

Daniel 7:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

Analysis

Daniel observes the disturbing scene: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." This represents the climax of earthly opposition—direct warfare against God's people. The phrase "prevailed against them" indicates apparent victory, suggesting martyrdom and temporary defeat. This echoes Revelation 13:7: "it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." The passive construction "was given" indicates God permits this persecution within sovereign purposes.

This troubling vision reveals that God's people will face violent persecution, and earthly observation will suggest the enemy's triumph. Yet the following verse (v. 22) provides crucial reversal: divine judgment favors the saints. The pattern holds throughout Scripture—apparent defeat precedes ultimate victory. Christ's crucifixion looked like defeat until resurrection vindicated Him. Believers may suffer martyrdom yet receive eternal reward (Revelation 20:4).

The little horn's warfare against saints demonstrates satanic opposition to God's people throughout history, reaching eschatological climax under antichrist. Every persecution of Christians—Roman emperors, medieval inquisitions, modern totalitarian regimes—prefigures this final assault. Yet Christ's promise remains: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" His church (Matthew 16:18). Temporary setbacks don't negate ultimate victory. The Lamb who was slain will conquer (Revelation 17:14).

Historical Context

Throughout history, God's people have faced violent opposition that appeared temporarily victorious: Israel's exiles, early Christian martyrdom under Rome, medieval persecution, Reformation martyrs, and modern persecution in hostile nations. Each instance partially fulfills this vision while pointing toward eschatological completion when opposition reaches its zenith before Christ's return destroys antichrist and vindicates His people.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the pattern of temporary defeat followed by ultimate victory encourage perseverance when believers face violent opposition?
2. What does God's permission of persecution ("was given") teach about divine sovereignty accomplishing purposes even through suffering?
3. How should knowing that apparent victory for God's enemies is temporary shape our response to current persecution of Christians globally?

Interlinear Text

הָיָה	וַיֵּרָא	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה
H2370	I beheld	horn	and the same	made	war	with	the saints
	H1934	H7162	H1797	H5648	H7129	H5974	H6922
וַיִּכְלָה לָהֶם:							
and prevailed							
H3202							

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 12:7 (Holy): And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Revelation 17:14 (Parallel theme): These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Daniel 8:24 (Holy): 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.

Revelation 17:6 (Holy): And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.