

Daniel 8:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

Analysis

In Daniel's vision, 'as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.' The 'he goat' (tsaphir-izzim, צָפִיר־עִזִּים) symbolizes Greece (explicitly identified in verse 21). Coming 'from the west' describes Greece's geographical location relative to Persia. The phrase 'touched not the ground' emphasizes incredible speed—Alexander the Great's conquest swept through the Persian Empire with unprecedented rapidity (334-323 BC). The 'notable horn between his eyes' represents the first king—Alexander himself (verse 21)—the singular leader whose charisma and military genius united Greece and conquered the known world. This vision, given in 551 BC, accurately predicts events 200+ years future, demonstrating God's sovereignty over history and nations. The imagery teaches that earthly kingdoms, however mighty, rise and fall according to God's predetermined purposes.

Historical Context

Daniel received this vision in Susa during Belshazzar's third year (c. 551 BC), about 220 years before Alexander's conquests. The ram with two horns (8:3-4) represented Medo-Persia, whose empire Daniel served. The goat's conquest fulfilled precisely: Alexander crossed from Greece (west) in 334 BC, defeated Darius III at Issus (333 BC) and Gaugamela (331 BC), conquering the Persian Empire in just three years—'touched not the ground' vividly pictures this blitzkrieg

speed. Alexander's death at 32 (323 BC) fulfilled the horn being 'broken' (8:8), with four generals dividing his empire (the four horns). Later interpreters, especially after the Maccabean period, saw the 'little horn' (8:9-14) fulfilled in Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC), who desecrated the temple and triggered the Maccabean revolt. Church tradition emphasized Daniel's prophecy as proving divine inspiration—no merely human author could predict such specific detail centuries in advance. The Reformers saw apocalyptic prophecy as demonstrating God's sovereignty over history's seemingly chaotic rise and fall of empires.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Daniel's accurately fulfilled prophecy (written 220+ years before Alexander) strengthen your confidence in Scripture's divine inspiration and reliability?
2. What comfort does God's sovereignty over earthly kingdoms provide when facing overwhelming political or social powers opposed to God's purposes?

Interlinear Text

בְּיַהְיָה	מִבְּ יָמִים	וְיָמִים	בְּעִזִּים
H589	H1961	And as I was considering	H2009
		H995	and the goat
			H6842
			behold an he
H5795			
מִן	עַל	כֹּל	בְּאַרְצָה
came	from the west	on the face	not the ground
H935	H4480	H5921	H3605
H4628		H6440	H776
			H369
נִזְגַּע	בְּאַרְצָה	קָרְבָּן	בְּיַד
and touched	not the ground	and the goat	had a notable
H5060	H776	H6842	H2380
			H996

לְיִצְחָק:

between his eyes

H5869

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 8:21 (Parallel theme): And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

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

Daniel 8:8 (Parallel theme): Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.