

supplied by the translators. TAHMID was the collective word customarily used in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers for the various permanent features of the daily sanctuary services, such as the offerings, incense, shewbread, lights, etc. In Numbers 28 and 29 "the daily" (TAHMID) is used seventeen times in connection with the regular or continual service of the sanctuary.

"TAHMID (continual) is everything in the worship of God which is not used temporarily, but is permanent, as the daily sacrifice, the setting forth of the shewbread, and the like. The word comprehends all that is of permanent use in the holy services of divine worship." (The Book of the Prophet Daniel, p 298, by C. F. Keil)

The "daily" or "continual" features of the earthly sanctuary service pointed forward to the unceasing, personal mediation of Christ, our Great High Priest, in the Heavenly Sanctuary. The unflinching constancy and unchanging permanence of His Heavenly mediation is mentioned at least fifteen times in the Book of Hebrews, by such words as "abideth"; "forever"; "continually"; "ever liveth"; "endless"; "unchangeable"; "continueth ever" (see Heb. 5: 6; 6: 20; 7: 3, 8, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25, 28; 10: 12; 13: 8). It is as if the writer of the Book of Hebrews was pointing with steady finger to the Heavenly ministry of Christ and proclaiming: "This is the true 'daily' of Daniel 8!"

What is meant by the "Taking away of the Daily Sacrifice"?

In the light of the foregoing, the "taking away of the daily sacrifice" must refer to some widespread human effort to pervert, obscure, or counterfeit the true "daily"—the continual, saving mediation of Jesus Christ—so as to render it powerless in the lives of millions. That this work has been done by Rome, especially in its Papal form, is shown by the following:

A Counterfeit Sanctuary. The Roman Catholic Church on earth has usurped the place of Christ's "true tabernacle" in Heaven.

A Counterfeit Sacrifice. The "sacrifice of the Mass" has usurped the place of Christ's true, "once-for-all" sacrifice.

A Counterfeit Priesthood. Human priests, who are exalted as "gods"; "christs"; and "creators of their Creator" have usurped the place of Christ, our true High Priest.

A Counterfeit Mediator. Mary has usurped the place of Christ, and is declared to be a more compassionate, accessible, and effectual mediatrix than Jesus Himself!

A Counterfeit "Vicar of Christ". The Pope has usurped the place of the Holy Spirit as the infallible Teacher of Divine truth, and the true Successor of Christ on earth.

A Counterfeit Way of Salvation. Salvation by works—prayers, payments, pilgrimages, penances, etc.—has usurped the place of salvation by God's free grace.

The vision of Daniel 8 is therefore not concerned with some narrow political or sectarian issue. It is not a picture of conflict between nations or denominations. It is far bigger than any of those. The "taking away of the daily" is nothing less than a highly-organised, world-wide attempt to neutralise all of the saving provisions of God, and to dethrone Christ as man's only effective Mediator!

No wonder the heavenly watchers were filled with alarm, so that one of them cried out in Daniel's hearing: "How long shall be the vision?" No wonder Daniel himself "fainted, and was sick certain days" (v 27)!

Conclusion

We have now learned how Gabriel, in obedience to God's command, explained to Daniel the meaning of the Ram, the He-Goat and the Little Horn. But the most puzzling feature of the vision—the "2,300 days" of v 14—was left unexplained. This chapter is like an important letter, of which the last page is left unfinished, or is lost. Doubtless due to Daniel's age and exhaustion, the interpretation was interrupted at a most critical stage, and the prophet was left in a state of frustration and perplexity, hoping that Gabriel would return and complete the explanation of the vision at an early date. "I was astonished at the vision," said Daniel, "but none understood it" (v 27).

Did Gabriel ever come back? . . . Was the mystery of the "2,300 days" ever solved? . . . These questions will be answered in Lessons 27 and 28.