

# Daniel 8:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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The ram "pushing westward, and northward, and southward" describes Medo-Persian military expansion with remarkable precision. History confirms Persia conquered westward (Lydia, Ionia, Greece), northward (Armenia, Scythian territories), and southward (Egypt, Ethiopia)—exactly as predicted. Notably absent is eastward expansion, accurately reflecting that Persia's eastern territories were already controlled before expansion began.

The phrase "no beasts might stand before him" uses animal imagery to depict military invincibility. For nearly two centuries, Medo-Persia seemed unstoppable, building history's largest empire to that point. "Neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand" emphasizes comprehensive conquest—captured nations couldn't be rescued by allies. "He did according to his will" describes the absolute sovereignty Medo-Persian kings exercised.

Yet this imperial greatness contains seeds of judgment. Earthly kingdoms that "do according to their will" inevitably collide with God's will. The same sovereignty language used of Nebuchadnezzar (4:35) applies here—but both empires fall when they forget that only God truly "doeth according to his will." This warns against pride in human achievement and points to Christ's kingdom, which alone endures forever.

## Historical Context

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Medo-Persian expansion under Cyrus (559-530 BC), Cambyses (530-522 BC), Darius I (522-486 BC), and Xerxes (486-465 BC) conquered approximately 50 modern nations. Cyrus took Babylon in 539 BC, Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 BC, Darius extended territory into Europe, and Xerxes invaded Greece. At its height (c. 480 BC), the empire controlled 44% of the world's population—about 50 million people.

Ancient historians including Herodotus documented Persian military campaigns matching verse 4's description. The Royal Road spanning 1,600 miles enabled rapid troop movement. Satraps (provincial governors) administered 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia (Esther 1:1). This historically unprecedented empire fulfilled prophecy with startling accuracy, validating Daniel's divine inspiration.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does Medo-Persia's temporary invincibility teach us about the limits of all earthly power?
2. How does the fulfilled prophecy of specific expansion directions demonstrate God's sovereignty over political history?
3. In what ways does Medo-Persian pride (doing according to their will) parallel modern cultural confidence in human autonomy?

## Interlinear Text

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אָתָּה מִנְגָּמָּה מִמֶּה ? מִמֶּה אָתָּה בְּאַתְּתִּי  
I saw the ram pushing westward and northward and southward  
H7200 H853 H352 H5055 H3220 H6828 H5045

וְכֹל חַיּוֹת לֹא יִעַמְּדֵן בְּפָנָי  
so that no beasts might stand before me  
H3605 H2416 H3808 H5975 H6440 H369

מִאָתָּה מִןְחָדָה וְאֵשׁ הַמְּשֻׁלָּח  
him neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand but he did  
H5337 H3027 H6213

וְהַגְּדִילָה כְּרָצֵן וְ  
according to his will and became great  
H7522 H1431

## Additional Cross-References

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**Daniel 11:16** (Parallel theme): But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

**Daniel 11:36** (Parallel theme): And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

**Daniel 8:7** (Parallel theme): And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.