

## **A Second Persecuting Little Horn Appears #2**

Daniel 8:9-14

March 26, 2023

Greg L. Price

Holy Scripture is divinely inspired and has been providentially preserved pure throughout history (1 Timothy 3:16-17). Our faith in Jesus Christ is based upon the certainty and trustworthiness of biblical revelation. Our faith to save us is in Christ, but that Christ who saves us is revealed in Scripture. Scripture is God's revelation that narrates Christ's miraculous conception, His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Our Christian faith stands or falls upon the certainty of Scripture (Luke 1:4). Take away the certainty of Scripture, and we have no certainty of salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

One of the most significant ways in which Scripture confirms that it is certainly God's infallible revelation to us and all that it reveals is true is by means of historic fulfillment of events and people prophesied hundreds of years earlier. Biblical prophecy is God's pre-telling of historical people and events that are yet to come.

For example, we have been studying Daniel's second vision (in Daniel 8). Only God omniscient and omnipotent could reveal to Daniel in a vision and bring to pass the truth concerning the future glory of the Medo-Persian Empire (at least 12 years before Cyrus took Babylon—the ram with two horns). Only God could foretell (220 years before it happened) that the mighty Persian Empire would be crushed by Greece (the he goat) under Alexander (the notable horn), which would then be divided into four kingdoms after his death (represented by four horns—Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt—250 years before it happened), and finally from one of those kingdoms (Syria—the Seleucid Kingdom) would arise a terrible persecutor of God's people in Israel (Antiochus Epiphanes –375 years later). These fulfilled prophecies confirm the certainty and truth of biblical revelation that our faith is not built upon fiction, but upon fact.

We've already considered the first two main points: (1) The Conquest of Nations by the Beastly Kingdom of Medo-Persia (Daniel 8:1-4) and (2) The Conquest of Medo-Persia by the Beastly Kingdom of Greece (Daniel 8:5-8). The third main point which we consider today is: A Second Little Horn Arises to Persecute God's People (Daniel 8:9-14).

### **III. A Second Little Horn Arises to Persecute God's People (Daniel 8:9-14).**

A. There are two distinct persecuting Little Horns mentioned in Daniel. In Daniel 7 there is a persecuting Little Horn that comes from within the Roman Empire—the Papacy of Rome. In Daniel 8 there is a persecuting Little Horn that comes from within the Grecian Empire—Antiochus Epiphanes. Let us now consider what is said about the persecuting Little Horn found here in Daniel 8 (some 375 years after the vision of Daniel).

B. Though the prophecy concerning Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC) is found here in Daniel 8, the fulfillment in history is found in the "silent years" between the Old and New Testaments (about 400 years). This fulfillment in history of the Little Horn (Daniel 8) has been preserved for us in two historical books: 1 & 2 Maccabees.

1. The Church of Rome claims 1 & 2 Maccabees are canonical Scripture, whereas the Protestant Canon has excluded them because they were not received into the Jewish Canon of Scripture. These books may be helpful historically, but that does not mean they are inspired revelation (many historic works may be helpful, both Christian and non-Christian alike, but that does not make them inspired revelation).

2. The fact that John 10:22 mentions "the feast of dedication" (which is described in

1 Maccabees 4 when the altar and temple were cleansed in 165 BC of all the pollutions brought by Antiochus Epiphanes) does not mean 1 Maccabees is inspired any more than because Paul quotes in Acts 17 from a pagan philosopher, Epimenides, that Epimenides is inspired. As Protestant and Reformed Christians, we receive the same Canon of Scripture from the Hebrew Old Testament that the Jewish Church received.

3. Thus, when I refer to 1 Maccabees or 2 Maccabees for historical confirmation that prophecies concerning the Little Horn in Daniel 8 were realized in the historical figure of Antiochus Epiphanes, please do not take that to mean that I am canonizing those books as infallible Scripture. I am only using those books as credible historical resources (as I have used other credible historical resources throughout in our study of the inspired Book of Daniel).

C. So let us identify from Daniels's vision the prophetic characteristics of the Little Horn and note the fulfillment in the brutal reign of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes).

1. He is called "a little horn" (Daniel 8:9). He began small but grew in great power in all directions. Antiochus was actually a hostage in Rome (188-175 BC) due to his father's (Antiochus III) defeat to the Romans (a condition of the treaty). After his release in 175 BC, Antiochus quickly rose to power and reigned from 175-164 BC. He extended his kingdom south (to Egypt), east (to Babylon, Armenia, and to the Persian Gulf), and to "the pleasant land" (the holy land—particularly Judea).

2. This Little Horn that became great, having taken control of the holy land, brutally attacked and persecuted the faithful among the Jews (Daniel 8:10). The "host of heaven" and "the stars" refer to faithful Jews that worshipped God according to His appointed ordinances and walked in obedience to His holy commandments (Daniel 8:24; 12:3). Casting them down to the ground is a picture of great oppression and persecution against the godly, for which Antiochus Epiphanes was notorious. Stamping upon them is a sign of violent hatred and personal vengeance, for their faithfulness to Jehovah was a personal insult to Antiochus Epiphanes.

a. The war of Antiochus against God's people began with seeking to influence the Jews to tolerate Greek culture and Greek religion, and sadly many of those in Judea did begin to tolerate the Greek gods. But when this method did not bring about the desired results as quickly as Antiochus desired, he issued deadly threats against those who would not conform—conform or die.

b. The threats then turned into violent persecution, torture, and deprivation when faithful Jews would not submit to his goal to establish the pagan religion of the Greeks and eradicate the worship of Jehovah. The godly, elderly, and learned Eleazar (2 Maccabees 6) was forced-fed pork but he spat it out (because it was forbidden under the dietary laws given by God to Moses). Some tried to convince him to only pretend to eat pork, but he would not do so for the sake of young witnesses. He was finally bludgeoned to death with rods for his unwillingness to compromise God's truth.

c. Like Pharaoh of old, Antiochus took out his wrath upon the young male infants. "Women who had their children circumcised were put to death according to the edict with their babies hung round their necks, and the members of their household and those who had performed the circumcision were executed with them" (1 Maccabees 1:60-61). That would be like the government rounding up all of us who have had our beloved children baptized and torturing and slaughtering us and our little ones if we refuse to renounce our baptisms.

3. The Little Horn that became a Great Horn of power exalted himself to be like Jehovah Himself, "prince of the host" (Daniel 8:11a,25; Daniel 9:25; Isaiah 9:6; Revelation 1:5). His royal name was Antiochus IV, but the name he gave himself was *Theos Epiphanēs* (God Manifest) or shortened to Antiochus Epiphanes. It was common for Syrian kings to be worshipped as a god after their death, but Antiochus could not wait until then, and declared himself god while he yet lived.

4. The Little Horn that became a Great Horn of power took away the daily sacrifice in the temple and cast the Temple down so that it was not used for the holy ordinances appointed by God, but was

used for all manner of idolatry and prostitution (Daniel 8:11b). Antiochus desecrated the temple and forbade all sacrifices and worship of Jehovah on pain of death. In the Temple an altar to Zeus was erected, and unclean sacrifices were made at the feet of an idol in the image of the king.

5. A host of the faithful were slaughtered, tortured by the Little Horn because they would not support the this abominable transgression of Antiochus in his desecration of the temple (Daniel 8:12a,13).

6. The Little Horn that became great cast the truth (the Holy Scripture) to the ground by destroying it and burning it wherever it was found and slaughtering all those who held copies of it (Daniel 12b). "Any books of the Law that came to light were torn up and burned with fire. Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practicing the Law, the king's decree sentenced him to death" (1 Maccabees 1:56-57). He "practiced" his extermination of the true religion, and for a while it "prospered"; but as we shall see, for only a little while. God raised up Antiochus to judge the unfaithful Jews and to test the faithful Jews, and then God judged Antiochus himself (as we shall see).

7. Is not the Little Horn of Daniel's vision remarkably confirmed in history to be Antiochus Epiphanes by all of the characteristics given by God to Daniel? But just in case that is not sufficient confirmation, how long was it foretold that this cruel persecution of the godly and the desecration of the temple would last before the cleansing and rededication of the temple (Daniel 8:13-14)?

a. 2,300 days (literally, "evening, morning"). Are these 2,300 figurative days representing 2,300 years (day-year principle), or are they 2,300 literal days? I submit that these are 2,300 literal days. When the angel says 2,300 evening, morning, he is emphasizing that the time period contemplated here specifically consists of a literal evening and a morning (similar to creation week in Genesis 1:5,8,13,19,23,31). This is unlike other references to prophetic days that follow the example of Daniel 9 (using the day-year principle).

b. Does this period of time (2,300 days, or 6 years and 4 months) fit the period of time in which God's people were brutally persecuted and the Temple was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes? In fact, this was the period of time in which Antiochus embarked upon his brutal persecution of the Jews and the desecration of the Temple after his first invasion of Egypt in September of 170 BC until to the rededication of the Temple in December 164 BC (1 Maccabees 4). All of this was prophesied to come in Daniel's vision about 375 years before it happened.

#### D. Application

1. When there are laws enacted that require compromise and toleration of immoral practices (abortion), sexual immorality, and false religions for the sake of unity/peace, they will eventually lead to persecution of the faithful who will not conform. What evil we tolerate will soon rule over us and persecute us (nationally and individually). We will be called troublemakers, haters, dividers, self-righteous hypocrites, separatists because we stand for Christ and His truth (Ahab/Elijah).

2. Persecution, trials, pain, sorrow, and afflictions will either harden us and make us bitter because we are so absorbed with self, or they will soften us and make us tender-hearted because we are so absorbed with Christ. That's the end that I desire by God's grace alone.

3. Jesus said that if the world hated Him, they would also hate us. It is an evidence that God gives to us that we are His and He is ours. If we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). The persecution of Antiochus was a great trial, but an even greater trial was the betrayal of fellow Jews in turning against the faithful. Don't follow the multitude in doing evil. There is no neutrality in following Christ. Be faithful until death, walk that narrow path of truth and righteousness in loving and obeying Jesus. Jesus promises to you a crown of eternal life.

Copyright 2023 Greg L. Price.