

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES

TEXT: DANIEL 8:9-27

INTRODUCTION:

1. We saw two weeks ago that the he goat in Daniel's vision represents the king of Greece (8:5), and the "notable horn between his eyes" is "the first king," that is, Alexander the Great (cf. 8:21).
2. Like Alexander, the he goat comes "from the west on the face of the whole earth" (8:5). Verse 5 states that the he goat "touched not the ground," referring to the tremendous speed which characterized the military conquests of Alexander the Great.
3. Daniel saw the he goat attack the ram (Media-Persia -- cf. 8:20) "in the fury of his power" (8:6). The goat "moved with choler against him," that is, "in great anger" (8:7). He smote the ram, and broke the ram's two horns (8:7).
4. This symbolically pictures the break-up of the Medo-Persian Empire with the result that the ram (Media-Persia) had no power to stand before the he goat (Greece).
5. The military campaign ended with Alexander the Great, the he goat, casting the ram, Media-Persia, to the ground and stamping upon it (8:7). These prophecies were fulfilled dramatically in history.
6. Daniel 8:8 describes how the great horn was broken. The great horn (Alexander the Great) was broken just when the he goat has reached the pinnacle of its strength. Out of this grows four notable horns described as being "toward the four winds of heaven" (8:8; cf. 8:22).
7. This fascinating prophecy predicts the untimely death of Alexander, and the division of his empire into four major sections.
8. Alexander the Great died in a drunken debauch at Babylon, not yet thirty-three years of age. His death left Greece without an effective single leader, and after twenty years the empire was divided into four divisions: (1) Cassander assumed rule over Macedonia and Greece; (2) Lysimachus took control of Thrace, Bithynia, and most of Asia Minor; (3) **Seleucus took Syria and the lands to the east including Babylonia**; (4) Ptolemy established rule over Egypt and possibly Palestine.
9. Daniel's vision then moves on to one of these divisions -- Syria, and its most famous king, Antiochus Epiphanes (8:9). Daniel focuses on Antiochus because he is a picture and type of the coming antichrist.

I. WHO WAS ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES?

1. Antiochus Epiphanes was a Greek king of the Seleucid Empire (the Syrian section of Alexander's empire) from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC. He was a son of King Antiochus III, and he assumed the name Antiochus after he ascended the throne.
2. The name Epiphanes means the "Illustrious One," but people called him *Epimanes*, meaning the "madman."
3. He is referred to as the "little horn" in Daniel 8:9, but he should not be confused with the "little horn" in Daniel 7:8-28.
4. The little horn in Daniel 7 is the antichrist, and the various prophecies predicting the coming antichrist have not yet been fulfilled.
5. The little horn in Daniel 8 is Antiochus Epiphanes, who is a picture and type of the antichrist, and prophecies about Antiochus were fulfilled 165 years before Christ.
6. Antiochus differs in many respects with the "little horn" of Daniel 7 because the "little horn" of 7:8 appears in the context of the fourth kingdom (the revived Roman Empire), while the "little horn" of Daniel 8:9 appears in the context of the third kingdom (Greece).
7. What causes some problems for students of prophecy is the blending of the two men together in various prophecies. This is because the prophecies of Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel 8 have both a historical as well as future fulfillment, in the sense that Daniel is looking beyond Antiochus and predicting his antitype, the antichrist.
8. Let me give another example of this blending. Ezekiel 28:12 is addressed to the king of Tyrus. But Ezekiel goes beyond the king of Tyre to the power behind his throne -- Satan (28:12-19).
9. Hermeneutics is the science and art of Biblical interpretation. By referring to Antiochus as "type" of the coming antichrist, we mean Antiochus Epiphanes foreshadows the antichrist. Antiochus is his picture and type; his ancient counterpart.
10. Because these prophecies point both to the historic Antiochus Epiphanes as well as the future Antichrist, Daniel 8 is referred to as a "double reference prophecy."
11. There is a near fulfillment (Antiochus) and a far fulfillment (the antichrist).
12. There are some questions as to where the prophecies regarding Antiochus end and those pertaining to the Antichrist begin. However, Daniel 8:9 clearly refers to Antiochus, and Daniel 8:25 clearly refers to the antichrist.

II. PARALLELS BETWEEN ANTIOCHUS AND THE ANTICHRIST

1. Both begin as a “little horn” (cf. Daniel 7:8; 8:9). Both Antiochus and the antichrist grow to become a great power from a small beginning.
2. The “little horn” of Daniel 8:9 “waxed exceedingly great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land” (Dan. 8:9, 10).
3. This will be true of the antichrist as well (cf. Dan. 11:41, 42). He will begin as an insignificant political figure in the beginning. In fact, he could be alive right now, waiting to step up onto the world stage.
4. According to Bible prophecy, the antichrist will gain worldwide power by the middle of the tribulation hour and exert control over “all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Rev. 13:7).
5. Indeed, "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).
6. Both of them persecute the saints of God. The cruel and violent persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes are recorded in many history books and encyclopedias, including the Apocryphal I & II Maccabees.
7. Antiochus hated the Jews. He sacrificed a pig on the altar in the Jewish temple, and dedicated the temple to the heathen god Jupiter.
8. It is recorded that he slew over 100,000 Jews.
9. He replaced the Jewish feasts with the drunken revelry of Bacchanalia, forcing the Jews to worship Bacchus, the god of pleasure and wine. The licentious festival of Saturnalia, the worship of Saturn, was also enforced upon the Jews.
10. He forbade the reading of the Holy Scriptures and the tradition of circumcision. Antiochus threw two Jewish mothers headlong with their infants off of the highest wall in Jerusalem, killing them because they had circumcised their children in defiance of his law.
11. He cut out the tongues and other body parts of the Jews, and then roasted them alive on a frying pan, making their family members watch (II Macc. 7:3-5).
12. If Antiochus was this cruel, we tremble when we consider the coming antichrist! Second Thessalonians 2:9 says the antichrist will come "after the working of Satan."
13. Revelation 13:4 says the antichrist (the beast) will get his power from the dragon (Satan).
14. The carnage committed by Antiochus is only a small foretaste of what awaits those who will be persecuted during the coming Great Tribulation (Rev. 6:9-11; 20:4).

15. Antiochus was limited in his power, but the power of the antichrist will stretch all over the world.
16. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the sanctuary of the temple, and the antichrist will desecrate the temple half-way through the seven-year tribulation period (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).
17. Our Lord referred to this in Matthew 24:15, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)."
18. When Antiochus set up the image of Jupiter in the Holy Place in Jerusalem and desecrated the sanctuary and its holy vessels, he was prefiguring "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet."
19. First Thessalonians 2:4 says the antichrist "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called god, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."
20. The book of Revelation describes the "image of the beast" that the false prophet will set up during the tribulation period. People will be forced to worship the image of the beast or be killed (Rev. 13:14, 15).

III. BOTH ANTIOCHUS AND ANTICHRIST ARE BLASPHEMERS

1. Both blaspheme the God of Heaven. Antiochus "magnified himself even to the prince of the host" (Dan. 8:11). His blasphemy prefigures that of the future antichrist: "And, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Dan. 7:8).
2. Revelation 13:1 describes the antichrist as a beast rising from the sea "and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."
3. Revelation 13:6 says, "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."
4. Revelation 17:3 says, "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."
5. I read (sermon by W.A. Criswell) that when Antiochus Epiphanes came to reign, he coined the money for his kingdom, and he wrote on his coins: *Theos Antiochus, Theos Epiphanes*; Antiochus, God manifest.
6. In this Antiochus prefigured the coming antichrist. Second Thessalonians 2:4 says the antichrist will exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

CONCLUSION:

1. In the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, there was a priest living near Jerusalem, named Mattathias, and this priest had five sons: John, and Simon, and Judas, and Eleazar, and Jonathan.
2. One day an emissary from Antiochus Epiphanes came to their town to force the Jews there to bow down before the altar of Jupiter. When a backslidden Jew worshipped Jupiter, the outraged Mattathias killed him as well and as the Greek emissary.
3. This is how the famous Maccabean revolt began, and the revolt is recorded in I & II Maccabees.
4. The Apocrypha is not inspired and does not belong with the 66 books of the Bible, but it does contain much helpful historical information.
5. When Mattathias died, Judas, his third son took over as the leader of the revolution, and in 164 BC Judas Maccabeus, known as "Judas the Hammer," won a great victory over Antiochus Epiphanes and independence for the people of Israel.
6. The first thing the Jews did was to reconsecrate and to rededicate the temple, which had been polluted by Epiphanes.
7. This rededication lasted eight days, and tradition says that when Judas Maccabeus sought for a cruse of oil, he could find just one small cruse—enough to last for only one day. But Judas Maccabeus took the oil, lit the little lamp, and it burned steadily for eight days.
8. And now over 2,000 years later, for eight days the Jewish people celebrate that feast of reconsecration and dedication. Today they call it the Feast of Hanukkah (consecration).
9. On the first day they light a candle, and the second day a second one, until finally, in the eight days there are eight candles burning. It is a sign of victory and deliverance and dedication; the Feast of Lights (for the eight candles that kept burning) and the Feast of Dedication.
10. It is referred to in John 10:22 and 23, "And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch."