

## Daniel 12 - John Karmelich

If you've been with me through Daniel, you'd notice there's a lot of history written in advance (proving it's the Word of God) and well, a lot of bad news for the Israelites. This book implied a long history of them being oppressed, abused, and murdered. Despite that, they've still an entity with their conquerors long gone. OK that's old news. Why should we care? As I've heard many a pastor state in tough times, "Read the last chapter, we win!" Without hope, it's hard to make it through life. As stated at the end of most fairy tales, "Then they lived happily ever after!" My point is without the hope of a happy ending, this life is ultimately hopeless. Everyone dies at some point. As I like to state, I don't fear death, as I'm positive I'll live forever. I believe in the Gospel more than I believe I'm writing this at the moment! It's suffering that I try my best to avoid!

The "last chapter" isn't just the final chapter of Revelation, it applies equally to this final chapter of the book of Daniel when it comes to ending with "good news". Let's be honest, the last few chapters were pretty grim. Daniel in effect wrote in detail about the Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and even hints of the Roman Empire with a lot of text about the end times where millions of Jewish people die. That's all bad news. The good news is they win in the end and yes Christians win in the end as well. To quote Dennis Prager (famous Jewish radio commentator), "If the Jews are right, we win. If the Christians are right, we (the Jewish people) win! Either way, I'm happy!"

So why does Daniel focus so much on the end times? Yes we'll get more comments on that in this last chapter. The answer is in effect is he is pondering when is all this suffering going to end! If we're in a lot of pain, wouldn't we be wondering when it's going to end? Remember God isn't allowing all of His people to suffer for the sake of suffering. When we're close to death, we think about the next life and if we're using our lives for His glory. The good news of suffering is it gets our minds on God. The other good news is one has to have hope! That's why religious Jews want the Messiah to come and of course, we Christians who know Jesus is the Messiah we want him to return to set up the kingdom. In effect it is what most of Chapter 12 is about. We get a repeated comment from Chapter 7 that the end times will last three and a half years of "really bad stuff" before Jesus returns to set up shop.

As we finish Daniel, realize we get a lot of unanswered questions. I pondered a few lessons back, how do angels actually fight each other? The bible doesn't tell us. There are other questions about what will happen then, that again we don't know about. In effect God tells Daniel preserve this book until it does occur and then it (the end times) will be obvious to those living then. What this chapter does teach us is the subject of this lesson and hopefully wet your appetite to read my more detailed version later!

With that said, let's discuss Chapter 12 itself. Remember that Chapters 10-12 are all one vision given to Daniel late in his life. Unlike earlier chapters written in Aramaic (the common language of that region back then), the last few chapters are written in Hebrew. It's a clue this vision is primarily meant for the Jewish people first. Speaking of them, the text focuses on a specific top angel named Michael. Realize whenever he appears in the bible it's always on Israel's behalf! It opens by saying at that time (the time of the great tribulation) Michael will rise up! I suspect that means that many Jewish people will escape from the Antichrist as Daniel stated in Chapter 11. They will escape to what we call Jordan as that will not be part of the Antichrist's territory! Then things get even weirder. It says after that horrible period, some people will rise to eternal life and some to eternal damnation. I'd argue this isn't the "rapture" as again, I think this vision is meant for the Jewish people. I believe it's about God's judgment for Jewish people where some will be saved and well, others not!

The angel giving Daniel this vision then tells him to seal this up to the end times. It simply means he's to persevere it. I am positive that the Jewish people going through that horrible time will understand it (this vision) better than you and I do! I suspect that's what Daniel means when he says knowledge will increase at that time!

Daniel Chapter 10 said he had this vision standing by the Tigris River (in Iraq). It also said that he saw two entities on the banks of the river. I suspect those entities were simply witnesses to what Daniel did see here. Anyway these two talked to another entity, who stood above the river! I'd argue the one who was above the river was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. The entity "above the river" states here in Chapter 12 that when all that end time bad stuff occurs it's going to last for three and a half years. (The Jewish calendar has 360 days BTW). Daniel wants to know more and that entity says in effect, "Sorry, but no more on that topic! Deal with it!"

The entity above the river (which again I believe is Jesus) repeats the fact that it is time to seal up what is being told and again, many will rise and be judged. Then the weird part (as if all of this isn't strange enough!) is from the time the antichrist sets up an idol in the temple (and demands he be worshipped as god), will be a three and a half year period plus another 30 more days. Why? I suspect the last 30 days is when Jewish people will be judged by God. Remember I argued this isn't for the Christian church, as I (and a majority of evangelical Christians scholars) argue the Church is "raptured" prior to all that. We then get another 45 day period stated here! I suspect that's when Jesus sets up a millennial kingdom (a 1,000 year peace time where Satan is bound up) and Jesus will rule the world!

I admit, this is strange stuff. I can hear many of you saying, can we move on to something else now? I should remind you that if 30% of the bible is prophecy, it means we need to spend 30 % of our time on this stuff! Now the bigger question: if Christians aren't going to be around during this time, why should we care about this stuff? At the least, we need to remember we're to have hope that we win in the end! Yes the future looks bleak until then and let's be honest, all of us are going to die one day! This lesson is on the necessity of hope in spite of bad things that occur!

Finally, why does God want to wrap it up this way? Why not just have Jesus come back and everyone live happily after? Why allow all of this evil to occur first? I suspect it's to show the ultimate outcome of life without God and the price paid for choosing to live that way! It's His world and His decision so we must accept it. Our job is to be a witness for Him no matter the situation. With that said, thanks as always for reading. By the way, since this is my last lesson on Daniel, if interested I list my sources on the last page of the other lesson that I wrote on Daniel (link on the same page as this one) 20 years ago! 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