

Daniel 8:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

Analysis

Gabriel continues the interpretation: "And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." The "rough goat" (Hebrew: tsaphir ha'izim, צָפִיר הַעֲזִים literally means "hairy he-goat," describing Greece's fierce, aggressive character. The "great horn between his eyes" unmistakably identifies Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), who conquered the Persian Empire with unprecedented speed and became one of history's most influential figures.

The phrase "first king" (Hebrew: hamelekh harishon, הַמֶּלֶךְ הַרִּישׁוֹן) indicates he inaugurates a dynasty but won't be the last. Indeed, Alexander's empire fragmented upon his death into the kingdoms of his generals. His singular prominence—conquering the known world by age 30—created a historical watershed. Greek language and culture (Hellenization) spread throughout the ancient world, providentially preparing for New Testament writing in Greek and gospel dissemination across Hellenized territories.

God's sovereignty in raising Alexander demonstrates that He uses even pagan conquerors for redemptive purposes. Alexander judgment on Persian pride, spread Greek language facilitating future gospel communication, and his military roads and cities later served Christian mission. God works all things—even conquest and warfare—toward His ultimate purposes in Christ. This encourages trust that God controls contemporary geopolitical events, using them for gospel advance even when His purposes aren't immediately apparent.

Historical Context

Alexander III of Macedon (356-323 BC) was tutored by Aristotle, inherited his father Philip's throne at 20, and conquered the Persian Empire by 30. He founded over 20 cities (many named Alexandria), spread Greek culture from Macedonia to India, and died suddenly in Babylon at 32. His conquests fulfilled Daniel's 218-year-old prophecy precisely. Historians Arrian, Plutarch, and Curtius documented his campaigns. Alexander's legacy permanently shaped world history—Greek became the Mediterranean lingua franca, enabling New Testament writing and early Christianity's spread. God's providence used Alexander's military genius for redemptive purposes.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of Alexander to spread Greek language demonstrate His sovereignty in preparing the world for gospel advancement?
2. What does the precise fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy about Alexander teach us about Scripture's supernatural origin?
3. In what ways should believers today trust God's control of geopolitical events, believing He directs history toward redemptive purposes?

Interlinear Text

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|--------|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| אָשָׁר | בְּגָדוֹלָה | וּבְקָרְבָּן | רַבָּה |
| goat | And the rough | is the king | of Grecia |
| H6842 | H8163 | H4428 | H3120 |
| בֵּין | עִינָּיו | הַלְּבָן | בְּרָאשׁוֹן |
| H996 | that is between his eyes | H1931 | is the king |
| | H5869 | | H4428 |
| | | | H7223 |

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 11:3 (Kingdom): And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

Daniel 10:20 (Parallel theme): Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

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