

Daniel 8:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

Analysis

The "little horn" emerging from the four kingdoms has been interpreted various ways, but most scholarship identifies Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC), the Seleucid king who brutally persecuted Jews. He started "little"—initially not heir to the throne—but gained power through manipulation. His expansion "toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land" describes his campaigns: south toward Egypt (Ptolemaic kingdom), east toward Parthia and Armenia, and especially toward "the pleasant land" (Hebrew: *hatzvi*, הַצְבֵּי)—Israel.

"The pleasant land" emphasizes Israel's special status to God—beautiful, desirable, His chosen nation. Antiochus's targeting of Israel prefigures later oppressors who particularly attack God's people. The phrase "waxed exceeding great" seems hyperbolic for a relatively minor ruler, but Antiochus's religious persecution had effects disproportionate to his political power—he nearly extinguished Jewish faith, provoking the Maccabean revolt.

Prophetically, many see Antiochus as a type of the future Antichrist—a pattern of hostility toward God's people that will find ultimate expression in end-times persecution. Both attack covenant faith, demand worship, desecrate holy places, and face divine judgment. This dual fulfillment shows Scripture's depth—historical events prefigure eschatological realities, with Christ's first coming judging Antiochus-like powers and His return abolishing them forever.

Historical Context

Antiochus IV Epiphanes ("God Manifest") ruled the Seleucid Empire 175-164 BC. He invaded Egypt twice (170, 168 BC), conquered territory eastward, and especially targeted Judea. In 167 BC he desecrated the Jerusalem temple, sacrificing pigs on the altar, forbidding circumcision and Sabbath observance, and requiring worship of Zeus. This sparked the Maccabean revolt, described in 1-2 Maccabees. His persecution epitomized hostility toward covenant faith.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Antiochus's small beginning but great impact warn us that Satan's attacks on faith may start subtly but grow destructive?
2. What does God's special designation of Israel as 'the pleasant land' teach us about His covenant faithfulness despite enemy attacks?
3. In what ways does Antiochus Epiphanes prefigure the future Antichrist, and how should this prepare believers for end-times persecution?

Interlinear Text

וְאַמְתָּם מִמֶּנּוּ וְאַמְתָּם
H4480 And out of one H259 H1992 of them came forth H3318 H7161 And out of one H259

מְאֻמֵּךְ הַמְּתַנְּדֵל וְתַנְּדֵל אֶל בְּבֵבָה וְאֶל
a little great which waxed exceeding H413 H5045 toward the south H413
H4704 H1431 H3499

וְאֶל בְּמִזְרָחָה וְאֶל בְּאֶבְרִיָּה
and toward the east H413 and toward the pleasant H6643
H4217

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 11:16 (Parallel theme): But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

Psalms 48:2 (Parallel theme): Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Ezekiel 20:6 (Parallel theme): In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands:

Ezekiel 20:15 (Parallel theme): Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands;

Daniel 7:8 (Parallel theme): I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.