

~BEAR (136)

[Hebrew, *dov* or *dohv*, Greek, *ar'kos*]

- The Syrian brown **bear**, *Ursus arctus syriacus*, is the animal formerly encountered in Palestine, and is still found in North Syria, Northwest Iran, and South Turkey. It is most often **light brown** in color and averages about 140 kilograms (310 pounds) in weight. Despite seeming awkwardness, the **bear** can move with great rapidity even over rough ground, some varieties attaining a speed of nearly 48 kilometers (30 miles) an hour for a short distance. **Bears** are also good swimmers, and most of them can climb.

- The idea that **bears** hug or squeeze their victims to death is not borne out by the facts. When engaged in a struggle, the **bear** strikes with its huge paws, and its powerful, heavy arms drive the non-retractile claws deep into the body of its opponent. A single blow may be sufficient to kill an animal such as a deer. Most appropriately, therefore, the Scriptures allude to the **bears** dangerousness in parallel with that of the lion.

- Just as when a man flees because of the lion, and the **bear** actually meets him, and as when he went into the house and supported his hand against the wall, and the serpent bit him. (**Amos 5:19**)

- As a **bear** lying in wait he is to me, as a **lion** in places of concealment. (**Lamentations 3:10**)

- Naturalists, in fact, consider the **bear** to be even more dangerous than the large cats. Usually, however, the **bear**, like other animals, does not molest human's but avoids them, although it may attack when provoked or surprised.

- The ferocity of the female **bear** when its young are lost is mentioned several times in the Scriptures.

- And Hushai went on to say; You yourself well know your father and the men of his, that they are mighty, and they are bitter of soul, like a female **bear** that has lost her cubs in the field, and your father is a warrior, and he will not spend the night with the people. (**2 Samuel 17:8**)

- Let there be an encountering by a man of a **bear bereaved of its cubs** rather than anyone stupid in his foolishness. (**Proverbs 17:12**)
- I shall encounter them like a **bear that has lost its cubs**, and I shall rip apart the enclosure of their heart. And I shall devour them there like a lion, a wild beast of the field itself will tear them to pieces. (**Hosea 13:8**)
- **Bears**, on one occasion, served as God's executioners against the delinquent youths who mocked the prophet Elisha.
- Finally he turned behind him and saw them and called down evil upon them in the name of Yehowah. Then two she-**bears** came out from the woods and went tearing to pieces forty-two children of their number. (**2 Kings 2:24**)
- **Bears** subsist on a varied diet, feeding on leaves and roots of plants, fruits, berries, nuts, eggs, insects, fish, rodents, and the like, and have a special fondness for honey. Although there are exceptions, **bears** seem to prefer a vegetarian diet.
- Nonetheless, in ancient Israel, when fruits and other non-flesh items of the **bears** diet were scarce, herders of sheep and goats had to be on guard against the depredations of **bears**. In his youth David had to brave the attack of a **bear** in order to protect his father's flock.
- And David went on to say to Saul; Your servant became a shepherd of his father among the flock, and there came a lion, and also a **bear**, and each carried off a sheep from the drove. (**1 Samuel 17:34**)
- And I went out after it and struck it down and made the rescue from its mouth. When it began rising against me, I grabbed hold of its beard and struck it down and put it to death. (**1 Samuel 17:35**)
- Both the lion and the **bear** your servant struck down, and this uncircumcised Philistine must become like one of them, for he has taunted the battle lines of the living God. (**1 Samuel 17:36**)
- Then David added; Yehowah, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the **bear**, he it is who will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. At this Saul said to David; Go,

and may Yehowah himself prove to be with you. (1 Samuel 17:37)

- When **bears** are hungry and get the scent of prey, they are known to make an impatient groaning sound. So the prophet Isaiah describes the Israelites as **groaning like bears** in expectation of **justice and salvation**, only to be disappointed repeatedly.
- We keep **groaning**, all of us, just like **bears**, and like doves we mournfully keep cooing. We **kept hoping for justice**, but **there was none**, for **salvation**, but it has **stayed far away from us**. (Isaiah 59:11)
- An **onrushing bear** is also fittingly likened to a wicked ruler who harries and oppresses his lowly subjects.
- As a growling lion and an **onrushing bear** is a wicked ruler over a lowly people. (Proverbs 28:15)
- In Daniel's vision of terrible beasts symbolizing world powers of earth, the **bear** represented the Medo-Persian World Power and its greed for territorial conquest and pillage.
- And, see there! Another beast, a second one, it being like a **bear**. And on one side it was raised up, and there were three ribs in its mouth between its teeth, and this is what they were saying to it, Get up, eat much flesh. (Daniel 7:5)
- As for these huge beasts, because they are four, there are four kings that will stand up from the earth. (Daniel 7:17)
- Rapacious like this, the wild beast out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, is seen in John's vision to have feet as those of a **bear**.
- Now the wild beast that I saw was like a leopard, but its feet were as those of a **bear**, and its mouth was as a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave to the beast its power and its throne and great authority. (Revelation 13:2)
- The peacefulness among Yehowah's regathered people, under Messiah's rule, is indicated by the prophecy that the **bear** will feed with the cow.

- **And the cow and the bear themselves will feed. Together their young one's will lie down. And even the lion will eat straw just like the bull. (Isaiah 11:7)**