

Daniel 8:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

Analysis

The phrase "I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai" describes a divine voice—the Hebrew suggests God Himself or a high-ranking angel speaking with authority. The location "between the banks" may indicate the voice came from heaven, between earth and sky. This voice commands Gabriel: "make this man to understand the vision." The urgency demonstrates God's commitment to revealing His purposes—He doesn't give visions to confuse but to instruct His people.

Gabriel's commissioning by divine voice parallels New Testament scenes where Father's voice directs Son (Matthew 3:17, 17:5) and Son commissions disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). God's revelation is always purposeful—He speaks to be understood, provides interpreters, and ensures His message reaches intended recipients. The command "make this man understand" shows God's gracious condescension; He could leave us in ignorance but chooses to reveal His plans.

This points to Christ as ultimate Prophet who makes God known. As Gabriel revealed divine purposes to Daniel, Christ reveals the Father to us (John 1:18). The Great Commission extends this—believers empowered by the Spirit must help others understand God's revelation. Understanding isn't automatic but requires divine enablement and faithful teaching, fulfilling the pattern established here.

Historical Context

Angelophany (angelic appearance) was relatively common in Old Testament—angels appeared to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, and others. These appearances often preceded major redemptive events. Gabriel's appearance to Daniel anticipates explaining prophecies about successive empires leading to Messiah's kingdom. The next Gabriel appearance in Scripture announces Christ's incarnation (Luke 1:26), creating an interpretive key: Daniel's prophecies find fulfillment in Jesus. Understanding this connection helps us read Daniel Christocentrically.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does God's command that Daniel must understand teach us about His desire to reveal rather than conceal His purposes?
2. How does Gabriel's role as interpreter model the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination in helping us understand Scripture?
3. In what ways does the chain of revelation—God to Gabriel to Daniel to us—demonstrate God's commitment to communicating His plans?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּקְרָא	אֹלַי	בֵּין	אֶדְם	קוֹל	וַאֲשַׁמְעַ
which called	between the banks of Ulai	a man's	voice	And I heard	
H7121	H195	H996	H120	H6963	H8085
הַמַּרְאָה:	אֶת	לַהֲלֹ	הָבִי	גַּבְרִיאֵל	וַיֹּאמֶר
the vision	make this	man to understand	Gabriel	and said	
H4758	H853	H1975	H995	H1403	H559

Additional Cross-References

Luke 1:26 (Parallel theme): And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

Luke 1:19 (Parallel theme): And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

Daniel 8:2 (Parallel theme): 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.

Revelation 22:16 (Parallel theme): I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Hebrews 1:14 (Parallel theme): Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?