

# Daniel's Vision of Chapter 10, part 1

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

Written By: Pastor John T. Anderson

Delivered On: February 28, 2009

*This Sermon is available in audio format for listening or downloading on our [Audio Sermons web page](#)*

Last Sabbath we had a most joyous experience. We were invited to attend a mortgage burning ceremony at the San Marcos SDA Church, where my wife and I used to attend. For those who may not be familiar with the term “mortgage burning,” it signifies the milestone of paying off the debt.

The church had obtained a loan of about \$450,000 when it was finished five years ago, and that had been reduced to about \$238,000 last fall, when the church initiated a special campaign to retire the debt completely in a more accelerated manner than just making monthly payments.

In brief, through the grace of God and the generosity of members and friends, the entire debt was paid and a service of celebration was scheduled to praise God for His goodness and officially put the flame to the record of debt. It was a great program, with many miracles associated with the construction of the building as well as the raising of the funds to pay it off being shared.

When it came time to destroy the mortgage, Henry Hsu (right), treasurer of the building project was the privileged one to light the document, while Elder Tom Staples (left), treasurer of the Southeastern Conference of SDA's and Basil Bell (center), pastor of the San Marcos Church stood by.

Along with expressions of thanksgiving, the smoke arose in lofty billows and gave concern that the fire sprinklers would be activated. Fortunately, they didn't! What a great thing, to see the debt retired, destroyed! What a sense of relief to be out from under the burden of financial constraint! As I considered what happened that day, it brought something else to mind.

The Bible talks about another debt, the debt of sin that we have incurred through disobeying God's law. There is a difference between the two, though; while the San Marcos Church labored mightily and was able to pay off its indebtedness, the other debt, the debt of sin is one we'll never be able to pay. We could have all the campaigns we wanted. We could work all our lives and “do good” as long as we lived, but we'd fall short.

But God foresaw our need, and sent His Son Jesus Christ, Who lived a perfect life and died on the cross to pay for our sins. I can't explain how my transgressions were there, but they were, and so were yours. Christ paid the debt of sin even for people who would never receive Him as Savior.

When the ones who refuse Jesus receive the “wages of sin, which is death” (Romans 6:23), it will mean that those sins will have been paid for twice! What sense does that make?

The Good News today is that the debt of sin is paid, in full. Christ’s sacrifice was total and complete. The mortgage is burned, the I.O.U. is cancelled, the ransom is paid, our sins are forgiven in Christ. Look back again at the happy smile on Pastor Bell’s face, registering the relief of that obligation! That same joy that we celebrated last week as the mortgage, the record of debt, went up in flames, you and I should celebrate every day! Thank God--what we could never pay, He Himself paid and has given us the ministry of sharing that News with others.

This is the message that Daniel gives through his prophecy, that a Messiah would come and be “cut off” for our sins. The God of the book of Daniel not only came and died for our transgressions, but is actively involved in the lives of nations and individuals.

Two things we will see in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel. We’ll see in this chapter the “vision of the glorious Man,” the climax of Daniel’s life, as well as the curtain being pulled back to reveal the unseen struggle between the forces of good and evil that take place on this planet as God works out His plan and Satan works to oppose it.

“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long, and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.”

Cyrus was more than likely the nephew of “Darius the Mede” who was in charge of Babylon shortly after its fall, and is described as being king in chapters 6 and 9. He was 62 at the time (Daniel 5:31), and probably didn’t live much longer than his first regnal year. Cyrus’ third year would have been 536/535 B.C. Obviously, it would have been at least three years since Babylon had been conquered and, as we saw in the last chapter, Daniel had fond hopes that Judah’s promised return to Jerusalem would have been underway. In fact, in accordance with the prophecy of Jeremiah of the seventy years of captivity, a decree had been given by Cyrus to allow the Jews to return from Babylon and begin the rebuilding process.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ‘Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: “All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.”’” Ezra 1:1-3

How did it come about that Cyrus expressed such a strong faith in the Lord? Faith does not exist in a vacuum; it must be built on evidence. In the case of Cyrus, there were two “witnesses” that nurtured his faith; prophecy (God’s Word) and direct contact with one of God’s faithful ones

(personal testimony). There was a divine and a human component. This is how the Ethiopian's faith grew: By reading the Scriptures, along with the testimony of God's servant Phillip, as told in Acts 8. By the way, God's plan of operation hasn't changed through the centuries. God wants to use you as the "human element" in the growth of someone's faith. In a minute or two, I want to share with you a story from modern times that illustrates this principle.

For King Cyrus, first there was prophecy: through the prophet Isaiah, more than a century before this, God had foretold the mission of Cyrus and called him by name. God spoke of him with these words: "Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, 'You shall be built,' and to the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.' Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held--to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut." Isaiah 44:28, 45:1.

This evidence, this prophecy from the Word of God was placed before Cyrus, and the remarkable and literal way in which it was fulfilled in the conquest of Babylon caused him to believe that his calling was of divine origin and he made up his mind that he would accomplish what the Lord had commissioned him to do.

Beyond this, there was the human component. Cyrus was acquainted with Daniel and knew about his miraculous deliverance from the lions' den. Daniel's stalwart presence and humility convinced Cyrus that he was the representative of the King of heaven, and he determined to cooperate with the divine model.

But the devil was not going to stand by and let this happen without conflict. It would be a "great conflict." That is a key phrase in our study today. Satan knew that it was God's purpose to bring His people back to Jerusalem. Satan knew that there was something very important about Judah's being in the place of God's choosing, and he was determined to derail the plan if possible. Hindrances were introduced to halt the progress. Satan worked tirelessly on the mind of Cyrus to rescind the permission that had been given, under the guise of threatened rebellion.

Satan's plan hasn't changed. Think of what's happening in this story and how it relates to each person's experience. Satan knows all about each person and their life journey. It is his desire to oppose all that God does for each of us. He detects when divine agencies are working for our good. The devil recognizes when a soul listens to the voice of conscience and responds to the invitation of mercy to come from "Babylon" to "Jerusalem" and he loads the road with impediments and discouragements just as he did back then. If you could only see how God has been at work in your behalf! The things in your life have not happened without divine guidance.

The Church is God's appointed agency for salvation. If God's presence is invited and cherished, something very important happens in worship. Through what Paul calls the "foolishness of preaching" God reaches out and brings instruction and conviction. No, the Church isn't perfect. It never has been. Mistakes are sometimes made. But it is God's will that we associate with His

people in worship. Satan hates that, and tries to do all he can to keep God's people from receiving the blessing that He has in store for them in worshipping Him.

This battle is going on today. I don't know if you read the story in the Sabbath School Quarterly that followed last Friday's lesson, but let me share it briefly. It is related by Saturnino Saballa Jr, a student missionary who is teaching in a newly opened village in Mindanao, Philippines. He relates that the chief of the village had a dream in which a Man dressed in white and carrying a big black book appeared to him. The Man said, "whoever obeys the commands written in this book will be my people." He then explained the importance of the Sabbath.

The chief called his villagers together and explained his dream, and everyone agreed that they would worship God on His day, the Sabbath. So the following Sabbath they gathered together, but didn't know how to "worship," so they did the only thing they knew; they chewed betel nut and spoke to an unseen spirit.

Then one of the villagers, while in a nearby town, met a tailor and told him of the dream. "I also am a Sabbath keeper!" the tailor said. "May I visit your village and worship with you?" The villager eagerly agreed, and the next Friday they made the six-hour hike to the village, the tailor bringing his Bible with him.

When they reached the village, the eyes of the chief grew wide with wonderment as he stared at the tailor's Bible. "That's the book I saw in my dream," he said. The next day they gathered for worship, followed by a feast of a roasted pig and vegetables. In the afternoon meeting they invited the tailor to speak and he shared with them from the Bible the Sabbath commandment as well as God's instruction regarding healthful living. He explained that the pig is a scavenger and not to be eaten, and that the chewing of betel nut is harmful and should be discontinued. The chief said, "My dear people. This black book tells us many important things. We shall eat pig flesh no more. We shall use betel nut no more." In time, every one of the villagers was baptized and invited to study the "black book" for themselves to learn more of God and His ways.

It was the Lord's design that His people be placed back into the land of promise and through His Word of prophecy, His angel Gabriel and his servant Daniel, Cyrus the Persian was led to issue a decree giving permission for the Jews to return. The devil countered that by his own tactics.

Satan's strategy contained two fronts. First he incited discouragement by a comparison of the new building with the old. When the remnant of about 50,000 exiles returned, they began the rebuilding process, starting with the altar upon which they could offer sacrifices. They laid the foundation of the temple. The earlier temple had been built by King Solomon, with much of the material being supplied by his father King David. The value of David's gift is staggering. We are told that the gold alone was 100,000 talents of gold. Allowing 75 pounds per talent, and 14 ounces per pound for the gold, and \$970.00 per ounce, that amounts to over \$100,000,000,000 (one hundred billion dollars). The new building, the rebuilt temple, would not boast of such costly material.

Present at the laying of the foundation were a few who had seen the magnificent temple of Solomon, and they expressed sadness at the inferior quality of the material being used in the new temple. Although there was great rejoicing when the foundation was laid, “many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, who were old men, who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes.” Ezra 3:12. Their expressions of doubt and dismay gave rise to discouragement and later resulted in the delay of the process. When God is at work, who is man to criticize?

The truth of the matter is that God is much more interested in the quality of the sanctuary of our hearts than the extravagance of the physical structure. The building may be the most ornate in the world, but if the hearts of the worshipers are absent the fruits of the Spirit, no costly artwork or embellishment or ceremonial can make up the difference. On the other hand, the simplest building He claims as His house, if the ones who worship therein cherish His principles and honor His ways. “It’s what’s inside that counts” describes what God considers of greatest value. The “ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit” is “very precious in the sight of God.” I Peter 3:4.

That was Satan’s first attack: get the people discouraged by comparing the new temple with the old. Get them thinking maybe this wasn’t of God’s doing.

The devil had a second line of assault. Remember that the serpent of Eden was described as being very subtle? That’s Satan’s specialty! He is crafty and shrewd. What did he do to introduce trouble here? When the Jews started to work, emissaries from Samaria arrived and offered their assistance in the rebuilding. At first glance, this might have seemed like a wonderful thing, but their offer was refused, leading to envy and open attempts at hindering the rebuilding. “Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers’ houses, and said to them, ‘Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.’ But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers of Israel said to them, ‘You may do nothing with us to build a house for Our God, but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded.’” Ezra 4:1-3.

It might seem that Judah came across as being harsh and insensitive while the Samaritans were kindly and generous. Why was their offer of help refused? The leaders of Judah recognized the role that idolatry had played in their captivity and determined that they would never walk that path again. Although the Samaritans confessed belief in Yahweh, the leaders of Judah discerned that their hearts were steeped in the practice of idolatry, and that to allow their hands to be joined in this project would violate the express command of God to make neither covenant nor alliance with idolaters.

When they were refused, “then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.” Ezra 4:4, 5. This was similar to what happened between Christ and the devil at the healing of the demoniac. When

permission was granted for the demons to enter the pigs, they destroyed themselves in Galilee and caused the local people to ask Jesus to leave. By inspiring the Samaritans to offer assistance, the devil purposed to corrupt their worship if they joined hands, or to instigate trouble if they didn't.

Daniel was well aware of what was happening in his beloved city of Jerusalem. He had studied the prophecies of Jeremiah and knew the appointed time of restoration had come, the completion of the seventy years of captivity. He had prayed earnestly for God's promise to be fulfilled and not delayed, as we learned in the last chapter.

In chapter ten he is given further insight into the workings of providence. We need to pay special attention to a phrase in the first verse. "A message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar.

The message was true, but the appointed time was long." Daniel 10:1. The Hebrew for "time appointed" (*saba'*) is found about 500 times in the Old Testament, with it being rendered "army," "host," "warfare" or "service." We use the word "service" in a military sense also. The plural of this word is *seba'oth*, which is the word used in the phrase "Lord of hosts." In Martin Luther's great hymn "A Mighty Fortress" we find the phrase "Lord Sabaoth His name."

The New King James Bible has an alternate reading of "great conflict." Many newer translations reflect that concept. The backdrop of this chapter is the "great conflict" between the forces of good and evil as it is demonstrated in the history of the Jews and their return from Babylon, and leads into the prophecy of chapters 11 and 12 which cast light on the "great conflict" through the ages until the return of Christ. To understand this "great conflict" as it affects the world in general and you personally is the foundation of wisdom. To be aware of this unseen conflict gives perspective on the meaning of life. Christ is battling for your soul, and Satan is there to oppose Him.

For three weeks Daniel prayed and "mourned" for the successful accomplishment of God's plan toward His people. Daniel was honored by receiving a vision of Christ, and a visit from the angel Gabriel who offered these words of comfort. "'O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.' While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, 'Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days.'" Daniel 10:11-13.

Here we have opened before us a view of the "great conflict." Heaven's agent, the angel Gabriel, was sent to influence the mind of Cyrus toward a favorable posture toward Judah and allowing her return to Jerusalem. In this effort he was opposed by another, called the "prince of the kingdom of Persia." The word "prince" is the Hebrew *'sar* ("prince, ruler or chief") from which we derive the titles Czar, Caesar and Kaiser. The "prince" of whom Gabriel speaks in this verse, we recognize as a representative of the kingdom of evil, perhaps Satan himself, "for we do not

wrestle against flesh and blood (a Scriptural phrase denoting humanity), but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12.

On the other hand, there is a “Prince” (*sar*) Who stands for God’s people. His name is Jesus. This same word *sar* is used in Daniel 8:11 when it says the horn “exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host,” and verse 25 which says “he shall rise against the Prince of princes.” It’s used in the last verse of chapter 10 and the first verse of chapter 12. We’ll discuss these verses later. The point is, there are two rulers in this “great conflict.” Satan is the prince the ruler, the “czar” or “Caesar” of this world, and Jesus is the Prince, the Ruler, the “Czar” or “Caesar” of heaven. Which will you choose to be your ruler? I wonder if the Jews caught the irony in their words when they said before Pilate, “we have no king but Caesar”? Did the term, as used in Daniel to refer to Christ, flash in their minds?

Satan, or his angel, was there to attempt to influence the mind of Cyrus toward an unfavorable relation toward God’s people, to rescind the edict of permission for them to rebuild. Gabriel was there to bend the king’s mind in a direction of favor. This struggle went on for at least 21 days, the exact duration of Daniel’s intense prayer. At last, the forces of righteousness prevailed, and during the remaining years of Cyrus’ reign and that of his son, the forces of evil were held in check and the door of opportunity was open for Judah to rebuild.

This brings up the question, “Should Christians today pray for the furtherance of righteous principles in the actions of governments?” I believe the answer to that question is, “Yes.” Paul advised that we offer prayers “for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” I Timothy 2:2. When legislators and judges make decisions contrary to God’s Word, it is time for Christians to pray. On March 5, the California Supreme Court will conduct a hearing on whether to allow Proposition 8 to stand, the Constitutional Amendment, defining marriage as being between one man and one woman. It is appropriate for all Christians who believe in the sanctity of marriage as established by God to pray for a favorable decision in this matter. Satan wants to destroy everything God made, and marriage was one of the best gifts the Lord gave to mankind. Satan wants to undermine the sacred union created by God and abolish the family unit, so vital to the integrity of society.

Gabriel was successful in influencing Cyrus to continue to allow the Jews to rebuild. However, after a number of years, despite advantageous conditions, the discouragement of the people, growing from the doubts that were expressed at the laying of the foundation, combined with the harassments of envious neighbors brought a stagnation to the rebuilding process and little progress was made until the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah.

This same interchange between the forces of good and evil has taken place since the inception of sin. It was Satan who inspired Cain to kill Abel, thinking that by so doing he would thwart God’s plan. He led Abraham into temptation saying Sarah was his sister, so that she might be taken by Pharaoh and the holy seed corrupted. Satan inspired Pharaoh to have the male babies of Egypt

killed, that he might frustrate the design of God. He whispered doubts into the ears of the ten spies to hinder God's plan. He led Israel into sin by the seduction of the Moabites at Canaan's borders, thinking that God would wipe Israel off the map. He prodded Herod into a jealous fit, leading to the edict to kill the Bethlehem babies, seeking to obstruct what God was doing. In all these things, heavenly agencies worked in God's behalf, and they work in our behalf, to oppose the forces of evil. If the curtain were pulled back, how amazed and astonished would we be as we saw the reality of the conflict being waged for every soul!

With an everlasting love Christ has purchased your redemption. He has called you from "Babylon" to "Jerusalem." He has given you knowledge through the prophecies of His Word, the "big black book" to guide you on the journey, as well as encouraging words from those who know Him. He is coming soon to take us home. Accept Him as your "Czar," your heavenly Prince, and let Him come into your heart today and allow His Spirit to shape your character into the image of Jesus.