

Daniel's Vision of Chapter 10, part 2

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

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One day this week I went to my back yard to check on some new trees that I had recently planted. A good friend had given me a couple of "bare root trees" and I had purchased some more, and I wanted to see how they were doing. "Spring is in the air" and some of our other fruit trees are already white with blossoms.

These new trees I was especially interested in. I was looking for any sign of life, any indication that they were taking root and responding to the moisture in the soil and the sunshine. I was glad to see that on many of them buds were beginning to swell, telling me that sap was flowing up the stems, and I smiled when I saw this.

I thought about how God looks at us, and greatly desires to see spiritual life in us. He has planted, He has watered, He has given us the sunshine of His love. He looks to see if we're taking root, if we're responding to His care. Just as I walked through my backyard and looked at my new fruit trees, Jesus looks to see if we're responding, if we're growing in grace. When He sees response and growth, He smiles. When He sees people coming to church to worship, He smiles.

When He sees the character traits of godliness, the fruits of the Spirit, unselfish love, blossoming in our lives, He smiles.

We began Daniel ten last Sabbath, which features the vision of the Glorious Man and the "look behind the scenes" into the "great conflict" taking place between good and evil. The first verse of this chapter says, "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar. The message was true, and of great conflict." Daniel 10:1, margin. The "great conflict" is the theme of the Bible, and the prophet Daniel was given unusual insight into the reality of this conflict.

The war is between Christ and Satan. It began in heaven, when Lucifer, a "covering cherub" somehow, unexplainably came up with the idea that he was worthy of worship as a Creator, and that he had a plan which would improve upon God's system of order. He thought that there was no need for God's law of love and selfless service, and that angels should be able to do whatever they please. After all, weren't they holy beings? Shouldn't they have the right to "do their own thing"?

When Satan and his angels were evicted from heaven, the venue of this conflict was transferred to this earth, where Satan continued his endeavors of deception and flattery. He tempted our parents to disobey God's express command, and when they did it threw this planet into chaos. But God stepped in with a plan to save mankind, which meant that God Himself would come to this planet as a man. He would lay aside His glory and take upon Himself our flesh and demonstrate that neither Adam nor us need to sin, but that by constant reliance on God's strength the victory can be won. He lived a perfect life of obedience, died for our sins, rose in triumph from the grave and is in heaven now, ministering in the sanctuary for our benefit. He stands ready to help anyone who asks for help in defeating the enemy.

Satan has determined to oppose all that God does for our salvation. Back in Daniel's day, because of Israel's disobedience, God's protection was removed and they were allowed to go into captivity, that they might be disciplined by the experience and return to Him, forever leaving idolatry behind, and that the witness of their light might shine in foreign lands, as it did in the court of Babylon through the faithful life of Daniel and his friends.

But it was also God's purpose that they return to their homeland, the Canaan land of promise after spending seventy years in captivity, and that Jerusalem would again be their capital. To this end, He inspired Isaiah to prophesy that Cyrus would capture Babylon, release its captives and send them home to rebuild the city and temple. When Cyrus was presented with this prophetic evidence, along with the godly testimony of Daniel's life, he was impressed that the God of heaven wanted him to do this. He determined that he would follow the desires of Yahweh and issued an edict that would allow the Jews to return and rebuild. God had "stirred up his mind" to this great work.

We saw that Satan stood ready to oppose this plan, and he inspired a campaign of murmuring and discontent at the inferior materials of the new temple as compared with Solomon's temple, and incited the harassment of the Samaritans who did their best to frustrate the purpose of God, attempting to persuade Cyrus to rescind the decree of permission, claiming that the Jews were a rebellious and seditious lot. Notice the "great conflict" in action: even as God had "stirred up" the king to give the command to rebuild, Satan "stirred up" the people into a spirit of discontent and the enemies to work in opposition.

But, in response to Daniel's earnest prayer and the strong efforts of both Gabriel and Christ working on the mind of Cyrus, the door of opportunity remained open during the reigns of Cyrus and his son Cambyses. However, as we noted last week, as time passed the unhappiness of the Jews and the hindrances of the Samaritans brought the project nearly to a complete halt until the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah.

Thus the unseen battle, the "great conflict" went on in Daniel's day and still goes on today. If the curtain were pulled back we would be amazed at the reality of this conflict in the world as a whole and in our individual lives. Christ and His forces are working with divine energy to bring salvation

and eternal safety to His children, while the enemy is working tirelessly to hinder what God is doing and bring discouragement to the process of going from “Babylon” to “Jerusalem.”

Last week I mentioned the fascinating story of the Philippine chief of Mindanao, how he received a dream from a Man dressed in white who was holding a big black book and saying to him, “All who obey the commands in this book will be My people.” The Man in white spoke to the chief about the importance of the Sabbath. Shortly after this, one of the villagers went into town and talked with his tailor who said, “I also am a Sabbath-keeper,” and asked if he could worship with them. The tailor went the next Friday and when the chief saw the tailor’s Bible he said, “That’s the book I saw in my dream!” The tailor shared with them many things from God’s book and they became Christians.

“Well,” you might say, “that happened in the far-off Philippines. Nothing like that happens here in America, in San Diego.” Don’t be so sure about that! God is still working on the minds and hearts of people to bring His benevolent purposes to pass. I told you that we went to the mortgage burning celebration at the San Marcos Church two weeks ago where many miracles were shared which took place in the building process. Because of the nature of the topography it was necessary to have a lot of dirt brought in to build up the pad, which of course, can be very expensive. The cost of the dirt can be high and the cost of the transportation of the dirt even more. The church knew that if they had to pay “full price” for this it would drain the building fund to the bottom. So they prayed and asked God to send them dirt. The Bible says that He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and He owns the hills under the cattle too!

So earnest prayer was made that God would “move mountains” as He had promised. Word was put out that dirt was needed, and from all over San Diego County, trucks began arriving with fill material, at no cost to the church. But then things began to slow down, and they still needed a lot of dirt. One day Pastor Will James and one of the members, Ralph Gerardo, were at the church site, hoping for more trucks. Pastor Will said, “Let’s pray,” and they did. Within minutes, here came a large dirt truck, and the driver said to them, “I hear you need fill dirt.”

Now, someone might say it could all be attributed to market- place dynamics and human devising, but you’ll never be able to convince Pastor Will and Ralph that that particular truck, as well as all the rest, wasn’t an answer to prayer! Their “words were heard,” to recall the statement of Gabriel, and God had worked on the minds of men to further His plan. In all, 2,500 trucks wound their way down that dirt driveway and discharged their payloads, with their contents and transportation being totally free. The church didn’t pay one penny for those yards of dirt so badly needed. (In the picture, one of the trucks unloads its dirt cargo at the San Marcos SDA Church site.) Can you say, “Praise God”?

That Sabbath at San Marcos I heard a brother tell about their car needing repair. He checked with the dealer who confirmed that the car was “out of warranty,” and also gave them the discouraging news that the cost of the repair was going to be about \$3,000.00. Disheartened, with money being tight, this brother and his wife prayed that God would help them. The dealer called

back, and said that even though the time had expired on their warranty, they were going to cover it anyway! This is not something that people in business usually do! You can say whatever you want about it, but you'll never convince that brother and his wife that it wasn't an answer to their prayer. God had worked on minds and hearts to bless and encourage His people. Can you say, "Praise God"?

I heard Elder Mike Tucker (whose family had begun the "The Quiet Hour" media ministry) tell about his wife's father who belonged to a church which was experiencing a plumbing leak on the hot water side. Their church was constructed on a cement slab, with the copper supply pipe buried underneath the cement. Somewhere down there it was leaking, but where? It may be that there are scientific means of leak detection, but they decided to pray. They got down on their knees and asked God to help them find the leak. When they were finished, Pastor Mike's father-in-law said to the others, "We don't need to look to find where the leak is."

Astonished, the others asked how he could be so sure about this. Without moving, still on his knees on the ceramic tile flooring which was the place where they had prayed, the brother explained that during the prayer he could feel warmth on his knee, and knew that the leak had to be right under there. They carefully marked the identified spot, and removed one tile, and went straight down, and sure enough, that was where the leaking pipe was found! They repaired it, and located an extra tile that had been left over and replaced the one removed. Can you say, "Praise God"?

About two months ago we had some visitors at our church. When I visited them in their home, the lady explained that her dad, a long-time SDA Christian, had moved here from Kentucky and she had made a commitment that she would provide him transportation to church. Her brother sent her the GPS coordinates for our Valley Center Church, and on a certain Friday they set out to locate it. They drove up and down our street, but the church didn't stand out to them. (Part of the building program we're now initiating includes a sign!) Finally, they decided to make "one last pass," and someone in the car said, "Wait a minute. Maybe that's it."

They drove down the driveway into our parking lot. She told me that there were some people working there that Friday, and a "very distinguished white-haired man" approached their car and spoke with them. She explained that they were looking for a conservative SDA church for her dad, and wondered if he knew anything about this church. He said, "Yes, I attend here," and expressed the thought that he felt her dad would be comfortable here.

So I asked the daughter, "Have you seen that 'very distinguished white-haired man' at our church?" She pondered for a moment and then said, "No." Later, I told her that I couldn't get her story out of my mind, and she said, "I've been thinking about it too!" I told her that I had checked with everyone I could think of as to the identity of the "very distinguished white-haired man," and I don't want to jump to any conclusions, but as yet, no one at our church has been identified as the one with whom they spoke with that Friday. I told her that I thought there was a

strong possibility that she had spoken with an angel that day. If that is true, think of what that means!

Do you remember the four themes of the book of Daniel we discussed when we began our study? God knows, God cares, God is in control and is involved, and God rewards. Daniel 10 is eloquent on the theme of God's involvement in the affairs of man. That same God loves and cares for you too. If your eyes were only opened, you would see that He has been involved in your life in a very close way, arranging things in a way to bring you near to Him. Some day our eyes will be opened to see His grace at work, but even now the "eye of faith" can discern His footsteps in the path of life.

When Daniel prayed he said, "I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain Man clothed in linen (the linen garment stands for righteousness. Revelation 19:8.), whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude." Daniel 10:5, 6.

Who was this "Man" that Daniel saw? It was the Lord Jesus Christ! How beautiful that, nearing the end of his journey, Daniel was blessed to see his beloved Lord! John the Revelator, the other "pillar of prophecy," likewise was given a view of his Lord while exiled on the island of Patmos. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,' and, 'what you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia; to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.' Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, and in the midst of the seven lamp stands, One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." Revelation 1:10-17.

Notice the five points of comparison between the visions that were shown to Daniel and John. Because He is specifically identified in Revelation as being Christ, the Son of Man, and because the descriptions between Revelation 1 and Daniel 10 are so similar, we have no doubt but that Daniel saw Jesus in vision.

In both, Jesus is pictured as being clothed with a golden band. Daniel recognized it as being the famous gold of Uphaz, considered as being of the highest quality in Old Testament times. There's a lot of talk today about the value of gold. Gold in the Bible symbolizes that which is of highest value in God's sight, faith and love. What did Paul say? I could have everything and do everything, but without love it amounts to nothing. I Corinthians 13. This "agape" (selfless) love is the

hallmark of God's character. The Bible teaches us not only that God loves, and that God is love. He is the embodiment of that selfless principle of devotion.

When you read I Corinthians 13, the "love chapter," incorporate this idea by replacing "love" or "charity" with "God." For everyone of those attributes, place the name of God instead of love, and you will see a picture of God that is beautiful.

If we were to see what Daniel saw, today we would probably describe this golden band as a belt. A belt is that which holds in, holds up and holds together. This picture of Christ with the golden waistband is simply the text "The love of Christ constrains us" in picture form. God's love is what holds us together as a church. When they made the wilderness tabernacle, they were instructed to make "golden clasps" which served to tie the fabric together that formed the curtains covering the tabernacle. It is the gold of faith and love that holds the church together. It is the faith and love of God operating in our lives that holds in check evil passion and desire. It is when we love Jesus supremely that we can experience that "self control" which is one of the gifts of the Spirit. Give us more faith! Give us more love!

By picturing Jesus with the sash of gold, God would have us see how precious our Savior is to us. He should be first, last and best in all our thoughts and actions. The Creator of the universe, a personal Friend; think of it! Is He precious to you? Do you know how you can determine the answer to that question? Do you talk with Him, read from His Word, the "big black book" that He has given you? Is He worth more than gold to you? Yes, up there we'll walk on streets of gold, but what will be the most precious thing of all will be to fellowship with Christ forever!

Daniel saw that his face was like the appearance of lightning. John said that "His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength." Daniel said that His eyes were like torches of fire; John said that His eyes were like a flame of fire.

Daniel said that His arms and feet were like burnished bronze; John said that "His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace."

Daniel said that the sound of his words were like the voice of a multitude; John said that His voice was like the sound of many waters. This makes sense, because in Bible symbolism, "waters" many times represents "peoples, multitudes nations and tongues." Revelation 17:15. This will be the sweetest voice you will ever hear. Nothing you've ever heard on earth will come close to the sound of Jesus' voice. When we see Him, we will "see the King in His beauty." Our eyes will be enraptured by the glory of His Person. Our ears will be enchanted by the sound of His voice.

By saying His voice is like the "sound of a multitude," God would have us know something beyond the exquisite sound of Jesus' voice. It is that He is the Representative of the human race. He stood for the human race at the cross, taking the wrath of God, the punishment for sin in our place. When they nailed His outstretched arms to the wooden beam, it was as if He embraced all of

humanity in one large, compassionate hug. In Christ we have redemption and wisdom and righteousness and peace. He is our Spokesman in heaven. He is our “Czar,” our “Prince.”

Another point needs to be stressed, which is that prophecy is about Jesus. Knowing all the facts, time charts and events of prophecy without knowing Him is futile, empty knowledge. What did Paul say? “Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,...but have not love (God), I am nothing.” I Corinthians 13:2. Knowing all the dates and sequences of prophecy but not knowing Jesus as a personal Friend adds up to zero. This is the major failing of the prophecies of the tabloids. They don’t lead you to Jesus! The predictions of Nostradamus or Jean Dixon don’t draw you to the Savior!

When Daniel received this vision he said, “And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.” Daniel 10:7. This is the same reaction that Adam and Eve had in the Garden when they disobeyed and the wicked will have when Jesus returns in the sky.

It is similar to what Paul describes in his account of the vision of Jesus he saw on the Damascus road. He saw and heard the voice of Jesus. We read, “The men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice (that is, they heard the sound) but seeing no one.” Acts 9:7. Later he told the mob at Jerusalem, “Now those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice (that is, they did not hear with understanding) of Him Who spoke to me.” Acts 22:9.

This is a truism of life. Make note of it. It’s a great mystery! God sends His light and speaks to all. But only those who sincerely and truly desire to seek His truth and apply His wisdom “see” Him as He is. Only they receive the “vision.” The evidence of the divine is all around, but only those who, willing to follow wherever He leads, hear His voice. In the end it will be seen that all have been given sufficient light upon which to make an informed decision. God has left no one without ground upon which to build faith. But only those who seek Him without reservation obtain the “vision” of Christ. Don’t be totally surprised if some of your friends don’t share your love of God. When Peter confessed that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, Jesus told him, “flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father Who is in heaven.” Matthew 16:17. In other words, to “see Jesus” and to “know” Him is something that God wants everyone to experience, but only those who are willing receive it.

One of our members, Bibiana, says that before she was a Christian, she and her husband David would visit the home his parents where they would stay in David’s room. Her mother-in-law Ruth had placed an embroidered “thing” on the dresser which looked like it had some kind of Arabic writing on it. It made no sense to Bibiana. On many occasions, they stayed in that bedroom during visits and the “thing” was always there on the dresser, even after the passing of dear Ruth.

Later, Bibiana received Christ as her Savior and became a Christian. Until one year she looked at the “thing” again and saw something different. With great excitement she went running to her

husband shouting, “David, David, look; it says ‘Jesus’ on it!” It was there all the time, but she couldn’t “see” it. Now she says even when she looks at it and tries to see the “Arabic” writing, she can only see the name “Jesus”! Now the “Jesus writing” is displayed in the living room of their home, a prized possession.

This vision of the Glorious Man, Jesus Christ, is available to each one of us today. We can have a relationship with Him that is even deeper than the disciples had when they sojourned with him on the dusty paths of Judea. By allowing His Spirit entrance into your heart, by opening His word, by speaking with Him in prayer, by meditating on His love, by sharing His truth with others, we can be close to Jesus. We can “see” Him in everything we do. Do you want this vision to be your life?