

# LESSON 26

Last week we ended by reading verses 13-14, and we discussed the interpretative difficulties in determining what is meant by the 2300 days in verse 14, which is the curious answer given to the question of “how long?” in verse 13. Before we try to determine what is meant by the 2300 days, what would we expect the answer to the question “how long?” to be? How long will God’s people be trodden under foot? Elsewhere with similar questions we have seen God answer “not long,” and we have seen God provide comfort by telling his people that their troubles will be only temporary. Perhaps we should not be surprised if we see a similar answer here.

Last week we discussed a clearly wrong answer to the question. The Millerites in the 1800’s used verse 14 to teach that Jesus would return in 1843. As we saw, that false teaching led to a Great Disappointment, from which came various false religious groups. Today we will discuss three possible views for the 2300 days, at least two of which are wrong, but we will not be able to say definitively which of those three is right.

Why is Miller’s view a false teaching if we can’t say for sure what the 2300 days means? Because not being able to say for sure what something means is very different from not being able to say for sure what it does not mean! We know that Miller’s view was wrong because it violated other Scriptures — namely, Mark 13:32, which tells us that not even Jesus knows that day of his return. It also violates the Scriptures that tell us Jesus’ return will not come with signs but instead will come as a thief in the night. Also, we know that Jesus did not return in 1843, which means that Miller falls under the condemnation of all false prophets:

**Deuteronomy 18:22** — *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*

And worse, Miller's false teaching about Daniel would put Daniel under that same condemnation if Miller had been correct about what Daniel was saying — but, of course, Miller was not correct.

Verse 13 begins with a holy one speaking, and that holy one then answers the question "how long?" that is posed to him. Who is the holy one in verse 13? Most take him to be an angel, but Calvin argues that he is Christ. Perhaps, but that is just speculation. We aren't told who he is.

Last week we discussed the desecration of the temple and the persecution of God's people that occurred under the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and we discussed how the transgression of some of God's people in readily accepting the Greek culture helped make that desecration and persecution possible. We also discussed the Maccabean revolt, which led to the restoration of the sanctuary by Judas Maccabaeus on December 14, 164 BC. That revolt also led to the ruling Jewish Hasmonean dynasty, which was first semi-independent and later fully independent of the Seleucid empire. Palestine became a Roman client state in 63 BC, and the Hasmonean dynasty was replaced by the Herodian dynasty in 37 BC.

The Jewish Hanukkah holiday celebrates the rededication of the temple in 164 BC. Here is how Josephus describes it:

Now Judas [Judah the Hammer; son of Mattathias] celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days, and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon; but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God, and delighted them by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival

of their customs, when, after a long time of intermission, they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, that they made it a law for their posterity, that they should keep a festival, on account of the restoration of their temple worship, for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival.

This same feast is called the feast of the dedication in John 10:22.

So, back to the 2300 days in Daniel 8:14. That 2300 day period is the answer we are given to the question of how long the sanctuary will be trodden under foot until it is cleansed. Literally, the answer is “evening, morning, two thousand and three hundred.” What does the 2300 days mean? Is it literal or figurative? (I have looked at more commentaries on this one question than I have about any other issue in this book — and I still don’t have a definitive answer!)

We have at least three choices:

- The “evening, morning” could refer to the evening and morning sacrifices, in which case 2300 evening and morning sacrifices would occur over a literal 1150 days.
- The “evening, morning” could be taken as a Hebrew day (as in Genesis 1, “there was evening and there was morning”) so that we have a literal 2300 days.
- The number 2300 could be figurative.

**View #1:** The time period is a literal 1150 days, which would be three years and 55 days (1150 days contain 1150 mornings and 1150 evenings for a grand total of 2300 mornings and evenings). (Note that 1150 days is three years + 70 days if we use a 360 day lunar year, which is used elsewhere in prophetic literature, at least for short periods of time.)

This view is appealing in that the altar to Zeus was set up in the temple about 1150 days before it was cleansed. (Historians tell us that the period between desecration and rededication was 1106 days, but we can't be sure of the point of the initial desecration in view here, and it is possible that the Bible is rounding the numbers.)

**View #2:** The time period is a literal 2300 days, which would be a little over six years and 100 days.

Some commentators argue that a Hebrew reader would never have understood the language in verse 14 to refer to only 1150 days. They point out that when the Bible wants to express half days it uses two numbers, as in 40 days and 40 nights (Genesis 7:4). So under this view verse 14 is referring to 2300 days.

But a problem with this view is that nothing really notable (that we know about) occurred six years and 100 days before the temple was cleansed. Antiochus came to the throne in 175 BC, and some argue that his persecution of the Jews started around 170 BC, which is about six years prior to 164 BC. But the appointment of the High Priest by bribery and the construction of the Greek gymnasium near the temple all occurred prior to 170 BC, and in fact Antiochus was busy fighting the sixth Syrian War against the Ptolemies in 170 BC, with the real persecution picking up with his return in 168 BC — so the date of 170 BC for the beginning of the persecution seems to be without much basis.

**View #3:** The time period of 2300 days is figurative. But there is a problem with this view — the number 2300 is not an obvious symbolic number or a multiple of such numbers. Even so, this view is strengthened by the apocalyptic nature of this chapter and the chapters on either side, as well as by the figurative time periods we see elsewhere in this book. But what is the symbolic meaning?

The period of 2300 days is a little over six years (which falls just short of the perfect seven). If we instead take 1150 days, then we are a little short of three and a half years (a broken seven). Both of those figures have been used elsewhere to refer to a persecution that is temporary.

Either way, the intent of the figure would be to stress that the persecution would end — it would not be permanent. That is just what we would expect the answer to be. The problem with this view, of course, is that none of the usual figures give us a perfect fit with 2300 days.

**My View:** I think either **View #1** (literal 1150 days) or **View #3** (figurative 1150 days) is correct, and I slightly favor **View #3** over **View #1**.

Why 1150 days? The phrase “evenings and mornings” in place of “days” is a key phrase here, and I think it stresses that the removal of the “daily” sacrifices was the center of attention in this event. Verse 26 refers to the vision as the vision of the evening and the morning.

Why symbolic? Our rule is that we choose symbolic unless we have a really good reason to do otherwise. A literal 1150 days makes sense, so that is an option, but the use of a broken seven to denote a temporary persecution is a common symbol in the Bible.

But why 1150 for a broken seven? That is a very good question. (Did you ever notice that whenever the teacher says that is a very good question, he never has a very good answer?) In Revelation 12:6, we see 1260 days used to denote a broken seven — 1260 days is three and a half lunar years (with 360 days in a lunar year). But in Revelation 11:2, we see yet another symbol used for a broken seven — 42 months, which is also three and a half years. In Daniel 7:25, we saw “a time and times and the dividing of time” used to denote a broken seven. So all we can say is that various symbols are used in the Bible for a broken seven, and we can’t say for sure why 1150 was used here rather than 1260. Perhaps God wanted to assure Daniel that the terrible persecution would not just be temporary, but would *really* be temporary, and so he used a symbol slightly shorter than three and a half years. Perhaps it is important that 1150 days is three years + **70 days** if we use a 360 day lunar year because we have certainly seen the number 70 used elsewhere in the Bible.

Perhaps our struggle to make 1150 fit the usual symbolic scheme suggests that we should interpret the number literally, in which case it most likely denotes the time between the first offering of swine to Zeus in the temple until the cleansing of the temple.

We can't say for sure which of these three views is correct, but we can say that the interpretation of the 2300 days does not appear to be a critical feature in understanding the vision — why? Because Gabriel's interpretation in the second half of this chapter says nothing about it, and Daniel does not ask him about it.

Why didn't Daniel ask about it? If Daniel took the number literally, then he was likely very relieved to hear that the trampling would last only 2300 days — there was no need to inquire further. If Daniel understood it figuratively, then he would have experienced the same relief — the persecution would be temporary. And I like what one commentary says about the use of *days* rather than *years* in verse 14: “The fact that it is expressed in days reminds the troubled Israelites that the Lord will not let this period extend a day beyond what they can bear.”

Remember that the question in verse 13 (how long?) is also found in Revelation. There the answer is soon (1:1, 1:3, 22:6, 22:10). The answer here is the same. God's people are being persecuted, but their affliction is temporary — unlike the affliction of their persecutors, which will be eternal.

We may be tempted today to ask, “how long?” How long until we are no longer trampled underfoot by societies and governments that reject God and that have thrown his word behind their backs? How long? The answer today is the same answer that Daniel heard when that same question was asked — our current situation is temporary. The permanent is yet to come. Whatever we are facing here on earth, it can be measured in *days*.

**2 Corinthians 4:18** — *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the*

*things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

### **Daniel 8:15-17**

**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.**

After the vision (or perhaps, after the first vision, if Daniel is now having a second vision), Daniel sees the angel Gabriel and hears a voice asking Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel.

Daniel is the only book in the Old Testament that gives us the name of an angel. The only other angel who is named in the Bible is Michael, and we will meet him in Chapter 10 of Daniel.

The War Scroll from the Dead Sea scrolls lists four angels by name: Michael, Gabriel, Sariel, and Raphael. The book of First Enoch expands the list to seven by

adding Uriel, Reuel, and Remiel. But we only know two of those names from the inspired text.

Gabriel tells Daniel that the vision is for the time of the end. What does he mean by this? The phrase “time of the end” is one of those phrases that requires us to examine the context very closely. Although we might be tempted to think “the end” must always refer to the end of the world, that could not be the case here. The vision very clearly ends with the cleansing of the temple after its desecration by Antiochus. Thus, the time of the end refers here to a time even before the birth of Christ. We see similar uses of the word “end” elsewhere in the Bible:

**Ezekiel 7:2-3** (regarding the end of Jerusalem under the Babylonians) — *Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel; **An end, the end is come** upon the four corners of the land. Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.*

**Habakkuk 2:2-3** (regarding the end of the Babylonians 70 years later) — *And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but **at the end** it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

These uses of the word “end” mean the same thing — the end of whatever is being described in the vision or the prophecy. The point is that God is in charge of the timing, and God will determine when the “end” occurs. The fulfillment is sure and will not occur by accident.

**Daniel 8:18-19**

**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.**

In verse 18, Daniel is in a deep sleep. The same Hebrew verb used here is used to describe Jonah's "deep sleep" as he slept through a violent storm (Jonah 1:5), and a related Hebrew word is used for the "deep sleep" that God caused to come upon Adam when he took part of his flesh to create Eve (Genesis 2:21). It is not clear whether Daniel fainted from or was just exhausted from all that he had seen, but from verse 17 I think it is most likely that Daniel fainted (although when he faints in verse 27, the word "fainted" is used). In any event, the angel sets Daniel on his feet again.

Here we see even more clearly what is meant by the time of the end. The "time of the end" in verse 17 is called "the time appointed the end" in verse 19. It is the time that God has appointed for the events in the vision to be completed.

The "indignation" in verse 19 refers to the outpouring of God's wrath against the enemies of his people and against sin. The appointed time is the time when the vision will be fulfilled.

**Daniel 8:20-22**

**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.**

Here we have the explanation of the vision, which we have already discussed. Recall that the ram was Medo-Persia and the goat was Greece. As history tells us, Greece defeated Medo-Persia and then split into four pieces after the death of Alexander the Great. These four kingdoms did not arise “with his power.” That is, they were ruled by Alexander’s generals and not by Alexander’s sons. Alexander had a son that was born after Alexander’s death, but that son and his mother were soon murdered.

**Possible problem:** Verse 20 speaks of the “**kings** of Media and Persia.” Did Daniel believe that the Medes and the Persians were separate kingdoms when these events occurred? No. Daniel clearly sees here that Media and Persia are represented by a single ram. That is, they act as one beast with a single will and a single mind. They are, as history also tells us, a single entity at this time. Daniel elsewhere refers to the law [singular] of the Medes and the Persians, which makes absolutely no sense if they were separate kingdoms with separate kings.

Why, then, does Daniel refer to the “kings” (plural) of Media and Persia when in fact Cyrus was in charge of both? We have already noted that the word “king” is

sometimes used in Daniel to mean “kingdom,” so the most likely explanation is that the ram denotes the combined *kingdoms* of Media and Persia. We know that the words “king” and “kingdom” are used interchangeably in the next verse, verse 21 — “And the rough goat is the **king** of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first **king**.” The goat is called the *king* of Greece, yet the first *king* is a horn on the goat. Thus, the goat must be the *kingdom* of Greece. But, with that said, if we are consistent in how we view verses 20 and 21, then the horns in verse 20 would be kings rather than kingdoms, as is the horn in verse 21.

What is the meaning of verse 20 if “king” really means “king”? Verse 20 could be pointing to the king of Persia (Cyrus) and the last king of Media (who was Cyrus’s own grandfather, Astyages) whom Cyrus defeated to become the one king of the Medes and the Persians. That is, the one ram was a combination of those two kingdoms led by those two kings.

### **Daniel 8:23-25**

**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.**

Here we have a description of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, whom we have also already discussed. Recall that each of these items fits Antiochus precisely. In Jewish writings, he is referred to as Antiochus the Wicked.

Verse 23 tells us that he would arise in the latter time of their kingdom. Although, chronologically he ruled about midway in the timespan of the Seleucid kingdom, God's interest in the Seleucids ends with Antiochus IV (as we will see in Daniel 11). The kingdom began to decline with the death of his father Antiochus III.

This type of focus is not unusual in the Bible. There were many Roman emperors, but as far as God was concerned there were only eleven. He talks about the first eleven in Daniel and in Revelation, but says nothing about all the others that followed. God's interest in Rome (and in the Seleucids) seems to have ended as soon as they were judged and sentenced — and that may be the most frightening thing about these visions!

Notice that without warning there is about a 150 year break between verse 22 and verse 23. Alexander died in 323 BC, and Antiochus IV came to power in 175 BC. We need to keep this in mind as we get closer to Daniel 11, where we will also see such breaks.

Verses 24 and 25 have some curious phrases, especially in the King James Version.

- “He shall destroy wonderfully” — that means he shall cause *fearful* or *extraordinary* destruction.
- “He shall cause craft to prosper in his hand” — that means he will cause *deceit* or *trickery* to succeed.

- “By peace shall destroy many” — that means he will destroy many *without warning or while they are at ease*.

Verse 25 tells us that “he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes.” Who is the Prince of princes? We saw the Prince of the host in verse 11 and said that it could be a reference to Jesus. I think we see the same Prince here, and again this could be a reference to Jesus. If these are not references to God the Son, then they must be references to God the Father. (The use of the phrase “without hand” that follows further suggests that he is standing up against God in verse 25.) An assault against God’s people is an assault against God.

Verse 25 tells us that Antiochus IV would be broken by no human hand. History tells us that after making an unsuccessful attempt to pillage a wealthy temple in Elymais, he died of a sudden mysterious illness. Daniel is telling us here that the illness was anything but mysterious! God removed Antiochus from the scene just as he would later remove Herod from the scene in Acts 12. The Bible, and particularly the book of Daniel, is full of men who thought they were God.

- Nebuchadnezzar thought he was God — and he found himself out grazing in the field like an ox.
- Domitian thought he was God — and he was assassinated by one of his own servants.
- Alexander the Great thought he was God — and he died young and in pain after a drinking binge.
- Antiochus thought he was God — and he died suddenly of disease.
- Herod thought he was God — and he was eaten by worms.

We look at those men who thought they were God, and we may say, “I’m glad we aren’t like that!” And I fear the greater the sin, the more likely we are to have that reaction. Murder? Adultery? But doesn’t the Bible tell us that we can be guilty of those sins — without ever committing the acts (Matthew 5:28, 1 John 3:15)? Perhaps

we should take a closer look at the sin of putting yourself in the place of God. We may never say it, but can we still be guilty of it?

What was the first temptation? Genesis 3:5 — “ye shall be as gods.” Do we really think Satan has given up on that one — especially after it worked so well? Do we really think you have to be Alexander the Great to succumb to that temptation? How many of our own troubles can be traced back to the thought that we are God? That we are all knowing? That we are all powerful? That we control the universe? That we are above time? That death cannot touch us? That we sit above and alone, having need of no one? That we are unchanging and unchangeable? That our word is truth? That our will be done?

It makes for an interesting study, and I would point you to an excellent book called *The God Players* by Earl Jabay. But we should also note the extreme danger of such delusions from the examples we see in the Bible of those who thought to take the place of God. We are the creature, not the creator — and our troubles begin as soon as we forget that.

**Romans 1:25** — *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.*

## **Daniel 8:26**

**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.**

Daniel is told to seal up this vision because it pertains to many days hence. How many days hence? The vision was received in 550 BC, and it was fulfilled in 164 BC. Thus “many days” refers here to a time period of 386 years. Daniel was told to seal

the vision up because it dealt with events that would pertain to people who would live much later. This vision was not directly applicable to the people of his own day.

In Revelation 22, John was given the **opposite** command!

**Revelation 22:10** — *And he saith unto me, **Seal not** the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*

Why was John told to not seal up the words? Because the time for their fulfillment was near! This crucial time frame is also mentioned elsewhere in Revelation.

**Revelation 1:1** — *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which **must shortly come to pass**.*

**Revelation 1:3** — *For **the time is at hand**.*

**Revelation 22:6** — *These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things **which must shortly be done**.*

**Revelation 22:10** — *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: **for the time is at hand**.*

Thus, Daniel was told to seal up a vision that referred to a time less than 400 years after he received it, yet John was told not to seal up his vision. Does it make any sense at all to teach (as most do) that nothing in Revelation has yet been fulfilled 2000 years later and counting?

Those who begin their study of Revelation by ignoring the time frame in the opening verse of the book have no chance of correctly interpreting the book — and most commentaries begin just that way. Daniel 8:26 and Revelation 22:10 provide a very good starting point for discussing the prophecies in these two books and especially the prophecy in Revelation.

**Daniel 8:27**

**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.**

Daniel fainted due to the vision and was sick for some days. Why? Because he saw what would one day happen to God's people. Even though it would not happen to him or to anyone he knew, still Daniel was disturbed. This is certainly a lesson for us. We should be concerned for God's people everywhere and for all time — present and future.

We should be distressed by the persecutions directed around the world at Christians and at those who profess to be Christians. And we should be very thankful for the freedoms we enjoy, while understanding that those freedoms will not last forever. There is but one eternal kingdom, and the United States is not it. While we enjoy these freedoms, we have a tremendous responsibility to take advantage of them to spread the word. God has opened a door of freedom for us, and he expects us to go through it while we can, because one day that door will close.

How can we show our concern for *future* Christians? One way is by carefully guarding the truth that has been entrusted to us. That is how we show our care and concern for God's people in the future.

**1 Timothy 6:20** — *O Timothy, keep that [or guard that] which is committed to thy trust.*

**Jude 3** — *Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

This is not just the elders' or the preacher's responsibility. It is everyone's responsibility. Another way to show our concern for God's people is by prayer — and we will see Daniel doing that very shortly.

Notice that even after the explanation, Daniel confesses in verse 27 that he did not fully understand the vision. (That confession should provide some comfort to us in our efforts to understand these visions! Maybe he too was puzzling over the 2300 days!)

Daniel was about 70 when he received this vision, but verse 27 tells us that he got back to work doing the king's business as soon as he recovered from his illness, and we know that Daniel was doing God's business in his work for the king. There is no retirement from our service to God!