

1. From chapter 8:1 to the end of the book - the prophecy, even though it concerns the Gentiles - is occupied with human history as it relates to Israel.
2. Daniel's first vision in chapter 7 is a broad summary of the times of the Gentiles. It emphasizes the events up through the second coming of Christ to the earth.
3. Daniel's second vision in chapter 8 - two years after the vision of chapter 7 - concerns the empires of Medo-Persia and Greece as they relate to Israel.
4. Daniel is projected forward into the prophetic future of the Persian and Grecian Empires. (8:1-2)
5. The phrase "in the palace at Shushan" or "in the citadel of Susa" may mean either that Daniel saw himself there (in the vision) or that he was present physically in that city when he received the vision.
6. Shushan was located about 220 miles east of Babylon and 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf.
7. At the time of Daniel's vision it was the capital of Elam and later became one of the Medo-Persian royal cities. (Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1; Esther 1:2)
8. Shushan was used as a winter residence by the Persian kings and was made the administrative capital of the empire.
9. Elam, later called Susiana, was northeast of the Lower Tigris area in what is now Iran.
10. In verse 3-4 Daniel sees a ram with two horns which are unequal - one higher than the other and the higher one growing out last.
11. The two horns denotes the two divisions of the empire, Media and Persia, and signifies that one part of this empire would begin with less strength and become more powerful than the other.
12. Medo-Persian history confirms this account. Before Cyrus came to power, Media already was a major force. (8:20)
13. Cyrus succeeded in gaining control of powerful Media to the north (550 B.C.) and made Persia the more important of the two. With these united, he established the vast Medo-Persian Empire.
14. The ram seemed invincible as it charged to the west, the north, and the south. Medo-Persia made most of its conquests in these directions.

Note: To the west they subdued Babylonia, Syria, Asia Minor, and made raids upon Greece; to the north—Armenia, Scythia, and the Caspian Sea region; to the south—Egypt and Ethiopia.
15. The phrase "none could stand against" the ram - means that no country could resist Medo-Persian power.

16. Medo-Persia did as it “pleased” and “became great” or “magnified himself.”
17. The text means that the Medo-Persian Empire would become large and powerful, which did in fact occur. More territory was controlled by this empire than by any other until that time.
18. Then Daniel sees a male goat charging toward the ram from the west. (8:5-7)
19. In verse 21 of chapter 8 - Daniel identifies the goat.
20. The rest of the vision is not explained in the text but is clear from history. Coming “from the west” points to the position of Greece, which was to the west of Medo-Persia (and Palestine).
21. The phrase “from/crossing the whole earth” means that Alexander the Great conquered the world of his day, and the goat speeding across the globe “without touching the ground” portrays the swiftness of Alexander’s conquests.
22. Alexander was one of the great military strategists of history. He was born in 356 B.C. - the son of a great conqueror in his own right, Philip of Macedon.

Note: Philip had united Greece with Macedonia and was planning to attack Persia when he was murdered. Alexander, educated under the famed Aristotle, was only twenty when he succeeded his father as king. A year and a half later he launched his attack against the Persians. In that same year Alexander won the Battle of Granicus in Asia Minor, which brought an end to the dominance of the Medo-Persian Empire. With his subsequent victories at Issus (333 B.C.) and Arbela (331 B.C.) the conquest of Medo-Persia was complete. Incredibly within only three years Alexander had conquered the entire Near East.
23. At the pinnacle of Alexander’s career, having conquered much of the known world, the great conqueror died. On returning to Babylon from the east, he was taken with a severe fever.
24. Alexander spread the Greek language and culture all over the world, an act that prepared the world for the gospel by giving it a common language - “Koine Greek” - the language of the New Testament.
25. The point of reference in verse 8-10 is Syria, the south is Egypt, and the east is Armenia (Ancient Medo-Persia) - the “pleasant land/Beautiful land” is Palestine or Canaan - possibly Jerusalem.
26. This is confirmed in history - under Antiochus Epiphanes - the 8th king in the Syrian Dynasty.
27. Notice the words “host” and “stars” in verse 10. Antiochus Epiphanes would severely persecute the Jewish saints in Palestine. He put a stop to their religious practices. (Genesis 15:5, 22:17)