

The Second Beast of Daniel: A Bear with a Chest and Arms of Silver Daniel 2:32b, 2:39a, 7:5 and 8:1-4, 20

DIG: In what three ways is Medo-Persia pictured here? Who were the four great beasts out of the sea? What made this bear different from other bears? Why was it raised up on one of its sides? What did the three ribs in its mouth represent? What did the ram represent? Why was one of its horns longer than the other? How were the three ways it charged similar to the three ribs in the mouth of the bear?

The chest and arms of silver represented the second Gentile kingdom, which was **the Medo-Persian Empire** (2:32b). As we go down the statue, there is a *decrease* in the value of the metals, gold, being the most valuable, **silver**, being less valuable than gold, bronze, being less valuable than **silver**, and iron being the least valuable. Thus, they lacked the inner unity of the Babylon Empire and never blended into one people. So there was an *increase* in the hardness and strength of the metals. **Silver** is stronger than gold, and so on. This increase in hardness was reflected in the increased strength of each empire. Therefore, **the Medo-Persians** were militarily stronger than the Babylonians. They were the second of four Gentile empires to dominate Jerusalem.

When **Daniel** interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he said to him: **After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours (Daniel 2:39a)**. Many years later, **ADONAI** gave **Daniel** more details about that kingdom in his own vision. He said: **And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear, and like the chest and arms of silver, it represented the Medo-Persian Empire**. It wasn't a bear, but its primary features looked like a bear. It was less majestic than the lion. However, it is frequently associated with lions in Scripture (1 Samuel 17:34-36; 2 Samuel 17:8; Proverbs 28:15; Hosea 13:8). **Bears** are bulky and weighty and **Medo-Persia** conquered by sheer force of numbers. This empire started with the union of **the Medes and the Persians**; however, later **the Persians** became the much more dominant of the two nations. Hence, **it was raised up on one of its sides. And it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth**. To solidify its empire, **Medo-Persians** had to conquer **three** other kingdoms, Lydia, Babylonia and Egypt. But even beyond these **three** kingdoms, God had given **them** the power to make even more conquests outside **their** borders. **It was told, "Get up and eat your fill of flesh" (Daniel 7:5)!**

In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, or two years after his first vision about the four beasts, Daniel had another vision. It was twelve years before the end of the Babylonian Empire. At this time Daniel was about 69 years old. In his vision he was transported 230 miles away from Babylon to the king's palace at Susa, beside the Ulai Canal (Daniel 8:1-2), or modern day Iran. At that time Susa was a little known town. But it was destined to become the capitol of the Persian Empire (Nehemiah 1:1; Esther 1:2). In fact, the palace in his vision hadn't even been built yet!

There he saw a ram with two horns, which represented the Medo-Persian Empire (Daniel 8:20). The guardian spirit of the Persian Kingdom was pictured as a ram. Whenever a Persian king stood before his army, instead of wearing a crown, he wore a ram's horn. See my commentary on Genesis Me - Aries (The Ram). Daniel was standing beside the canal, and the ram that he saw had horns that were long because both the Medes and the Persians were powerful kingdoms. But one of the horns was longer than the other because the Persians were more powerful than the Medes. But the higher one grew up later. Before Cyrus the Persian came to power, Media was already a major kingdom. In fact, a century earlier in the year 612 BC, it was Media that helped Babylon to conquer the Assyrian Empire.

So the vision of the ram is a further development of the chest and arms of silver in the statue in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:32), and the bear raised up on one of its sides, with three ribs in its mouth (Daniel 7:5). Each vision gave more detail. Like the three ribs in its mouth, the ram charged in three different directions. It charged toward the west because in history Medo-Persia charged west conquering Babylon, Syria and Asia Minor. It charged as far north as the Caspian Sea because it conquered Scythia and Armenia. And the ram also charged south taking Egypt and Ethiopia. It doesn't mention going east because Medo-Persia made no significant conquests eastward. As I mentioned above, God had given them the power to make even more conquests outside their borders. Therefore, no animal or no other kingdom could stand against the ram, or Medo-Persia, and none could rescue themselves from their power. They did as they pleased, and became a great empire (8:3-4).

However, the Medo-Persian Empire was inferior to the Babylonian Empire in influence and achievement. The roots of the Babylonian Empire began soon after The Flood (Genesis 10-11); but the Medo-Persian Empire does not go that far back. They lacked the inner unity of Babylon. Although the Medes and the Persians were united politically, they never blended into one people. They were an inferior type of government. God gives each Gentile Empire a certain amount of time, then He terminates their kingdom and gives it to another. So as the Medo-Persian Empire faded away, God raised up the Greek Empire.