

APPENDIX TWO

The Problem Of Dan. 8:14 And Its Context

by

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A criticism of our key doctrine of the sanctuary is being increasingly met, namely — that our interpretation of Dan. 8:14 by reference to the investigative judgment of the saints entirely ignores the context. The case is put forward usually somewhat like this: In the eighth chapter of Daniel, an impious power is shown doing despite to the sanctuary, and the question is then asked as to how long such iniquity shall prosper. The answer, therefore, of verse 14, cannot be applied to another subject altogether, namely, when shall the professing people of God have their cases investigated by a heavenly court? Such an interpretation, say our critics, has nothing whatever to do with the context. On the other hand, that interpretation which gives an exposition of Daniel 8 according to the historical events of Maccabean times — chiefly the profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes and its cleansing by loyal Jews, makes obvious sense, and is in complete harmony with the surrounding verses.

In answer to this criticism, we would first point out that the interpretation of Dan. 8:14 rests upon a larger context than that chapter alone. A close study of the whole book of Daniel reveals that 8:11-14 is the climax of a major theme of this prophetic volume. The very first verses of Daniel bring to view Babylon's attack upon the sanctuary. In the 5th chapter, the vessels of the sanctuary are again profaned by a wicked Babylonian king. In the 7th chapter, the law which was in the heart of the sanctuary, is "changed" by a power which is labelled in the New Testament as Babylon. Daniel's prayer of the 9th chapter is that God will "cause his face to shine upon the sanctuary which is desolate" and the closing verses of the chapter present that Messianic prophecy which is dated from the rebuilding of the sanctuary in Jerusalem and which extends to the inauguration of the services of the heavenly sanctuary and the ascended Priest. The tenth chapter of Daniel presents the conflict between the angels of God and those wicked powers endeavouring to influence Persian rulers to prevent that rebuilding of the sanctuary promised in the prophecy of Dan. 9. In Dan. 11:31 the prophet points again to the work of antichrist in "polluting the sanctuary of strength," and the reference is similar in Dan. 12:11. Considering these emphases throughout Daniel, it is evident that the theme of the 8th chapter, verses 11-14, is the motif of the entire book. Those who contend that Dan. 8:11-14 finds its complete fulfilment in the historical episode regarding Antiochus Ephiphanes are aligning themselves with the modernists who would derate Daniel to the status of forgery made in the second century BC. Such thereby take issue with Christ's own endorsement of the prophet, and the Saviour's own interpretation of Dan. 8:11-14 as yet future in His day. See Matt. 24:15.

Rather, in view of the recurring references to the sanctuary throughout the book, we conclude that Dan. 8 is the climactic symbolic presentation of the chief theme of the prophet — the great controversy between good and evil as shadowed forth by the conflict between Babylon and the Jewish sanctuary and its host in Old Testament times, and spiritual Babylon (Rome) and the Christian church in this dispensation.

Let us now consider what the present writer believes to be the heart of this matter.

The New Testament In Rev. 12, 13 & 14 Interprets Dan. 8 For Us.

Note the following:

DANIEL 8

“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.” v. 10

“The host was given over” v. 12 (margin)
 “He shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.” v. 24

“He magnified himself to the Prince of the Host.” v. 11

“And the place of his sanctuary was cast down.” v. 11

“And his power shall be mighty but not by his own power.” v. 24

“Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” v. 14

“He shall be broken without hand.” v. 26

REV. 12, 13, & 14

“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and it cast them to the earth.” 12:4

“It was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them” 13:7

“He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.” 13:6

“Opened his mouth in blasphemy against ... the tabernacle (or sanctuary).” 13:6

“The dragon gave him his power ...” 13:2

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come.” 14:7

“And the angel ... gathered the vine of the earth and cast it into the winepress of the wrath of God.” 14:9 See also 14:14.

No one questions that Rev. 12 and 13 has to do with the great controversy between Christ and Satan, but it has not always been recognized that the same is the case in Dan. 8. This should have been seen by the reference to the “Prince of princes” in this chapter and by virtue of the fact that this prophecy, as with the last one in Daniel, is apocalyptic in form, and therefore cosmic in scope. Commentators have been so busy gazing at Antiochus Epiphanes that this key phrase “Prince of princes” has not been seen in its true significance. Likewise, it has often been recognized that Rev. 12 and 13 allude to Dan. 7 (particularly 7:25), but what has not been noticed is that there is no specific mention of the tabernacle in this latter passage. The reference to the tabernacle or sanctuary in Rev. 13 is based on Dan. 8, just as the reference to blasphemy in Rev. 13 springs not only from Dan. 7:25 but also from Dan. 8 (vs. 23-25). Thus Dan. 8:14, as well as Rev. 13:5, 6, deals with the age long warfare against God and not merely with an incident during the second century BC.

It is interesting to observe that the Nestle edition of the Greek New Testament has a reference to Dan. 8:10 appended to the margin of Rev. 12:4 in order to show the source of the Revelator’s terminology.

Many non-Adventist interpreters have pointed out that the dragon of Rev. 12, besides representing Rome in the secondary sense, primarily refers to Satan. Verse 9 declares “and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him.” Similarly, in Dan. 8, the symbol that stands for Rome represents also the wicked spiritual power which energizes it. That Isa. 14 and Ezek. 28 in their references to the rulers of Babylon and Tyre signify Satan primarily, has long been a commonplace with Bible students, and we should recognize that this same principle is found in the 8th chapter of Daniel. No mere episode in

intertestamental history is here being focused upon by the prophet, except possibly in an apotelesmatic sense. The interpretation which understands the prophet to be employing a symbol which refers both to an earthly power and Satan working through it is not a novel viewpoint, but rather one based upon inspired procedure found in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Further support for this view is found in a closely related chapter of Dan. 10, which beyond all question depicts the great controversy between Christ and Satan, rather than events of only national significance. Inasmuch as Dan. 10 is introductory to a prophecy which elaborates the preceding prophecy of the 8th chapter, an understanding of it casts light on the present problem. "In this chapter, as perhaps nowhere else in Scripture, the veil that separates heaven from earth is drawn aside, and the struggle between the powers of light and darkness is revealed." (*SDABC*, 5:860).

The main import of this chapter, Dan. 10, seems to be to introduce the final prophecy found in the two following chapters, and this introduction is effected by giving to the prophet evidence that movements on earth were but the outcome of prior spiritual activity on the part of the supernatural beings. The same two heavenly beings mentioned in the 8th chapter figure in the present one, and again at the close of this prophecy in Dan. 12:5-7.

Let us note particularly the words of Gabriel to Daniel in 10:12, 13.

"Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 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."

The word translated "prince" in this passage is often used by Daniel in connection with supernatural beings (8:11, 25; 10:13, 21; 12:1), [*SDABC*, 5:859] and the name Michael appears in the Bible "only in apocalyptic passages ... where Christ is in direct conflict with Satan." This is significant indeed when we remember that Dan. 10-12 is but a further expansion of Dan. 8, as chapter 8 is of chapter 7, chapter 7 is of chapter 2.

Typical comments by exegetes on this passage include the following:

Pulpit Commentary on Daniel 10:13

While in the lower plane of history the nations themselves do these things; in the higher sphere it is their angels who are the actors.

Ellicott's Commentary on Daniel 10:13

Perhaps no single verse in the whole of the Scriptures speaks more clearly than this (v. 13) upon the invisible powers which rule and influence nations ... revelation points out that as spiritual beings carry out God's purpose in the natural world (Ex. 12:23; 2 Sam. 24:16) and in the moral world (Luke 15:10), so also they do in the political world. From this chapter we not only learn that Israel had a spiritual champion (v. 21) to protect her in her national life, and to watch over her interests, but also that the powers opposed to Israel had their princes, or saviours, which were antagonists of those which watched over Israel. The "princes" of the heathen powers are devils, according to 1 Cor. 10:22. ... Further passages in the New Testament bearing upon the question are 1 Cor. 8:5; Col. 1:16.

Wordsworth's Commentary on Daniel 10:13

The prince of the kingdom of Persia, that is, one of the angels, who, under Satan, the prince of the powers of the air, the ruler of the darkness of this world ... exercises power in this lower world, especially in thwarting the advancement of the Kingdom of God, and in disturbing the peace, and in marring the prosperity of His Church. ...

Daniel here reveals to us (what is more clearly displayed in the New Testament) that the Evil One has still great power in this lower world; and that he has evil angels which do his work in the kingdoms of earth. Satan knew well that the return of the Hebrew people to Jerusalem, and restoration of the Temple at Jerusalem, were steps in advance toward the Advent of Christ, and toward the evangelical dispensation of His acts and sufferings, by which Satan's own kingdom would be destroyed, and toward that future final consummation in which all the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. (Rev. 11:15).

E. G. White: Prophets and Kings, 571-572

While Satan was striving to influence the highest powers in the kingdom of Medo-Persia to show disfavour 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.

In connection with these statements we should recall that Daniel contains that type of prophecy known as apocalyptic, which is specially characterized by its cosmic quality, its viewing of earthly events from the standpoint of the great spiritual controversy between Christ and Satan. (*SDABC*, 7:723) These facts with reference to chapter 10 cast great light on the cryptic phrase regarding the works accomplished by the little horn. "And his power shall be mighty, **but not by his own power.**" Rome, in her persecutions, was but the earthly manifestation of Satan's wrath against "the woman" and "her seed." See Rev. 12:4, 13, 17; and Gen. 3:15. The fallen archangel, rather than merely a worldly kingdom, is the focus of Dan. 8:11-13, as surely as the sanctuary of the following verse primarily applies to the spiritual sanctuary of heaven rather than the literal visible one.

As certainly as Satan and his work are found prefigured in Dan 8, so are Christ and His redemptive activity. "The daily" stands for His continual ministry as the saints' High Priest. The "prince of the host" referred to in verse 11 is identical with "Messiah the Prince" in Dan. 9, and "the prince of princes" of Dan. 8:25. To apply Daniel's expressions merely to Onias the Jewish high priest is practically blasphemy. The context of the allusion to the "prince of princes" includes reference to the time of the end of all things. The eschatological expression employed here links with the symbolic picture of Dan. 2:44, 45 where the kingdom is depicted as the coming of a stone cut out without hands. Compare Dan. 8:25 with Dan. 2:45.

The question of Dan. 8:13 thus becomes "how long shall Satan be permitted to oppose the work of Christ and to oppose the saints through earthly counterfeit powers, how long will it be before God intervenes?" Such a question is often found in Scripture. Compare with Dan. 8:13; Psalm 6:1-4; 13:1-4; 94:1-6; Zech. 1:12; Hab. 1:2; Rev. 6:10. In each instance the question "how long?" is a heartfelt desire for God's interruption of the course of iniquity and His punishment of evildoers and His justifying of the oppressed saints who for so long a period are made to appear as "the offscouring of all things." The ultimate fulfilment of such

requests is the final judgment of God, the way for which is paved by the closing work of the everlasting Gospel. These both involve proceedings in the heavenly sanctuary, for the sanctuary of Rev. 13 which is blasphemed by the little horn is the sanctuary that houses the throne of God and His law.

Rev. 13 states that not only the sanctuary of tabernacle, but the name or character of God have been blasphemed. Thus the justifying of the sanctuary is the clearing of God's character from the slanders of Satan, the unmasking of Satan before the universe, and the terminating of his attacks upon the saints on earth below and in heaven above. It should ever be kept in mind that the meaning of devil is "slanderer", and what we find him doing through his serpent medium in the opening pages of Holy Writ is identical with his initial attack in heaven and all his subsequent activities. To Eve, God was pictured as a hard taskmaster, and this has been perpetuated by the antichrist of history with its doctrines of salvation by works, purgatory, hell fire, etc. These have indeed "blasphemed God's name." Therefore, the justifying of the sanctuary must involve a work which will reveal God as holy and righteous, and a message setting forth the true gospel. No other transaction but the judgment could trace fully all God's dealings through the centuries and vindicate His actions and character before the universe. When Dan. 7 and 8 are set out in parallel fashion it is made further apparent that Dan. 8:14 points to the same event pictured in verses 9 and 10 of the 7th chapter of Daniel. Let us notice the sequence:

DANIEL 7

Babylon

Medo-Persia

Greece

Rome

"The judgment was set and the books were opened."

DANIEL 8

Medo-Persia

Greece

Rome (the little horn)

"Then shall the sanctuary be justified (cleansed)."

Similarly, as in Dan. 7 and 8 the description of the work of the antichrist is followed by the judgment which vindicates the saints and issues in destruction for the wicked, so in Revelation following chapters 12 and 13 we have the proclamation "Fear God and give glory to Him, **for the hour of His judgment is come.**" The verses which follow this statement in Revelation are identical in import with the description of the destiny of the righteous and the wicked which follow Dan. 7:9, 10 and Dan. 8:14. (See Dan. 7:22, 26, 27; 8:25; 11:45; 12:1-3; 13; and compare Rev. 14:12, 16, 19-20). Thus the sequence in both Daniel and Revelation is identical: the work of the antichrist against the people and truth of God, the judgmental vindication of the saints and the true gospel; the respective rewards distributed to the righteous and the wicked.

We should note well that to apply Dan. 8:14 only to the investigative judgment of the saints is to limit the significance of this verse. Seen in context it becomes evident that the judgment here brought to view is the entire work, both investigative and executive, including the judgmental privileges of the saints during the millennium when all will have an opportunity to have the questions of long years answered by the books of record. Dan. 8 has clearly revealed the **saints** as being trodden under foot as well as the sanctuary and the truth of God, and thus the justification called for in verse 14 involves a clearing of the character of the saints as well as a clearing of God's name and uplifting of that cast down law. Complete vindication for God, however, can only come with the destruction of the powers permitted to operate until their true character becomes manifest to all created beings.

C.S. Lewis in his book *Reflections on the Psalms* has a chapter on the meaning of judgment as used in the Old Testament, and his words are pertinent to our interpretation of Dan. 7:9, 10, and Dan. 8:14. Lewis points out that, in Old Testament thought, to vindicate and to judge are linked. Jewish judgment showed not so much who was righteous but who was “in the right.” Says Lewis:

The ancient Jews, like ourselves, think of God’s judgment in terms of an earthly court of justice. The difference is that the Christian pictures the case to be tried as a criminal case with himself in the dock; the Jew pictures it as a civil case with himself as the plaintiff. The one hopes for acquittal, or rather for pardon; the other hopes for a resounding triumph with heavy damages. Hence he prays “judge my quarrel,” or “avenge my cause”. . . .

We need not therefore be surprised if the Psalms, and the Prophets, are full of the longing for judgment, and regard the announcement that “judgment” is coming as good news. Hundreds and thousands of people who have been stripped of all they possess and who have the right entirely on their side will at last be heard. Of course they are not afraid of judgment. They know their case is unanswerable — if only it could be heard. When God comes to judge at last it will.

In the same chapter Lewis also says:

The Divine Judge is the defender, the rescuer. Scholars tell me that in the *Book of Judges* the word we so translate might almost be rendered “champions;” for though these “judges” do sometimes perform what we should call judicial functions many of them are much more concerned with rescuing the oppressed Israelites from Philistines and others by force of arms. They are more like Jack the Giant Killer than like a modern judge in a wig. (C.S. Lewis. *Reflections on the Psalms* [London, 1958] 15-17).

It is interesting to notice that Ellen G. White in speaking of the judgment in *Christ’s Object Lessons* presents the same concept as C.S. Lewis.

... the prayer, “do me justice of mine adversary,” applies not only to Satan, but the agencies whom he instigates to misrepresent, to tempt, and to destroy the people of God. (p. 170)

He who dwells in the heavenly sanctuary, judges righteously ... Every act of cruelty or injustice toward God’s people all they are caused to suffer through the power of evil workers, is registered in heaven. (p. 176)

The Lord will interpose to vindicate his own honour, to deliver his people and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness. ... There is a God in Israel who will maintain his law and vindicate his people.

... Men who claim to be Christians may now ... indulge their satanic hatred because they cannot control the consciences of God’s people. But for all this God will bring them into judgment. ... Not long hence they will stand before the judge of all the earth to render an account for the pain they have caused to the bodies of his heritage. (p. 178)

... from the downtrodden millions of so-called Christian lands, the cry of human woe is ascending to God. That cry will not long be unanswered. God will cleanse the earth from its moral corruption.

From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather his children to himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest of criminals. But the day is near when "God is judge himself." Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed, "the rebuke of His people shall He take away." White robes shall be given to every one of them. And, "they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." (p. 179)

Whatever crosses they have been called to bear, whatever losses they have sustained, whatever persecution they have suffered, even to the loss of their temporal life the children of God are amply recompensed. "They shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." (p. 180)

Such an understanding of the judgment referred to in Dan. 7:9, 10 and 8:14 is in complete harmony with the theme so often emphasized in the book, namely, the ushering in of the kingdom of God with its attendant destruction of the wicked and rewarding of the saints. God is to be justified and vindicated and so are His people. It should never be forgotten that the Hebrew word translated "cleansed" or "justified" is forensic in nature, that is, it has judgment connotations. The universe is to be cleansed from all sin, and Satan and his charges ever refuted. Thus in Dan 7, immediately after the antichrist is pictured and his devastating work, we read the promise that "the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it to the end. 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 dominion and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." Dan. 8, after the presentation of the desolating work of antichrist, points to the justifying of the sanctuary as God's ultimate rebuttal of evil. And in Dan. 11, the same wicked power is pictured in verse 31 as polluting the sanctuary of strength and persecuting the saints, and exalting himself and magnifying himself above every God. But next it is affirmed that this state of affairs will continue only "till the indignation be accomplished" (11:36). This indignation, the wrath of God, is revealed in 11:45 and 12:1, where the antichrist is shown as coming to his end immediately before the saints awake to their everlasting reward.

Thus repeatedly in Daniel we have judgment — God rescuing and vindicating His people as He brings destruction to the wicked whose deeds are manifest before all as satanic. The final judgment is marked not only by the bestowing of eschatological justification upon the saints, but also by the confession of every lost soul before the universe to the effect that his punishment is just. In Isa. 45:23 we read, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow every tongue shall swear." This will be the fitting finale of the great controversy between good and evil, between Christ and Satan.

It is therefore, no arbitrary exegesis which has led Seventh-day Adventists to link with Dan. 8:14 that solemn final ceremonial of the Jewish economy which prefigured the complete extinction of sin and the cleansing of the universe from every stain of evil. As certainly as Christ and Satan figure in Dan.8 rightly understood, so both are found in type in the Day of Atonement — thus casting of lots, "one for Jehovah and one for Azazel" Lev. 16.

Others besides Seventh-day Adventists have seen in the closing events of the Day of Atonement the prefiguring of that day when all the universe will see that Satan alone is

responsible for the episode of sin. On page 85 of *The New Standard Bible Dictionary* we read concerning a major purpose of the Day of Atonement that it “was used to express the thought that sin belongs to a power or principle hostile to Jehovah and its complete purgation must include its being sent back to its source.” Similarly in Eadie’s *Bible Cyclopaedia*, page 577, we read:

... the sins of the believing world are taken off them and rolled back on Satan, the prime author and instigator. Though the penalty is remitted to believers, it is not remitted to him who has brought them to apostasy and ruin. The tempted are restored but the whole punishment is seen to fall on the archtempter.

Rev. 20, which describes the close of the great controversy, also alludes to the Day of Atonement by its picture of Satan being fettered in the wilderness of this barren world. The desolated earth becomes his “grave” for a thousand years. Commentaries such as the *Expositors Greek Testament* have pointed to this as the antitype of the fettering of Azazel in Lev. 16. (5:471.) Similarly, aspects of the judgment of Dan. 7, 9 and 10, and 8:14 are referred to in verses 4, 11 and 12 of Rev. 20. It is because the judgment will manifest the righteousness of God and demonstrate that the blame for sin belongs to the great Azazel that we find at the close of Scripture the recurring ascription to God of justice and holiness (see Rev. 15:3; 16:5; 19:2). To this vindication of the Creator and those who have sided with Him, Dan. 8:14 points.

Dan. 8:11-14, rightly viewed, has ramifications extending from Genesis to Revelation. It expands the prophecy of Gen. 3:15, with its prediction of long sustained conflict between Christ and Satan and their followers, and points to those closing events in the great controversy pictured in Rev. 11-22. Such an interpretation will not suit those who, reasoning from the premises of naturalism, cling to a merely human Bible, dissected by unbelieving critics, but it will recommend itself to the judgment of all who believe Christ’s witness, that the Scriptures throughout testify of Him and His saving ministry for the saints (John 5:39).

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N. B. This article was written about 1962, and studied by the Problems in Daniel committee. The same is true of my articles on the Year-day Principle, Dan. 9, and Dan. 10-12.