

Daniel 8:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Daniel's phrase "I saw in a vision" (Hebrew: *va'ereh bamarehv*, וָאֶרְאֶה בַּמַּרְאֶה) emphasizes the visionary nature of this revelation—not a literal journey but a prophetic experience where God transported Daniel's consciousness to witness future events. The location "Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam" is highly significant: Shushan (Susa) would later become the Persian capital where these prophesied events would unfold.

The river Ulai (Hebrew: *Ulai*, אֱלַי), an actual river near Susa, grounds the vision in geographic reality. God often uses specific locations in prophetic visions to anchor symbolic content in historical actuality. Daniel standing by the river may symbolize the flow of history's stream—kingdoms rising and falling according to divine decree. The repetition "I saw in a vision" stresses the supernatural character of this experience.

Providentially, Daniel receives this vision at the future Persian capital before Persia even conquers Babylon. This demonstrates God's comprehensive knowledge of all events—He reveals details about places not yet prominent in the political landscape. The vision's geographic specificity would later validate its divine origin when these exact locations became historically significant.

Historical Context

Shushan (modern Shush, Iran) was located in Elam, east of Babylon. Though ancient—it appears in earliest Mesopotamian records—Shushan gained prominence when Cyrus and later Darius made it a major Persian administrative center. The winter palace built there became famous; Nehemiah served there (Nehemiah 1:1), and Esther's story unfolded there.

The Ulai River (possibly the Karun River or Eulaeus) flowed near Susa. Archaeological excavations have confirmed Susa's significance in the Persian period, including palace complexes matching biblical descriptions. Daniel's vision anticipating this location's future importance demonstrates supernatural foresight—human wisdom couldn't predict Susa's rise to imperial prominence.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why does God anchor prophetic visions in specific geographic locations rather than keeping them entirely symbolic?
2. How does Daniel's vision occurring at Susa before it became politically significant validate the vision's divine origin?
3. What does God's comprehensive knowledge of future geographic and political developments teach us about His sovereignty?

Interlinear Text

וַאֲרָאָה	בָּחַז וִן	וַיְהִי	וַאֲרָאָה	וַאֲנִי	בְּשׁוּשַׁן
And I saw	in a vision	H1961	And I saw	H589	that I was at Shushan
H7200	H2377		H7200		H7800
הַבַּיִת הַ	אֲשֶׁר רַ	בְּעֵילָם	הַמְּדִינָה הַ	וַאֲרָאָה	בָּחַז וִן
in the palace	H834	of Elam	which is in the province	And I saw	in a vision
H1002		H5867	H4082	H7200	H2377
וַאֲנִי י	הָיָה יְהִי	עַל	אוֹיֵב ל	אוֹלַי:	
H589	H1961	H5921	and I was by the river	of Ulai	
			H180	H195	

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 1:1 (Parallel theme): The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

Esther 1:2 (Parallel theme): That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,

Jeremiah 25:25 (Parallel theme): And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,

Genesis 10:22 (Parallel theme): The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

Genesis 14:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

Ezekiel 32:24 (Parallel theme): There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit.

Esther 2:8 (Parallel theme): So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

Isaiah 21:2 (Parallel theme): A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

Isaiah 11:11 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Numbers 12:6 (Parallel theme): And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.