

# Manna for Your Soul

## The Fourth Beast: Enquiring Minds Want to Know

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“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth *were of iron*, and his nails *of brass*; *which* devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; <sup>20</sup>And of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows. <sup>21</sup>I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; <sup>22</sup>Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” **Daniel 7:19-22**

### Looking at the Word:

The angel's initial response to Daniel's question only piqued the man's interest to know more about the fourth beast. Daniel would have readily understood the cycle of one nation rising against another, as represented in the first three beasts. The fourth beast, however, was a greater interpretive challenge. Not only was it strikingly different from the beasts that preceded it, but it made war against the people of God. Its activity also served to bring God's judgment upon the kingdoms of men while initiating heaven's rule on earth.

- **Daniel's Interest in the Nature of the Fourth Beast (7:19-20):** Daniel sought the “truth” about this fourth beast (yâteb is information that is certain and doesn't waver—cf. 7:16). Daniel's description is essentially a reiteration of that which was recorded in 7:7-8 (see comments there) with two exceptions of added detail. As has already been noted, the fourth beast was visually daunting because of its extraordinary **strength**. That impression is reinforced by new information concerning its “nails of brass.” The fourth beast is able to tear the flesh of its opposition with its iron teeth and then crush and trample that which is left with its brass claws. The second additional detail concerns the **little horn's leadership** within the kingdom. The leading horn on this beast rises to prominence subsequent to the first ten horns. While the leader of this end-time kingdom is initially viewed as a little horn (an unimportant ruler), after he supplants three of the ten original horns, he is consequently seen as “more stout than his fellows” (i.e. more formidable, imposing, larger).
- **Daniel's Interest in the Little Horn's War Against the Saints (7:21):** Daniel had been in the first wave of Jewish captives brought to Babylon. Like Joseph in Egypt, Daniel's position of prominence and influence within the Babylonian court had provided him with ample opportunity to shepherd and protect God's people. Daniel would have been gravely concerned to learn of the little horn “making war upon the saints” and to know the iron teeth and brass claws of this fourth beast would mean suffering and death for the people of God. During the tribulation, Antichrist will seek to destroy anyone who refuses to worship his image. That means believers will be under intense persecution. While many Christians will enter the gates of heaven as martyrs, Antichrist will have a special hatred for the Jewish people (Revelation 12:13-17; 13:7). As horrific as their sufferings were during World War II, an even greater holocaust is still ahead for God's chosen people. Jesus said, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22).
- **Daniel's Interest in Judgment from the Ancient of Days (7:22):** Antichrist will wreak dreadful havoc upon God's people until the appointed time when God acts to cut short the fourth beast's reign of terror. At that time the Ancient of Days will judge Antichrist with perfect justice. Antichrist will experience the full measure of God's wrath as he is cast into the lake of fire. At this same time the Ancient of Days will also judge His saints with perfect mercy—a mercy purchased with the blood of the Lamb. They will experience the full measure of God's love and goodness as they are ushered into the millennial kingdom.

### Application and Meditation:

During the present age, the believer is sometimes lulled to sleep with the pleasantries of the world system. We forget we are engaged in a spiritual war. Since Satan has no power to attack God in heaven, he chooses to attack God's people on earth. During the Great Tribulation, Satan's true intent of destroying believers will be on open display. Even today, Satan will gladly barter wealth, power, success, or any number of other worldly trinkets in exchange for a believer's spiritual compromise. Don't be deceived. The exchange is never for the believer's benefit. The purpose is to disrupt the believer's fellowship and to destroy his spiritual usefulness. Satan's greater goal is to discredit and dishonor the Lord before men and angels. Our faithfulness to God matters. It matters in the here and now. It matters in eternity. © 2006, Manna for Your Soul. All rights reserved.