

# SIGNS *of the Times*

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

## Judgment Day

Have you ever noticed how little children keep asking for the same stories over and over again? You've read it 20 times, but your child never tires of the same story. Why?

One reason is that kids learn through repetition; it's how their brains absorb language patterns. A 2011 study found that when children were read the same story multiple times, they remembered new words and their meanings better than they did when they encountered the same words in different books.

Adults learn through repetition as well. That's why the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation often cover the same ground repeatedly, looking at the topic from different angles. So let's look at a prophecy found in Daniel 8. It covers some of the same ground as Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2, but with some new information.

### A VISION WITH A TWIST

1. What was the first thing Daniel saw in vision, and what did it mean? (Daniel 8:3, 4, 20)

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Usually God leaves us to understand the meaning of prophetic symbols through careful study and by following sound biblical principles. But Daniel's vision in chapter 8 is different. The angel Gabriel explains to the prophet—and us—exactly what the symbols represent.

2. What was the second animal in the vision, and what did it represent? (Daniel 8:5-7, 21)
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In Bible prophecy, an animal represents a kingdom, and its horn represents its king or ruler. Just as predicted, Greece conquered the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. Its “large horn” represents its first king, Alexander the Great.

3. What happened next to the empire of Greece? (Daniel 8:8, 22)

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Alexander the Great had conquered the world by age 30, but died two years later. After his death, the empire broke into four divisions under Alexander’s four leading generals—Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Cassander—just as the prophecy predicted.

## **A LITTLE HORN**

4. What was the next development Daniel saw in his vision? (Daniel 8:9)

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At this point, the angel Gabriel no longer specifically identifies the meaning of the symbols in the vision. But in verses 9-12, he does give more information about this little horn power. It grows “exceedingly great,” especially toward the “Glorious Land” – a reference to Israel, the home of God’s people in the Old Testament. Rome was the power that ruled over Israel following the empire of Greece. Rome fits many of the details given in verses 9-12.

## **2,300 DAYS AND THE CLEANSING OF THE SANCTUARY**

5. What did Daniel hear as his vision came to a close? (Daniel 8:13, 14)
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The little horn power would cast down God's sanctuary (vs. 11) and oppose the daily sacrifices offered there (vs. 12). At the close of the prophecy, Daniel heard how long it would be until the sanctuary would be cleansed and restored—2,300 days.

6. Does God have a sanctuary today like He had in Bible times? If so, where? (**Hebrews 8:1, 2; 9:24**)

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The sacrifices and ceremonies of God's sanctuary on earth during Bible times were object lessons designed to point to Jesus' future sacrifice. These served their purpose when Jesus died on the cross. And when the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem in AD 70, these sacrifices and ceremonies came to an end. But the Bible declares that there is a sanctuary in heaven—the real sanctuary of which those on earth were copies. When Jesus returned to heaven after His death, He entered the heavenly sanctuary where He serves today as our High Priest. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

The ceremonies conducted in the earthly sanctuary pointed to spiritual realities that are actually carried out in the sanctuary in heaven as part of Jesus' saving work there. In the earthly Old Testament sanctuary, there were seven annual festivals. They pointed forward to heavenly realities—to the work of Jesus on our behalf:



**EARTHLY SANCTUARY  
FESTIVAL**

**HEAVENLY SANCTUARY  
REALITY**

Passover

The death of Jesus

Unleavened Bread

The forgiveness (removal) of sin

First Fruits

The resurrection of Jesus

Pentecost

The birth of the Christian church

Feast of Trumpets

Call to live for Jesus

Day of Atonement

God's judgment day

Tabernacles (Booths)

The Second Coming of Jesus

In our next study, we will look more closely at the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement—and what that means for

God's people today. In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement was a solemn day of judgment. The people had been coming to the sanctuary throughout the year, confessing their sins over the head of a lamb. The priest sacrificed the lamb and sprinkled its blood in the sanctuary. This symbolized Jesus taking our sins and shedding His blood for us. On the Day of Atonement, a special ceremony was held to cleanse the sanctuary of all the sin that had symbolically accumulated there during the year.

The prophecy of Daniel 8 predicted a cleansing of the sanctuary after 2,300 days. This prophecy is pointing us to earth's great judgment hour.

7. What solemn appointment lies ahead for each person on earth? (**Romans 14:10, 12**)
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8. What announcement goes out to the whole world just before Jesus comes again? (**Revelation 14:6, 7**)
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That may sound like bad news. But remember that Jesus is the Judge. (John 5:22) He is also our Defense Attorney. (1 John 2:1) We don't have to fear the judgment. With Jesus on our side as both Judge and Defense Attorney, we can't lose. As long as we invite Jesus into our hearts, His blood covers us from all sin in the day of judgment.

What is your relationship with Jesus right now? Have you accepted the forgiveness He offers?

## MY DECISION

- Jesus, I invite You to live in my heart. I want Your forgiveness to cover me in the judgment.

## MY PRAYER

*Father, thank You for Jesus. Thank You for the promise that He will stand by my side on the day of judgment. I accept Your gift of salvation in Him. Cleanse me of all sin. I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.*

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