends. It answers the question that has been asked from the fall of Adam, “when would the dominion be taken back from Satan the Deceiver?”
- 7) A series of events would take place after the close of the investigative judgment.
 - a. At the close of the investigative judgment, the Son of man will take off his priestly robe and put on his kingly robe, and will be given “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom.”
 - b. “All people, nations, and languages, should serve him”, this will happen after the second coming when all the righteous will be received into heaven.

⁸¹ *The Great Controversy*, p.482.

⁸² Ellen White, *The Faith I Live By*, p.209.

c. “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” This refers to the kingdom of God which will descend to the earth after the 1,000 years of judgment in heaven and will stand here on the new earth forever and ever.

All of these events are wrapped up in one statement. They were not clear to Daniel, as it would be further revealed that these events would be sealed till the time of the end.

- 8) Contrary to verses 1-8 which were given to lead to the event in verses 9-10, verses 11-12 are events which will take place after the key event in verses 13-14. Here we have a reserve order. Please refer to the symmetrical structural table as shown above.
- 9) Verse 11 states the reason for and the way to punish the horn and beast. The reason is “because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake”; the result is that “the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” at the second coming of the Son of man. (2 Thess. 2:8).
- 10) Verse 12 predicts the fate of the rest of the beasts. Yes, their dominion was taken away before the fourth beast came on the scene, “yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” Their cases were not closed but open till they will be judged during the 1,000 years and then be executed after the second resurrection (Rev. 20:12-15), because “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Mt. 22:30). Also, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” (2 Pet. 2:9). (emphasis added).

How verses 2-8 lead to verses 9-10, and verses 11-12 to verses 13-14 can be summarized in the following chart.

	Events on Earth	Events in Heaven
Text	Verses 2-8	Verses 9-10

Key Player	Little horn	Ancient of the Days
Timing	The evolving of earthly powers to the little horn power	
Event	The setting up of the heavenly kingdom by identifying the candidates through investigative judgment. Compare Dan. 2:44.	
Text	Verses 11-12	Verses 13-14
Event	Destruction of the little horn power and other earthly powers.	The Son of man receives the kingdom and afterward.
Key Player	Little horn/other beasts	Son of Man
Event	The destruction of the little horn and other beasts at the appointed time relate to the Son of man receiving the kingdom at the close of the heavenly judgment and the events that follow after that.	

Part Two: Verses 15-28. The Interpretation

1. Verses 15-18. Initial Explanation: “[15] I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. [16] I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. [17] These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. [18] But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.”

Note:

- 1) The visions deeply troubled Daniel’s spirit (verse 15). So, he asked “one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this.” (verse 16). It seems there were more than one that stood by. As we will see in Chapter 8, there were at least two holy ones that stood by. (Dan. 8:13-14).
- 2) One may wonder why Daniel felt so grieved and troubled? Isn’t the ending optimistic and bright enough that “all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass

away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (verse 14)?

- 3) If we look back at Isaiah's reaction when he saw the glory of God in the holy of holies (Isa. 6), we may be able to understand Daniel better.

"As Isaiah beheld this revelation of the glory and majesty of his Lord, he was overwhelmed with a sense of the purity and holiness of God. How sharp the contrast between the matchless perfection of his Creator, and the sinful course of those who, with himself, had long been numbered among the chosen people of Israel and Judah! "Woe is me!" he cried; "for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Verse 5. Standing, as it were, in the full light of the divine presence within the inner sanctuary, he realized that if left to his own imperfection and inefficiency, he would be utterly unable to accomplish the mission to which he had been called."⁸³

- 4) The same feelings must have seized Daniel as he beheld the glorious and solemn scene of the heavenly judgment hall. How could it be possible for him and his own people to make it to the kingdom which shall not be destroyed?
- 5) Daniel's reaction to the vision would be repeated in the spirit of John when he saw "in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals..... And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." (Rev. 5:1,4).
- 6) To comfort him, one of the angels that stood by told him the sum of the vision in verses 17-18. Earthly kingdoms would come and go, but the saints of the most High shall possess the everlasting kingdom forever. That is a glorious promise, and there is the hope for the people of God.

⁸³ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p.307.

7) “The great plan of redemption results in fully bringing back the world into God's favor. All that was lost by sin is restored. Not only man but the earth is redeemed, to be the eternal abode of the obedient. For six thousand years, Satan has struggled to maintain possession of the earth. Now God's original purpose in its creation is accomplished. ‘The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever’ (Daniel 7:18).”⁸⁴ (emphasis added)

2. **Verses 19-22.** The fourth beast and saint of the most High: “[19] Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; [20] And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. [21] I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; [22] Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”

Note:

- 1) It should be noted that the 4th beast with its little horn not only takes up more space than other beasts in the visions, but appeared twice (v. 7-8, 11). Therefore, Daniel wanted to “know the truth of the fourth beast” (verse 19). He recounted the fourth beast and the little horn, giving three more details about his nails, his look and its war against the saints and prevailing over them (v. 20-21).
- 2) But the key event which reverses things is when “the Ancient of days came” and “judgment was given to the saints of the most High” (verse 22). It implies the failure

⁸⁴ Ibid., *Amazing Grace*, p.370.

and demise of the 4th beast. It also signifies the time for the saints to possess the kingdom. (verse 22).

- 3) It should be noted that the purpose of the coming of the Ancient of Days is to give judgment to the saints of the most High. As the Father gave the authority of judgment to Jesus to decide who should be in the first resurrection and who will be in the second resurrection (Jn. 5:27-29), so does the Ancient of the Days come with Him at His second coming to give judgment to the saints of the most High so they can enter the kingdom of God as priests and kings to judge the wicked for 1,000 years. (Rev. 20:4).
- 4) “The saints of the most High”. This phrase is significant for it includes all the people of God, not just Daniel’s own people. It shows the broad mission scope of God.
- 5) Let it be reiterated that the coming of the Ancient of Days with the Son of man at His second advent means the destruction of the kingdom of the fourth beast and the triumph of the saints, restoring them to an everlasting kingdom. That is the conclusive event of the visions in Chapter 7. The investigative judgment as described in Dan. 7:9-10 is the preparatory process leading to this conclusion.
- 6) “Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High. Daniel 7:22.
At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: ‘I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.’ Revelation 20:4, 6”⁸⁵

3. **Verses 23-25:** “[23] Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. [24] And the ten horns out of this

⁸⁵ Ellen White, *Heaven*, p.119.

kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. [25] And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

Note:

- 1) The words of the angel in these verses were an explanation of verses 7-8 focusing on the fourth beast and its expansion and development.
- 2) These cover the events of both the fourth beast and the little horn which grew afterward and can be considered as the second phase of the little horn. The little horn did what the powers before him did and conquered three kings. History shows that the removal of these three horns was fulfilled in dissolving the Arian Heruli (476-493), Vandals (534) and the Ostrogoths (538), each of which had theological and doctrinal differences with the Roman Catholic Church and comprised the principle obstruction to the rise of the “little horn” power. (Readers can refer to Uriah Smith for a more detailed discussion of these military campaigns).
- 3) However, the emphasis was placed on the diversity of the little horn in its non-military activities, namely, blasphemy against God in its attempt to change times and laws as well as persecution of the saints for a period of three and half times.
- 4) Notice the text says the little horn could only “think to change times and laws”, because the law of God cannot be changed or altered by any human authority. “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Mt. 5:18). Human authorities may think they have implemented the changes, and thus have changed “times and laws”, but that was only in their “thinking.”

5) Historically, the Roman Catholic Church claimed it changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, as can be seen in the following reference from the *Kansas City Catholic*:

"The Catholic Church of its own infallible authority created Sunday a holy day to take the place of the Sabbath of the old law."⁸⁶

In *The Convert's Catechism of the Catholic Doctrine* by Peter Geiermann, we also find the following Q&A regarding why the Catholic church keeps Sunday instead of Sabbath:

"Q: Which is the Sabbath day?

"A: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Q: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"A: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A. D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."⁸⁷

6) "They shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." This was also accurately fulfilled in history. For 1260 years from 538 when the Papacy became the supreme power in Rome to 1798 when the French general Berthier took pope Pius VI prisoner on February 20, 1798.⁸⁸ This period is well-known as "the medieval dark ages".

7) Eyes have the connotation of understanding or wisdom. Eyes like a man indicate a system based on human, rather than divine, wisdom.

⁸⁶ *Kansas City Catholic*, Feb. 9, 1893.

⁸⁷ *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, by Rev. Peter Geiermann, C. SS. R., page 50, third edition, 1913, a work which received the "apostolic blessing" of Pope Pius X, Jan. 25, 1910.

⁸⁸ <http://www.historyorb.com/events/date/1798>

	Description (v. 7-8)	Further Description (v. 19-22)	Interpretation (v. 23-25)
1	Dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly (v. 7)	Exceeding dreadful (v. 19)	
2	Great iron teeth (v. 7)	Whose teeth were of iron (v. 19)	
		Has nails of brass (v.19)	
3	Diverse from all the beasts that were before it (v. 7)	Diverse from all the others (v. 19)	Diverse from all kingdoms (v. 23)
4	It devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it. (v. 7)	Devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet (v. 19)	[It] shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. (v. 23)
5	Ten horns (v. 7)	Ten horns in his head (v.20)	Ten kings that shall arise (v. 24)
6	Another little horn (v. 8)	Other horn came up (v. 20)	Another after them; diverse from the first (v. 24)
7	Three horns plucked up by the roots (v. 8)	Three horns fell	Subdue three kings (v. 24)
8	Eyes of man (v. 8)	Horn that had eyes (v. 20)	
9	A mouth speaking great things (v. 8)	A mouth that spake very great things (v. 20)	Speak great words against the most High (v. 25)

		Whose look was more stout than his fellows (v. 20)	
		Made war with the saints and prevailed against them. (v. 21)	Wear out the saints of the most High (v. 25)
			Think to change times and laws (v. 25)
			[saints] given into his hand, a time and times and the dividing of time. (v.25)

4. Verses 26-27: “[26] But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. [27] And 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, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

Note:

- 1) It should be noticed that the evil power would last three and half times or years or a literal 1260 years (Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6). As mentioned above, when the time comes, its dominion shall be removed. However, verse 26 mentions the dominion of this power will be taken away and consumed and be utterly destroyed. It implies that this power would go through a “resurrection” after the judgment was set in heaven.
- 2) Verse 27 predicts that the saints of the most High shall inherit the everlasting kingdom. “The greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven” points to the new earth

where there will not be any evil angels or wicked people anymore.

- 3) “The kingdom of grace is now being established as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place till the second coming of Christ to this world. ‘The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven’ is to ‘be given to the people of the saints of the most High’ (Dan. 7:27).”⁸⁹
- 4) The basic order of events can be seen as follows,
 - a. The fourth beast emerges;
 - b. The beast becomes ten kingdoms;
 - c. A diverse power comes up and subdues three kings;
 - d. This little horn power speaks great words against the most High, thinks it can change times and laws; and it persecutes the saints of the most High;
 - e. Its dominion is taken away at the end of 1260 years;
 - f. Judgment is set in heaven for investigative judgment to approve the candidates for the kingdom of God;
 - g. Sometime after that, the beast power comes back to life again, but its dominion will be taken away and consumed when the Ancient of Days comes with the Son of man at the second advent, and will be utterly destroyed after the 1,000 years; and
 - h. The saints of the most High will then inherit the dominion and kingdom and serve and obey God forever and ever.

The order of events can be summarized in the following table:

⁸⁹ Ellen White, *In Heavenly Places*, p.340.

	Events	Description	Further Description	Interpretation
1	Investigative Judgment	1.The thrones were cast down; 2.The Ancient of days did sit; 3.Countless angels ministered unto him; 4.Judgment was set; 5.The books opened (v.9-10). 6.The Son of man came with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days.		But the judgment shall sit (v. 26).
2	The End of the Investigative Judgment	[He] was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom,		They shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. (v. 26).
3	Second Advent		Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High (v. 22).	
4	Hereafter	That all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which	And the time came that the saints possessed the	And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,

		shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.	kingdom. (v. 22)	shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (v. 27)
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5. Verse 28: “[28] Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.”

Note:

- 1) The visions ended well, however, Daniel was greatly troubled. To him, there seemed to be no connection between what he saw and Jeremiah's 70-years prophecy. In his visions, he only saw the changes of kingdoms on earth, nothing was said about the return of the Israelites to their homeland. What confused him further was that the people of the saints of the most High would suffer persecution for “a time and times and the dividing of time”, which did not look like three and half years, but 1,260 literal years. How did that relate to the 70-years prophecy of Jeremiah?
- 2) Secondly, nothing was said about the destroyed temple of Jerusalem. What Daniel saw was the great and solemn day of investigative judgment in heaven. There the sins of the people of God which were once forgiven were seen again recorded in the books in heaven. Even though the explanation from the angel contained a blessed ending, who can make it while their sins are still recorded in heaven? How would the investigative judgment in heaven end?

- 3) Worse, after 1,260 years finished and the investigative judgment starts, this evil force would make a comeback. So when, exactly, will it be halted and punished?
- 4) With these questions in mind, there is little wonder that Daniel's "cogitations much troubled me", and "my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."

It would take another vision to address these unresolved questions in Daniel's mind. That vision would come in two years' time and was recorded in the following chapter.

C. Missional Reflections

1. Daniel 7 is about the tale of two kingdoms. All earthly kingdoms will perish, but the kingdom of God together with its principles will last forever. The primary burden of the mission of God is to inform people of this everlasting kingdom and stir up their desire for the Kingdom of God.
2. "From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, we need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld—power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring—how completely has it passed away! As "the flower of the grass," it has perished. James 1:10. So perished the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the kingdoms of Grecia and Rome. And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ *Prophets and Kings*, p.548.

- 3 The fourth beast had Daniel's attention. It is diverse from the rest of the beasts in that it is not only political, but also religious, a combination of religion and state. In our days, we should also watch for the combination of religion and state.
- 4 The little horn power is revealed to have two stages: the first stage is given 1,260 years, the second stage will rise again after the investigative judgment begins in heaven, but will be consumed and destroyed at the second coming of Christ. This shows a pattern that the union of state and religion would first separate, then merge together later. This trend would also be true for us today.
- 5 Even though in Daniel's mind, his concern was mostly, if not only, the Israelites, in the dream, the phrase "the Israelites" was avoided and replaced by "saints of the Most High", which has a much broader coverage and connotations than the mere historical Israelites. The mission of God concerns not only Israel, but the whole world.
- 6 The contrast between the saints of God and the wicked is revealed in verses 12, 14, 18, 27. The wicked will be slain, destroyed, burnt into ashes and be no more (v. 12). But the saints of the most High from "all people, nations, and languages" shall serve the Son of man in "his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" and possess the kingdom (v. 14, 18, 27). Again, there is no room here for the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Only the saints will enjoy eternal life in the everlasting kingdom, no wicked will live forever. It is based upon these teachings that Jesus said "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jn. 3:16)
- 7 The key figure in the kingdom of God is the Son of man. The kingdom will be given to him with its dominion and glory. He is the key factor for the setting up, the receiving

and the possession of the kingdom by the saints of the most High.

8 Chapter 7 also reveals four stages of the everlasting kingdom:

- 1) The kingdom is set up through the investigative judgment to approve its candidates as a result of the defense of the Son of man before the Ancient of days (v. 9-10, 13).
- 2) The Son of man receives the kingdom (v. 14).
- 3) The kingdom is fully established at the time when the Ancient of the Days comes at the second advent (v. 18, cf. Mt. 25:24).
- 4) The kingdom and the earth are finally possessed after all the wicked are burnt to ashes and the new earth is created (v. 27).

To have a good understanding of these different stages will help us have a better picture of the kingdom of God.

9 The detailed description of the little horn helps us to identify it and be cautious about this deceptive power.

10 It also should be noted that the little horn power cannot change the times and the laws of God, but only “think to change” them. The law of God is immutable and not subject to human changes. On the contrary, all men will be judged according to the unchangeable law of God, be it during the investigative judgment or the millennium judgment after the second advent of Christ.

11 “There is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl. 3:15). Whatever the wicked power would do in the medieval ages, it will repeat it again at the end of time. The persecution of the saints of the most High is one of the main evil deeds of the little horn power during the 1,260 years. The time of the end will also be characterized by persecution of the remnant of God’s people. Though Dan. 7:25 foreshadows its fall at the end of 1,260 days, Dan. 7:26 hints that this horn power

would be “resurrected” sometime after the judgment for an investigative judgment.

- 12 Twice Daniel described his depressing and miserable reactions (v. 15, 28). He was deeply grieved and troubled. His cogitations much troubled him and his countenance changed. It should be noticed that the persecution of the saints was not mentioned in the night vision (v. 2-14) but appeared later in the explanation (v. 19-25). As a result, we can safely conclude that what made Daniel so depressed was more of the contrast between the holiness of the Ancient of the Days and our wretchedness and sinfulness than the persecution of the saints. The solemn scene of the investigative judgment troubled him more than the prospect of the persecution of the saints, which can be readily taken as an honor to be counted worthy to suffer for the Lord. What a lesson for us today who are living right in the solemn and great day of the investigative judgment! How cautious and serious we should be!
- 13 The order of events in verses 25-27 is important to keep in mind. The judgment seat would be placed after the three and half a times (v. 25, 26) and then be followed by the destruction of the little horn. “And 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” will occur last after the new earth will be created. This pattern is important to help us understand Dan. 8:13-14.
- 14 Finally, it is mentioned three times in Chapter 7 that the fourth beast was diverse from all the others (v. 7, 19, 24). It implies that the first three beasts were basically similar in nature. There was something constant and continual in them. This little horn which waxed diverse was the little horn power that comes out of the fourth beast. This observation will be very useful for understanding the continual element of “the daily” in Chapter 8, 11, 12.

Failure to observe this point has kept the debate over

the meaning of “the daily” in Chapter 8 heatedly going on for over a century. A close look at the text itself can help us avoid many controversies. A standing warning for all!

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What is the main purpose of the vision of Chapter 7? Why was the vision on the beasts given? What are their final fates?
2. Who is the Ancient of Days? Why does He appear on the throne? Why is the Son of man brought near him? What is the role of the angels?
3. What are some of the books that were opened before the throne?
4. How do you understand the concept that God is not a God of the dead but of the living in light of the judgment?
5. List some of the characteristics of the little horn and find out its historical fulfillment. What implications does it have for our time?
6. What are the two major events described in Chapter 7?
7. Describe the cluster of events starting from the investigative judgment as portrayed in Dan. 7:9-10 and 26 all the way until the everlasting kingdom is fully established.
8. Can the horn power change the law of God and make it noneffective or does that only exist in its own “thinking”? Can you outline the historical and ongoing presumptuous attempts of the little horn power to manipulate God’s holy law?
9. How was the prediction of the persecuting of God’s people in Dan.7:25 fulfilled in history? Which verse in Daniel 7 predicts its restoration to its dominion? What would this power do to God and his people at the time of the end?
10. How could we harmonize the destruction of the little horn power in Daniel 7 with the destruction of the image in

Daniel 2? What would be the key power to destroy this wicked force and when would it take place?

Chapter 12. The Second Vision of Daniel

From Chapter 8 on, Daniel switched the language he was writing in back to Hebrew, all the way to the end of the book. The visions in Daniel 7 and 8 occur only two years apart. Moving into Chapter 8, we come into the second section of Daniel. As mentioned before, the visions in chapters 8-9 and those of chapters 10-12 are a pair, both sharing the same focus. Both were given by the river. Both started from the era of Persia. Both end with the punishment of the wicked, signified by their landmark events. Both have the same key figure.

Items	Chapters 8 & 9	Chapters 10-12
Where	“I saw in a vision, and I was <u>by the river</u> of Ulai.” (Dan. 8:2)	“I was <u>by the side of the great river</u> , which is Hiddekel” (Dan. 10:4)
Beginning of the Vision	“there stood before the river a ram which had two horns.” (Dan. 8: 3) “the kings of Media and Persia.” (Dan. 8: 20)	“there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia” (Dan. 11:2)
Key Figure	“the Messiah the Prince” (Dan. 9:25)	“the prince of the covenant.” (Dan. 11:22)
Purpose of the Vision	“And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.” (Dan. 8:19)	“Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.” (Dan. 10:14)

As already shown, the visions in chapters 2 and 7 are a pair, which present a panoramic picture of events from Daniel’s time to eternity, with a focus on the kingdom of God.

Both visions depicted a glorious future for the people of God. However, this wonderful prospect painted did not relieve Daniel's feelings of trouble and relief.

That the people of God “shall be given into his [the little horn] hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” was already bad enough (Dan. 7:25), this horn power would rise up, and most likely would repeat his evil deeds and persecute God’s people again, till his dominion shall be taken away sometime after “the judgment shall sit” (Dan. 7:26).

When would the judgment sit? Is there tangible landmark event that could be used as a timeline to determine the strike on the wicked little horn power? What about the Jeremiah’s 70 years prophecy of returning to Jerusalem? How to harmonize all these? These and many other questions may have been on Daniel’s mind.

That did not slip off the attention of a merciful and almighty God, and another vision was coming on its way.

A. The Story

Two years after the vision in Chapter 7, Daniel received another vision in the third year of Belshazzar, about 551 BC. This time, the imagery changed to sacrificial animals. He saw a ram with two horns, the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last, pushing westward, and northward, and southward. It became great. v. 3-4. The angel explained that the ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. (v. 20).

Then he saw a he-goat having a notable horn between his eyes. The he-goat defeated the ram, waxed great and was broken and to be continued in four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. v. 5-8. In explanation, the angel said

that “the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.” v. 21. The four notable ones are four kings coming up after but inferior to the first king.

Finally, the vision moved on to the little horn power which occupied significant space (verse 9-12). This little horn waxed exceeding great, cast down some of the host and of the starts to the ground and stamped on them. He magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily *sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

Then there came the central and cardinal question of the vision which reflects Daniel’s questions,

“How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” Dan. 8:13

This question directly reflected the thoughts that was on Daniel’s mind. Simply put, when shall it be the time to halt the evil force and its evil deeds?

The answer is given in verse 14: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” When the sanctuary shall be cleansed, then it is time to deal with the evil forces and to halt its evil deeds.

So the key to this puzzle is to understand what it means to cleanse the sanctuary and when will it happen.

Before we move into the reading of Daniel 8, it is well to be cautioned that while this chapter is short and concise, the

interpretations of it are disproportionately numerous and mixed. They also cover a wide range of issues, such as

- the identification of the little horn power
- the meaning of “the daily”
- the day-year principle
- the sanctuary
- and the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Excuse of prayer, patience and discretion is much needed in studying this chapter. It will be helpful to have a clear concept of the issues listed above before we can grasp the main point of the vision in chapter 8. We will need to have a clear understanding of the above listed issues before have an overall missional reading of this chapter first, and then deal with specific issues one by one afterward.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verse 1-14: The Visions

1. Verse 1-2. [1] In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. [2] And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

Note:

- 1) The time was 551 B.C.. Daniel saw another vision at Shunshan in the palace in the province of Elam. However, in the vision he was by the river of Ulai.
2. **Verse 3-8.** [3] Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher

than the other, and the higher came up last. [4] I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. [5] And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. [6] And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had there seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. [7] And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. [8] Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

Note:

- 1) “a ram which had two horns”, this was explained later in the chapter. “The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.” Dan. 8:20.
- 2) The rise of Medo-Persia is here depicted in verse 4. First came the conquest of Babylon to the west [539 B.C.]; the greatest conquest to the north was the Lydia of Anatolia, today's Turkey, in 547 B.C.; and the expansion to the south was the annexation of Egypt in 525 B.C. This led to the creation of the vast Persian Empire, which even included the 127 provinces of India within its borders. These are probably represented by the “three ribs” in Daniel 7:5.
- 3) “an he-goat” with “a notable horn between his eyes” was “the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.” Dan. 8:21.

- 4) Verse 7 foretells how Grecia took over Persia completely in 334 B.C., two hundreds plus years after “the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar”. This conquest brought into the then-known-world the period of world history known as “Hellenistic civilization”.
- 5) Verse 8 foretold the sudden death of Alexander the Great at the peak of his military campaign and conquests (323 B.C.) and the division of the Greco-Macedonian empire into four distinct kingdoms by his four generals, symbolized by the “four notable horns.” These “four notable” horns would parallel the “four heads” of the “leopard” beast of Daniel seven (Daniel 7:6).
- 6) After the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.), the Greco-Macedonian empire would be divided into four distinct kingdoms, symbolized by the “four notable horns.” These “four notable” horns would parallel the “four heads” of the “leopard” beast of Daniel seven (Daniel 7:6).
- 7) In his explanation, the angel would later confirm this future four-fold division, stating that, after Alexander was “broken,” “four kingdoms” would “stand up out of the nation, but not in his power” (Daniel 8:22), each specific kingdom would be controlled by a former general of Alexander: (1) Greece and Macedonia would be ruled by Cassander, (2) Thrace and Asia Minor would be ruled by Lysimachus, (3) Egypt and Palestine would be ruled by Ptolemy, and (4) Syria and the Eastern Territories would be ruled by Seleucus, “toward the four winds of heaven”.

3. **Verse 9-12** [9] And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. [10] And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. [11] Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice

was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. [12] And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

Note:

- 1) “out of one of them”. According to the principle of grammatical proximity, “one of them” refers to one of “the four winds of heaven”, rather than one of “four notable ones”. Gerhard F. Hasel sees application of grammatical Parallelism in verse 8-9, which also leads to the same conclusion that the little horn power grew out of one of the four winds, rather than four notable ones. 91
- 2) Further studies leads to group verse 9 and 11 as a pair and verse 10 and 12 as another pair. In other words, verse 9 and 11 describes first stage of the little horn power, and verse 10 and 12 the second stage.
- 3) Compare with Daniel 2 and 7, it is not difficult to see these two stages of the little horn parallel with Dan. 2: 40-41 and Dan. 7:7-8. In historical fulfilment, the power described here in verse 9-12 would refers to Rome in its two stages.
- 4) There are two identifications of the little horn as described in verse 9-12. One is Antiochus IV Epiphanes (c. 215 BC – November/December 164 BC), which is popularly accepted in Christendom. The other one is Rome in its two stages, pagan Rome and papal Rome. Which one better fits the descriptions of verse 9-12? This will be the first

91 Gerhard F. Hasel, “The “Little Horn, the Heavenly Sanctuary, and the Time of the End: A study of Daniel 8:9-14” in Frank B. Holbrook, Ed, *Symposium on Daniel* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 390.

task in reading Daniel 8. A correct identification of the little horn is the first step in helping people see the light and truth as conveyed in Daniel 8 in our missional outreach.

5) **Identification of the Little Horn**

i. **Direction of the Little Horn**

V. 9 says, "And out of one of them came forth a little horn". According to grammatical proximity, "out of one of them" does not refer to the "four notable ones", rather "toward the four winds of heaven." v. 8.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes came forth from one of the four notable ones, not one of the four winds of heaven. Yet, Rome came forth from one of the four winds of heaven, not from one of the four notable ones.

Rome, not Antiochus IV Epiphanes, fits this description.

ii. **The Timing of the Little Horn**

But 8:23 says that the "little horn" should have arose "in the latter time of their kingdom".

History has it that Alexander the Great (r. 336-323 BC) of Macedon led his army on a series of campaigns which successfully conquered the then-known world from Macedon, through Greece, down to Egypt, across Persia, to India. When he died in 323 BC, his empire was divided among four generals: Lysimachus (c. 361-281 BC), Cassander (c. 355-297 BC), Ptolemy I (366-282 BC) and Seleucus I Nicator (358-281 BCE). Ptolemy I founded the Ptolemaic Dynasty which lasted until the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BC. Seleucus I

Nicator founded the Seleucid Empire which extended to 63 BC.

So, the latter time of the four kingdoms would be somewhere around 30 BC. In 44 B.C., Caesar, general of the Roman Republic, was appointed as perpetual dictator, symbolizing the end of the republic. And in 27 B.C., Octavian became Augustus, symbolizing the beginning of the Roman Empire.

Yet Antiochus IV Epiphanes did not rise at the end of the four horns, he rose in the middle of those four kingdoms (his reigned from 175 BC. -164 BC.). For there were eleven other kings of the Seleucid dynasty that rose up in succession after the death of Antiochus IV. It is evident that he rose up in the middle of the four kingdoms. Therefore, verse 23 excludes Antiochus IV from the fulfilment of its prediction.

iii. Its Growing Process

Verse 9 says, the little horn "waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land."

a. Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- v. 9 says, "which waxed exceeding great" Antiochus IV succeeded his father, Antiochus the Great, after he had been in power for 55 years. He had previously been held as a hostage and was ambitious and went to war everywhere after succeeding to the throne. However, during his 9-year reign, he was unable to hold on to the large tracts of land that his father had seized because he was unable to put down the rebellion in his territory. Rather than growing stronger, his trend grew smaller

during his nine years in power. This is the exact opposite of what the Bible says it to be "waxed exceeding great."

- Verse 9 says that the "little horn" attacked "south. Antiochus invaded Egypt once. Later he tried to invade again, however, Rome sent officials to tell him not to attack, so he didn't. Therefore, he was not able to wax great toward "the south".
- Versel 9 also says the little horn would wax great toward "the East", meaning Persia. His father had invaded Persia before. When Antiochus IV sent another expedition to the east, he was met with strong resistance and had to retreat. So he was not able to grow stronger toward the East, but actually, but declining.

b. Rome

- In 31 B.C., Rome conquered Egypt, waxed great toward the south.
- In 65 B.C., Rome conquered Syria and Babylon, waxed great toward the east.
- In 31 B.C., Rome marched into Judea, waxed great toward the pleasant land.
- Rome started small, but waxed exceeding great.

iv. "He magnified himself even to the prince of the host." V. 11

According to the angel's explanation, the little horn " shall also stand up against the Prince of princes;" v. 25. Obviously, the prince of the host is the Prince of princes. It is none other than Jesus.

However, at the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, this "Prince of princes " - Jesus Christ – was not born yet. Jesus

was not born until the time of Rome. It was Rome that nailed Jesus to the cross. The papal system also teaches contrary to the teachings of Jesus, and shows no respect to the Prince of princes.

- v. The little horn "cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them." v. 10.
He "shall destroy the mighty and the holy people." v. 24.

Rome in its two stages, pagan Rome and papal Rome has persecuted more people of God than all other persecuting powers combined.

- vi. **The little horn "shall be broken without hand."** v. 25.

That "he shall be broken without hand" predicts its end. The little horn will not be destroyed by human hands.

Antiochus IV defiled the temple of the Jews for more than three years, from 168 BC to 165 BC. Then the Maccabean brothers revolted and drove him out of Jerusalem. So, his fall was due to the Jews, not "without hand". Antiochus IV was replaced by a human being, he was destroyed by human hands. So, Antiochus IV did not fit this profile.

The papal system has not only taught contrary to the teachings of Jesus, and shows no respect to the Prince of princes, but stood up against him and persecuted the followers of Jesus. Its dominion was once removed at the end of three and half a times, i.e., 1798. Prophecy predicts it will revive again and resume its old tricks. In the end, this system will be broken without hand. Michael will stand up against him (Dan. 12:1). Its final overthrow and destruction will take place at the second coming of Jesus, when the stone "cut out without

hand” will come to smite the image and break it into pieces, as predicted in Dan. 2:34.

This prediction of the final end of the little horn is significant. It brings forth a very important point that the little horn in Daniel 8, though it started small in the end of the four kingdoms but will extend all the way to the second coming of Jesus. In other words, it would go beyond the three and half times, as appointed in Dan. 7:25 and end in the second coming of Christ.

To make a distinction between the little horn during the “a time and times and the dividing of time.”

This understanding will be crucial in tackling Dan. 8:13 &14.

vii. Additional Characteristics of the Little Horn

- a.** Verse 25 identifies the little horn as “a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences”

Compared with Dan. 7: 17, “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth”, we know that the little horn was referred to as “a king”, which is a kingdom, not an individual.

This concept is also reflected in Moses’ predication, which says that “The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.” (Deut. 28:49-50).

Therefore, we can see that “a king of fierce countenance” is “a nation of fierce countenance”, not an individual.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes was an individual, not a nation. However, Rome was such a nation.

“Understanding dark sentences” refers to the ability to conceal one’s meaning by using ambiguous words, and so disguising one’s real purposes, particularly aimed at seducing men from their religion. Compare Dan. 8:25 and Dan. 11:27 to do mischief in the hearts and speak lies to one another. Rome certainly fits this description.

b. The little horn “waxed great, even to the host of heaven;” v. 10

History can show that Papal Rome “exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2 Theol. 2:4)

c. The little horn “cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.” v. 12

The papal system has manufactured many unbiblical beliefs, such as the immortality of the soul, purgatory, Sunday worship, baptism of the dead, etc. It is gaining a substantial following in history as well as in the present.

viii. Antiochus IV and Maccabees

Some modern scholars understand that "the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate." (Dan. 9:27) as happening in the time of Maccabees. However, Dan. 9:27 is quoted in the *Maccabees* pointing to the fact that the Book of Daniel was written before Maccabees. This fact also shows that the little horn must not refer to Antiochus IV, because the Maccabees were living at the same time with Antiochus IV.

This shows that modern scholars have misunderstood the passage.

They interpret the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV as the "abominations he shall make it desolate" of Dan 9:27. However, Jesus referred to this "the abomination of desolation", alluding to Dan. 9:27, to the Roman army that would come after His ascension. The scholars' understanding differs dramatically from Jesus. This gives additional evidence that Antiochus IV is not the little horn in Dan. 8.

Therefore, the conclusion is that Antiochus IV is not the little horn of Daniel 8, and therefore, can be confidently excluded. And, all those interpretations which were built upon this wrong identification of the little horn on "the daily", the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the splitting up of the 2300-day prophecy into 1150 days to make it to fit the days of Antiochus IV's desecration of the temple of Jerusalem are consequently placed in indisputable doubt.

The little horn in Daniel 8 primarily refers to Rome in its two stages, pagan and papal Rome. However, it is not limited to the historical Rome, be it ancient or medieval, rather points to the continual extension of the little horn power in the end time, till it is being destroyed "without hand" (v. 25).

To sum up, the little horn power in verse 7-12 is Rome in its two stages, the pagan Rome, the medieval papal Rome and the Papacy in the time of the end. It "shall be broken without hand" undoubtedly projects it to the very end of the world (Dan. 8:25).

Up to this point, all the descriptions about the earthly powers were evil and wicked, against the principle of righteousness, against God and His truth. One could almost feel the overwhelming and depressing feeling on Daniel.

Daniel would have been strongly tempted to ask, how would God let it “destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice,” when will this evil be stopped and punished?

The Lord could read the mind of his servant. A question was raised on behalf of Daniel. But the answer was directly given to the puzzled Daniel. We are now ready to enter the heart issue of the vision in Chapter 8.

C. Missional Reflections

1. The identification of the little horn is crucial in mission outreach. To understand how to use the information provided in this chapter will help many to see who is little horn today and be separated from this evil power, though much pain might be involved.
2. It is important to weigh the popular interpretation against biblical evidences in order to reach right conclusion.
3. Dan. 8:23 clearly outlines the timing of the little horn power, it excludes any identification before the end of the four notable ones. Little details make great difference. It reminds us to be careful in the little things in our mission outreach. Sometimes, it is little details that helps to bring decisions.

Questions for Thoughts and Discussion

1. What is the background story behind the vision of Chapter 8? What is the central issue of the vision?
2. Why is it important to prove that Antiochus IV Epiphanes was not the little horn as described in Daniel 8?
3. How do you prove that Rome in its two stages, pagan and papal Rome, is the little horn in Daniel 8? What implications does that have for us today? Why is it important to identify the horn power anyway?
4. Can you use the internal textual evidences within Daniel 8 to disprove popular scholarly interpretation on the little

horn? How much confidence can we place upon the scholarly studies, no matter how popular that is?

Chapter 13 The Question and the Daily

A. The Question in Daniel 8

In our discussion in the previous chapter, we went through the vision Daniel saw two years after his first vision in Daniel 7. In this vision, Daniel saw the rise and fall of Mede-Persia and the emerge and division of the Grecian empire into four parts. Then, he was shown the climbing rise of the little horn and its evil deeds. Unlike Dan. 7:25, a prophetic three and half a year timeframe was assigned to the little horn power, no timeframe was given to the little horn in Dan. 8. What's going to happen to this little horn power?

Two years ago, another vision was shown to Daniel in Daniel 7. Four beasts were revealed in the vision, but Daniel's concern was with the fourth beast. "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others" (Dan. 7:19). Why the fourth beast? Because it was "diverse from all the others".

Now in this second vision, the ram was defeated by the he-goat, the he-goat was broken and the kingdom was divided by the four notable ones. Then at the end of the four notable ones, the little horn arose. Concerning the little horn power, the vision simply ends with the statement that "it practised, and prospered." (Dan. 8:12).

The natural, logical and compelling question to ask was when would these hideous deeds be halted and destroyed?

However, because of the different interpretation of a term embedded in the question, namely, "the daily", the Hebrew "hatamind", the simplicity and straightforwardness is lost in the confusion conflicting explanations. This terminology must be given specific treatment in order to restore the brevity and

clarity of the question, and consequently, the answer provided to address the question.

B. Missional Reading

“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” Dan. 8:13

Note:

- 1) The two saints here are two angelic beings, Michael and Gabriel. The one who raised the question was Gabriel, who was also the angel sent to make Daniel understand the vision.
- 2) “How long” is a frequently asked question in the Scriptures concerning God’s judgment on the wicked and delivery of His people.
“Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.” Ps. 35:17
“How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?” Ps. 89:46
“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Rev. 6:10
In a similar way, this question was cried out on behalf of Daniel, how long would God wait before He takes action on the wicked forces?
- 3) As mentioned above, Daniel switched to Hebrew language from Chapter 8 to the end of the book. In describing visions, Daniel used two different Hebrew words. One is “chazown” (Dan. 8:1, 2, 13, 15, 26; 9:21,24; 10:14; 11:14.), the other is “mareh” (Dan. 8:16, 17, 26, 27; 9:23; 10:1,16). To make a distinction, “chazown” vision refers to a panoramic view or the whole picture, while “mareh”

vision refers to a partial picture. The vision in verse 13 is the word “chazown”.

- 4) Both “chazown” and “march” are used in Dan. 8:26. The “chazown” vision was to be closed till the time of the end, however, Daniel was to meditate and understand the “march” vision (Dan. 8:16; 9:23).
- 5) “the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation.” The first things to remember is that the word “sacrifice” does not belong to the text. It was added by human wisdom.⁹² Therefore, this phrase should read as “the daily, and the transgression of desolation.”
- 6) Secondly, it should be remembered that the question to be asked was mainly about the little horn power as described in the previous four verses (Dan. 8:9-12). Thus, it is easy to see “the daily, the transgression of desolation” was another way to describe the two stages of the little horn through the medieval ages and their continuation into the time of the end.

Dan. 2:33, 41, 42	Daniel 7:7, 8	Daniel 8:9-12	Daniel 8:13
The Fourth Kingdom	The Fourth Beast	The Little Horn	Extension of The Little Horn
Part of iron (State Craft)	Ten Horns (State Craft)	First Stage (Pagan Rome) v. 9, 11	The Daily (Paganism)
Part of Clay (Church Craft)	The Little Horn (Papal Rome)	Second Stage (Papal Rome) v. 10, 12	The Transgression of Desolation (Papacy)

- 7) “to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot.” “To give the sanctuary to be trodden under foot” is another way to say “it cast down the truth to the ground” (Dan. 8:12). “To give the host to be trodden under foot” is the same as “it cast down some of the host

⁹² Ellen White, Early Writings, p. 74.

and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.” (Dan. 8:10) .

The Fourth Beast	The Little Horn	The Daily and Transgression of Desolation
“the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;” Dan. 7:21 “and shall wear out the saints of the most High.” Dan. 7:25	‘it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.’ Dan. 8:10	“to give …the host to be trodden under foot.” Dan. 8:13
“and think to change times and laws.” Dan. 7:25	“it cast down the truth to the ground” Dan. 8:12	“to give both the sanctuary …to be trodden under foot.” Dan. 8:13

- 8) Put it another way, the sanctuary is called “the tabernacle of testimony”(Ex. 38:21; Num.1:53, 9:15; Act. 7:44; Rev. 15:5). The host refers to the people of the most High. “To give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot”, therefore, means to trodden under foot the testimony of God, namely, the law of God and to persecute the people of the most High.
- 9) Having gone over different parts of Dan. 8:13, we can sum up the question in verse 13 now. When will the evil practices of “the daily and the transgression of desolation” in attacking God’s law and persecuting God’s people be brought under control? At what point of time will the evil deeds of the pagan power and the papal power be stopped and punished?
- 10) Gabriel explained that the horn power “shall be broken without hand.” (Dan. 8:25). This stretches the timeline of the horn power to the end of the world. The political powers will keep on changing. Pagan Rome has long become history. Other political powers would emerge to

give support to the same religious entity in apostacy, namely, papacy. How to describe these shifting political and pagan forces in an inclusive term? Daniel chose the word hatamid, “the daily”.

- 11) An illustration could help make it clearer. For instance, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong were well known for their rapid industrialization and high growth rate between early 1960s and 1990s. How to refer to them in an inclusive way? “The Four Asian Tigers” was coined to include these four countries and regions by catching their common feature.
- 12) There has been controversy over the meaning of “the daily”, which needs to be treated specifically.

C. The Daily and Its Meaning

1. The daily in Daniel

- a. The daily, hatamid, appears five times in the book of Daniel, Dan. 8:11, 12, 13; 11:31; 12:11. The basic meaning is “the continual”, “the entity that is constant”. As aforesaid, the word “sacrifice” in English Bibles, such as in King James Version, was inserted by translators. It does not belong to the text.

Currently, three interpretations exist in the understanding of the daily. They are,

- b. The daily service, or daily morning and evening sacrifices in the temple of Jerusalem, compatible to the Antiochus IV identification of the little horn. This view is popular among the reformed protestant churches. As shown in our previous chapter, Antiochus IV cannot be the little horn of Daniel 8. Therefore, this understanding of the daily which was derived from the wrong identification of the little horn doesn't hold water either.

- c. Paganism, a term first used in the fourth century by early Christians for people in the Roman Empire who practiced polytheism.⁹³ The view holders identify the little horn as Rome in its two stages, the pagan Rome/Paganism, and papal Rome. In their understanding, the daily refers to pagan Rome, or paganism. This view on the daily, or also known as the old view, was once widely circulated among early Adventist, but is now becoming less well known.
- d. Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, a revised version of the above two. This view holders identify Rome in its two stages as the little horn in the same way as those who regard the daily as paganism, yet they inherited the temple service connotation of those who think Antiochus IV was the little horn. However, this group do understand the Sanctuary in Daniel 8 is the heavenly true tabernacle rather than the earthly temple of Jerusalem, and they replace the added word "sacrifice" by the Bible translators with a different word—"ministry". Thus, instead of interpreting the daily as "the daily morning and evening service" in the Jerusalem temple, this view takes the daily as "the daily service" or daily ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, as typically represented in the early sanctuary service.
- e. This view on the daily, or also known as the new view, is the prevailing view today among Adventists. Many who are taught of this new view know little or nothing about the old view.

In order to determine which view may better fit the text in Daniel 8, it would be wise to look into its context first before comparing these two views.

⁹³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paganism>, accessed on August 24, 2020.

2. Contextually the Concept of the daily rooted in Daniel 2 &7

As seen before, Daniel 2 and 7 each presents a vision for the future on the earthly and heavenly dimensions. The prophecies on the earthly kingdoms can be summarized in the following table.

Earthly Kingdoms	Daniel 2	Daniel 7
Babylon Empire	Gold head v. 32, 38	Lion v. 4
Mede-Persia Empire	Silver chest v. 32, 39	Bear v. 5
Greece Empire	Brass waist v. 32, 39	Leopard v. 7
Roman Empire	Iron legs v.33, 40	Dreadful Beast v.7, 19, 23
Pagan Rome Papal Rome	Feet and Toes: part of potters' clay, and part of iron. v. 33, 42	Ten Horns v. 7, 20, 24 The Little Horn v. 8, 20-21, 24-25

It can be readily seen that Babylon, Mede-Persia, Greece and Rome are presented by symbols with the same nature. They are all metals in Daniel 2 and all animals in Daniel 7. In other words, specific symbol changes from one to another, but the nature of the symbols remain the same. These four consecutive kingdoms displays some similarities with one another. There can be seem a continual aspect or constant element in all of these four monarchs. That continual aspect or similar nature of all these kingdoms is called “hatamid” in Hebrew, or “the daily” in English. History shows that these four kingdoms were all pagan empires. Thus, paganism would be a proper word to catch the similar nature of these monarchs.

The diversity came when it came to the fourth kingdom. In Daniel 2, we see a change when it moves from legs to the feet. The material changed from metal to partially metal and partially clay. And that is not ordinary clay, but the potter's clay. In the Old Testament, the Creator is compared to the Potter and the people of God the clay (Isa. 64:8; Jer. 18:4-6). Thus we see that the diversity is reflected in religious realm, differing from political realm only.

In the same way, Daniel noticed that the fourth beast is "diverse from all the beasts that were before it," (Dan. 7:7). It was not the ten horns that is diverse, but the little horn (Dan. 7:7, 20). The diversity of the little horn phase of the fourth beast lies in that "he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws", meaning he shall move into the spiritual and religious realm, not only confined to military and political conquests like "all the beasts that were before it". So here again, the continual aspect, or regular element is reflected in the first three kingdoms and continued to the first phrase of the fourth before moving to the little horn. Using the Hebrew word to describe the similar nature of all these kingdoms, hatamid would be the choice word.

If you wanted to use one catch-all word in Hebrew to sum up the first four kingdoms, hatamid would be one. Let us see another illustration. For example, there are five countries, England, French, Germany, Italy and the United States of America. It can be summarized as European countries and America, or Europe and America. "Europe" would well catch the similar geographic feature of the first four countries. And the word "Europe" could even include more countries. In the same way, hatamid can include more kingdoms, as long as they are of similar nature, political or pagan nations.

It is also noteworthy that Daniel continues to use the word “beast” to name the fourth entity even though he could not find any animal in the natural world to identify it. The very fact he still chose the word “beast” indicates there is a continual aspect in all these earthly powers until it shifts to another phase, the phase of the little horn.

So it can be seen that the concept of the daily is already visible both in Daniel 2 and 7. It is therefore neither abrupt nor unexpected to see the word *hatamid* actually appearing in Daniel 8 and later chapters, which are counterparts with each other.

3. The Daily in Daniel 8

As mentioned above, the vision of Daniel 8 was shown two years later after the vision in Daniel 7. The word *hatamid* appears three times in verse 11, 12 and 13. Here Daniel chose two animals to describe the first two earthly powers and “the little horn” for the third to highlight its difference and diversity. However, this little horn is not altogether different than the first two, its first phrase was actually similar to the previous two. Rather than searching for a suitable animal name to describe the first phrase of the little horn, which he failed already in Daniel 7, Daniel singled out the Hebrew word *hatamid*, a word that catches the essential nature of this power to describe the first phrase of the little horn, to reflect its similarity to the previous two animals, to clearly convey the idea that there was some continual aspect in all these three entities. They were all pagan empires in nature.

It should also be noted that Daniel used “the little horn” in both chapter 7 and 8, but the connotations are slightly different. In the same way, “the daily” is used in verse 11 & 12 and in verse 13, but the connotations are also different. As mentioned above, “the daily” in verse 11 & 12 refers to pagan

Rome, but in verse 13 it includes more political or pagan powers as time goes beyond the end of 2300 days prophecy, similar to the way the word “Europe” in the illustration above could include more countries as time moves on. In fact, “the daily and the transgression of desolation” are referred to as “the king of the south” and “the king of the north” in Daniel 11 (Dan. 11:40-45). Fast forward to Revelation, we will see that “the transgression of desolation”, or the Papacy, is represented by the beast from the sea (Rev. 13:1, 2). However, the beast from the land would become “the daily” (Rev. 13:11-15). As time moves on, “the daily” would also include “the kings of the earth” that will unite with the sea beast (18:3).

4. The Old View vs the New View

Having made it clear contextually the meaning of the daily in the book of Daniel, it is now time to look into the old view and the new view in the Adventist circles and to eliminate the erroneous one.

a. The Old View: William Miller and Adventist Pioneers

William Miller was the first one who identified the “daily sacrifice” as “Rome pagan” abomination, or paganism. Notice how he relates his conclusion as he explains the daily in Dan. 12:11,

“I have come to this conclusion: that this power, called “daily sacrifice,” is Rome pagan abomination; the same as Christ has reference to in Matt.xxiv.15. Luke xxi.21.....This agrees with Paul, 2 Thess.ii.3-10 quoted.Here Paul shows plainly, that there was one abomination then at work, which would hinder the rise of the last abomination, until the first was “taken out of the way.”

Then the second would be revealed, whom the Lord would destroy with the brightness of his coming.”⁹⁴

Adventist pioneers inherited Miller’s view and saw “the daily” as paganism, yet not limited to Pagan Rome alone, but also including paganism in Media-Persia and Greece as well. Uriah Smith clearly articulated this understanding in his book, notice how he interpreted the daily in Dan. 8:13,

“From a religious point of view, the world has presented these two strong phases of opposition against the Lord’s work in the earth. Hence, although three earthly governments are introduced in the prophecy as oppressors of the church, they are here ranged under two heads: ‘the daily’ and the ‘transgression of desolation.’ Medo-Persia was pagan; Grecia was pagan; Rome in its first phase was pagan. These were all embraced in the ‘daily.’ Then comes the papal form, the ‘transgression of desolation,’ a marvel of craft and cunning, an incarnation of cruelty.”⁹⁵

Simply put, “paganism” means political, military and pagan power.

b. Conradi and the New View on the Daily

Smith’s interpretation did not satisfy the inquisitive mind of one of the German brethren, Ludwig Richard Conradi (March 20, 1856 – September 16, 1939), and it was this understanding that Desmond Ford (February 2, 1929 – March

94 William Miller,
<http://www3.telus.net/enochandsienna/Favorites/William%20Miller%20on%20the%20Daily.html>, accessed March 20, 2020.

95 Uriah Smith, p. 158

11, 2019) later referenced as the reason behind his new quest on the daily.

“Particularly the relationship between the question and answer to Dan. 8:13-14 worried our German leader. After all, verse 14 was an answer to a specific question, and that question said much about the sins of antichrist, but nothing about the sins of true believers, and apparently nothing about the Day of Atonement. From Conradi we obtained, through this mental tumult, our present denominational teaching on the daily which spread from him to A.T. Jones, A.G. Daniells, W.C. White, W.W. Prescott and other leaders. Conradi revived the teaching of the reformers that Dan. 8:13 pointed to the papal counterfeits of Christ’s gospel and mediatorial work.” 96

As Ford pointed out, Conradi’s new view on the daily was not really new, but a revised version of the reformers’ understanding. In fact, before Adventists came on the scene, many thought that Antiochus IV Epiphanes (215 BC – November/December 164 BC) was the little horn in Dan. 8:9-12. As a result, the word “sacrifice” was added to “the daily” by the Bible translators, thinking it was Antiochus IV that contaminated the earthly Jewish sanctuary, resulting in taking away the daily sacrifice in Dan. 8:11, 12. With this consideration, the meaning of “the daily” is closely associated with the earthly sanctuary.

While this identification of Antiochus IV Epiphanes as the little horn is absent in the Adventist circles, a similar way of thinking is embraced by the new view. As mentioned above,

96 Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment* (United States: Desmond Ford Press, 2018), p. 53

the new view also associates “the daily” with the sanctuary, only not with the earthly Jewish but with the heavenly sanctuary. Instead of supplying the word “*sacrifice*”, the proponents of the new view replaces it with “*ministry*”.

“It is necessary then to translate *tamid* with a word that comprehends all of these activities connected with the sanctuary, not just the one idea of sacrifice. A word that is more broad and inclusive, encompassing all of these activities, is ‘ministry.’ All these activities which *tamid* is used to describe are activities carried out by the priest in the courtyard and the holy place of the sanctuary. They were part of his daily ministry there. It is this type of ministry that Jesus carries out in the heavenly sanctuary (see Hebrew 8:1) and which the little horn power attempted to counterfeit. It attempted to turn the eyes of mankind from Jesus’ true, original ministry in heaven to an earthly, human substitute. This is the *tamid* which the little horn power attempted to take over and control.”⁹⁷

Essentially, they are the same. Indeed, it changes only the liquid, but not the medicine. Neither the word “Sacrifice” nor “ministry” belongs to the original text. It is an addition of human wisdom, as Ellen White would call it. Nevertheless, the new view needs this concoction of human wisdom to make sense of its purport of “the daily”.

c. When the Rubber Meets the Road

Academic or scholastic arguments have never been an effective way to tell right from wrong. In some cases, it only serves to worsen the already confused situation, as the Chinese saying goes, “the beauty of scholarship is to make minds confused.” To check whether a solution is right or

⁹⁷ William Shea, Daniel: A Reader’s Guide (Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, 2005), p. 182

wrong, the simplest way is to apply the solution back to the original mathematical problem. If it fits all the conditions and the equations stand, then, it is the right solution. If it does not fit all the conditions and the equations fail to stand, it is a wrong solution. It is as simple as that. This also applies to “the daily” issue in Daniel.

The word “the daily” appears five times in the book of Daniel. All one needs to do is to apply the old and new views to the five verses to see which one fits better. The following table demonstrates the result of the comparison.

	Old View	New View
	Paganism	Christ's heavenly ministry
Dan. 8:11	✓	x
Dan. 8:12	✓	✓/x
Dan. 8:13	✓	x
Dan. 11:31	✓	x
Dan. 12:11	✓	x

- Dan. 8:11 refers to pagan Rome and its activities, the old view fits, the new view does not fit. If the daily truly is Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, pagan Rome did not take it away, for it did not get involved in the spiritual realm.
- Dan. 8:12 refers to papal Rome and its activities. Either view could fit this time frame. However, the new view has

to answer the question how would an earthly power be able to take away the ministry of Christ in heaven? After all, Satan was cast out from heaven again when Jesus died on the cross (Rev. 12:10,13). It is almost a blasphemy to say that an earthly power can take away Christ's heavenly ministry, making heaven a unsafe place. We will take a deeper look at this point later.

- Daniel 8 employs two words for vision, one is panoramic [khaw-zone'], the other is partial or snapshot [mar-eh']. The vision used in Dan. 8:13 is the panoramic vision [khaw-zone'], the same word appeared in Dan. 8:1, which runs from the ram [Media-Persia], he-goat [Greece], and the little horn [pagan Rome and Papal Rome] and beyond." Adventist commentators understand "the transgression of desolation" being the papal power. What was not made clear is that this phrase refers not only to the papal power during the 1260 years, but also its restored phase after 1844 till the second coming of Christ.

So it follows that "the daily" covers the powers from the ram [Media-Persia], the he-goat [Grecia] and the four notable ones [four kingdoms after Alexander the great], the pagan Rome, and earthly kingdoms beyond 1844. Therefore, the old view fits.

Now let's check on the new view of the daily. Let's say we accept the assumption that Christ's ministry in heaven was taken away by priests in the papal system. That would be several hundreds of years removed from the time of Jesus' ascension at 31AD. Even if counted from 31 A.D., together with papal Rome, they do not constitute the whole vision [khaw-zone'], which begins from Media-Persia and extends to papal Rome till 1798 and beyond. So the new view ruins the whole vision in verse 13.

Furthermore, in verse 13, “the daily and the transgression of desolation” were mentioned together as the subject that carry out the evil action over the sanctuary and host. How could Christ’s ministry in heaven be trodden down under foot? In this regard, Stefanovic admits the terms in verse 13 are “detached from one another, and it is not very clear how they relate to each other.” And he continues to say “the list given here is a summary of the statements found in verses 10-12 of this chapter.”⁹⁸ However, what he fails to realize is that he is self-contradictory in recognizing that “the entire vision” goes beyond the activities of the little horn, yet at the same time limits it to verses 10-12, which is only part of it.

- Dan. 11:31 associates the act of “taking away the daily” with “arms”, the old view fits, understanding that “arms” were fulfilled in the French army, while the new view fits not, because, according to the new view interpreters, Christ’s heavenly ministry was taken away or obscured by priests in the papal system, not by “arms”.
- Dan. 12:11 locates the taking away of the daily at a specific time, which the old view pins places in 508 A.D. as the time when “the abomination that maketh desolate” is to be set up, when “there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” To put it in the format of a mathematical equation, it is “ $508+1290=1798$ ”. It seems that the old view fits this verse. The new view does not fit here either, for there is no definite date for the alleged taking away of Christ’s heavenly ministry by the Catholic priests. It was a gradual process. The SDA Bible commentary admits that the old view fits better while the new view still needs to find its way sometime in the future.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Zdravko Stefanovic, p. 309

⁹⁹ Nichol, SDA Bible Commentary, Vol. 4, p. 881.

d. Ellen White Affirms the Old View and Condemns the New View

Concerning the daily in Daniel, the often quoted passages from Ellen White read as follows:

“Then I saw in relation to the “daily” (Daniel 8:12) that the word “sacrifice” was supplied by man’s wisdom, and does not belong to the text, and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those who gave the judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the “daily”; but in the confusion since 1844, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion have followed. Time has not been a test since 1844, and it will never again be a test.”¹⁰⁰

The above statement in the *Early Writings* was an edited version. The original article was published on *The Present Truth*, November 1, 1850.

“Then I saw in relation to the ‘Daily,’ that the word ‘sacrifice’ was supplied by man’s wisdom, and does not belong to the text; and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those who gave the judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the ‘Daily;’ but since 1844, in the confusion, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion has followed. (PT November 1, 1850. par. 12)

¹⁰⁰ Ellen White, *Early Writings*, 74.

“The Lord showed me that Time had not been a test since 1844, and that time will never again be a test.” (PT November 1, 1850. par. 13)¹⁰¹

Obviously, these are two separate paragraphs. Paragraph 12 talks about the daily, and affirms the correct view was given to those who gave the judgment hour cry. All were united on “the correct view of the ‘daily’” before 1844. That also explains why she said later that the Lord did not give her light on this issue, for it was already given to someone else before her.

These paragraphs were simple English. There should not be any misreading or misunderstanding. However, because of the preconceived idea on the daily, the promoters of the new view could have read the above quotes quite differently than commonly understood.

For instance, one firmly asserted that the passage quoted above was concerned about the "time" of the ending of the 2300 days, “not the specifics of the theology concerning the daily.”¹⁰² Should the primary source of 1850 have been consulted, this embarrassing argument would have been graciously avoided.

However, no one really cares what Ellen White actually wrote, but would build on the above erroneous analysis and went even further to the extent of doing grammatical analysis

¹⁰¹ Ellen White, *Present Truth*, November 1, 1850.

https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_PT.November.1.1850.par.13¶=517.9_0, accessed on November 12, 2020.

¹⁰² Daniells, "Remarks Before the Faculty of Fernando Academy, California, May 11, 1910," DF 200: A. G. Daniells Miscellaneous Articles, WE; Daniells to W. C. White, Feb. 22, 1910, WCW Correspondence, 1910–Daniells, A. G., WE; Daniells to W. C. White, Feb. 1, 1910, RG 11, Incoming Letters, 1910–W.

yet completely ignoring its immediate context and the author's own words.

Concerning the pronoun "it" in Ellen White's 1850 statement as quoted above, one author writes:

"The "it" on which they unitedly held the correct view could refer grammatically to either (1) "the 'daily'" itself or (2) the fact "that the word sacrifice was supplied. . . and does not belong to the text." Against point (1) is the fact that she later wrote that she had "had no instruction on the point under discussion"-the point, as mentioned five lines earlier (1 SM 164) being "the true meaning of the daily."

And in favor of point (2) is the fact that the Millerites had unitedly and repeatedly insisted that the word "sacrifice" was not in the text. They used this argument to refute many of their opponents who contended that the taking away of the "daily" was the taking away of the Jewish sacrifices by Antiochus for a period of 2300 (or 1150) literal days."¹⁰³

The argument above could be wisely avoided if the author would only have continued to read the very next sentence in the 1850 statement, which reads, "When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the 'Daily'".

What is even more mind-boggling was that this pointless and groundless analysis could have been accepted and widely quoted as the authoritative paper on this issue published by the White Estate.

¹⁰³ Julia Neuffer, "The Gathering of Israel: A Historical Study of Early Writings, pp. 74-76" (Ellen G. White Estate Research Document), p. 12.

Here is yet another different reading of Ellen White's statement in 1850. Let's place it side by side with Ellen White's reading.

“Then I saw in relation to the ‘Daily,’ that the word ‘sacrifice’ was supplied by man’s wisdom, and does not belong to the text; and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those who gave the judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the ‘Daily;’ but since 1844, in the confusion, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion has followed. (PT November 1, 1850. par. 12)

“The cry she is talking about had to do with the judgment hour. Union existed before 1844. Confusion followed after 1844. Judgment hour. 1844. 1844. Even here her choice of words is consistent with the emphasis we see in the rest of her statement on the matter of time. Before 1844 everyone was agreed that the correct year for the end of the daily was 1844. After 1844 they experimented with setting other times. Looking back we can see that the daily ends in 1844 and the corresponding yearly begins in 1844. 1844 is what the pioneers who preached the judgment hour message all agreed on. The issue in every aspect of the above statement has to do with time.”¹⁰⁴

Yes, “the cry” she is talking about is about “the judgment hour”. But the point Ellen White was making was that “those

¹⁰⁴ Frank W. Hardy, “Ellen White on the Daily”.
<http://www.historicism.org/Documents/TheDaily.pdf>, accessed October 26, 2020.

who gave the judgment hour cry” received the “correct view of it [the daily].”

The author said “everyone was agreed that the correct year for the end of the daily was 1844.” There was nothing mentioned about “the end of the daily”, what Ellen White said was that “nearly all were united on the correct view of the ‘Daily’”.

This writer claimed that “The issue in every aspect of the above statement has to do with time.” However, the truth is that Ellen White was talking about the daily from the very beginning when wrote, “Then I saw in relation to ‘the Daily’”.

There are only two sentences in Ellen White’s statement in that paragraph. How could someone with a PhD come to misread it to that extent is beyond human comprehension. What is equally alarming is that many blindly follow the so-called scholarly studies without using their common sense and God-given judgment.

You would think that this would have been the end of the story. But no, others hastened to build upon the above and went even further.

“Therefore if the pronoun “it” or the phrase “correct view” in her 1850 statement would refer to the paganism interpretation of the “daily,” Ellen White would have contradicted herself, for the Lord would have shown her the “correct view” of the “daily” while later she denied such a fact.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Dennis Kaiser, Ellen White and the ‘daily’ Conflict, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=church-history-pubs>, accessed March 20, 2020.

Ellen White never denied what she wrote on the daily and never altered anything she wrote in 1850. The truth is that Ellen White did not contradict herself. The light she received was on who had the “correct view”. The Lord did not give her any light on this subject. Should anyone want to know what is the “correct view of the daily”, check with “those who gave the judgment hour cry” and find out. End of discussion.

The debate regarding “the daily” became a heated controversy at a time when the church needed unity the most, having experienced two devastating fires that burned down the Battle Creek Sanatorium and the publishing house, and to make matters worse, the split due to Dr. Kellogg’s separation including A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner, the two 1888 champions. Mrs. White counselled both sides to cool down and not to be side-tracked. The church could not afford another split over something that was not essential.

However, in private, she firmly stressed her negative attitude on the new view in 1910.

“At this stage of our experience we are not to have our minds drawn away from the special light given [us] to consider at the important gathering of our conference. And there was Brother Daniells, whose mind the enemy was working; and your mind and Elder Prescott's mind were being worked by the angels that were expelled from heaven. Satan's work was to divert your minds that jots and tittles should be brought in which the Lord did not inspire you to bring in. They were not essential.But I am charged, Silence is eloquence.

And I was shown from the first that the Lord had given neither Elders Daniells nor Prescott the burden of this work. Should Satan's wiles be brought in, should this "Daily" be such a great matter as to be brought in to confuse minds and

hinder the advancement of the work at this important period of time? It should not, whatever may be. This subject should not be introduced, for the spirit that would be brought in would be forbidding, and Lucifer is watching every movement. Satanic agencies would commence his work and there would be confusion brought into our ranks. You have no call to hunt up the difference of opinion that is not a testing question; but your silence is eloquence.”¹⁰⁶ (emphasis supplied.)

Ellen White clearly wrote that the proponents of the new view, Brother Daniells and Elder Prescott’s minds were “being worked by the angels that were expelled from heaven. The burden of bringing in the new view on the “daily” is not given by the Lord. Emphatically, she equals the bringing in “the daily” issue as “Satan’s wiles”. To completely ignore the plain statement made in 1850, ignoring the challenging situation the church was facing when the daily controversy was heavily debated from 1900 onwards – especially between 1907-1910 – and to insist that Mrs White had no position on the “daily” issue, is truly mind-boggling. This letter should have settled the issue, at least regarding Ellen White’s position on it. But strangely enough, it is somehow omitted or avoided when discussing Mrs. White’s position on the daily.

In conclusion, it should be plain to see now that the concept of the daily can be found throughout the book of Daniel, not just at places when the word “the daily” was actually used in Dan. 8, 11 and 12. It is a word to catch the common feature of secure political powers. The old view of the daily is no doubt “the correct view” while the new view is wrong on all counts and in all aspects. It is only because confusion and darkness prevailed that such an erroneous misconception could have been allowed to take the place of the authentic in the face of the plain and clear testimony.

¹⁰⁶ Ellen White, Manuscript Releases, Vol. 20. 17-18.

Faithfulness to the text and a good attitude towards the prophetic guidance is always better than sharpened but misguided interpretative tools.

D. Missional Reflections

1. High esteem of the Bible should always be held. We should not insert our own words into the Bible to make our understanding or interpretation work. This practice shows a lack of respect to the Bible.
2. Preconceived ideas or pre-held positions could easily mislead anyone. A lesson should be remembered by all.
3. Accept the plain teaching of the prophetic writing is always better than trying to twist it to fit one's own agenda. What is involved may not just be reading comprehension, but perhaps moral ethics of integrity.
4. Non-essential issue may suck much energy which should have been put into mission outreach. A standing lesson for all time.
5. To discard what is right and bring in what is wrong, the system of one's thinking is endangered.

Questions for Thoughts and Discussion

1. What is the basic meaning of the Hebrew word “hatamid”? Why the Bible translators added the word “sacrifice” after it?
2. What are the old view and the new view on “the daily”? State the strongest reason why the new view does not fit.
3. How should we treat the writings of Spirit of Prophecy when there is clear and ambiguous statement made?
4. What lessons can we learn from the daily controversy in the Adventist history? How do you explain that such an obvious erroneous view even become dominant view?
5. What is the central question of Daniel 8?

Chapter 14 The Answer and The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

A. The Story

Daniel received another vision two years after his first vision. In the vision, the changing scenes were shown. At the point when the vision revealed the little horn's attack on the law of God and His people, an angel raised a question on behalf of Daniel. When will the action be taken to curb the deeds of the evil forces (Dan. 8:13)? The answer was given to Daniel by another holy saint in verse 14.

[13] Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

[14] And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Dan. 8:13,14.

What is interesting is that people read this chapter and they see a different context. Some see that the word “sanctuary” appeared three times in Dan. 8:11, 13, 14, therefore, they conclude that Daniel 8 is about the sanctuary message, and more specifically, they thought Dan. 8: 14 is about investigative judgment on the saints. Others see Dan. 8:9-12 is about the little horn and the question in verse 13 was also related to the little horn, so they conclude Dan. 8:14 is judgment against the little horn.

Reality is that this is not that hard to decide. Compare the following dialogue.

Q: "Mom, How long do we have to wait for the birthday cake?"

A: "Dad will leave his office at 5, when he gets off the car."

The question is about when to cut the birthday cake. The answer given is not about Dad's driving, rather using driving as a reference frame to locate the time to cut the birthday cake. The known time for Dad's driving is 5, but traffic is unpredictable. As soon as Dad gets off his car. It will be time to cut the birthday cake.

Similarly, it should be clear that Daniel 8 is not about the sanctuary, it is about when to deal with the wicked deeds of the evil force. The time and work of the sanctuary in verse 14 was given as a reference frame for locating the actual starting point to halt the evil deeds of the evil forces, as questioned in verse 13.

Interestingly enough, the understanding of Dan. 8:14 has gone through several stages from Daniel till now.

- 1) Daniel thought the sanctuary in Dan. 8:14 was the temple of Jerusalem, therefore he earnestly prayed for its cleansing, as shall be seen in Daniel 9.
- 2) Inherited the same understanding of the sanctuary like Daniel, the disciples of Jesus caught the appearance of the Messiah as prophesied in Dan. 9:24, 25, but failed to see the Messiah's death and the destruction of Jerusalem in Dan. 9: 26, 27, which brought great disappointment upon them when Jesus was crucified on the cross.
- 3) Many mistaken Antiochus IV as the little horn, continued to think the sanctuary in Dan. 8:14 as the temple in Jerusalem.

- 4) William Miller (February 15, 1782 – December 20, 1849), the originator of the Millerite movement in the 1940s, had his inspiration from Dan. 8:14. However, he accepted the popular view and thought the sanctuary was the earth, thus interpreting the cleansing of the sanctuary in Dan. 8:14 as the burning of the sin-polluted earth at the second coming of Jesus. When Jesus did not return at the expected time, the Millerite movement went through a great disappointment. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that Miller understood the logical connection between verse 13 and 14. When was it time to punish the evil forces? The second coming! The fire of His glory will destroy the wicked.
- 5) Seventh day Adventist gained a new understanding of the heavenly sanctuary, which brought an entire chain of truth. They came to understand that Jesus was not coming to this earth at the end of 2300 day prophecy, but to go into the most holy place from the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to begin the investigative judgment on the saints of God from Adam. Emphasis was placed on the correctness of the calculation of 2300 day prophecy and the investigative judgment. Over time, the cleansing of the sanctuary was mistakenly equaled to the investigative judgment. As a result, the logical connection between the question in verse 13 and answer in 14 became somewhat blurred. Because the investigative judgment over the saints of God is not directly and logically related to the question of when to punish the wicked.
- 6) Not satisfied with the disconnected logic between the popular traditional Adventist interpretation of Dan. 8:14, Corandi and his associates started to look for other alternative interpretation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, they sought for new view on the daily. People like Desmond Ford even came to the extent to deny the existence of heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment.

- 7) Others who embrace the new view of the daily landed in a confused zone, either failed in making sense of the simple and clear question in verse 13 or lost sight of the investigative judgment in verse 14 altogether.

These developments make it all the more important to have a correct and logical interpretation of the answer as presented in Dan. 8:14.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verse 13-14. The Question and the Answer

1. Verse 13-14. [13] Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? [14] And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Note:

- 1) As a refresher, we have seen that Daniel must have been so much troubled after hearing the evil deeds of the little horn in its paganism and papal phases. When could it come to an end? Where is the hope for God's people?
- 2) The Lord read his mind and one of the attending angels raised the question for Daniel in verse 13.
- 3) Daniel already knew from the vision given two years' ago that three and half year was given to the little horn (Dan. 7:25). So the concern was more for the days beyond the end of 1260 years.

- 4) “When will action be taken to curb the evil deeds of tampering with the law of God and persecuting His people by the daily and the transgression of desolation?”
- 5) “And he said unto me”. The Hebrew word for “he” can be translated as “the wonderful numberer.” Instead of answering the angel who raised the question for Daniel. The Wonderful Numberer turned to Daniel and directly revealed to him, at the end of the 2300 prophetic days or 2300 literal years, a process would start which will lead to the cleansing of the sanctuary.
- 6) As already shown in the previous sanctuary studies, the earthly sanctuary was a type for the heavenly sanctuary. The services in the earthly sanctuary also typifies the services in the heavenly Sanctuary. In the earthly sanctuary, there were daily services and a yearly service in the Day of atonement. Sinners confessed their sins over the sacrificial animals, and their confessed and consequently forgiven sins, therefore, were transferred from them to the sacrificial animals and then through the blood of the sacrificial animals to the sanctuary. Over time, these blood-transferred sin would make the sanctuary polluted. Once a year on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of atonement, or otherwise known as “Yom Kippur”, the high priest would kill the goat of the sin offering, he would come to the most holy place and stand before the mercy seat (Lev. 16:15), and use his blood to “make an atonement for the holy place” and to cleanse the holy place and the people. (Lev. 16:16, 30). When the high priest would come out of the holy place, he would remove “all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,” out of the holy place, and “putting them upon the head of the goat” (Lev. 16:21).
- 7) So the sanctuary is symbolically cleansed at the act of the actual removal of sins out of the sanctuary, which also typifies the end of his ministry as a high priest at the Day

of atonement. What follows is the reward of the penitent and punishment of the wicked, including the scapegoat, which typifies Satan.

- 8) “And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation--a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12.”¹⁰⁷
- 9) “The removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded” is the cleansing of the sanctuary. The judgment described in Dan. 7:9-10 is the process of investigation which determines whose sins shall be removed and whose sins shall remain on record and the needed procedure leading to the cleansing of the sanctuary.
- 10) When the process finishes, the investigative judgment comes to an end, the sanctuary is then cleansed, which signalizes that probation for humans is closed and the priestly ministry of the High Priest also comes to an end. The kingdom of grace subsequently ends, and the kingdom of glory is ushered in. The day of the Lord arrives.
- 11) However, the time for the close of probation and the great day of judgment at the second coming “is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” “no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”(Act. 1:7; Matt. 24:36). What can be revealed

¹⁰⁷ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, 421.

is that “he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Act. 17:31).

And that “appointed day” is the end of the 2300 prophetic days, or the beginning of the heavenly investigative judgment. When it is finished, the sanctuary will be cleansed, and the wrath of God pours on the wicked in the day of the Lord.

- 12) In other words, the cleansing of the sanctuary is the visible event which signifies the beginning of the day of the Lord, a time to punish the wicked. Here lies the logical connection between the question in verse 13 and the answer in verse 14.
- 13) The word for “cleansed” is “tsâdaq”, which has the basic meaning of to be cleansed, to be vindicated and to be restored to its original state. Understanding the sanctuary is none other than the garden of Eden will be helpful in properly interpreting the meaning of “the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”
- 14) Therefore, when the sanctuary shall be cleansed, it means that,
 - a. all the sins of the repentant righteous from Adam to the last one will be blotted out, to be erased from the heavenly record and to be removed from the garden.
 - b. According to Lev. 16: 30, “For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.” When the sanctuary is cleansed, the people of God who have afflicted their souls shall also be cleansed from all their sins before the LORD. They will be perfect and sinless!
 - c. the law of God will be vindicated. The law of God was covered by the grace of God during probation;

now it is time for the law to function and to demonstrate justice.

- d. all the mechanism added for the purification of the redeemed are now safely dismantled, and the garden of Eden will be restored to its original state.
- e. The priestly ministry of Christ will be closed. He will receive the kingdom, dominion and glory and become the King of the glory.
- f. Probation will be closed, and the day of the Lord will arrive. The wrath of God will be poured out over the wicked.

Part Two: Verse 15-27. Interpretation

1. **Verse 15-19.** [15] 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. [16] And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. [17] 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. [18] Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. [19] And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

Note:

- 1) Daniel was puzzled about the vision he saw. In the vision he saw two years' ago, there was a three and half a times prophecy given, which he was not able to reconcile with the seventy years' prophecy to return. Now another 2300 prophetic days, or 2300 literal years! Imagine how much

distress Daniel might have felt! Worse, either of the visions said anything about going back to Jerusalem.

- 2) Gabriel was called to make Daniel understand the vision [mareh], which, according to verse 26, was the vision about the 2300 days.
- 3) However, Gabriel told Daniel the purpose of the [chazown] vision. “for at the time of the end shall be the vision.” In other words, the [chazown] vision in verse 13 was related to the time of the end.
- 4) Furthermore, Gabriel wanted to make Daniel “know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.” Looking at the explanation given in verse 25, it seems “the indignation” was the wrath of God poured out during the day of the LORD after the sanctuary is cleansed. The evil powers in verse 13 “shall be broken without hand.” (Dan. 8:25).
- 5) Gabriel was told to make Daniel to understand the [mareh] vision, but instead he revealed to Daniel the main point of the [chazown] vision, that is to show the end of the evil powers in verse 13. In this way, Gabriel was making a connection between the [mareh] vision and the [chazown] vision. In other words, the event in the [mareh] vision signifies the timing for God’s wrath to pour out over the evil powers (“without hand”).

2. **Verse 20-22.** [20] The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. [21] And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. [22] Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

Note:

- 1) These verses explain the ram, the he goat and the four notable ones in verse 3-8.

3. **Verse 23-25.** [23] And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. [24] And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. [25] And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

Note:

- 1) As shown above, verse 23 delineates the time for the appearance of the little horn power in verse 9, which excludes Antiochus IV to be the little horn power in verse 9-12.
- 2) “And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power.” This explained that “an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression” (verse 12). First there was the Roman Empire by moving its capital to Constantinople, leaving room for power to the Pope. Then there was the lending of troops to the Papacy by the French king Clovis, so that the Papacy grew in power. Thus, the Pope did not become bigger because of his own power.
- 3) Verse 24 and 25 further explain the evil deeds of the little horn power, which was described in Dan. 7:25 and Dan. 8:11-13. It should be noted that there's no time limit given here compared with Dan. 7:25.
- 4) “he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes;” The way the horn power against the Prince of princes is to “cast down the truth to the ground” (verse 12) and to trod under foot the sanctuary (verse 13), or “think to change times and laws” (Dan. 7:25).
- 5) Because “he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes;” therefore, when the sanctuary shall be cleansed,

“at that time shall Michael stand up” against him (Dan. 12:1). The indignation of God will be poured “upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.” (Rev. 16:2).

- 6) “but he shall be broken without hand.” “the daily and the transgression of desolation” shall be destroyed, not by human hand, but by the wrath of God, “the spirit of his mouth” and “the brightness of his coming.” (2 Theol. 2:8).
4. **Verse 26-27.** [26] And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. [27] And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

Note:

- 1) Gabriel concluded by stating that the [mareh] vision of the 2300 day prophecy is true, but the [chazown] vision, which goes beyond 2300 days and extends to the end, was shut up, indicating these visions were not meant for Daniel to understand.
- 2) Notice that the [mareh] vision of “the evening and the morning”, or the 2300 days prophecy was not shut up. But the vision concerning the time of the end were shut up. That could explain why Gabriel was sent again to help Daniel to understand the [mareh] vision, at least the part which does not belong to the sealed part of the [chazown] vision.
- 3) Daniel's response was even more tense. He was totally confused. As will be seen in Chapter 9 that the sanctuary in Daniel's mind was the temple of Jerusalem. Dan. 8:14 talks about the cleansing of the sanctuary, implying the sanctuary was defiled. Not only that, it also talks about 2300 days, which Daniel understood, it could not be literal six plus years, for the vision was given in 553 BC, 52

years after the captivity in 605 BC. Given another 7 years, it could still be within the 70 years range. The Israelites were not allowed to go back to rebuild the city and the temple yet. It must be prophetic days or 2300 literal years.

- 4) Why 2300 years? Why should the temple be defiled for so long? What would happen to Jeremiah's 70 years prophecy? As a result, Daniel fainted and was sick for many days before resuming to the king's business again. No one understood the meaning of the [march] vision. This sickness might even be the reason why Daniel was not in business anymore at the last year of the reign of Belteshazzar in 539 BC.
- 5) When would the commencement of the 2300 days be? When would it end? How could the sins of God's people be cleansed? These were questions which could find their answers in chapter nine of the book of Daniel.

A. Missional Reflections

1. The first thing that comes to our mind is Daniel's concern for his country and his people. Though it was not written in words, the very reason why the Lord gave the second vision to Daniel can be found in the last verse in Chapter seven. The vision in Chapter eight was given to show what God would do to protect His people and when to strike the forces of evil.
2. It was also given to address a question in the mind of Daniel and the Israelites about the temple services. Daniel 8:14 shows the true sanctuary would be in session. What Nebuchadnezzar destroyed was only a shadow, the true tabernacle, true sanctuary is now in heaven! It is the place shown in Chapter 7 where the Ancient of Days sit on the throne for judgment.
3. Like in Dan. 7, a great portion of the vision was given to the activities of the little horn, who not only "cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and

stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host". (Dan. 8:10-11), but also "it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. " (Dan. 8: 12). This is definitely a very serious situation. Jerusalem was already destroyed, temple service stopped, the people of Israelites taken into captivity, how come the little horn power could continue to do the same or even worse? It even magnifies to the prince of the host, cast down the truth and it will "prosper". If this is the case, when will it be the time for the little horn to be haltered?

4. Looking at what is happening in our world, this question is of paramount relevance today. Things will not get better, but worse. And the worst time of trouble is yet to come. But the good news is that God has already started the process to seal His people from the end of the 2300 day prophecy, or 1844. The sins of the saints will be blotted out and the living saints will be protected during the coming storm while the wicked will definitely be punished after the sanctuary will be cleansed.
5. Gabriel was sent to make Daniel understand Dan. 8:14. The people of God today should also understand the sanctuary message as conveyed in this key verse. It calls for affliction of the souls for the people at the great Day of atonement and to live a godly life at the solemn hour of judgment and to cooperate with heaven for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary as well as the temple within us.
6. "The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14."¹⁰⁸ Dan. 8:14 remains to be the key text for Seventh day Adventist church and her mission today.
7. The study of Dan. 8:14 and related texts led to the Millerite movement in the 19th century. However, the

¹⁰⁸ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, 409.

wrong understanding of the sanctuary led to the great disappointment. A new discovery of the heavenly sanctuary gave impetus and laid foundation for the Adventist mission in the 19th century and onward. At a time when the distinctive Adventist messages becomes blurry, the simple and profound identification of the sanctuary being the garden of Eden from the beginning and the kingdom of God in the end will bring fresh insight into the sanctuary message, and make it possible to present the everlasting gospel simpler, practical and more powerful. From Eden sanctuary we came, to the Eden kingdom we return.

8. The realization that the heavenly sanctuary is none other than the garden of Eden provides congruency of the central theme of the Bible. It calls for a back to Eden lifestyle. It shows the law of God will never change and the plan of God cannot be thwarted nor moved by Satanic scheme. It rings the condition for eternal life and the requirement of heaven in the loudest and clearest sound. Since Adam and wife were expelled from the garden for the seemingly slightest sin of eating the forbidden fruit, neither could anyone who still carry with them what might appear to be the slightest sin be admitted into garden of God. Perfect and sinless in Christ is the only way. This new realization will uplift Christ as our Saviour as never before.
9. A clear understanding of the close interconnections and distinct differences between the investigative judgment and the cleansing of the sanctuary will relocate the emphasis in our message and redirect our missional direction. Moving along with emphasis embedded within the text itself on the cleansing of the sanctuary will direct our attention to the close of probation, and send a clear warning to our people that time of trouble is coming and we should do all we can to be well prepared and to be kept for the great tribulation and test ahead.

10. A focus on the cleansing of the sanctuary and the conscious awareness of the close of probation will silence many meaningless speculative theological debates over whether Christians could or should be perfect or not. Ready or not, probation is closing. There will be no more intercessor in the heavenly court after the sanctuary is cleansed. When the laundry shop is closed. You cannot send in your dirty clothes anymore. Services closed. “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” (Rev. 22:11). Miller accepted the popular view on the sanctuary and experienced great disappointment. Today, those who will accept the popular view on Christian perfection, which holds Christians will continue to sin till Jesus comes again, will surely experience yet greater disappointment or despair.

11. Shifting focus to the cleansing of the sanctuary will reshape our theological framework and bring people in touch with spiritual reality. The cleansing of the sanctuary is the momentum to usher in the kingdom which shall not be destroyed, the focus of the everlasting gospel. Probation is coming to a close, time for forgiveness is coming to an end. Overcoming, victory and perfection is the right tone that is compatible with the cleansing of the sanctuary.

12. As shown earlier in this study, the key question in Daniel 8 is when to take action on the evil forces (Dan. 8:13), and the answer given in verse 14 is that as soon as the sanctuary is cleansed. When the investigative judgment was mistaken as the cleansing of the sanctuary, the logical connection between verse 13 and 14 is not explicit. Some identified the problem lied with the old view of “the daily”, thus opened the gate for all sorts of errors and confusion, just as Ellen White wrote in the 1850, “since

1844, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion have followed."

Some have gone so far as to deny the investigative judgment is included in Dan. 8:14.

That thought brings me back to my real problem with the traditional understanding of Daniel 8:14, which has to do with what Adventism has done with the cleansing of the sanctuary. The time honored view is that the cleansing is the investigative judgment of the saints.

But looking as hard as I can at the text, I find no investigative or pre-Advent judgment of the saints in that passage. What I do find is judgment on the little horn and a restoration, justification, and cleansing of the sanctuary in relation to that power at the end of the 2300 days.

Here is a problem we ought to be aware of. Our answers have been too simple and have not been rooted in the text itself.¹⁰⁹

Others twist the plainest meaning of Ellen White's writing to their own preconceived wrong ideas and left infamous records in their published articles and papers. Lessons should be learned that deviation from the correct view of any biblical interpretation may suck too much of energy and cause great damage to the Adventist mission.

13. Again, in Dan. 8 we see the timeline prophesized before history evolves. These historical prophecies were accurately fulfilled in history, providing sufficient evidences for our faith in the reliability of the Word of God.
14. The little horn power and its activity is given in great details, we should study it and know how to identify what power is here spoken about, especially in reaching non-

¹⁰⁹Knight, 68.

Adventists for the everlasting kingdom. The pagan Rome as the daily has long begone. We should be able to identify the paganism daily at our day. To do that, light from the pages of Revelation is needed, especially Rev. 13 and 17.

15. Daniel 8:14 shows that the little horn's attempt to change God's law was futile. The divine law of God still sets the standard for the investigative judgment and continues to serve as the authority and standard for punishing the wicked.
16. The sanctuary message calls for the keeping of the commandments of God and the righteousness of Jesus!

Questions for Thoughts and Discussion

1. List the different phases of the understanding of Dan. 8:14 since Daniel's time and try to explain why.
2. Why do you think the wonderful numberer gave the answer directly to Daniel?
3. What is the sanctuary here in Dan. 8:14? What does the cleansing of the sanctuary mean?
4. How does the investigative judgment relate to the cleansing of the sanctuary?
5. How does the answer in Dan. 8:14 logically answer the question in verse 13?
6. How does the question and answer in Dan. 8:13 and 14 indirectly address the question in Daniel's mind about the Jerusalem temple and its services?
7. Which vision was sealed, and which is true and needs to be understood?
8. What implications does the understanding the investigative judgment began at the end of 2300 days prophecy have upon us?
9. Why the 2300 days prophecy cannot be literal days? Why was Daniel greatly troubled?

10. The focus of Dan. 8:14 is placed on the cleansing of the sanctuary. What does that mean for the people living at the time of the end?
11. How could the simple and straight understanding that the sanctuary in heaven is the garden of Eden withdrawal before the flood help us to refute the assumption that there is no sanctuary in heaven?

Ch. 15 The Messiah and the Holy City

The closing scene of the vision in Chapter 8 made Daniel deeply distressed and worried. For days he was sick and was not able to attend to the king's business. "None understood it." (Dan. 8:27). The vision in Chapter 8 took place in the third year of Belshazzar's reign. We have seen that Daniel was not serving in the king's business in Chapter 5. It was not clear whether this illness led to his retirement from the public service. However, somewhere in between Daniel retired.

Daniel was expecting to go back to Jerusalem after seventy years, yet after fifty plus years, there appeared another date, 2300 days or years! In Daniel's mind, the sanctuary was the temple in Jerusalem. Yet, in the vision, it was told it would be cleansed sometime after the 2300 days prophecy was fulfilled. What is more, the very mentioning of "cleansing" indicates defilement. He must have deeply confused and troubled.

A. The Story

The story in Chapter 9 is simple. It was in the first year of Darius over the realm of the Chaldeans, or 538 BC, the seventy years' prophecy of Jeremiah was coming to an end, which would have been completed in 3 years. Daniel prayed to God to confess his sin and the sin of his people Israel, and to present his supplication before the LORD God at the holy mountain of God (v. 20).

In Daniel's mind, Jerusalem was the holy city and the holy mountain of God (v. 16). The temple of Jerusalem was the sanctuary of God. (v. 17). As 70 years was approaching, Daniel earnestly prayed, "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my

God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” (v. 19).

It seems to be evident to Daniel that it was the sin of the people which stood in the way of the great event for God to bring the Israelites back to the holy city of Jerusalem. Forgiveness would be the only way to remove the obstacles for the people to return.

While Daniel was still praying, the angel Gabriel was sent to make Daniel understand the [mareh] vision of the 2300 days and the cleansing of the sanctuary (v. 21-23).

Gabriel told Daniel that seventy weeks were appointed for the people of Israel. Yes, there would be decree for the Israelites to restore and to build Jerusalem. He also gave a prophecy of the appearance of the Messiah and a description of His life and mission. Yes, the city and the temple would be rebuilt, however, they would be destroyed again, sending out a clear message that the temple of Jerusalem is not the sanctuary that shall be cleansed as foretold in Dan. 8:14.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verse 1-19. Daniel’s Prayer

- 1. Verse 1-2.** [1] In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; [2] In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Note:

- 1) The time was 551 BC, about 12 years after the vision in the third year of Belshazzar as related in Chapter 8.
- 2) Daniel learned about the 70 years desolation from the book of Jeremiah. Jer. 25:11, 12, 29:10.
- 3) As has been aforementioned, Daniel had been thinking about the return all along. Verse 2 also helps to explain why Daniel did not waver in his prayers and supplications in spite of the royal decree in Chapter 6. He had also been pondering on the “a time and times and the dividing of time” and 2300 days and trying to harmonize these with the 70 years promise for return.

2. **Verse 3-6.** [3] And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: [4] And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; [5] We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: [6] Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

Note:

- 1) Prayer is the means to reach the heart of God. Daniel must have constantly wrested with God and presented his puzzles before God. Chapter 9 records the prayer which was answered.
- 2) The phrase “by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” is suggestive of the day of atonement, a time for affliction of souls.
- 3) Daniel’s deep personal confession as well as on behalf of the people of Israel.

3. **Verse 7-10.** [7] O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. [8] O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. [9] To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; [10] Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

Note:

- 1) Daniel acknowledged the Lord is righteous, merciful and forgiving.
- 2) But all the people sinned against God; all leaders sinned against God; and all have rebelled against God and walked not in the law of God.

4. **Verse 11-14.** [11] Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. [12] And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. [13] As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. [14] Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

Note:

- 1) Daniel admitted that it was the transgression of the Israelites that brought the curses and great evil upon them (Lev. 26 and Deut. 27-29).
- 2) Daniel categorized three types of sins of the people, “yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.”
- 3) What the LORD did was all righteous. “Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” (Jere. 6:19).

5. Verse 15-19. [15] And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. [16] O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. [17] Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. [18] O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. [19] O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Note:

- 1) Verse 15. Even though Moses was the visible leader, Daniel understood it is the Lord God that brought the

Israelites out of Egypt, and made Himself known. By bringing out this history, undoubtedly, Daniel was expecting another “Exodus”, not out Egypt but out of Babylon and back to Jerusalem.

- 2) It should be noted that Daniel was counting on days to return back to Jerusalem. He probably knew well that from the day of Exodus to the time of Samuel was 490 years, or 70 times 7 years (Act. 13:18-20). And from the time of Samuel or king Saul (1095 BC), who was made the king of Israel, to the time of the captivity (605 BC), was another 490, or 70 times 7 years.
- 3) It was the Passover Lamb that made Exodus possible. The blood on the lintel and two side posts served as a sign for the destroyer to pass over the door and not smite the houses (Ex. 13:22-23). The Israelites left Egypt the same night.
- 4) Now Daniel prayed to the Lord for the return of the Israelites to Jerusalem, because the 70 years prophecy in Babylon was almost full. Seventy years had been on his mind in his thinking and prayers. It is therefore not surprising to see that the angel’s interpretation also involves the concept of seventy.
- 5) Verse 16-18. In Daniel’s understanding, Jerusalem was the city of God, “thy holy mountain”, “the city which is called by thy name”, and the temple in Jerusalem was the sanctuary.
- 6) Key words such as desolation, transgression, sanctuary and the host, cleansing appeared in Dan. 8:13-14. With the understanding the temple of Jerusalem as the sanctuary, Daniel’s prayer and supplication was filled with honest acknowledgement and sincere confession of the transgression of the people and earnest pleading with the Lord to shine on the desolate sanctuary in Jerusalem and deliverance of Israel.
- 7) Dan. 8: 13-14 was deeply imprinted upon Daniel’s mind, but Daniel’s prayers shows that he did not understand

what it means to cleanse the sanctuary. The only sanctuary in his mind was the temple in Jerusalem.

- 8) Without a proper understanding of what constitutes the cleansing of the sanctuary, Daniel pleaded with the Lord to take action for the city and the people. “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.”

Part Two: Verse 20-27. Gabriel’s Interpretation

1. Verse 20-23. [20] And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; [21] Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. [22] And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. [23] At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Note:

- 1) To respond to Daniel’s pleading, Gabriel was sent “to give thee skill and understanding” and to “understand the matter, and consider the vision.”
- 2) Notice the vision Gabriel came to make Daniel understand is specifically the partial [mareh] vision, that is, the 2300 day and cleansing the sanctuary prophecy given in Dan. 8:14.

2. **Verse 24-27.** [24] Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for

iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. [25] Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. [26] And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. [27] And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Note:

- 1) Verse 24-27 were Gabriel's explanation of the partial (mareh) vision in Dan. 8:14. The angel's explanation echoed Daniel's concerns about the holy city and his own people but took him to a higher dimension. It brought in view the life and mission of the Messiah of the whole world. It also revealed the true sanctuary which would be anointed for service. Unfortunately, the rebuilt city of Jerusalem and its temple, the shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, would be completely destroyed at the appointed time. That could have been a hard sobering dose for Daniel to take, reminding him that the Jerusalem temple was not the sanctuary which will be cleansed in Dan. 8:14.
- 2) Daniel 9 did not record Daniel's reaction to the explanation. But it should not be difficult to imagine Daniel's confusion and sadness, as has already been shown in Dan. 7 and 8.
- 3) Since Daniel's main concern was the holy city and his people. So the angel Gabriel started with "Seventy weeks

are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city". v. 24. The seventy weeks here is not 490 days, which is a little over a year, not enough time to accomplish the six missions described next. They were rather 490 literal years. (Ezek. 4:6; Num. 14:34).

- 4) Commenting on v. 24, Ellen White wrote, "The time of the first advent and of some of the chief events clustering about the Saviour's lifework was made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel." ¹¹⁰
- 5) These events were ,
 - a) "to finish the transgression", the work and mission of the Messiah will bring transgression to an end. The plan of redemption through Christ will eventually stop all transgression. This will take place at the second coming.
 - b) "and to make an end of sins", the work and mission of the Messiah will prevent sin from committed. It points to the bright future of life in the new earth. No one will choose to sin anymore. It is the death of Jesus on the cross that serves as perpetual guarantee to keep the cosmos safe forever.
 - c) "and to make reconciliation for iniquity", the mission of the Messiah would atone for iniquity and reconcile men to God. This has been fulfilled through Christ's ministry in heaven after his ascension.
 - d) "and to bring in everlasting righteousness", through the work of the Messiah, everlasting righteousness will eventually dwell in new earth, the city of righteousness, the faithful city. (2 Pet. 3:13; Isa. 1:26).
 - e) "and to seal up the vision and prophecy", various interpretations are out there to explore the exact meaning of this phrase. It could either mean that the OT visions and prophecies concerning the Messiah would be confirmed, or the vision and prophecy in

¹¹⁰ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, 698.

Dan. 8:13 will be sealed up. In either case, Jesus is the key for unlocking the vision and prophecy.

f) “and to anoint the most holy”, v. 24. It is to anoint the most holy, the sanctuary. This was fulfilled after Jesus was resurrected and went to heaven to inaugurate the heavenly sanctuary.

6) Verse 25a delineates the beginning of the commencement of the 70 weeks, which is marked out by the most concerned matter in Daniel’s mind, “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem”.

- When the seventy year arrived, Cyrus issued a decree for all the exiled nations under the domination of Assyria and Babylon to return home and restore their national temples (538 BC., cf Ezra 1:2-4; 6:3; 2 Chron. 36:22, 23). As a result, “the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.” (Ezra 3:1). However, Dan. 9:25 was about building “Jerusalem” the city, not the temple. So this decree cannot be counted as the commencement date of the seventy weeks.
- However, these people did not immediately rebuild the temple but their own houses. In the second year of Darius the king, the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet, the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying, “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?... Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.” (Hag. 1:4,8).

In the end, “And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year [515 BC] of the reign of Darius the king.” (Ezra 6:14).

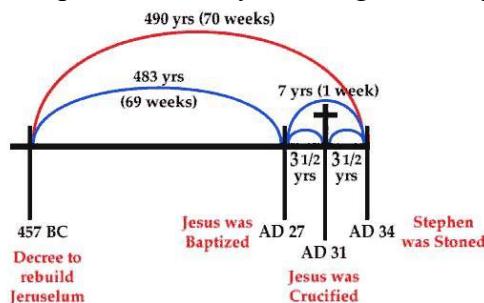
- It was Artaxerxes' decrees to Ezra which was fully related “to restore and to build Jerusalem” (457 B.C., cf. Ezr.7:6-25), including granting jurisdiction to the Jewish people. The city was restored in a fuller sense. Therefore, it is proper to count 457B.C. as the commencement of the seventy weeks.

7) Jesus confirmed the 457 BC date as the beginning of the 70 weeks after his baptism and victory in the wilderness. He also confirmed the interpretative principle of one prophetic day for one literal year.(Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6).

“The burden of Christ's preaching was, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.’ Thus the gospel message, as given by the Saviour Himself, was based on the prophecies. The ‘time’ which He declared to be fulfilled was the period made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel. ‘Seventy weeks,’ said the angel, ‘are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.’ Daniel 9:24. A day in prophecy stands for a year. See Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6. The seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety days, represent four hundred and ninety years. A starting point for this period is given: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks,” sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. Daniel 9:25. The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, as completed by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (see Ezra 6:14; 7:1, 9, margin), went into effect in the autumn of B. C. 457. From this time four hundred and eighty-three years extend to the autumn of A. D. 27. According to the

prophecy, this period was to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One. In A. D. 27, Jesus at His baptism received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and soon afterward began His ministry. Then the message was proclaimed. "The time is fulfilled."¹¹¹

- 8) According to verse 25, the appearance of the Messiah would be 69 weeks, or 483 years after 457 BC, which leads to 27 AD, the very year when Jesus was baptised and started his public ministry at the age of thirty.



- 9) After the fall, the Lord proclaimed the gospel for the first time, called the Protoevangelium, in Gen 3:15. The Saviour would come as "the seed of the woman", which was announced would be from the descendant of Abraham (Gen 12: 4; cf. Gal. 3:16).
- 10) Abraham had two sons, with an age difference of 13 years. When he received the command to offer Isaac, "Abraham had reached the age of a hundred and twenty years." (PP 147.3). Considering Isaac was born when he turned into 100, Isaac was offered at the age of 20. His brother Ishmael then was 33 years old. The life and the death of the seed of the woman was foreshadowed by these two sons of Abraham, where Isaac represented "the only begotten son" (Heb. 11:17; cf. Jon. 3:16), and Ishmael marked the age of the death of the coming

¹¹¹ Ellen White, Desire of Ages, 233.

Messiah. Through this test, God was telling Abraham that my Only Begotten Son would die at the age of 33 to save the world, including your 33 year old first son and the son coming to you by promise.

“The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his own good, nor solely for the benefit of succeeding generations; but it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds. The field of the controversy between Christ and Satan--the field on which the plan of redemption is wrought out--is the lesson book of the universe.”¹¹²

- 11) Verse 26a predicts the Messiah would be cut off, but not for himself, indicating he would be killed for the transgression of the people (cf. Isa. 53:4, 6, 8, 10,12; Jn. 1:29).
- 12) Verse 27 continues to foretell the covenant the Messiah would confirm with many and his death at the middle of the seven would serve as the cause for “the sacrifice and the oblation to cease”, hinting the temple service would end when type met the antitype, the Lamb of God be offered on the cross. This was fulfilled when Jesus died, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;”(Matt. 27:51).
- 13) The other three and half a year of the 70th week was left for the disciples to proclaim the gospel to the chosen people of God, which would be counted as from 31 AD to 34 AD. The symbolic event was the stoning of Stephen to death. (Act. 7:54-60). “And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.” (Act. 8:1). The 70 weeks assigned to the Jews came to an end. The

¹¹² Ellen White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, 154.

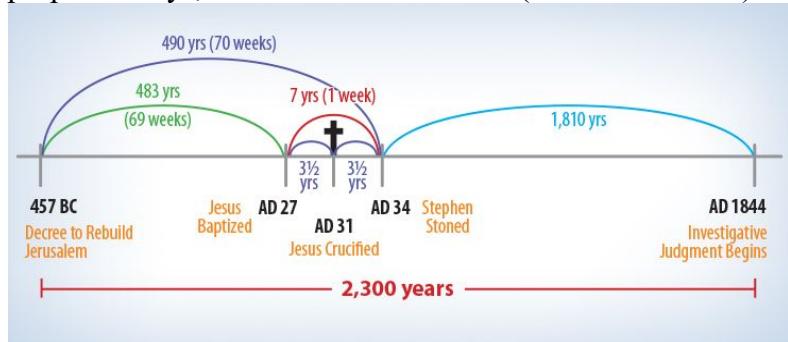
Jewish nation has lost its special status as the chosen elect of God. Gospel went abroad.

- 14) Verse 25b predicts that the rebuilding of the city and they would experience difficulties but would eventually be successful in spite of troubles. However, the city and the sanctuary would be destroyed by “the people of the prince”, Jerusalem would lay desolate. (v. 26b and 27b).
- 15) Jesus referred to the above prophecy about the city and the temple in Matthew 24. It was fulfilled in 70 AD when the Roman soldiers came like flood and destroyed both of them.

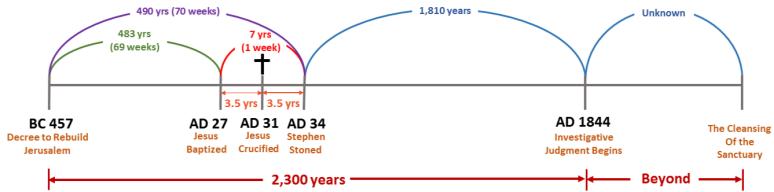
C. Missional Reflections

1. Daniel always put his people on his mind, his deep concern and care for the fellowmen was the source for mission. That should be a model for us today for engaging in Adventist mission.
2. Daniel’s prayer reveals that he was seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness first. Daniel made sincere confession of sins he did not commit, but were committed by his people. His prayer is also a model for us today as we live close to the time to return to the kingdom of God. So he should also not only confess our own sins, but intercede for our fellowmen.
3. When Daniel was praying with humble and contrite spirit, he was visited by the angel Gabriel sent from heaven, showing God listens to our prayers, even though He may answer it differently, as in the case of Daniel. Angels may visit those who afflict their souls with humble and contrite spirit in the great Day of atonement today as we live in and make us wise to understand His truth and His will for us.

4. In his prayer, Daniel mentioned about the Exodus experience. God answered him with the new Moses, the Messiah who would become the Passover Lamb to make it possible for believers to have another Exodus from the world to the promise land, the garden of Eden.
5. With the starting point of 70 weeks determined, the starting point of 2300 days was also ascertained. This makes it easy to project the end of the 2300 prophetic days. Applying 457BC as the commencement of the 2300 prophetic days, the end would be 1844. ($457+2300=1844$).



6. It was William Miller and associates that correctly put the two and two together and concluded that the 2300 days prophecy would end in October 22, 1844. It should be properly understood that there was no investigative judgment within the 2300 days prophecy. Investigative judgment started when 2300 days prophecy came to the end.
7. Dan. 8:14 consists of two phases, which are as follows,
 - 1) the 2300 days prophecy: 457 BC to 1844; Jesus' ministry on earth and his ministry in the holy place in heavenly sanctuary.
 - 2) Beyond 2300: from 1844 to the cleansing of the sanctuary, the last phase of Jesus' ministry in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary.



8. For Daniel, both the first 70 weeks and the end of 2300 prophetic days were all prophecy. However, these have all become history. Jesus has accomplished His mission on earth within the timeframe of the first 70 weeks of the 2300 prophetic days. He has also finished His priestly ministry in the holy place. At the end of 2300 days, or 1844, Jesus has moved from the holy place into the most holy place to begin the last phase of His ministry, the investigative judgment, before the close of probation. The mission of Jesus is now well underway to move towards the cleansing of the sanctuary.
9. It is also important to keep in mind that it is not 2300 days that determines 1844, but 1844 was pre-appointed before the foundation of the world, because God has set this day even before men sinned (Act. 17:30-31). However, God used the point of time Daniel was most concerned about as the frame of reference, the time to give a decree to rebuild Jerusalem, as the starting date for the 2300 days prophecy.
10. In other words, 1844 was the fixed date God appointed for the beginning of the hour of judgment. 2300 days was a variable. It was 2300 days because the decree for rebuilding Jerusalem happened to be issued in 457 BC. That was a memorable date for the Israelites. It was a time Daniel was concerned the most. So it was adopted as the

starting point to reach 1844, the appointed date for judgment.

11. Sometimes, truth hurts. In order to dismiss Daniel's mistaking the Jerusalem temple as the true sanctuary and holy mountain of God, a sad prophecy was given to him about the destruction of the rebuilt Jerusalem city and temple. In our missional outreach, sometimes we may have to tell the truth in love, even though it may hurt our missional audience, such as the true identity of the daily and the little horn power in the medieval age and our time. But do it always within the prospect of the glorious everlasting kingdom and the honour and glory of God.
12. The final destruction of Jerusalem must have made Daniel sad. It serves as a type for the whole world be destroyed at the second coming of Jesus, echoing the prophecies in Dan. 2 and 7. It is a sad result of the transgressions against God. It is revealed to us so that we could seek for another kingdom which will never be destroyed.
13. The mission of the Messiah as prophesised in Dan. 9:24-26 shows the wide scope of the mission of Christ. It was not only for the Jews, nor for humanity, but includes the entire cosmos, all of God's created worlds. It prompts missionaries of Christ to have a broader understanding of Christian mission.

Questions for Thoughts and Discussion

1. Why Daniel prayed so earnestly and confessed the sins of the Israelites from the leaders to common people?
2. What vision was Gabriel sent to make Daniel understood?
3. How do you prove that Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 are a whole?

4. What was the significance of Jesus' proclamation that "The time is fulfilled" (Mk. 1:15)? How does that help to decide when the 2300 days prophecy end?
5. Compare with founders or key figures of other world religions whose lives were not predicted before their birth, how will you use the prophecies in Chapter 8 & 9 to help people from different religious persuasions to realize Jesus is the only Saviour?
6. Explain why 2300 days prophecy and beyond is the longest time prophecy and also the most important prophecy about the Messiah in the Bible. Pay special attention to the two phases, that is the 2300 days and beyond.
7. Explain how the teachings of Jesus was rooted in the book of Daniel. Hint: the kingdom, the announcement of the arrival of Messiah at the beginning of His public ministry, the destruction of Jerusalem at the end of His ministry, his death and resurrection, even the self-addressing Son of man, the examination of wedding garment, the close of the door in the parable of the ten virgins, etc.
8. After 1798, studies on the 2300 days prophecy emerged, William Miller successfully connected the 70 weeks prophecy in Chapter 9 with Dan. 8:14 in 1830s. Explain how does this part of history fulfil the prophecies in the book of Daniel?
9. Was the atonement finished on the cross or it has been an ongoing process, and it entered the final phase from 1844?
10. Why is it that 1844 becomes a dividing line between the full gospel and the limited understanding of the gospel? State your reasons and discuss.
11. How do you explain that the understanding of the truth is progressive? Why the message of investigative judgment and the cleansing of the sanctuary so urgent for today?

12. How is it that a correct interpretation of Daniel 9 and Dan. 8:14 not only help us better understand the mission of Christ, but prompt us to understand and urge us to engage in the mission of God for these last days?

Ch. 16 Seen and Unseen Wars

A. The Story

In the third year of the reign of Cyrus. Daniel received another vision, a partial vision (mareh) concerning the long and great war. This time Daniel did understand the vision. However, he was greatly grieved as usual. He lost his appetite and didn't anoint himself at all for three full weeks.

In this vision, he saw a certain man clothed in linen, the image of a high priest. Compared with Rev.1:13-16, we can see that this man is none other than Jesus. This is the first time Daniel saw him clearly, even though he has seen him dimly before in Dan. 3, 7 and 8. Those who were with Daniel were terrified, but Daniel alone saw the vision, fainted and fell into sleep.

An angel was sent to make Daniel understand what was going on behind the scene, the unseen war between the holy and evil angels over the matter of the world. It is comforting to see the angel was sent to fight with the evil forces for 21 days, corresponding exactly to the time when Daniel was not feeling well.

Daniel was then told that the angel was sent to show him “what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.” (v. 14). This statement sheds light on the main point of the vision in Chapter 11 and 12.

After relating the vision to Daniel, the angel needed to go back to fight with the prince of Persia, with the help of Michael your prince.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verse 1-9. Vision of the Glorious Man

1. **Verse 1-3.** [1] In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.
 1. [2] In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.
 2. [3] I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Note:

- 1) The third year of Cyrus king of Persia was 536 BC, two or three years after Chapter 9.
- 2) Another vision was revealed to Daniel. For “the thing was true, but the time appointed was long.” (KJV). NASB puts it as “the message was true and one of great conflict”. The great conflict was both long and great.
- 3) Daniel understood the vision and was greatly distressed for three full weeks. He lost his appetite and did nothing to care his skin in a very dry climate.
- 4) We see Daniel’s consistent concern for his people and his country. Time and again, we see in Daniel “a man of sorrow”, a man who always placed his people and country on his heart. In this way, we see in Daniel a perfect type for Jesus, a man of sorrow, who always place his people upon his heart. His only concern is to bring them out of this evil world and bring them back to the kingdom of God.

2. **Verse 4-9.** [4] And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; [5] Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: [6] His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the

appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. [7] And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. [8] Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. [9] Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

Note:

- 1) Similar to the vision in Chapter 8, Daniel was “by the side of the great river”.
- 2) Verse 5-7 is a description of Jesus, dressed as the High Priest, condescended to communicate with Daniel, the same scene John saw on the isle of Patmos in Rev. 1:13-16, glorious, holy and solemn. What a wonderful connection is there between the universe of heaven and this world. How deeply our Saviour cares for those who love him.
- 3) However, Daniel was greatly humbled as he described his reaction as there remaining “no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.” (v. 7-9). This was the impression felt by a man who had a visible manifestation of the Spirit of God in him and who is thrice called ‘greatly beloved’. Not a single boastful word of self-esteem, because he was contrite in spirit, and faithful, and true. What an example for us today!

Part Two: Verse 10-21

1. **Verse 10-14.** [10] And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. [11] And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto

thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. [12] Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. [13] But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. [14] Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.

Note:

- 1) Though Daniel did not reveal the name of the angel, it was most likely the same Gabriel who visited him in earlier visions. This angel was also sent to “confirm and to strengthen” Cyrus (Dan. 11:1), whom Ellen White identified as Gabriel.¹¹³
- 2) Gabriel was sent to strengthen Daniel, to make him understand the vision, and also to disclose to Daniel that the long and great war is not limited to the humans powers, involving Babylon, Median-Persian, Greece, Rome or the little horn and so on, but also angelic forces, good and evil angels.
- 3) It was then the crucial time for Cyrus to make a decision whether to allow the Jews to return to restore the city and rebuild the temple. Michael and Gabriel were there to resist the powers of evil angels and to exert positive influences upon Cyrus. “And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, 556.4.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 557.

- 4) Daniel 10 presents before us a busy picture of angels actively involved in working out the plan of God for the benefit of the heirs of salvation.
- 5) "While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested. Through the prophet Daniel we are given a glimpse of this mighty struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus; and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel's aid. "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days," Gabriel declares; "but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia." Daniel 10:13. All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained; the forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses, who reigned about seven and a half years."¹¹⁵
- 6) Verse 14 is the key text, it pinpoints the thrust of the vision [chazown] and explanation given to Daniel. It was about "what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days." It was still "many days" from Daniel's time.

2. Verse 15-21. [15] And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. [16] And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. [17] For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is

¹¹⁵ Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, 571.

there breath left in me. [18] Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, [19] And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. [20] Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. [21] But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

Note:

- 1) Daniel fell to the ground as he did in Dan. 8:17 and became speechless.
- 2) The angel touched his mouth, as one of the seraphims did to Isaiah (Isa. 6:7).
- 3) “For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord?” Daniel’s humility was further demonstrated.
- 4) “O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.” How a humble man like Daniel was viewed in the eyes of heaven was encouraging. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa. 57:15).
- 5) Verse 27 opens before human eyes the intense struggle between the good and evil angels for the ebb and flow of earthly affairs. It further highlights the work of Michael in this great conflict.

C. Missional Reflections

1. Learning from Daniel to develop deep passion for our fellowmen or kinsmen. This is so crucial among the

people who are eager to return to the kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem! This is something we should all pray and seek for.

2. Jesus is not far from us, he is fighting side by side with us. Angels are fighting with us and for us. We need to understand more the work of the angels and to cooperate with them.
3. Spiritual discernment can be given to individuals while the surrounding people may have no clue. Daniel was revealed the unseen war, yet his kinsmen saw nothing and did not understand.
4. When we are in the right condition, heaven can enhance our spiritual understanding.
5. Mission is a comprehensive project. It involves all aspects of the cosmos. The Saviour and the good angels are both deeply involved in the work of saving men.
6. Our High Priest is never separated from the matters on earth. Heaven and earth are closely connected. “The angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man” to “to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:14).
7. Heaven is near to those who are in humble and contrite spirit. It is crucial for God’s missionaries for the end time.

Questions for Thoughts and Discussion

1. What is the main purpose of the vision in Chapter 10-12?

2. How does Daniel 10 help us to have a glimpse of the unseen war over the affairs of the world between good and evil? How could this insight impact your perspective on culture and world affairs?
3. In what way does Daniel's concern for his country and people affect you? How would that impact your prayers and your efforts in the mission outreach?
4. Who was the man in linen Daniel saw in his vision?
5. From time to time, people with supernormal abilities appear and attract many followers. How can we use Daniel's description of his reaction in Chapter 10 as a reference to identify which ones are from God and which ones are from the devil?
6. Why was Gabriel sent to address Daniel's prayer? What can we learn from this?

Chapter 17 A House Divided

A. The Story

Daniel 10-12 is a replay of Dan 8:1-14 targeting the last day events, starting from the end of 2300 day prophecy leading to events after the cleansing of the sanctuary or the close of probation, namely the time of trouble.

Chapter 11 is a continuation of Chapter 10. As it was pointed out in Dan. 10:14, the purpose of the vision is to reveal what shall befall the people of God, and the prelude is quite long. However, it sets the stage for the events in the latter days.

There was no description of the vision itself, only the explanation of the angel about the vision. That explains why it is so plain, void of symbols as commonly seen in previous chapters.

Gabriel started his explanation with the fact that he used to help Michael in strengthening the decisions of Darius the Persia king to grant the Jews the benevolent plan to go back to Jerusalem. Now, in the third year of Cyrus, the restoration project was already begun. That should have taken a load off Daniel's mind. It also accounts why the angel told Daniel to go and rest in peace at the end his explanation.

Gabriel then gave minute details of the development of kingdoms from Medo-Persia to Greece (v.1-2); and from Greece to four Greek empires (v. 2-4). Great details were then given to the conflict between the king of the north (Syria) and king of the south (Egypt) (v. 5-15).

Imperial Rome came on the scene from verse 16 and went on to verse 30a. After that (v. 30b) Papal Rome appeared till verse 39 as the king of the north.

From verse 40 to verse 45, the anticipated history moved from the collapse of king of the north, being through its resurrection, to its final destruction.

It may well be the prophecy in Daniel 11 that led Jesus draw his conclusion that “And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.” (Mk. 3:24-26) The internal wars between the earthly powers leads to its final destruction.

As mentioned before, the beginning and the ending events in Dan. 8-9 and 10-12 are about the same. Even though Daniel 11 has more details in comparison with Daniel 8, the sealed part is the same. The seal will not be broken till the time of the end. Then understanding will be given to the event of 2300 day prophecy, the cleansing of the sanctuary and what will take place afterward. All of these are entrusted to the Daniel arising at the time of the end. The end-time Daniel will continue the mission of Daniel for their time.

As the return of Israel from captivity was the primary load on Daniel’s mind, the return to the New Jerusalem will be the primary concern for the end-time Daniel, the spiritual Israel. As Daniel prayed earnestly for God to act speedily, the end-time Daniel should also pray and do their best to hasten the second coming of Jesus to return to the garden of Eden!

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verse 1-2. Mede-Persia.

1. **Verse 1-2.** [1] Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. [2] And now will I

shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

Note:

- 1) “in the first year of Darius the Mede”, probably the same year when Babylon collapsed. Gabriel “, stood to confirm and to strengthen him [Michael]”, in order to strengthen the decision of allowing the Israelites to return.
- 2) Verse 2 predicts that, after Cyrus, there would be “three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be richer than they all”. Two options are proposed.

Option 1 – (1) Cambyses (529-522 B.C.), (2) False Smerdis the Usurper (522 B.C.), (3) Darius I (521-486 B.C.), and (4) Xerxes (485-465 B.C.), the king of the book of Esther.

Option 2 – (1) Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), (2) Darius (522-486 B.C.), (3) the Xerxes of Esther (486-465 B.C.), and (4) Artaxerxes (465-423 B.C.).

Be it Xerxes or Artaxerxes, both meddled in Greek affairs, could be considered to be the fulfilment of the fourth rich and strong Persia kings. Either way, the Greek Empire would be the next superpower to emerge on the scene of history.

Part Two: Verse 3-4. The Greek Empire

1. **Verse 3-4.** [3] And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. [4] And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Note:

- 1) Verse 3-4. The mighty king that shall stand up and rule with great dominion is doubtless Alexander the Great (356-323 BC). When he died the sudden death, the Greece kingdom was divided among his four generals, an obvious fulfilment of verse 4, “his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled”.

Part Three: Verse 5-15. King of the North [Syria] vs. King of the South [Egypt]

1. **Verse 5-6.** [5] And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion. [6] And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

Note:

- 1) After the division, two new entities appeared, the king of the south and the king of the north, terms seemingly borrowed from the northern kingdom and southern kingdom of Israel after its division. Using Judeo-Palestine as the point of directional reference, Hellenistic Egypt would be symbolized as the “king of the south”, as this power would be located “south” of Israel. Hellenistic Syria is called the “king of the north,” as this power would be located “north” of Israel; in a similar fashion, Hellenistic Egypt is called the “king of the south,” as this power would be located “south” of Israel.
2. **Verse 5.** “The south” designates Egypt, as it does in Daniel 8:9. “The king of the south” refers to its first king, Ptolemy I

Soter (reign, 323-282 B.C.). During his reign, Ptolemy took possession of Cyprus, Phoenicia, Caria, Cyrene, and many other islands and cities, thus was strong. This particular dynasty would survive the longest out of all the Hellenistic monarchies (323-30 B.C.).

Note:

However, Seleucus, who was not given a territorial appointment and was once placed himself under Ptolemy's command and thus became of Ptolemy's "princes", receiving a commission as the commander of Egyptian naval forces, would grow strong and eventually enlarge the Seleucid kingdom "above" that of Ptolemy's, fulfilling the prediction of this verse. As a result, the Seleucid Empire existed from 312 BC to 63 BC. In between, "Five Syria Wars" were waged between Ptolemy dynasty and Seleucid empire, which were outlined in Dan. 11.

3. Verse 6. The predicted peace treaty was reached by 271 B.C. between Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the second Greek king of Egypt, and Antiochus I Soter (reign, 280-261 B.C.), the second Greek king of Syria, who was later killed in the war against Eumenes I of Pergamos (261 B.C.), and was succeeded next by Antiochus II Theos (reign, 261-246 B.C.).

Note:

Antiochus II launched the "Second Syrian War" (261-252 B.C.) against Ptolemy II, but eventually the two "join themselves together" in peace (252 B.C.) upon the following terms: Antiochus II would exile his current wife, queen Laodice, and their two sons, and marry Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II. Soon thereafter, Antiochus put away Berenice and reinstated his former wife Laodice and her children. In revenge, Laodice poisoned Antiochus II (246 B.C.); thus, the one "who strengthened" Berenice in those "times" did not "stand." Losing protection, Berenice and her infant son, together with those who came with her, were all executed by

Laodice. Seleucus II Callinicus (reign, 246-226B.C.), son of Laodice was proclaimed king.

4. Verse 7-9. [7] But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: [8] And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. [9] So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

Note:

- 1) While Bernice was suffering in Syria, her half-brother Ptolemy III (246-221 BC), who had succeeded to the throne in the year of her father's death, in order to establish his own authority and also to avenge for his sister Bernice, raised an army and invaded Syria as far as Babylon - the "fortress of the King of the North". For a time, Egypt dominated the eastern Mediterranean Sea. This was the "Third Syrian War" in history. (246-241 B.C.)
- 2) Verse 8. According to history, Ptolemy III took 2,500 idols of gold and silver and 40,000 talent of silver in this campaign of invasion of Syria. Many of these were Egyptian idols taken by a succession of conquest in various centuries, including those stolen by Cambyses.
- 3) Verse 9. Indeed, history shows that Ptolemy III, satisfied with this glorious achievement, and needing to consolidate his power, did not attack Syria again during his lifetime.

Here is a depiction of the new king of the north, Seleucus II (son of Laodice), returning from a battle, being defeated. Seleucus II wanted to avenge the Egyptian occupation of the land of Syria, but as a result his army was destroyed, his navy wiped out, and he returned to Antioch empty-handed, badly wounded.

5. Verse 10-13. [10] But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress. [11] And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. [12] And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it. [13] For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

Note:

- 1) Verse 10. Seleucus II, King of the North, had two sons, both of whom were eager to take revenge and reclaim Seleucus' lost lands. The first to succeed him, Seleucus III Ceraunus Soter (225-223 B.C.), was a coward who was unable to support the northern kingdoms and was assassinated by his men. He was succeeded by a more capable brother, Antiochus III Magnus (223-187 B.C.).

The second "he" ("he who shall overflow and pass over") refers to the historical Antiochus III who personally led an invasion of the Ptolemies beginning in 221 B.C. and recovered some lost territory, including Seleucia and Phoenicia. But due to civil unrest he had to return to quell the rebellion. In 220 B.C. he again set out for Egypt.

His invasion did not go well at first, but then a Ptolemaic general named Theodotus betrayed him and gave the very important land of Coele Syria to Antioch. The Ptolemaic frontline was thus broken at a critical moment which

allowed Antiochus III to attack "even to his fortress" of the king of the south, as the Bible foretells.

- 2) Verse 11. In 219 B.C., the Fourth Syrian Campaign broke out. By this time, Antioch had succeeded in capturing Coele-Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine. And Ptolemy IV Philadelphus, of the south, turned out to be a king of pleasure and corrupt character. He was then awakened to "great anger," so he used diplomacy to delay the war and engaged in actively military training. By 217 B.C., Antiochus had led his army straight to Raphia, near Gaza, the "fortress" of the king of the South. Ptolemy then led his army to fight with "the king of the North". In the end, Antiochus III's "army" was "given" into the hand of the King of the South, as predicted. Coele-Syria was returned to the king of the South.
- 3) Verse 12. At this time, the King of the South (221-205 B.C.) is still referred to here as Ptolemy IV. After his victory over the king of the North in the aforementioned battle of Raphia and the recapture of Coele Syria, he became complacent and satisfied with the status quo instead of pursuing his victory and completing the conquest of Syria in its entirety. Thus, while having "taken away the multitude," Ptolemy IV would "not be strengthened by" this victory and would return to his homeland.
- 4) Verse 13. According to history, by this time, the previous king of the South, Ptolemy IV, had already died. His son Ptolemy V (Epiphanes, reign: 203-181 B.C.) was only about five years old when he succeeded to the throne. He was manipulated by some of his ministers because of his youth. Antiochus III began to regroup his forces in 212 B.C. in an attempt to revive the Egyptian invasion at the change of power in Egypt, avenging the defeat in the previous battle (Raphia, 217 B.C.) and launching the "Fifth Syrian

War" (202-195 B.C.). Succeeded in occupying Coele Syria, through two strikes. This was a turning point. From then on, Egypt lost control of Coele Syria.,

6. Verse 14-15. [14] And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. [15] So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

Note:

The king of the south is Ptolemaic Egypt. Its status as a Mediterranean power was seriously weakened after the battle of the Panium (201-200 B.C.). Many Seleucid kings that would "stand up" against "the king of the south". One of them would be Antiochus IV Epiphanes (reign, 175-163 B.C.). "The arms of the south" would not have "any strength to withstand" him, Antiochus IV launched a successful invasion of Egypt, and would also be one of the "robbers of thy people," namely Daniel's own people Israel. Antiochus IV would invade Jerusalem (168-167 B.C.) and "rob" the people of Daniel. He would strip the sanctuary of all its treasures, plunder the resources of the city, and murder thousands of people, selling many more thousands into slavery. Antiochus' action had actually provoked a Jewish revolt which would eventually result in the complete removal of the Seleucid presence from Judea altogether (141 B.C.). Thus, Antiochus IV, who attempted to "exalt" himself by "robbing" the people of Daniel, would ultimately "fall" and fail "to establish the vision."

Daniel 11

Verse 5

Interpretation

King of South – Ptolemaic Egypt

Ptolemy I Soter (323-282 B.C.)

King of North – Seleucid Syria

Seleucus I Nicator (312-280 B.C.)

Verses 6-9

First Syrian War (276-271 B.C.)
Ptolemy II Philadelphus vs.
Antiochus I Soter

Second Syrian War (261-252 B.C.)
Antiochus II Theos vs. Ptolemy II
Philadelphus

Third Syrian War (246-240 B.C.)
Ptolemy III Euergetes vs.
Seleucus II Callinicus

Verses 10-13

Fourth Syrian War (219-217 B.C.)
Antiochus III Magnus vs.
Ptolemy IV Philopater

Verses 14-15

Fifth Syrian War (202-195 B.C.)
Antiochus III Magnus vs.
Ptolemy V Epiphanes

Robbers of people – Seleucid
plunder of Jerusalem and the temple under
Antiochus IV
Epiphanes (reign, 175-163 B.C.)

Part IV. Verse 16-22. King of the North and the Death of Christ

1. Verse 16. [16] But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

Note:

1) Adventist commentators generally see in here the rising of the Pagan Rome from 168 B.C. and ended the Seleucid-Syrian kingdom. According to this understanding, this text can be stated like this: “But he [Pagan Rome] that cometh against him [Seleucid-Syria, the “king of the north”] shall

do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him [Pagan Rome]; and “he [Pagan Rome, the new “king of the north”] shall stand in the glorious land [Judeo-Palestine, Israel], which by his hand shall be consumed.” Thus, by 63 BC, through the military might of Pompey the Great, Pagan Rome would “stand in” and “consume” the “glorious land” of Israel, as both Syria and Judeo-Palestine would become Pagan Roman provinces.

2. Verse 17-19. [17] He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him. [18] After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him. [19] Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Note:

1) Verse 17. This passage is probably one of the most interesting prophecies on the historical development in Daniel 11. It tells of the transition from Pompey the Great and his involvement in Judeo-Syrian affairs to that of Gaius Julius Caesar, the most famous general in Roman history, and his specific involvement in Egyptian affairs. In between, there were multiple rulers in Rome, thus the "he" of the king of the north in verse 17 represents the rulers of Rome in general.

With the death of Pompey in Egypt, he "shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom ", that is, Egypt, the last remaining province of the territory over which Alexander the Great had ruled. Once Rome had taken Egypt, it had access to gain the whole of Greece,

which would be up to Caesar's nephew, Octavian to accomplish this. In this sense, he was "to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom his nation", even the strength of future Rome.

"And upright ones with him" refers to Rome's combination with the Jews. According to Josephus, when Caesar encountered a revolt in Egypt, he did not have enough troops with him. His rescuers were far away in Syria and could not save him in time. At this point, Antipater, who was in Judea (a military advisor to Silvanus II), came to Caesar's rescue and enabled him to escape. Thereafter, Antipater was given special preferential treatment (Antipater was the father of the later King Herod the Great) and all the Jews were given special preferential treatment. Their petition to have the Temple walls rebuilt was also granted. This period of history is also the exact fulfilment of "the righteous and his". This shows that the Jews also played considerable role in the Roman conquest of Egypt.

Ptolemy XII had appointed his two children to co-regency, but they each had an ulterior motive. Then Cleopatra VII seduced Caesar to turn around and help her ascend to the throne. Caesar had wanted to occupy Egypt, but after meeting Cleopatra VII, he helped her ascend to the throne. Cleopatra VII also became Caesar's mistress until he was assassinated.

It is said that Cleopatra VII had enthroned herself as the goddess Isis (Isis), and commanded worship to her. The plural "women" would refer to her polytheistic background and her own canonization as a goddess. Another possible explanation is that, according to the Egyptian custom of polygamy, this Cleopatra may have been a daughter of one

of the wives of Ptolemy XII. Either way, Cleopatra seems to be the daughter of women in verse 17.

At the time of Caesar's murder, Cleopatra VII was also in Rome, but did not help him at all. On the other hand, the successor appointed by Caesar, not the son he had with Cleopatra VII but his nephew Octavian, drove Cleopatra VII to commit suicide as well. By doing so, Caesar "corrupted her".

This history exactly fulfilled this prophecy, providing convincing evidence for the reliability of the bible prophecy.

- 2) Verse 18-19. The period of Roman-Egyptian history in 47-31 B.C. clearly fulfills the prophecy of Dan 11:18-19. It begins with the first Roman dictator, Julius Caesar, describing how he turned from Egypt to three coasts and took multiple locations as he began to pursue the remnants of his former general, Pompey. Caesar was assassinated by his own people. However, his generals killed all those involved in his assassination and thus "remove" this shame. The only one that fits the rest of the descriptions in these verses was Mark Antony. Only he had been the equivalent of a ruler of a nation - ruling over the Eastern Romans and co-regenting Egypt with Cleopatra VII; and then he had the same encounter with Cleopatra VII, the "daughter of the women", as did Julius Caesar. He met with the same ending like Caesar, but he did not have "a general" to avenge for him as he himself did for Julius Caesar. Antony's "reproach" was "his own". He met Cleopatra VII before he went to his place of refuge in his fort - Eastern Rome. As a result, as the Bible predicts, he systematically turned "his face toward the fort of his own land" where he "stumbled and fell", and finally returned to Alexandria in Egypt in great defeat. In addition to this, having offended the Roman

Senate deputies and the allied Octavian, who declared war on him and pursued him for his sins. He was greatly defeated at the Battle of Actium, and committed suicide after fleeing to Egypt, and "not be found".

3. Verse 20-22. [20] Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. [21] And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. [22] And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

Note:

- 1) Verse 20. In the previous verse, the last figure was Mark Antony. Therefore, "a raiser of taxes" that "shall stand up in his estate" was Octavian. After the death of the other two allies, i.e. Mark Antony and Lepidus, the Senate gave him the title of Augustus in 27 B.C. He became the supreme ruler, equivalent to an emperor, until his death (reign years: 27 B.C.-14 A.D.).

During his long reign of more than 40 years, he put an end to civil wars and refrained from waging major wars, allowing Rome to enter a period of peace and prosperity known in history as the "Pax Romana". From 26 to 19 B.C., the northern part of the Roman empire stretched from Spain, through Gaul, to Germania in the west, with the Rhine as its border, and to Armenia and the Caucasus in the east, ending at the borders of the Parthian Empire (northeast of present-day Iran).

But Augustus, like other Roman rulers, did not understand economics, because with the cessation of war and the absence of plunder, taxes became an important

source of income to keep the government running. Thus, "a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom" took place. As mentioned earlier, Judea had become a Roman colony, and there were tax collectors sent by Rome to collect taxes. It is said that they often collected more than the required amount (cf. Lk 19:2-7).

A raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom refers to Augustus Caesar (30 B.C.-14 A.D.), that is, in the time of Joseph and Mary. At that time he had issued an imperial decree calling on all the people of the world to sign up for a register for the purpose of determining taxes. (Luke 2:1)

In 14 A.D., Augustus Caesar died at the end of his life, not as a result of war or homicide, reigning 41 years at the age of 76 (first 63-14).

- 2) Verse 21. The "vile person" here refers to the second Roman emperor Caesar Tiberius (14-37 AD). He was the son of Augustus Caesar's wife from a previous marriage (Tiberius Claudius Nero). Augustus Caesar's son and nephew had died before him. His wife (Livia) begged Augustus to make Tiberius his successor. Augustus had believed that his stepson Tiberius was "too vile" to become emperor. Yet, after the death of several successors, he would eventually adopt Tiberius as his own son (A.D. 4), and designate him to be the sole heir to the Roman throne. Tiberius, too, knowing that he was unworthy and incompetent, pretended not to be king until the senate repeatedly asked him to do so ("by flatteries").

Indeed, the way in which he won his kingdom was not by warfare or merit, but by flattery, first through his mother's nepotism, and then by his own hypocritical abdication of the throne, and so on, which fits the description of the man who replaced Augustus Caesar. Even though he did possess

exceptional administrative skills that were developed through his experience as a military commander, but he didn't have the proper temperament needed to command the respect of the senate or his subordinates in government. Thus, he would have the reputation of a "vile person" who would not receive the respect and "honour of the kingdom" as did his predecessor Augustus.

- 3) Verse 22. Tiberius Caesar is still the "him" as referred to in this verse. It describes the swift and brutal way of his executing anyone who was seen as conspirators against him. Lucius Aelius Sejanus, a former leader of the Praetorian Guard and protector of the emperor, was falsely accused of an actual plot against the emperor and killed without proper judgment. That day was October 18, 31 A.D.

The text can be read as "And with the arms of a flood [swift exacting judgment] shall they [conspirators against Tiberius] be overflowed [removed] from before him [Tiberius], and shall be broken [executed]."

This prophecy sets forth the time and context of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, because "the prince of the covenant" was no doubt Jesus Christ. Like as Sejanus was accused of usurping the throne, and Christ was accused of becoming king (Lk 23:1-2; Jn 19:12).

The Bible provides evidence for the time of crucifixion. Tiberius began his reign in 14 A.D. In fact, he had already been co-regent with Augustus for 2 years, so he began his reign in 12 A.D. Therefore the 15 years of Tiberius would have been 27 AD, the year Christ was anointed and began his public ministry. (Lk. 3:1-3) Three and a half years later Christ was crucified, which was A.D. 31. (Dan 9:26-27)

Daniel 11 Symbol	Interpretation
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“He that cometh against him” (Verse 16)	Pagan Rome subjugates Syria, becoming the new “king of the north”
“Stand in glorious land” (vs. 16)	Pompey the Great, 63 BC
“Enter whole kingdom” (vs. 17)	Julius Caesar in Egypt
“Daughter of women” (vs. 17)	Caesar’s Cleopatra
“Stumble and fall” (vs. 19)	Caesar’s assassination
“Raiser of taxes” (vs. 20)	Caesar Augustus
“Vile person” (vs. 21)	Tiberius Caesar
“Prince of covenant broken” (Verse 22)	Christ’s Crucifixion

Part V. Verse 23-30. The King of the North and the King of the South

Different interpretations exist on this specific passage, but they all fall into the same historical framework of Pagan Roman, thus maintaining consistency with the earlier chapters of Daniel.

One way to look at it is that verses 23-28 offer a survey of three general historical trends in the history of Pagan Rome as the new “king of the north:” (1) the history of a Judeo-Roman “league” (verse 23); (2) the Roman subjugation of Syria, Judea, and Egypt, which would include the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (verse 24); and (3) the resumption of the warfare between the “king of the north” (Pagan Rome) and the “king of the south” (Egypt) in two different conflicts, Caesar vs. Pompey, and Octavian vs. Antony (verses 25-28).

- 1. Verse 23.** [23] And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

Note:

- 1) And after the league (Judeo-Roman League in 161 B.C.) made with him (Pagan Rome) he (the new “king of the north”) shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people (the Jews).
2. **Verse 24[24]** He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.
3. **Verse 25[25]** And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.

Note:

- 1) And he (the king of north Octavia) shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south (Mark Antony and Cleopatra in Egypt) with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army (to engage in the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.); but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him (Antony would “not stand,” committing suicide with Cleopatra 30 B.C.).

4. Verse 26-27. [26] Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. [27] And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.

Note:

- 1) Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat (Antony's subordinates and queen of Egypt) shall destroy him (Antony), and his (Antony's) army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. And both (Antony and Octavian are brothers-in-law) these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper (using each other for military help): for yet the end shall be at the time appointed (God is in control, time for a change of dynasty).

5. Verse 28. [28] Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

Note:

- 1) Then shall he (the king of north, Octavia) return into his land (Rome) with great riches (and later he was renamed Caesar Augustus, the first official Pagan Roman emperor); and his heart shall be against the holy covenant (Octavian had intervened in Jewish affairs and required the

submission of Judea to Rome; or optional interpretation: Constantine's nominal conversion but actual use of Christianity); and he shall do exploits (with the final conquest of Egypt), and return to his own land (Octavian would return to Rome as sole master of the empire).

6. Verse 29-30. [29] At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. [30] For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

Note:

- 1) Verse 29 At the time appointed (end of 360-year prophecy, 31 B.C. to A.D. 330), he (Pagan Rome) shall return (moving from persecution to coordination, confusing Christians, relocating capital), and come toward the south ("toward not to Egypt", Constantine's removal of the Roman capital to Constantinople Egypt A.D. 330); but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter (This move "toward" Egypt would be peaceful, not like the "former," Octavian's defeat of Egypt, or like the "latter" time, Egypt's defeat by the "king of the north" in Dan 11:40-45).
- 2) Verse 30, For the ships of Chittim (Barbarian tribes Visigoths, Huns, Vandals and Heruli) shall come against him (causing the collapse of the Western Roman Empire): therefore he [Pagan Rome, Paganism, Theodosius I, the last emperor to rule over both the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire,] shall be grieved (had to face the challenge of saving the empire), and return [attempt to revive itself], and have indignation [war against] the holy covenant (the Ten Commandments, Deut. 4:13): so shall he do [make war against Christianity]; he [Paganism] shall even return [attempt to revive itself], and have intelligence [gain the support] with them [professed Christians] that

forsake the holy covenant [compromise paganism with Christianity].”

Please notice that the second half of Verse 30 may have a secondary application in Papal Rome. Irrespective of which application is taken, verse 30 made the transition from Pagan Rome to Papal Rome.

Daniel 11	Interpretation
Verse 23	Judeo-Roman League (161 B.C.); Pagan Rome, as the new “king of the “north,” was “strong” with the Jews (a small people);
Verse 24	Pagan Rome enters “peaceably” upon the “fattest places of the province” (Syria, Judea, Egypt); Pagan Rome would do what “his fathers” have “not done,” destroy Jerusalem (Titus, A.D. 70); Pagan Rome would “forecast devices” against the Christian Church through ten periods of Christian persecution; Even for a “time” (360 literal years); this would go from both 48 B.C. (Caesar’s involvement in Egypt) to A.D. 313 (Edict of Milan ending Christian persecution) AND 31 B.C. (Octavian’s defeat of Antony and Egypt) to A.D. 330 (dedication of Constantinople);
Verses 25-28	Pagan Rome (“king of the north”) vs. Egypt (“king of the south”) – a history of warfare between Pagan Rome (led by Octavian) and Egypt (led by Mark Antony and Cleopatra); Octavian would win the Battle of Actium (31 BC) and seize control of Egypt (30 BC);

Verses 29 “At the time appointed”	End of 360-year prophecy (31 B.C. to A.D. 330 and 48 B.C. to A.D. 313);
“Come toward the south”	Constantine’s removal of the Roman capital to Constantinople, “toward,” not “to,” Egypt (A.D. 330);
“Not as former, or latter”	This move “toward” Egypt would be peaceful, not like the “former,” Octavian’s defeat of Egypt, or like the “latter” time, Egypt’s defeat by the “king of the north” in Dan 11:40-45;
Verse 30 “Ships of Chittim”	Barbarian Tribes that caused the collapse of the Western Roman Empire (Visigoths, Huns, Vandals, and Heruli);
“Against the holy covenant”	First, a revival of Paganism in the face of Christianity, and its absorption into Roman Catholicism; second, the triumph of Catholicism over both paganism and Arian Christianity, and its attempt to destroy true Christianity.

Part VI. Verse 31-39. The Abomination that Maketh Desolate

1. **Verse 31.** [31] And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Note:

- 1) The arms here was fulfilled in the army of the Franks, led by Clovis (466-511), the king of Franks, who was converted to Catholic faith in 496 and believed to be baptized in Christmas 508,¹¹⁶ received the patriciate,

¹¹⁶

honorary consulate, and recognition as king, dedicated his sword and his country to the Papacy. In this way, they forfeited their previous paganism and thus polluted the sanctuary of strength, the source of their spiritual courage and reliance. Paganism [the daily] was thus removed or taken away. In reality, paganism crept into Catholicism and was actually lifted up appearing in the garb of Christianity. Clovis' version and emerging as the political champion of the Roman Catholic Church paved way for the setting up of papacy as a strong and dominating power over the world, thus “place the abomination that maketh desolate”.

This verse clearly associates “arms” with the daily. It was through “arms” that “the daily” was taken away. This confirms again that the daily could not be Christ’s ministry in heaven, for no earthly arms could possibly take away the heavenly ministry of Christ! To believe it would be close to blasphemy. The priest’s replacement of Christ’ intercessory ministry in Catholicism was not brought about by “arms”, but through gradual changes over time.

2. Verse 32-34. [32] And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. [33] And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. [34] Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

Note:

- 1) Deuteronomy describes “his covenant” as “even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.” (Deut. 4:13). So those who “do wickedly against the covenant” refers to the commandments-breakers.

1John 2:3-4 reveals that to know God is to keep his commandments. Therefore, those who “do know their God” are the ones that would keep God’s commandments.

So we see two groups of people here, the first being those who do evil against the covenant would seduce people by flatteries, by clever and flowery words, with a gospel or with flattering prospects of social, economic, and even political advancement.; and the second the people who kept His commandments and his Word, and such people act in a strong manner, to keep their faith and spread the gospel under severe persecution.

- 2) Verse 33. These two verses describes the good work done by those faithful Christians during “many days”, they would be persecuted and suffer for the Lord. However, there would be “a little help”, help from reformation which would result in shortening the days of persecution. (Matt. 24:22) However, there were also others who would recant their faith through “flatteries.”

- 3. Verse 35.** [35] And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

Note:

- 1) During this time the wise men will fall, so that they may be cleansed after their faith has been tested. believers in all ages after Daniel, it shows that persecution is coming, but not beyond God's control. There is a limit. In comparison with Dan. 7:25, we can see that the “time appointed”, or “the time of the end” is the end of 1260 years, namely, 1798.
- 4. Verse 36-39.** [36] And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that

that is determined shall be done. [37] Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. [38] But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.[39] Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

Note:

- 1) The "king" should still refer to the king of the North. According to the historical progression and context, this King of the North should be referring to Papal Rome. Although the involvement of the Frank king was mentioned earlier, his appearance is only in a supporting role. It is still Papal Rome who plays the leading role.

Three characteristics of this kingly power were given: "do according to his will", in contrast to the will of God. Exalt himself, in contrast to the self-condescension of Christ, highlighting his non-Christian quality; "Magnify himself above every god," and especially "speak marvellous things against the God of gods," revealing his offense to God, and especially blasphemous against the Holy Spirit, the One who imparts the inspiration and gives the word of God.

However, it will meet with its final and complete downfall at the indignation of God, the outpouring of the seven last plagues in the day of the Lord, otherwise known as the time of trouble, echoing the answer given in Dan. 8:14.

To the question of when to bring the power of the king of the north to a stop as asked in Dan. 8:13, the answer

given here in verse 36 is the indignation of God, which follows immediately after the sanctuary be cleansed as described in Dan. 8:14.

Verse 36 serves as a general summary of the king of the north, which is further described in its two stages, first in verse 37-39 and second verse 40-45 till its fatal destruction.

- 2) Verse 32-35 described how the king of the north would treat the people of God. Now the prophecy moves on to tell how this power would act in relation to God in verse 37-39. These behaviours were fulfilled in the middle ages, they will be repeated in similar fashion in the latter days.

The reference to "the God of his fathers" indicates that this king has a historical heritage. So it is easy to identify this power with the preceding king of the north. As Eve's "desire shall be to thy husband" (Gen. 3:16), so the desire of women (people of God in different generations) is Christ, the head of the church. Verse 37 shows that the king of the north (papal Rome) has forfeited the religion of his fathers (no more open paganism), but does not hold regard to "the desire of women (no respect to Christ), nor regard any god." This power simply magnify himself above all, a typical representation of the spirit of Lucifer (Isa. 14:13-14). Instead, idolatry would be the main characteristic of this power, not worshipping God according to the law of God.

"The most strong holds" refers to Christian church. The king of the north would "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thes. 2:4). It further foretells that the papal Rome would "divide the land for gain", which finds interesting fulfilment in the fact that the Roman Catholic

Church would also maintain regional dioceses by appointing bishops over each divided area.

Part VII. Verse 40-45. The End Time Events

1. Verse 40-45. [40] And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. [41] He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. [42] He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. [43] But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. [44] But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. [45] And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Note:

- 1) Verse 40-45 covers the period from the time of the end, marked by the fall of the papal power in the mediaeval age at the end of 1260 years to its final destruction under the indignation of God. This time of the end of papacy also marks the beginning of the time of the end for the world, for the world would unite itself with the papacy and share its fate (Rev. 18:4-6). During this time, there is a shift of the king of the south, while the king of the north remains the same.
- 2) Verse 40. As in the preceding verses, those who occupied Egypt was named “the king of the south”, now the power

that reflected the spirit of Egypt and recognized not the Lord (Ex. 5:4), would be considered the new “king of the south”. The French Revolution transpired the Catholic French into atheism. On 15 February [1798], the twenty-third anniversary of the then Pope Pius’s election, the French marched in, removed the Pope and set up a Republic under General Berthier. The papacy experienced the loss of her temporal power, remarkably fulfilled the prophecy of verse 40, that the king of the south (French) gave a “push” at him (papacy) in 1798, the very end of 1260 years prophecy.

This “push” corresponds to the “deadly wound” in Revelation (Rev. 13: 3). With the passage of time, this wound would be healed, and the king of the north would come back against “him”, that would represent the worldwide atheistic ideology. The resurgent papal power would conquer the king of the south, or atheistic ideology as existed in political systems, scientific and artistic circles as well as in individuals in “the countries”, “with chariots (arms), and with horsemen (wars), and with many ships (economical means, see Pro. 31:10, Rev. 18:17)”, and bring them under its own banner.

In a nutshell, verse 40a predicts the weakening downfall of the papacy in 1798 and going into dormant condition. Verse 40b foretells the future when the papal power would come back and bring the world to its side. By then, there would only be two camps in the world: those who remain faithful to God and those who are united with the papacy, regardless of their religious persuasions or convictions. The unifying principles here are the true and false Sabbath.

At the time when this book is written (2020), we are living somewhere between v. 40a and v. 40b. The God of heaven and the evil forces are assembling their followers.

3) Verse 41. “He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.”

After 1798, the central battleground of the great controversy between good and evil shifted, from Europe to America. Revelation 13 also reveals that a beast comes up out of the earth at this time (Rev. 13:11). At first "the beast had two horns like a lamb", but then "it spoke like a dragon" (Rev 13:11), and " And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." (Rev 13:12). In light of these verses in Revelation, it is easy to determine that the "Glorious Land" here is the United States of America.

How would the king of the north bring the nations to its side as described in v. 40b? Verse 41 provides the clue. It is attained through affiliation and coercion of the United States of America.

And “many *countries* shall be overthrown”. Notice that the word “countries ” is italicised, indicating it does not belong to the text. (Compare with .” Young’s Literal Translation, “and many do stumble). It means many people shall be overthrown and owed to the side of papacy. But “Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon”, who used to be the enemies of God’s people, shall escape from his hand.

What we need to explore is what came into the United States that led to the overthrow of many? We know that the ancient Roman Empire, in its advances to Roman Catholicism, resulted in the first Sunday Act in 321 AD.

When the modern Roman Church entered the United States, its signature act of abomination should also have been the enactment of national Sunday law to compel men to obey. And many have overturned the commandments of God by obeying the man-made law. "The land is defiled by its inhabitants, because they have broken the law, and have abolished it, and have broken the everlasting covenant." (Isaiah 24:5) What law was it that was abolished? It's the Sabbath! God said to these men who set up the law of iniquity, "Woe! Those who set up unjust laws and record deceitful judgments." (Isaiah 10:1) Their destiny would be destruction.

However, the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, these enemies of Israel in the Old Testament, these men who were hostile to God and his people, were able to break away from the hand of the king of the north by choosing to respond to God's end-time call to join his remnant church. This indicates that at the end of time there will be some in the northern king's camp who will respond to God's call and be able to escape from spiritual Babylon (Rev 18:4; Isa 10:20-23). For "in that day the root of Jesse will set up a banner for the nations, and the Gentiles will seek him, and the place of his rest will be glorious." (Isaiah 11:10-14) So, in the last days, God will use the root of Jesse to set up the banner of the Sabbath. "In that day the Lord will stretch out his hand twice to save the remnant of his people", the remnant of his church.

- 4) Verse 42-43. These verses foretells the king of the north enforcing the countries, even the atheistic Egypt shall not escape. As Revelation further reveals that "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." (Rev. 13:17), through economic sanctions and coercion, the king of the north would do all things in trying to align the world to itself;

there will be who had once been faithful to God, under duress, would compromise their faith and follow the King of the North.

- 5) Verse 44. However, God would still have a faithful remnant, proclaiming the good news of the second coming of Christ as the legitimate real King of the world.

Saith the Lord, “Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.” (Isa. 41:2) Again, “I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon morter, and as the potter treadeth clay.” Jesus Christ is the King from the east who will rule over all kings of the world, He will come from the north as well as from the rising of the sun upon the princes.

The east is also where the sun rises. It has the connotation of the seal of the living God, the true Sabbath (Rev. 7:2). The tidings from the east proclaims that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. Those who have the seal of God on their head will be under His protection.

The good news from the east and north presents the wonderful message that the coming King of kings is none other than the Lord of the Sabbath! Whosoever responds to the call of the true Sabbath and be prepared for His second advent shall not be disappointed, but would receive protection and deliverance from Him. While this powerful message will bring faith, hope and courage to the faithful remnant, it greatly disturbs the king of the north and enrages him that “all who do not worship the image of the beast may be killed.” (Rev. 13:15).

The fierce wrath of the king of the North will bring persecution to God's people and into " even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. " (Jer. 30:5-7). How will things really end? Has the king of the North "prevailed" again in this battle with the people, as in ancient times when " they shall be given into his hand "(Dan. 7:25)?

What is the end of the king of the North? What will happen to the saints of the most High? This are the questions that will be addressed in the following verses.

- 6) Verse 45. "Sea" – In Genesis, "the gathering together of the waters" is called "the Seas." (Gen. 1:10), which can also represent a large number of people, as in the case of Europe in Daniel 7. The sea is also used as a general term for a populous place, as in Revelation 17:15.

"Glorious holy mountain." When it speaks of the holy mountain, it usually refers to Mount Zion, to Jerusalem (Isa. 66:20; Jer. 31:23; Dan. 9:16). Therefore, this glorious holy mountain refers to spiritual Jerusalem, the spiritual people of Israel, the people of God who remain faithful to God in the end, who recognize the authority of God's law and accept the righteousness of the Lord our God. In the context, this holy mountain refers to those who proclaim the tidings of the East and the North.

The king of the North will set up a tabernacle between the multitude of people and the true church of God in the last days. What kind of tabernacle will be set up? "the tabernacles of his palace." This reminds us of Exodus 25:8 where God instructed the people of Israel to make a sanctuary for him so that he can dwell among them. The king of the north, the false Christ said to set up a tabernacle like a palace to dwell in the midst of the church. God made

the tabernacle to dwell among us for the forgiveness of sins and to give us the truth; and the king of the north wanted to set his tabernacle between the people and the church to hinder God's truth and to rob God's glory.

In what way, then, did he set up the tabernacle? We know that the most sacred thing in the sanctuary was the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments of God, and that God's throne was on top of the Ark. Therefore, the tabernacle of God is called "the tabernacle of witness" or "the tent of the covenant law" (NIV) in the Old Testament (Num. 17:7; 2 Chron. 24:6; Acts 7:44; Rev. 15:5). The King of the North also set his throne on the his man-made law in his tabernacle. In other words, wherever the King of the North enforces his counterfeit laws and enforces his Sunday observance, there will be his tabernacle.

Verse 45 says that the King of the North will set up his tabernacle " between the seas in the glorious holy mountain ", that is, between the world and the true church, as if he had reached the pinnacle of power and be unmatched in the world.

However, its end was foreordained, no one could help it, and the King of the North would eventually perish, not by human hands (Dan. 8:25).

Verse 45 can be rephrased like this: "He (the Roman Catholic Church) will set up his palace-like tabernacle (with the counterfeit Sabbath as its symbol of authority) between the sea (the whole world) and the glorious holy mountain (the Christian Church), but in the end no one will be able to help him (to the end of destruction)."

Now, the fate of the papacy is clearly stated. What will be the fate of God's people? This will be picked up in Chapter 12 with the revelation of both their mission and destiny.

C. Missional Reflections

1. The main focus in the last three chapters of Daniel is placed on the human dimension. It reveals in great details the wars in the divided house of the world and the spiritual war between worldly powers and God's people. Simply put, spiritual warfare on the human realm.
2. In this vision, great details were given to different competing powers to the extent that specific individual and event was prophesied. It shows that God knows everything, past, present and future. He cares for each individual, nothing can escape His eyes.
3. It also shows how religious power is united with political power to delve deeper into darkness in the spiritual realm and in persecution.
4. However, God's people, like the prince of the host, is willing to die rather than change principles.
5. It also demonstrates a principle that a house divided cannot stand by itself. Worldly powers compete one with another, one devours another, leading itself to compete destruction.
6. Yet, the citizens of the kingdom of God, who are willing to sacrifice their lives for the principle of the kingdom, will in the end stand with the kingdom.

7. Unspecified powers, such as the king of the south and king of the north, are ever changing with times. Before the time of the end, it is determined by its geographical location. Powers that occupy the south are called the king of the south. Power that occupies the northern part is called the king of the north.
8. However, when history moves into the time of the end, these terms became more symbolic. King of the north represents Roman Catholic system, king of the south powers who deny the existence of God, atheism.
9. Tidings of the east and north refers to the Sabbath and the second coming of the Christ. Reference can be found in Rev. 7 where the angel coming from the east have the seal of God, the Sabbath. The north is where God dwells, Ps. 48.
10. In the end, messages of the Sabbath and the Second Coming are the tidings that disturb the king of the north. It clearly shows that the strongest weapon for God's people to fight the spiritual is to spread the tidings of the everlasting gospel! This great tiding is also a response to the soulcry of the Israelites in their captivity. It is a message of returning home!
11. Those who carry the message of the Sabbath and 2nd Coming are the agents God uses to fight with the dark power at the end time. From here the seventh day Adventist finds its origin in the book of Daniel.
12. The time of the end is brought in several times in this chapter. It should be understood that only the king of the north has an end, and this end began in 1798. The people of the most High has no end, either is there an end for the kingdom of God. Because the world will

unite itself with the king of the north. Therefore, the end of the king of the north is also the end of the world.

Questions for Thoughts and Discussion

1. How would you use Daniel 11 to elaborate on Dan. 10:14 and show the main purpose of the vision?
2. How do you determine who is the king of the south and who is the king of the north at different stage of historical development? Who is the king of the north for the time of the end?
3. What incident marks the beginning of the fall of the end-time king of the north? Why is that also being considered the beginning of the time of the end, the time of the end for whom? Is there an end for the people of God? Why or why not?
4. Of the kings of the South and kings of the North mentioned, which one impresses you more? Why?
5. How was Jesus prophesied in this prophecy?
6. In what way does the new view on the daily contradicts Dan. 11:31 while the old view fits well?
7. Why did God reveal some many details on the conflicts and wars among the earthly powers? What is the point that was intended for readers to see?
8. Who is the wise men in Daniel 11?
9. What are the tidings out of the east and out of the north? How will it trouble the king of the north? How will you plan to engage in this great mission for the time of the end?
10. Where do you think your country is implied in Dan. 11:40-45? What are your responsibilities as one who understands the warnings and present truth for this time?
11. The king of the north will set up a law to replace God's law and "shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." How should we be prepared for the coming crisis?

12. When the king of the north overcomes the nations, there will be only two camps, one under the banner of the king of the north, and one under the banner of God. How will you help your family and friends to make the right choice?

Chapter 18 Michael Shall Stand Up

As mentioned earlier, however, 10-12 is a whole. Therefore, Chapter 12 would have followed Chapter 11 closely both in sequence and in content. Dan.11:44-45, on the one hand, foretells the message of God's faithful ones and the great calamity they will face, and on the other hand, illuminate the ultimate downfall of the king of the north. So how do the faithful defuse the impelling danger and get around it? How should Daniel relate to all the messages given to him? It is to this aspect that Chapter 12 is directed.

A. The Story

Daniel 12 is the continuation of the vision in from Chapter 10-11. It answers the questions concerning God's people and clarifies that the vision concerning the last days was not meant for Daniel, and therefore was sealed until the time of the end. It provides two more time prophecies, as a second witness, which not only locates the time of the end for the wicked, but also an approximate timing for Daniel to stand in his lot to receive examination on his candidacy for the New Jerusalem, yet without breaking the seal ahead of time.

B. Missional Reading

Part One: Verse 1-4: Events in the latter days

1. **Verse 1-4.** [1] And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. [2] And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and

everlasting contempt. [3] And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. [4] But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Note:

1) Verse 1: And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

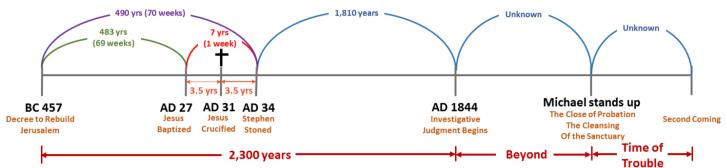
Daniel 7, 8 and 11 have outlined the evil activities of the papacy, he even “stand up against the Prince of princes” (Dan. 8:25). Time would come when Michael, the Prince of princes, shall stand up against the little horn or the king of the north, “he shall be broken without hand”, “none shall help him” (Dan. 8:25, 11:45). “for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Rom. 12:19)

Daniel 12:1 is a parallel answer to Dan. 8:14, given to the question raised in Dan. 8:13. As Dan. 8:14 points to the cleansing of the sanctuary as the time to punish the two desolating powers, namely, the daily (nations) and the transgression of desolation (the papacy or spiritual Babylon), Dan. 12:1 highlights that time for the Prince of princes to take revenge as “Michael shall stand up”, which immediately follows the cleansing of the sanctuary.

It should be noted that as Michael shall stand up against the king of the north and his allies or the daily, the great prince shall “standeth for the children of thy people”. For Daniel, “thy people” meant the people of Israel. At this time of the world history, “thy people” shall be the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:4-8), “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (Jas 1:1) Michael shall stand for them during the

“a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”, and deliver them, “every one that shall be found written in the book.”.

When the investigative judgment is over, the sanctuary is cleansed, Michael will stand up as a King, no longer a High Priest. That is also the time to close the probation and send down the seven last plagues.



When probation closes, the Spirit of God is withdrawn from the wicked world. Satan loses all restraints, he will do all within his might to destroy the people of God, thus triggers “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.”

Simply put, the time to destroy the king of the north begins right after the cleansing of the sanctuary when the investigative judgment comes to an end (Dan. 8:14), probation will have been closed, the Son of man “was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom” (Dan. 7:14), the Day of the Lord arrives. It is at this conjunction that Michael shall stand up against the evil powers and is ready to deliver His faithful believers.

- 2) Verse 2. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

This is the special resurrection which precedes the general resurrection of the righteous at the second coming

of Jesus. Those who faithfully proclaimed “the tiding from the east and from the north” and rested in Christ from the time of the end will be specially resurrected at the end of the time of trouble, to behold the glorious triumphant coming of Christ! They will not go back to sleep again as in the case of Lazarus (John 11:43-44), but “to everlasting life”. However, there will also be some wicked, especially those who were responsible to carry out the execution of the death sentence of Jesus, who will also be specially resurrected to witness and verify that it is the same Jesus that was nailed to the cross and now come back again! These wicked people will be destroyed again with the rest of the wicked “with the spirit of his mouth” and “with the brightness of his coming”(2Theos. 2:8)

The pen of inspiration thus comments on this verse,

“Graves are opened, and ‘many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth. . . awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ Daniel 12:2. All who have died in the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. ‘They also which pierced Him’ (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.”¹¹⁷

- 3) Verse 3. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

In the context, “they that be wise” and “that turn many to righteousness” in this text seems to refer to “And they

¹¹⁷ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, 637.

that understand among the people shall instruct many” (Dan. 11:31). They were persecuted and “fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.” (Dan. 11:33; cf. Pro. 12:26; Rev.13:18), now the Lord will reward them “as the stars for ever and ever.”

- 4) Verse 4. “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.”

Again, Daniel was told to shut up the words as in Dan. 8:26, “for it shall be for many days”. In other words, the part which are related to the last day events are sealed till the time of the end, or the end of 1260 years. When the time of the end approaches, the sealed portion of the book will be open, many shall run to and fro in the scriptural scroll, thus the understanding of prophecy will be increased.

Indirectly, Daniel was told that he should not be too much worried about those events, especially the time of trouble, for it would still be far away from his time.

Part Two: Verse 5-9: Last-day Events Sealed

1. **Verse 5-6.** “[5] Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. [6] And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?”

Note:

- 1). Verse 5 described the other two angels beside Michael, and one said to the other clothed in linen the similar question as found in Dan. 8:13, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” Or put it another way, when will it be for the events

as described in verse 40-45, for Michael to stand up, for the time of trouble and for the special resurrection and onward?

2. Verse 7-9. [7] And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. [8] And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" [9] And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Note:

- 1) The angel that "sware by him that liveth for ever" announced after "a time, times, and an half", "all these things shall be finished." It should be noted that the 1260 years is the period that the power of the holy people was scattered or restrained. Only after the power of the king of the north be restricted could the faithful spread the tidings from the east and the north in a relatively free environment.
- 2) There is no doubt that Daniel was puzzled. He was expecting that the people of Israel would return to Jerusalem after seventy years, yet in the vision "thy people" would go through the 1260 years, all the way to the time of trouble. How was he able to make sense of all of this?
- 3) The angel comforted Daniel and relieved the anxiety off his mind. The vision is not about him nor his people, but the faithful at the time of the end.

Part Three: Verse 10-13: Time to break the Seal

1. Verse 10-12. [10] Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. [11] And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the

abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. [12] Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

Note:

- 1) Similar to Daniel 11:33-35, this passage states that "many" would be "tried" only the "wise" would understand the sealed last day events. It would make more sense to apply verse 10 to the close of probation when Michael shall stand up, for by then, the confessed sins of many righteous people would have been forgiven and cleansed. They are "purified, and made white, and tried;" They will remain purified, but the wicked will remain wicked. Notice when the sealed book of Daniel was opened, the angel instructed John, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Rev. 22:11). The comment from Ellen White seems to confirm this understanding. Before quoting Dan. 12:10, Ellen White made the following comment,
- 2) "When the limit of grace is reached, God will give His command for the destruction of the transgressor. He will arise in His Almighty character as a God above all gods, and those who have worked against Him in league with the great rebel, will be treated in accordance with their works."
¹¹⁸
- 3) Who will have the blessed privilege to understand the sealed vision concerning the last days? The angel gave two more time prophecies, one reaffirms the fall of the king of the north, the other points to the time when the great preparation of the second coming would start.

¹¹⁸ Ellen White, *Sermons and Talks*, Vol. 1, 225.

- 4) Counting from the time of its full establishment, it would take “a time and times and the dividing of time” to bring the little horn power to its downfall in 1798 (Dan. 7:25). However, counting from the time when the daily was taken away, “there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days” for the abomination that maketh desolate, or papacy, to be wounded. As explained in Dan. 11:31, the daily was taken away at 508, marked out by the Clovis’ receipt of honorary title from the papacy. Thus, this 1290 days prophecy provides a second witness to establish the time of the end. Here again, we see the principle of the two implied.
- 5) As mentioned above, the last day events after the time of the end was sealed. That would include the correct understanding of both the time and event of the 2300 days prophecy. Proper interpretation would be reached after “the honey first and bitter after” experience as predicted in Revelation10. However, “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.” Counting from the time the daily was taken away in 508 A.D., and moving 1335 prophetic days or 1335 literal years would bring us to the year 1843. Blessed was he who waited till 1843, for he has stepped into the threshold of the opening of the investigative judgment at the end of 2300 days, or 1844, or the hour of the judgment, the distinct signal for the beginning of closing the probation and officially ushering of the everlasting kingdom. The year 1843 would be the maximum extension of time which is not associated with any specific end-time events, otherwise, the seal would have been broken beforehand.
- 6) The 1335 days prophecy provides a side witness to the event taking place at the end of 2300 days prophecy. In giving yet another non-event related time prophecy as a hint and sidenote close to the last day events, yet not breaking

the seal of the vision, God is pouring out His boundless compassion and mercy to His people!

- 7) It is highly unlikely that these two time prophecies would go beyond 1798 for the wicked and 1843 for the righteous respectively, for “these wonder” beyond the time of the end are all sealed. The only time that was made known is the 2300 days prophecy, but its timing and meaning would be understood only after the time of the end. After 1798, it was known that the investigative judgment would begin in 1844. No hint is given as to when the process will end and the sanctuary shall be cleansed. In the same manner, no time is given in anyway in terms of the close of probation, the beginning and ending of the time of trouble as well as the time for the second coming.
2. **Verse 13.** [13] But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

Note:

- 1) Daniel did not fully understand what was revealed to him. However, he received blessed assurance that he would go to rest till the end came, he would “stand in thy lot” during the investigative judgment as a faithful candidate for the New Jerusalem. Notice the close tie between verse 12 and 13. It indicates that God has done what he would without breaking the seal. Verse 12 leads to 1843, and verse 13 points to 1844 when the Son of man would be brought to near the Ancient of days (Dan. 7:13). Daniel would rest all the way till that day. In addition to that, the prophecies of his book would also “rest” till the time of the end, then it would be understood and proclaimed to fulfil its mission.

The book of Daniel closes with something we could anticipate, a remarkable event for Daniel to look forward to after the wheel of history passes the time of the end.

C. Missional Reflections

1. Before anything, the good news from Chapter 12 is that Michael protects and delivers His people from the time of trouble. Yes, He will stand up against the king of the north, but He will stand for His faithful ones.
2. And these people are called “the children of thy people” of Daniel. In other words, they shall be called the spiritual Israel. In Revelation, we will find there are twelve tribes of Israel living at the time of the very end. They will go through the great tribulation. They shall serve God and the Lamb forever (Rev. 7). The remnant church at the end time finds her root in Daniel.
3. They are also called the wise and shine like stars. They “turn many to righteousness”. They are a mission-minded group, calling those who dwell upon the earth to worship the true God and to keep His commandments.
4. This is the group that understand the last day events and “to give them meat in due season” (Matt. 24:45). They have the present truth for the present time. They understand the sequence of the last day events and call people to make preparation for that.
5. The sealed portion of Daniel points to the “a little book open” (Rev. 10:2), and guides readers to study Daniel and Revelation together to have a better understanding of the things in the latter days.

Questions for Thoughts and Discussion

1. When will Michael stand up? What is its significance of the historical moment?

2. What is the time of trouble? How should we be prepared for the coming tribulation?
3. What resurrection does Dan. 12:2 refer to? What will be the groups that would rise up again at this time right before the second coming of Christ?
4. Why was the vision closed to the time of the end? What signifies the end of the “a time, times, and an half”?
5. Explain which view on the daily fits Dan. 12:11 and state your reason.
6. What good intention lies behind the 1335 days prophecy?
7. What does it mean for Daniel to stand at his lot?

