

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, צִפִּיר־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?

3