

2 Maccabees 9.1-9: the arrogance and death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes

9:1 About that time, as it happened, Antiochus had retreated in disorder from the region of Persia. 9:2 For he had entered the city called Persepolis and attempted to rob the temples and control the city. Therefore the people rushed to the rescue with arms, and Antiochus and his men were defeated, with the result that Antiochus was put to flight by the inhabitants and beat a shameful retreat. 9:3 While he was in Ecbatana, news came to him of what had happened to Nicanor and the forces of Timothy. 9:4 **Transported with rage**, he conceived the idea of turning upon the Jews the injury done by those who had put him to flight; so he ordered his charioteer to drive without stopping until he completed the journey. But the judgment of heaven rode with him! For in his arrogance he said, "When I get there I will make Jerusalem a cemetery of Jews." 9:5 **But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him an incurable and unseen blow.** As soon as he ceased speaking **he was seized with a pain in his bowels for which there was no relief and with sharp internal tortures** -- 9:6 and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions. 9:7 Yet he did not in any way stop his insolence, **but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Jews**, and giving orders to hasten the journey. And so it came about that he fell out of his chariot as it was rushing along, and the fall was so hard as to torture every limb of his body. 9:8 **Thus he who had just been thinking that he could command the waves of the sea, in his superhuman arrogance, and imagining that he could weigh the high mountains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter, making the power of God manifest to all.** 9:9 **And so the ungodly man's body swarmed with worms**, and while he was still living in anguish and pain, his flesh rotted away, and because of his stench the whole army felt revulsion at his decay.