

great future enemy of God's people.¹ Very few recent commentators accept Jerome's view, as far as verses 21-35 are concerned. By tracing the course of the Seleucid kingdom with so much detail, particularly of the reign of Antiochus' father, it would seem that a line has been drawn directly to Antiochus Epiphanes, to prepare believers for the great crisis that would be produced by this "horn" (cf. p. 139ff) that would stand up in one of the parts of the Grecian kingdom.

One of the important purposes of the book of Daniel was to prepare God's people for this terrible ordeal. This was not the only purpose of the book, as is claimed by those who hold the Maccabean viewpoint, but it was a vital and definite purpose. Although Antiochus was not of great importance in world history, he was of tremendous importance in the history of God's people.

After describing so many events of comparatively little importance to the people of God, and thus leading the history right up to the time of the great crisis that was so vividly described in chapter 8, it would seem strange suddenly to jump forward more than two thousand years without first discussing this terrible crisis.

In chapter 8 much detail about this important crisis had already been presented. It showed the background of Antiochus Epiphanes in the latter part of the third or Grecian kingdom, the way he obtained his throne, his exaltation of himself, his great opposition to God's people, his attempts to corrupt the people by flattery and his subsequent use of brutal and cruel persecution. It predicted that he would stop the regular ceremonies and terribly desecrate the temple. It said that this desecration would come to an end, and that Antiochus would be "destroyed, but not by human power" (8:25). Some of these facts are now touched upon rather briefly and much material is added. His attacks on foreign nations, which were briefly summarized in 8:9, are described in more detail, particularly those against Egypt. Historical scholars agree that verses 21-35 give a remarkably accurate picture of the outstanding features of the crisis that centered around Antiochus