

## Daniel 7 - John Karmelich

For those of you wondering what the future is going to bring, you've come to the right place. Whether you care about this or not, realize the next six chapters describes stuff that will affect everyone's future. Therefore I'm encouraging you to read on as well, will affect us!

From Chapters 7 to the end of the book is essentially future prophecy from Daniel's perspective. There are some Christians who live for this stuff. Others will run away as fast as possible from this topic. If you don't know, 30% of the bible is predictions. It's to validate that the bible as the word of God. When we go through our moments of doubt that the bible as accurate, or consider some non-biblical view of the future, a careful study of prophecy will get us back on the right track. Realize about half of the Old Testament predictions are about Jesus First or Second Coming. As some of you know, I've studied the bible carefully for the past few decades. I'm convinced the Old Testament is filled with predictions and patterns that tie to every aspect of what Jesus did do and what He will do! For every prediction dealing with His 1st Coming, there are roughly twice as many about His 2nd Coming! The New Testament has lots of comments that deal with predictions about Jesus Second Coming as well. Bottom line, it is here to validate the bible as God's word and explain how the future will unfold with Him ruling the world!

I figured out a long time ago if the bible's 30% predictions, that means I need to spend 30% of my time studying God's word on that subject. I'm positive the bible is God's word. I'm convinced Jesus is going to return to rule the world one day. While the bible doesn't give us a date of His return, (so we'll watch for it) signs are given to explain how history will unfold. Which reminds me to tell you how I solved a dilemma I had about future predictions: Daniel lived to the start of a large Persian (think Iran) Empire. He wrote about the Persian, Greek and the Roman Empires before they existed and that the Roman one will revive prior to the Messiah's (Jesus) coming. Yet, the bible has no predictions about the rise of the Muslim Empires that ruled the Middle East since the fall of the Roman one. Why doesn't the bible ever touch that subject? Then it hit me: Paul said the church was a mystery in the Old Testament. As stated in Ephesians 3:1-12. That includes the fact no predictions about the church age exist, other than all the ones about life shortly before His return! Yes there's lots of scripture about false teachers in the church age, but none about its time frame other than what to watch for when it'll end. So again, to keep us on our toes, the bible never gives a date of His coming! I got that out of my system, so back to Daniel:

The reason I get into all of this, is Daniel Chapter 7 is a sweeping vision of life in the Middle East from the Babylonians to the Romans, and then a description of a revised Roman Empire when the Antichrist comes on the scene! Again, I pondered why the bible skips over the Muslim rule of that greater area in the Middle Ages to the modern era and the "church age" thing is my best explanation! Even if the bible is accurate about those four empires, here's the million-dollar question: Why should we care about this stuff? Thought you'd never ask! One reason is Daniel lived in the time of the first of these empires. If you think someone else wrote Daniel, it was part of the Greek translation of the Old Testament that did occur in 270BC. Yet in Chapter 11 we get details of the Greek rule even after that date. To me that's a proof God knows the end from the beginning! Even if we already believe the bible is God's word, what else should motivate me to care about this stuff? The answer is the bible does not give a date Jesus will return, but it sure gives us lots of clues of what to watch out for before it happens! So if He's not going to return until there is a revised Roman Empire, why should I worry about it? Again, glad you asked!

Think of it this way. If you had a desk job, and the boss was out of town, would you be likely to take it easy on the job? If the boss was standing over your shoulder would you work harder? Of course! Now what if Jesus could return at any moment? Isn't that motivation to be on our toes? I'm convinced Paul

believed Jesus could return at any time and we should live for that fact as well! Paul lived when Rome was powerful and he knew Daniel spoke of a revised empire when the one that opposes Jesus rules! In spite of that, he lived as if Jesus could return at any time and that should be our motivation as well! I'm convinced Jesus can return for the church at any time. As to the end time events, I hold the view that the church won't be here for that. We'll get more into that debate later in this book. All I want for you at this point is to understand that Daniel was given these sweeping prophesies so we'd understand how the world will unfold from his time perspective as well as our time perspective.

With that long introduction completed, time for a Chapter 7 summary. Let's begin with the fact there is no transition from Chapter 6. We get a "date stamp" on this chapter in the first verse: "The first year of Belshazzar". He is the king of Daniel Chapter 5, who probably was killed the same day as the events of that chapter. For those who like time stamps, it is 542BC give or take a year. Most likely Daniel wrote this chapter then. In essence he had a dream and he was convinced it was God ordained. There's proof because the dream followed human history with great accuracy.

The essence of the dream is Daniel got a vision of the four great empires that ruled the Middle East. It's interesting to note that each new one had a greater territory than the previous one. These are Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. The dream began with the reference to Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian guy who conquered Jerusalem. Daniel spent most of his life as a top executive under him! Here in Chapter 7, Daniel himself had this vision that started with something he already knew about (Babylon). Realize the dream was a pattern of four great beasts, which represented these four empires. Babylon was like a lion with wings! In the British Museum today is a gate from ancient Babylon. On it is a winged lion. I am just saying that Daniel would know that reference!

Then the next reference was to a bear. It stood on one side. That refers to the fact the bear was made up of two nations (the Medes and the Persians) and the later became the dominant one. The bear had three ribs in its mouth, most likely referring to three empires they conquered: Babylon, Egypt and Lydia, (an empire that included parts of Greece and Turkey). The third beast was a leopard with four wings. It has to refer to Alexander the Great who conquered the world from Greece to India in 10 years, so it was as "swift as a leopard". He died young and his empire ended up being divided among his four generals! In Daniel's final aspect of the vision, there was no animal. It just said that something ferocious conquered a vast area! Historically that has to refer to the Roman Empire!

I told you this is weird stuff and we're not even half way through the chapter! The vision then switches to a throne with the man sitting on it being very white with lots of fire around it. It represents God in a judgment role. The text mentioned thousands ministering to Him, which I picture as leading people for that judgment. If all of that isn't strange enough, we then get into a description of a beast being killed. I am sure it's a reference to what we commonly call the Antichrist. It implies the Roman Empire will be revised one day when that guy rules for a bit. Then the text focuses on what we call Jesus at His return who'll rule the world and His kingdom lasts forever. He defeats the Antichrist and that's that!

Then the scene switches back to Daniel. Of all the things he saw, his biggest questions were about that fourth beast. My hunch is Daniel wanted to know when the Messiah (Jesus) will rule the world forever, so Daniel wanted to know more about that final time frame. Let's start with the fact the western half of the Roman Empire died about 400AD. The eastern half lasted till about the year 1400AD. My point is Jesus has never ruled over the world in a literal sense, so this has to be future prediction. Anyway think of this vision as the Roman Empire (Part 2) being sometime in the distant future! When it does happen that revised empire will have 10 leaders, three will fall and the antichrist is an 11th who then takes over the whole thing. The text says the antichrist defeats "the saints of the Most High". Note that Jesus said

the gates of hell will not defeat the church (Matthew 16:18). To me that's a clue the church will not be a part of this "Antichrist time period" and other believers who get saved then are in focus!

To summarize, I'm trying to describe a strange vision that covers history from Daniel's day (about 500 BC) to the Roman Empire and again when it revises again. As I said, this skips all of the time when the church exists (as per Paul's prediction), but it picks up again when the church is no longer on the scene! Yes it's weird! It covers a lot of history and future events to us! Even if I've didn't describe all of these details perfectly, we know its description of history from Daniel's time is very accurate in details! That alone should give us reason to trust our bible and keep us on our toes until His return! That's more than enough for one lesson.

If interested, the other links on this chapter (I wrote two lessons on these details back then). Of course, you're welcome to read that if you'd like. Either way, I'm grateful that you did read this! If you're new here, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again, John