

The Little Horn: Antiochus IV Epiphanes? Or, Rome?

There are several reasons why the *little horn* mentioned in Daniel 8 could not be Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

1. A careful look at the “gender” when describing the source of the little horn in the Hebrew shows that the little horn was to arise from one of the four winds or one of the four directions of the compass and **not** from one of the horns. [Note that Hebrew nouns have gender.]
2. Daniel 8:23 indicates that the little horn will arise at the latter end of the Seleucid kingdom. Antiochus IV Epiphanes arose about the middle of the Seleucid kings and not at the end. The Seleucid dynasty ran from 312/311 to 65 B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes reigned from 175 to 164 B.C. Rome arose just at the end of the Greek kingdoms.
3. The little horn was to prosper (Daniel 8:12) and grow exceedingly great. (Daniel 8:9) Antiochus IV Epiphanes did neither of those. In fact, he was referred to by contemporaries as “the madman.”
4. The little horn was to grow exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the “glorious land.” (Daniel 8:9) After a short-lived triumph in the “south” (Egypt), Antiochus IV Epiphanes was totally defeated when the Roman ambassador, C. Popilius Laenas, merely informed him that the Roman Senate wanted him to leave. The Roman ambassador drew a circle around Antiochus with his cane and demanded a decision before he stepped out of it. (See Livy, *History of Rome*, 45.12.) Antiochus Epiphanes did not succeed in the east either. He died under obscure circumstances in his campaign in Mesopotamia. Even in Palestine, referred to as the “glorious land,” (Daniel 8:9, *NKJV**) where he initially seemed to be successful, he ultimately lost all of that land when Palestine became temporarily free under the Maccabees.
5. *Horns* in the symbolism of Daniel always referred to kingdoms and never to individual kings.
6. The period of time during which Antiochus IV Epiphanes was in control of Jerusalem cannot be fitted with 2300 days or 2300 evenings and mornings. The best contemporary account found in 1 Maccabees 1:54-59; 4:52-54 overwhelmingly states very precisely that he succeeded in interrupting the temple services for three years and 10 days (from Chislev 15, 168 B.C. to Chislev 25, 165 B.C.). While 1 Maccabees 1:54 applies the phrase “desolating sacrilege,” taken from Daniel 9:27 in the Greek, to what Antiochus IV Epiphanes did in Jerusalem by erecting an idol in the temple grounds and sacrificing a pig nearby, Jesus in his discourse from the Mount of Olives said that Daniel’s “desolating sacrilege” was still future as of His day. (See Matthew 24:15.) He added, “Let the reader understand.”

Why do we believe the little horn of Daniel 8 is Rome?

1. On the principal that Daniel's visions parallel each other, it is clear that Rome followed Greece in Daniel 2 and 7. Thus, Rome should follow Greece in Daniel 8 as well.
2. As mentioned above, Rome arose in the west—out of one of the four winds or directions.
3. Historically, it is clear that papal Rome grew out of pagan Rome. Thus, the Roman bishop was a successor to the Roman emperor. Therefore, it is appropriate for them both to be represented by a single horn or single kingdom.
4. The Roman Empire did successfully take control of the Middle East at the latter end of the reign of the Hellenistic or Greek kingdoms. (Daniel 8:23)
5. While Antiochus IV Epiphanes lost much of the territory he received from his father, Rome in fulfillment of the prophecy “grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.” (Daniel 8:9, *NKJV**)
6. Pagan Rome emphatically and tragically magnified itself against “the Prince of the host.” (*KJV**) It was under Roman authority that Jesus was crucified.
7. Both pagan Rome and Christian Rome destroyed “mighty men and the people of the saints,” (Daniel 8:24, *RSV**) i.e., many Christians were persecuted by Rome throughout its history.
8. Both pagan Rome and Christian Rome attempted to destroy, replace, or do away with the “continual burnt offering” (*tamid*) and the sanctuary known to Daniel and his predecessors. Not only was Herod's Temple destroyed and torn completely down by the Roman armies, but also in the 130s A.D., the Roman emperor, Hadrian, constructed a pagan temple in Jerusalem.
9. Papal Rome has done its best to replace the *tamid* or “continuous ministry of Christ in the sanctuary of Heaven” (*God Cares*, vol. 1) with a system of human priests and ministries
10. **In 1733, Sir Isaac Newton, the celebrated scientist who first explained the principle of gravity, wrote the following about Daniel 9 and Antiochus IV Epiphanes.**

This last horn is by some taken for Antiochus Epiphanes, but not very judiciously. A horn of a beast is never taken for a single person: it always signifies a new kingdom, and the kingdom of Antiochus was an old one. Antiochus reigned over one of the four horns, and the little horn was a fifth under its proper kings. This horn was at first a little one, and waxed exceeding great, but so did not Antiochus. It is described great above all the former horns, and so was not Antiochus. His kingdom, on the contrary was weak, and tributary to the Romans, and he did not enlarge it. The horn was

a king of fierce countenance, and destroyed wonderfully, and prospered and practiced; i.e. he prospered in his practices against the holy people: but Antiochus was frightened out of Egypt by a mere message of the Romans, and afterwards routed and baffled by the Jews. The horn was mighty by another's power, Antiochus acted by his own. The horn stood up against "the prince of the host of Heaven", the Prince of Princes; and this is the character not of Antiochus but of antichrist. The horn cast down the sanctuary to the ground, and so did not Antiochus; he left it standing. The sanctuary and host were trampled underfoot 2300 days; and in Daniel's prophecy days are put for years; but the profanation of the temple in the reign of Antiochus did not last for so many natural days. These were to last till the time of the end, till the last end of the indignation against the Jews; and this indignation is not yet at an end. They were to last till the sanctuary which had been cast down should be cleansed, and this sanctuary is not yet cleansed. Sir Isaac Newton's *Daniel and the Apocalypse*, eds., Sir William Whitla (London: John Murray, 1922), page 222.—[as quoted in *God Cares*, vol. 1, 185-186].

For further information see: 1) *SDA Bible Commentary* on Daniel 8; 2) *Bible Amplifier Series: Daniel 7-12*; and 3) C. Mervyn Maxwell. *God Cares*, vol. 1, 152-155.

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