

The Third Beast of Daniel: A Leopard with Thighs of Bronze

Daniel 2:32c, 2:39b, 7:6, 8:5-8, 21-22, and 11:3-35

DIG: What three ways is Greece pictured here? What made this leopard different from other leopards? Why did it have four wings and four heads? What did the goat represent? Why did it have one prominent horn? Why didn't the goat's feet touch the ground? Why did the goat attack the ram with great rage? Why was the large horn broken off? What grew in its place? Would they have the same power?

The belly of bronze represented Alexander the Great, and the thighs represented his kingdom, Greece in the east and Macedonia in the west. Nebuchadnezzar's image of the statue was top heavy and *decreased*, or got weaker, as you went down because of the density of the metals. Gold has a specific gravity of 19, silver 11, bronze 8.5, and iron 7.8. But the strength of the metals *increased*, or got stronger in each successive empire. Bronze is stronger than silver and the Greek Empire was stronger than the Medo-Persian Empire. So the belly and thighs of bronze represented the third Gentile kingdom, which was the Greek Empire (2:32c). Pictured as two thighs, it occupied territory in both the east and the west. It was the third of four Gentile empires to dominate Jerusalem.

Nearly two hundred years before Alexander was born, Daniel received this prophecy that predicted the Greek Empire would not be divided among Alexander's children, but between four others. When Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream he saw a third kingdom, one of bronze, which would rule over the whole earth (Daniel 2:39b). Then later, when he received his own vision he gave more detail, he said: After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. That third beast, like the belly and thighs of bronze, represented the Greek Empire. The leopard is less majestic than the lion and less grand than the bear, but it is swifter and faster than both. With leopard-like swiftness Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persian Empire and greatly extended Greek culture and influence. The leopard was also used as a motif for the Greek Empire (Jeremiah 5:6; Hosea 13:7). What made this leopard-like creature different from the rest was that it had four wings like those of a bird on its back. Alexander's Empire had four divisions like the four wings: the first wing was Thrace, the second wing was Greece, the third wing was Egypt, and the fourth wing was Mesopotamia. This beast also had four heads, or rulers (Daniel 7:6a). And it was given authority to rule (Daniel 7:6b). This kingdom was larger than the previous two.

In Daniel's same vision where he was transported to the palace at Susa, beside the Ulai Canal (Daniel 8:1-2), suddenly he saw a goat, literally, *the buck of the goats*, with a prominent horn, literally *the horn of vision*, between his eyes. This is the zodiac sign for Greece, which is the Capricorn. See my commentary on [Genesis Mb - Capricorn \(The Goat\)](#). This shaggy goat was the first king of Greece, Alexander the Great, and when he conquered the Medes and the Persians, he came from the west. This goat was so fast that he crossed the earth without touching the ground, and like a leopard, Alexander was known of the speed in which his armies moved (Daniel 8:5). This empire was also given authority to rule over all the earth, just as God gave to King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 7:6b). But like Babylon, it did not take all that it was allowed.

Alexander was born in 356 BC, his father was king Phillip of Macedon. Alexander had a famous tutor, Aristotle, who taught him Greek philosophy. But although Alexander was Macedonian and not Greek, he became fascinated with the Greek culture. As a result, he had a desire to spread the Greek philosophy, culture and language throughout the whole world. Phillip, united the two kingdoms of Greece and Macedonia and was preparing to conquer Persia when he was murdered. So Alexander became king in 336 BC when he was only 20 years old, and two years later began to move against Persia.

The vision of the goat with the prominent horn is a further development of the belly and thighs of bronze in the statue in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:32), and the leopard with four wings on its back and four heads (Daniel 7:6). Each vision gave more specific detail. So here, the four wings and four heads of the leopard are given more detail with the four horns of the goat.

In his vision, Daniel saw the destruction of the Medo-Persian Empire by Alexander the Great. The prophet described it in stages. When Alexander began he had only 35,000 troops. The goat charged the two horned ram, that he had seen standing beside the canal, with great rage. With these Macedonian and Greek troops he crossed the Hellespont, and attacked them with great rage because of previous Persian invasions against the Greeks. This was especially true of the Persian king who ruled between 486 BC to 465 BC. The Greeks called him Xerxes, but the Jews called him Ahasuerus (see my commentary on [Esther](#)). He invaded Greece twice without success, but the Greeks remembered his invasions more than a century later. The Persian king at the time of Alexander's invasion was Darius III, who ruled from 336 to 331. Alexander won the first battle at the Granicus River in May 334 BC. As a result, he freed all the Greek cities of Asia Minor from Persian control.

The second battle was at village of Issus, in November 334 BC. **The goat attacked the ram furiously, striking him and shattering his two horns.** The invading troops led by the young Alexander of Macedonia, outnumbered more than 2 to 1, defeated the army personally led by Darius III of Persia. **The ram was powerless to stand against him.** Darius fled the battlefield with Alexander in hot pursuit.

The final battle was at Gaugamela, which was near ancient Nineveh near the Tigris River in October 331 BC. Darius was building up a massive army, drawing men from the far reaches of his empire. He planned to use numbers to crush Alexander, and according to some contemporary historians he gathered around 100,000 men. Darius also picked a flat plain for a battlefield so Alexander would have no advantages in terrain, and allowing Darius to use his vast horde more effectively. On the eve of battle Alexander's generals were of the opinion that to counter the overwhelming advantage in numbers of the Persians a night attack should be launched. Alexander is said to have dismissed the notion explaining that as he was no ordinary general he would not act like one. As it turned out Alexander's timing of battle was right. Darius, fearing a night attack, kept his army awake and on alert for the whole night, while Alexander's men slept and were rested. Alexander planned to hold his forces of cavalry on the right flank, while his trained infantry went left, forcing Darius to go through a river. He then planned to attack after Darius was thoroughly stuck. **The goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him.** After this battle Alexander destroyed three major cities in Persia. **And none could rescue the ram from his power.** At that point Alexander kept moving east all the way to the Indus River in India, south to the Indian Ocean and then back to Babylon. **The Greeks** ruled by force, and the conquest of Medo-Persia was complete.

The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off. Alexander died an untimely death at the age of 32. **And in its place four prominent horns grew toward the four winds of heaven,** or in other words, in four different directions (8:6-8). It took twenty years of civil war, but **the four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that would emerge from his nation (Daniel 8:22a).** The four horns represent the four generals and four nations that divided the kingdom among themselves: Iysimachus ruled Asia Minor in the north, Cassander ruled Greece in the west, Ptolemy ruled Egypt in the south and Seleucus ruled Mesopotamia in the east, but none would **have the same power** as Alexander did (Daniel 8:22b). The ensuing battle between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria is described in Daniel 11:5-35. The details of this prophecy are so historically accurate that literary critics have attacked the book, saying that it must have been written after these events took place. But we worship an omniscient God who is outside of time. He can predict the past and the future. In fact, He causes the future to happen.

So in his first vision (**Daniel 7:2-6**), **Daniel** saw the first three *Gentile* kingdoms, with animalistic form that **he** was familiar with, a lion, a bear and a **leopard**. However, in the second vision (**Daniel 7:7-8**), it changed somewhat.