

The Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 8:11, describing the rise of the Papacy, says, “Yea, he magnified himself even against the prince of the host, and from him the daily was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down” (marginal reading used). Verse 12 adds, “and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered.”

The Bible clearly teaches that “there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5) That is the Biblical position.

This essential truth of 1 Timothy 2:5 was rejected by the Papacy. They profess belief in one God, but their one God is not the Father as the Bible consistently says, but rather a Trinity. 1 Timothy 2:5 also clearly says that Jesus is not that one God, but the Mediator between that one God and men.

Christ’s position is thus presented in the Scriptures as that of Mediator between God and men. “The mystic ladder of his [Jacob’s] dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man.” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 20)

“It is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us. . . . And thus Christ is the medium of communication of man with God, and of God with men.” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 143)

Christ held this mediatorial position before His incarnation, yes, even before the fall of man. It is simply the position He holds. “Christ was appointed to the office of Mediator from the creation of God, set up from everlasting to be our substitute and surety.” (*Signs of the Times*, April 26, 1899)

“From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed.” (*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 247)

It is this everlasting mediatorial work of Christ, this continual position which He has always had, which constitutes the “daily” which the Papacy has denied. The concept of a mediatorial Son of God is incompatible with the basic premises of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Daniel 8:11 says, “And the place of his sanctuary was cast down.” The word “place” here means foundation or basis. “In other words, the anti-God horn power attacks the very basis of the intercession of the heavenly sanctuary with its mediatorial and saving activities on behalf of the faithful.” (Gerhard F. Hasel, *Symposium on Daniel*, Frank B. Holbrook, editor, p. 414)

What is the foundation of Christ’s mediatorial work in the sanctuary? Upon what is His mediatorial role based?

The foundation of Christ's mediation is His Sonship to God. Being the Son of God, He can mediate between God and men.

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ . . . The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 412)

This connection between Christ's mediatorial role and His Sonship is emphasized in the fifth chapter of Hebrews:

“And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee . . . saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. . . . Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.” (Hebrews 5:4-10)

Jesus is priest because God designated Him as such. Notice that the very same authority which affirms Christ's Sonship to the Father also designates His mediatorial role: “He that said . . . Thou art my Son . . . saith also . . . Thou art a priest for ever.” Thus Christ's mediation is irremovably tied to His Sonship. To accept His mediation requires an acceptance of His Sonship to God.

Since the “daily” refers to the mediatorial work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and the basis of that mediatorial work calls into view His position as the Son of God, and since Daniel 8:11 predicted that the little horn would take away that daily and cast down that foundation, we must ask the question, When, and under what circumstances, did the Papacy fulfill this prophecy? To answer that question, we must go back to history.

When Was the Daily Taken Away?

The date for the taking away of the daily is determined by comparing the two answers given for a single question asked in Daniel 12.

Question: “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” (verse 6)

Answer #1: “It shall be for a time, times, and an half.” (verse 7)

Answer #2: “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.” (verse 11)

In answer to the question asked in Daniel 12:6, two time periods are given, both of which extend “to the end of these wonders.” Knowing the dates for the first time period, we can easily figure the starting point of the second.

What Happened in the Year A. D. 508?

Most history books say very little about the year 508, yet one significant event stands out.

“In Europe, one of the major events that year was the conclusion of the war between Clovis, king of the Franks (later France), and the Visigoths, whom he defeated and pushed into Spain.” (William H. Shea, *Bible Amplifier—Daniel 7-12*, p. 220)

Before we discuss the year 508 further, we must go back to the year 496. In that year Clovis, king of the Salian or Merovingian Franks, became the first of the pagan barbarians to adopt Catholicism. The Anglo-Saxons were still pagan, but all the other Germanic kingdoms had accepted the Arian form of Christianity. In the conversion of Clovis, the Catholic Church acquired a champion upon whose military might would hang the theological future of Europe.

“It is evident, from the language of Gregory of Tours, that this conflict between the Franks and the Visigoths was regarded by the orthodox party of his own and preceding ages as a religious war, on which, humanly speaking, the prevalence of the Catholic or the Arian creed in western Europe depended.” (*The Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. I, p. 286)

It is necessary at this point to clarify what was the so-called “Arianism” which was held by the Goths and the other Germanic peoples.

“Although the Goths refused to believe as the church of Rome did, and as a consequence have been branded as Arians, Romanism actually meant little to them. In fact, it meant little to Ulfilas, their great leader. The Goths refused to go along with the mounting innovations being introduced into the church of the caesars, which church quickly branded any competitor as Arian.” (Benjamin Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant*, p. 141)

“Since his ancestors were from Asia Minor (the province where the apostle Peter had been especially instructed by God to plant the gospel), Ulfilas was undoubtedly influenced by the doctrines of the apostle to the Jews; and he rejected the liberal and unscriptural teachings which had flooded many western churches. He was a believer in the divine revelation of the Old Testament, as well as that of the New Testament. He impressed upon the Gothic people a simple, democratic Christianity. Like Patrick and Columba, he apparently kept the seventh day as the Sabbath.” (*Ibid.*, p. 143)

In actuality, by the year 508 it had been more than a century since the term “Arian” meant a follower of Arius. At this point “Arian” simply meant “non-trinitarian.”

So the year 508 brings us to a showdown between Trinitarianism and non-Trinitarianism.

“For the first time the diffusion of belief in the nature of the Godhead became the avowed pretext for the invasion of a neighboring territory.” (Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, quoted in A. T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, p. 526.)

Actually, the war between the Franks and the Visigoths represented the culmination of a series of victories by Clovis. In 496 he had defeated the Alemanni, and in 500 the

Burgundians. But of greatest consequence would be the outcome of his campaign against the Visigoths.

It was in the year 507 that Clovis and his Frankish army met the army of the Visigoths under their king, Alaric II. Alaric, realizing his weakness, tried to delay the confrontation, hoping help would come from Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths. But no help came, and soon the Visigoths were in flight and Alaric was slain.

“The victorious Franks pursued them as far as Bordeaux (Burdigala), where Clovis passed the winter, while Thierry, his son, was overrunning Auvergne, Quincy, and Rouergue. The Goths, whose new king was a minor, made no further resistance; and in the following year the Salian chief took possession of the royal treasure at Toulouse. He also took the town of Angouleme.” (*The Historian’s History of the World*, Vol. 7, p. 473)

“A. D. 508. A short time after these events, Clovis received the titles and dignity of Roman patricius and consul from the Greek emperor Anastasius.” (Walter C. Perry, *The Franks*, p. 85)

“In 508 Clovis received at Tours the insignia of the consulship from the eastern emperor Anastasius.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., art. “Clovis,” Vol. VI, p. 563)

Historians who give only brief treatment to this war generally focus on the year 507, during which Alaric was killed. Yet, as the above references correctly indicate, the Franks continued their conquest of Visigothic territory until well into the year 508. The conclusion of the war, and the imperial recognition of it, occurred in the year 508.

“Nor was his a temporary conquest. The kingdom of the West Goths and the Burgundians had become the kingdom of the Franks. The invaders had at length arrived, who were to remain. It was decided that the Franks, and not the Goths, were to direct the future destinies of Gaul and Germany, and that the Catholic faith, and not Arianism, was to be the religion of these great realms.” (Richard W. Church, *The Beginning of the Middle Ages*, pp. 38, 39)

“Thus in A.D. 508 terminated united resistance to the development of the papacy. The question of supremacy between Frank and Goth, between the Catholic and Arian religions, had then been settled in favor of the Catholics.” (*Daniel and the Revelation*, 1944 ed., p. 330)

“Thus when Clovis and the Franks defeated the Arian Visigoths and drove them into Spain, it was also a theological victory for the bishop of Rome.” (*Bible Amplifier—Daniel 7-12*, p. 220)

“Thus was the bloody course of Clovis glorified by the Catholic writers, as the triumph of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity over Arianism.” (*The Two Republics*, p. 528)

And thus was the basis of Christ’s perpetual mediatorial role “taken away” by Trinitarianism in the year 508, just as the prophecy predicted.

The Abomination of Desolation

In His forecast from the Mount of Olives, Jesus mentioned “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet.” Christ’s prophecy had multiple application (See *LDE* 18, *DA* 628, *GC* 36). The abomination of desolation was to be a sign to Christians just before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It was also a sign to Christians just before spiritual Jerusalem was given unto the Gentiles to be trodden under foot for forty-two months. To both it was the signal that the time had come to flee into the wilderness.

As to the setting up of the abomination of desolation, Daniel tells us when it would occur:

“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.” (Daniel 12:11) The context of this passage indicates that these 1290 days would conclude at the same time as did the 1260 days. So to find out when the abomination of desolation was “set up,” just subtract 1290 from 1798. $1798 - 1290 = 508$

What is the abomination of desolation? Ellen White explains:

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.’ Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight.” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 26)

According to inspiration, the abomination of desolation is to be understood as “the idolatrous standards of the Romans.” Just as the planting of pagan Rome’s standard was a sign to the Christians in Jerusalem, so the planting of papal Rome’s standard would be a sign that the time of its supremacy was about to begin.

Outside Jerusalem the armies of Rome planted pagan Rome’s standard. And it was military power that planted papal Rome’s standard as well. This time it was the armies of Clovis, king of the Franks. “It is to them [the Franks] that the political inheritance of the Roman Empire passed; to them came the honor of taking up and carrying on . . . the political work which Rome had been doing.” (George Burton Adams, *Civilization During the Middle Ages*, pp. 137-144)

Papal Rome’s standard is the creed for which it stands. When the creed of the papacy had won military victory and was planted on the ground where truth had once stood, that would be a sign that the church was to flee into the wilderness.

Elder J. N. Loughborough presented this point clearly:

“In the setting up of this abomination that maketh desolate’ (Dan. 12:11), we see that five distinct steps were taken:—

“1. Forming a creed, expressing their faith in man-made phrases instead of adhering to the word of the Lord.

“2. Making that man-made creed a test of fellowship, and denouncing all as heretics who would not assent to the exact wording of their creeds.

“3. Making the creed a rule by which all heretics must be tried. Many were thus declared sinners whose faith was more in harmony with the direct statements of the Bible than that of those who decreed against them.

“4. Constituting themselves a tribunal for the trial of heretics, and excluding from their fellowship all who would not assent to their creeds. Not content to debar such from church privileges in this world, they declared them subjects for the lake of fire.

“5. Having thus kindled a hatred in their own hearts against all who did not conform to their creeds, they next invoked and obtained the aid of the civil power to torture, and kill with sword, with hunger, with flame, and with beasts of the earth, those whom they had declared unfit to remain in the world.

“Then appeared on the stage of action one class of professed Christians with a head over them, actually declaring that he was God on earth, persecuting another class of Christians who were conscientiously following the Lord and his Word.” (J. N. Loughborough, *The Church, Its Organization, Order, and Discipline*, pp. 76, 77)

According to Elder Loughborough the abomination of desolation had to do with the formation of the Catholic creed. So the next question is, Upon what creed does Catholicism stand? What was its first and basic creed? “The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church.” (*Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, p. 11)

Clovis’ victory over the Visigoths was recognized as the great turning point. It determined that Trinitarianism would rule in Western Europe. Thus the standard of the Romans was established by military power in the year 508, all in accordance with the prophecy of Daniel 12:11.

Why Church and State First United

History reveals that church and state first united for the purpose of overthrowing what they termed Arianism. It was to establish the Trinitarian creed that the Catholic Church first sought the arm of the civil government.

“Two major elements come together here: (1) the blending of the political arm of the state and the religious arm of the church, and (2) the use of the arms of the state to accomplish the ends of the church. With the defeat of the Visigoths as heretical Arian Christians, the church came to use the military power of the state to enforce its dogma. . . . Thus the setting up of the abomination of desolation of Daniel 12:11 can be seen as the union of church and state and what the church set out to accomplish through the power of the state. This had the effect of eclipsing the true ministry of Christ as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.” (*Bible Amplifier—Daniel 7-12*, pp. 220, 221)

“It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy—the beast.” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 443)

Catholicism Arose by Crushing Arianism

“It was evident that the spread of Arianism would check the onward march of Catholicism, and that the possession of Italy and its renowned capital by a people of the Arian persuasion would be fatal to the supremacy of a Catholic bishop.” (*Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 121)

“It was especially for the purpose of exterminating this heresy [the Arian faith] that Justinian decreed the pope to be the head of the church and the corrector of heretics.” (*Ibid.*, p. 268)

“The contest between Arianism and the orthodox Catholicism was the means of enthroning the papacy. . . . Every principle of truth was crushed, and with 538 was ushered in the Dark Ages.” (S. N. Haskell, *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, p. 266)

Paul described it this way: “There [shall] come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Catholicism and Paganism United to Crush the Most Essential Truths About God

Notice how Inspiration describes the uniting of paganism and apostate Christianity:

“I saw the company of idolaters . . . lower their banner and then approach that firm Christian company and make propositions to them.” (*Early Writings*, p. 212)

This is what Daniel 11:30 refers to when it says, “He shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.”

“These apostate Christians, uniting with their half-pagan companions, directed their warfare against *the most essential features of the doctrine of Christ.*” (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 324, emphasis supplied)

Daniel 11 describes the essence of the apostasy in this way:

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers.” (Daniel 11:37)

“And a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour.” (Daniel 11:38)

“With a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory.” (Daniel 11:39)

“But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” (Daniel 11:32)

“There were some, however, who were not misled by these delusions. They still maintained their fidelity to the Author of truth and worshiped God alone.” (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 323)

“It required a desperate struggle for those who would be faithful to stand firm against the deceptions and abominations which were disguised in sacerdotal garments and introduced into the church.” (*Ibid.*, p. 324)

History Will Be Repeated

“The prophecy in the eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated. In the thirtieth verse a power is spoken of that 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. 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. 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. . . .’ Scenes similar to those described in these words will take place.” (*Letter 103, 1904*, pp. 5, 6)

“These comments suggest that whereas the prophecy has had a valid fulfillment in the past, much of the history will be repeated.” (Don F. Neufeld, *Review and Herald*, July 8, 1976)

“We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God’s people on every side.” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 116)

“Said Paul: ‘There’ shall ‘come a falling away, . . . and that man of sin be revealed.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:3. So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image of the beast.” (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 443, 444)

How Long Shall Be the Vision Concerning the Daily?

In the description of the papal apostasy in Daniel 8, the focus of attention is its effect on the “daily,” or continual, mediatorial role of Christ, and the “place,” or foundation/basis, of His sanctuary ministry. Truth was cast to the ground and the transgression/abomination of desolation was set up. This was to be accomplished by military force of arms, as “an host was given him against the daily.” (verse 12)

Daniel then heard a conversation between two heavenly beings. The question asked in verse 13 was, “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?”

The answer given was, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” (verse 14)

To fully understand the answer, we must catch the point of the question. The question really was, How long will the truth about the “one God, and one mediator between God and men”—that truth which lies at the foundation of the sanctuary doctrine—how long will that truth be taken away?

And the answer is given, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days.” Therefore, in 1844, not only would Christ begin the great work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary, but the truth about Christ which lies at the foundation of that great work, would be restored. In 1844 the true doctrine of God, taken away by the papacy, would once again be understood by God’s people.

Therefore, according the book of Daniel, we should find a group of believers who began the Advent movement holding the original, apostolic view of God. History confirms this to be the truth.

Ben Ezra

