

1. Last week I introduced Daniel chapter eight and exegeted verse one. When time ran out I was about to begin the analysis of Dan 8:2.

2. First I want to give you an expanded translation of verse one.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 8:1 In the third year of Prince Belshazzar's reign over Babylon, I, Daniel, had another vision. The year was c. 550 B.C.

3. Now let's see what we can learn from Dan 8:2.

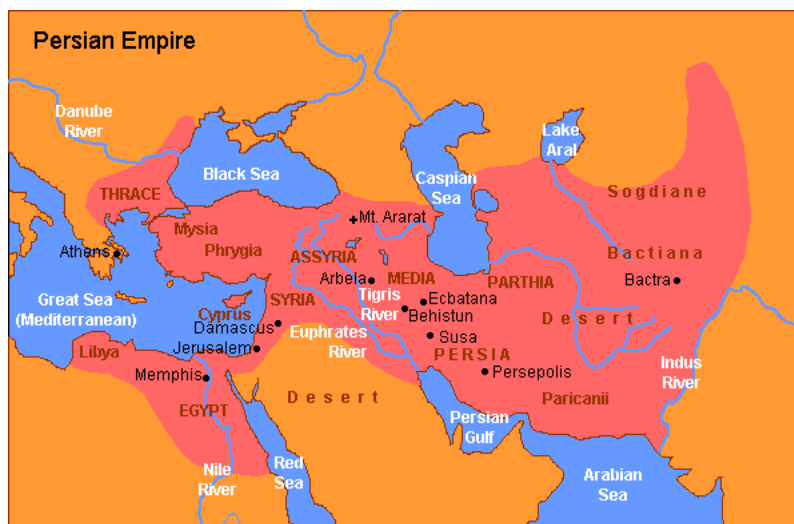
KJV

Dan 8:2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

NIV

Dan 8:2 In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal.

1. There have been numerous expositors who have concluded Daniel was transported to Persia where he saw the Ulai.



1.1 It is my view Daniel was not so transported physically; it was instead by vision that Daniel saw ancient Susa (called Shushan in the King James Version).

2. Ancient Shushan was located about 150 miles north of the present head of the Persian Gulf. It was situated midway between Ecbatana and Persepolis; it later became one of the main residences of the Persian kings.

3. According to Josephus, Daniel was in Elam. Keil notes that Bertho and Rosenmuller interpret Daniel as stating that he is actually in Susa. They use their position to support a Daniel II or pseudo Daniel.

4. Walvoord writes: "Most expositors, both liberal and conservative, understand Daniel chapter eight teaches that the prophet was actually in Babylon and in vision only was he transported to Elam. The overwhelming weight of scholarship on this point teach that Daniel was there only in vision ... which is supported by the Syriac version and the Vulgate, and upheld by John Calvin and many contemporary writers."

5. This is not unique to Daniel; Ezekiel also was so transported (Eze 8:3; 40:1).

Eze 8:3 He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood.

Eze 40:1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the fall of the city-- on that very day the hand of the LORD was upon me and he took me there.

Eze 40:2 In visions of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, on whose south side were some buildings that looked like a city.

6. It is questionable whether Babylon controlled Susa at this time; it is in fact doubtful. Whatever the case there is no doubt Daniel is projected forward into the prophetic future of the Persian and Grecian Empires.

7. The probability is that Babylon did not control this city or area at this time, and this perhaps accounts for Daniel's astonishment as he contemplated the vision.

8. The expression Shushan palace reoccurs in historical sections of the Old Testament. (Neh 1:1; Est 1:2, 5; Est 2:3 and 5)

Neh 1:1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev (Nov. or Dec.) in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa,

Est 1:2 At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa,

Est 1:5 When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa.

Est 2:3 Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm to bring all these beautiful girls into the harem at the citadel of Susa. Let them be placed under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let beauty treatments be given to them.

Est 2:5 Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish,

9. By the palace is probably meant the king's residence, which was more in the form of a castle or fortress than merely a luxurious building.

10. Shushan the palace nevertheless was destined in the Persian Empire to become the capital rather than Babylon.

11. Shushan's future was unknown at the time of this vision, although Susa had served as the capital of the Elamites of antiquity; and conservative scholars find a genuine prophetic prediction in this reference to Susa. (For Elam see the map of The Assyrian Empire)



12. Daniel finds it necessary to define in particular the location of the city, something a second-century pseudo-Daniel would not have had to do.

Dan 8:2 In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal.

13. Some critics have attempted to prove that Daniel was in error because Elam was probably not a province of Babylon at that time; however Daniel does not literally say that it was.

14. Daniel also mentions that it was by the river of Ulai. In regard to this stream near ancient Shushan John Walvoord has written, "The Ulai can best be identified with an artificial canal which connected the rivers Choastes and Coprates and ran close by Susa."

15. Daniel finds himself projected in vision to a town little known at that time and unsuspected for future grandeur, but yet destined to be the important capital of Persia, the home of Esther, and the city from which Nehemiah came to Jerusalem.

16. Beginning in 1884, the site of ancient Susa, then a large mound, was explored divulging many archeological treasures. The code of Hammurabi was found there in 1901.

17. The same archeology tells us that the famous palace referred to by Daniel, Esther and Nehemiah was begun by Darius and enlarged by later kings.

17.1 Remains of its magnificence can still be seen near the modern village of Shushan.

18. This unusual setting described in detail by Daniel in the opening verses of the eighth chapter now becomes the stage on which a great drama is symbolically portrayed.

19. The drama will describe the conquests of the second and third empires earlier prophesied first in chapter two and then again in chapter seven.

20. Before we move to verses three and four, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 8:2:

Expanded Translation

Dan 8:2 In my vision I, Daniel saw myself being transported both in space and time to a large palace in the city of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I could see myself standing beside the Ulai Canal.

21. Now let's see what we can learn from Dan 8:3-4.

KJV

Dan 8:3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

Dan 8:4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

NIV

Dan 8:3 I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later.

Dan 8:4 I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

Principles:

1. Daniel in his vision sees a ram with two horns:

- one horn is longer than the other and the higher
- the longer horn appeared later than the shorter horn.

1.1 As Daniel watches, he sees the ram pushing westward, northward and southward; but no mention is made of it pushing toward the east.

1.2 No other beast is found to stand before the ram nor was anyone, whether man or beast, able to be delivered from its power. As Daniel put it, "the ram does according to his will and becomes great."

2. The interpretation is provided in Daniel 8:20. The ram is Medo Persia, with the two horns representing Media and Persia respectively.

2.1 The fact that the ram represents both the Median and Persian Empires in their combined states rather than as separate empires is another important proof that the skeptics wrong.

Dan 8:20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.

3. Several critics have attempted to prove that Daniel erroneously taught two empires, first a Median and then a Persian. This is contradicted by history; these critics use this assertion in a feeble attempt to prove Daniel in error.

4. The skeptics, however, attribute to Daniel what he does not teach; the problem is their own scholarship.

4.1 As Young in an early commentary on Daniel put it, "Neither here nor elsewhere does Daniel conceive of an independently existing Median empire."

5. Historically, it was the combination of the Medes and the Persians which proved inexorable for almost two hundred years; and then came Alexander the Great.

6. The portrayal of the two horns representing the two major aspects of the Medo Persian Empire is an apt description of this most formidable "empire."

Dan 8:3 I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later.

6.1 The Persians, said to come up last and represented by the higher horn, were also the more prominent and powerful of the two.

6.2 The directions which no doubt represent the movement of the Medo Persians as they moved to acquire their hegemony. The major expansions of Persia were as Daniel predicted to the west, north and south.

Dan 8:4 I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

6.3 It is the accuracy of this portrayal, rather than any alleged inaccuracy, which is embarrassing to the critic who in reality does not want to accept a sixth-century Daniel because they cannot accept "real prophecy."

6.3.1 Such grand prophecy is thought to be beyond the capabilities of a prophet; but what of the message and the visit by the angel one might ask?

6.3.2 Daniel is predicting in about 550 B.C. which will actually take place several years later in about c. 330 B.C.

6.4 The critics just could not handle this phenomenal prophecy.

7. In regard to the use of a ram to represent that great empire, Keil observes, "In the Bundehesch the guardian spirit of the Persian kingdom appears under the form of a ram with clean feet and sharp-pointed horns and ... the Persian king, when he stood at the head of his army, bore instead of the diadem, the head of a ram." Keil goes on to write "The references to beasts represent kingdoms and nations."

8. Not only are the ram and the goat mentioned in the Old Testament as symbols of power, but Cumont in one of his ancient histories has noted "different lands were assigned to the signs of the Zodiac according to astronomical geography."

9. John Walvoord writes:

"In this view Persia is thought of as under the zodiacal sign of Aries, a ram, and Greece as sharing with Syria, the principal territory of the Seleucid monarchy ... the zodiacal sign of Capricorn, the "goat."

10. Taken as a whole, as Driver states,

"The verse describes the irresistible advances of the Persian armies, especially in the direction of Palestine, Asia Minor, and Egypt, with particular allusion to the conquests of Cyrus Cambyses."

11. Before we look at THE HE GOAT FROM THE WEST let me give you an expanded translation of Dan 8:3-4.

Expanded Translation

Dan 8:3 I, Daniel, looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the Ulai; the horns of the ram were long but one of the horns was much longer than the other however somehow I knew the longer horn grew up out of the ram's head after the shorter horn.

Dan 8:4 I watched as the ram charged first toward the west then the north and finally to the south. Strangely the animal did not charge to the east. The ram was extremely powerful and dominate; there was nothing that could stand before him, all that got in his way succumbed to his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

End Lesson Taught 5-26-2002