

The omission of any reference to the east was not caused by an erroneous idea that the Persians would make no conquests in the east but by the fact that what was being symbolically predicted was the replacement of the Babylonian empire by the Persian empire, which occurred when Cyrus turned south and conquered Babylon. His later conquests were not involved in the purpose of that part of the vision. Here a number of commentaries, by assuming a greater completeness in Daniel's vision than was intended, have made statements that contradict the known facts of history.

6. Recognition of the Fact of Progressive Revelation

As every educator realizes, it is usually difficult for the human mind to become accustomed to a new idea. A striking illustration is found in the New Testament. The gospels state that on several occasions Jesus predicted His coming death and resurrection. Yet the idea seemed so strange to the disciples that His words were quickly forgotten, and it was only after the events had occurred that they realized that He had predicted them.

When God reveals His great truths He sometimes begins by giving a hint about a matter. Later He might give another hint or reveal additional features. Still later He would give a fuller discussion. Eventually He might present the matter still more completely, adding details that had previously been merely suggested. This principle of progressive revelation is vital to understanding the Bible. Through the ages God gradually led His people into the acceptance and understanding of truths that were previously unknown to them.

The book of Daniel has many illustrations of this important principle. It contains a number of revelations given over a period of years, often overlapping, and frequently adding new aspects of ideas previously suggested.

In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign God enabled Daniel to interpret a dream that had greatly puzzled this King. He told the king that the dream presented four