

Daniel

From Battle to Victory

Lesson #11 for March 14, 2020

Scriptures: Ephesians 6:12; Daniel 10; Ezra 4:1-5; Joshua 5:13-15; Revelation 1:12-18; Colossians 2:15; Romans 8:37-39.

1. This week we will focus on Daniel 10. Daniel 10 introduces the final vision that Daniel received; it continues into chapters 11 and 12. While some translations give verse one differently, the more conservative translations point out in Daniel 10:1 that this vision is about a “great conflict,” even “warfare,” the basic meaning of the Hebrew word.

Daniel 10:1: In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of **great conflict**, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.—*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update.** (1995). (Daniel 10:1). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.†

2. So, where are the greatest battles in the universe being fought? How are we involved? In our day, Satan is no longer able to harass beings in the rest of the universe because his motives and methods have been uncovered, and the beings of the rest of the universe see the Devil for who he is and refuse to listen to him. His fight now is only over *our* minds and *our* thoughts. When we turn our minds to God and study God’s Word or pray, we are entering a cosmic conflict. But, as we know, that conflict has two sides. Will we join Jesus and His side? Or, will we join Satan and his side?
3. Can you describe this conflict in real human terms as it is going on today? In what ways does the Devil influence us in our daily activities? What was Satan doing to Emperor Cyrus that was being counteracted by Gabriel and later by Jesus Himself? See 1 Peter 5:8.
4. Read **Daniel 10:1-3**. Daniel did not tell us why he was fasting and praying for the Jews for three weeks. But, by comparing extra-biblical historical evidence with the evidence we have from other biblical sources, we discover that the first group of exiles had just returned to Judah and were being strongly opposed by the local inhabitants. See Ezra 4:1-5.
5. Daniel was very elderly at that point in time, probably around 90 years old. Was he still working for the Persian government? Cyrus had respected him a great deal a few years earlier. Did Daniel have any personal contact with Cyrus at that point? Do you think he tried to influence the emperor himself? We do not know that either.
6. It is important to notice that Daniel was not praying for himself. Instead, he was praying for the Jewish exiles who were more than a thousand miles away.
7. Why do you think the *Bible Study Guide* did not mention the fact that Daniel “did not eat any rich food or any meat, drink any wine” (Daniel 10:3, *GNB**) for a period of three weeks? Does this verse contradict the teaching about health that we emphasized in Daniel 1?
8. So, did Daniel’s prayer affect God in some way? How do our prayers affect God? Could we suggest something or some possibility to God that He does not already know about? Or, **do our prayers allow God to essentially say to Satan:** “Move away! My children are praying for Me to do something important here. I am not using excessive force or exercising any means that my human children have not requested!” Is that possible?
9. Another example quoted in our lesson of a time when someone prayed for his associates is in Job 42:7-10. God had stated unequivocally at the very beginning of the story of Job—the

part that we know about—that Job would be faithful to Him. Job did exactly as God had predicted because God never makes any mistakes in judging people. God rewarded Job for being faithful, and He tried to teach Job’s friends an important lesson. God did not reward Job for praying for his friends; He asked Job to pray for his friends because they had been so wrong in their assessment of Job and God’s role in the ordeal! Considering what it says in Job 42:11, does it look like Job’s family and his friends learned anything?

10. Read **Daniel 10:12**. While we do not know exactly what Daniel was praying for, it was not for something of which God was not already aware! Surely, the exiles in Judah were also praying for God’s assistance! **Thus, as in the days of Job, God waited to answer Daniel’s prayer until Daniel had proven his faithfulness to the onlooking universe!** When Gabriel was sent to answer Daniel’s prayer, Satan was primed and ready to fight back. Of what do you think that fight consisted? Was each side trying to do their best to influence Cyrus and whoever else might have been involved in making the decision? Do we experience the temptations of Satan and the guidance of God every day in our lives?

Daniel 10:4-10: ⁴ On the 24th day of the first month of the year, I was standing on the bank of the mighty River Tigris. ⁵I looked up and saw someone who was wearing linen clothes and a belt of fine gold. ⁶His body shone like a jewel. His face was as bright as a flash of lightning, and his eyes blazed like fire. His arms and legs shone like polished bronze, and his voice sounded like the roar of a great crowd. [Compare Revelation 1.]

⁷ I was the only one who saw the vision. Those who were with me did not see anything, but they were terrified and ran and hid. ⁸I was left there alone, watching this amazing vision. **I had no strength left, and my face was so changed that no one could have recognized me.** ⁹**When I heard his voice, I fell to the ground unconscious and lay there face downwards.** ¹⁰**Then a hand took hold of me and raised me to my hands and knees; I was still trembling.**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Daniel 10:4-10). New York: American Bible Society.^{††}

11. By comparing this passage with other places in Scripture such as Daniel 7:13; Leviticus 16:4; Daniel 8; Joshua 5:13-14; and Revelation 1:12-18, it is clear that the being portrayed was a supernatural being. The people were apparently overwhelmed by God’s glory.
12. As we will learn in Daniel 10-12, it seems clear that (1) either God controls human history, or (2) He foresees it accurately, or (3) both. Do we have evidence that God has acted to control our lives?
13. Read **Daniel 10:10-19**. In these verses we see that God did what He always does when speaking to His prophets. When He first appears to them, they are overwhelmed and often fall facedown on the ground. In Daniel’s case, God touched him and raised him to his knees and touched him again, raising him trembling to his feet; and then, God spoke to him and gave him strength. He took hold of his hand, and Daniel felt stronger.
14. What is implied in verse 13 by *the Prince of Persia resisted me for three weeks*? When Daniel heard this, was he thinking of Cyrus? Is it possible that Cyrus was resisting Gabriel? **We need to remember very specifically that the great controversy is being fought inside human minds.** The great controversy is not open battles with mechanical weapons; it is a battle for influence and commitment to causes. What should we do if we become aware of two conflicting systems, each of which seems to make some sense?

To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near.—Ellen G. White,

*The Desire of Ages** 48.4.

15. Do we understand in any way God's foreknowledge? There are many, including many Christians, who do not accept God's foreknowledge because, philosophically, they believe it would destroy human freedom. Others of us believe that God's foreknowledge is beyond our human understanding—what a surprise!—but that it does not in any way negate our human freedom. Daniel 10:13 is a verse speaking specifically about the great controversy.

The use of force: Think about what might be happening here. Which side in the great controversy is more than happy to use force? Would Satan hesitate to try to force Cyrus to choose for his side? Not at all! So, God must step in and hold the Devil back so Cyrus had some freedom to act. How does God apply such pressure? How do these battles for the mind actually take place? Will this not become a major battlefield and a major issue at the end of time? Will God still restrict Himself to the use of truth and evidence? Or, does He use other "weapons"? How do we go about making decisions? How do the angels seek to influence us for one side or the other? What part does the Devil's deception play?

16. This vision given to Daniel and recorded over three chapters—10 through 12—in Daniel includes events all the way up to and including preparation for the second coming of Jesus. What kind of preparation might we need to be making now for those final events?

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested they knew not their great ignorance. And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. **When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth.** Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God and a turning to men, putting human in place of divine wisdom.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*,* vol. 5, 707.2.†

17. There are some Christians, including some Seventh-day Adventists, who suggest that we do not need to evaluate the evidence and suggest that we should just ask the Holy Spirit? What will happen to those people who are now saying we do not have to take time to evaluate all the evidence? Will it be safe just to wait for the Holy Spirit to guide us? If we pray to Him, would He deceive us? How will we know which "spirit" is speaking to us? Could it be the Devil impersonating the Holy Spirit? When we discuss the work of the Holy Spirit, we need to remember that His major contribution to us has been the giving of the Scriptures. Those are what we need to be studying to learn from the Holy Spirit. (John 6:63)
18. So, what do we know about this battle going on over the decision to allow the exiles to continue with their work? What was the result of Daniel's praying and God's intercession?

What great honor was shown to Daniel by the Majesty of Heaven! He comforts his trembling servant and assures him that his prayer was heard in Heaven, and that in answer to that fervent petition, the angel Gabriel was sent to affect the heart of the Persian king. [Cyrus] The [Persian] monarch had resisted the impressions of the Spirit of God during the three weeks while Daniel was fasting and praying, but Heaven's Prince, the archangel, Michael,

was sent to turn the heart of the stubborn king to take some decided action to answer the prayer of Daniel.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*,* February 8, 1881, par. 31. Compare *The Sanctified Life* 51.2 (1889). See also *Prophets and Kings* 572.0; *Teaching about Angels** 144.2. [Content in brackets is added to the *RH* version of the quotation but is present in the *TA* version.][‡]

We read again in Daniel: [Daniel 10:12, 13 quoted].

By this we see that heavenly agencies have to contend with hindrances before the purpose of God is fulfilled in its time. **The king of Persia was controlled by the highest of all evil angels. He refused, as did Pharaoh, to obey the word of the Lord. Gabriel declared, He withstood me twenty-one days by his representations against the Jews.** But Michael came to his help, and then he remained with the kings of Persia, holding the powers in check, giving right counsel against evil counsel.

Good and evil angels are taking a part in the planning of God in His earthly kingdom. It is God's purpose to carry forward His work in correct lines, in ways that will advance His glory. But Satan is ever trying to counterwork God's purpose. Only by humbling themselves before God can God's servants advance His work. Never are they to depend on their own efforts or on outward display for success.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*,* vol. 11, 99.1-3.[†] [Brackets and the content in brackets are in the source.][‡]

19. **Daniel 10-12** took place in 536 B.C., the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. The first exiles had just returned to their homeland (See Ezra 2.) and had attempted to rebuild the temple. Apparently, an insurmountable mountain of opposition arose. First of all, the exiles had to travel hundreds of miles through territory of potential enemies to reach Palestine. They were carrying many things including most of their personal belongings plus amounts of gold and silver that today would be worth about \$26,500,000. Then, when the Samaritans were refused participation in the building of the temple, they became bitter enemies. They managed to write a letter to the emperor which resulted in the halting of construction. (Ezra 4:6-16,23-24) We do not know exactly at what point in this whole rebuilding process Daniel began his three weeks of fasting and prayer.
20. Stop and think of Satan's position for a moment. He had managed to scatter the children of Israel throughout the Babylonian and Persian empires. He must have thought that he was just about to win the great controversy because these people would eventually melt into their surroundings and completely forget God. Then, suddenly, God led a big group of them "home" to Palestine. Satan must have been furious, and this was his response.
21. At such a critical time in history, is it any surprise that Jesus Himself—referred to as Michael the Archangel—stepped in to make sure that God's plans were not defeated? As described in Daniel 10, He fought the evil prince of Persia. Is there any question about that "evil prince" being the Devil?
22. **We know that the Devil is fully aware that his time is coming to an end. The only way he can extend his life is by getting us to delay our preparation for the second coming.** How often do we think about how closely heaven is tied to earth? Do we think each day about how our lives might be impacted by supernatural forces?
23. Try to imagine Satan's thoughts as 50,000 exiles moved successfully from exile in Babylonia, Persia, and elsewhere back to the land of Palestine. He must have been exceedingly disappointed. But, he realized that if there was some way to prevent them from

regaining a foothold, he might still succeed in his plan to destroy God's people. So, do you think it is possible that a human king, Cyrus, left by himself, could offer significant opposition to a supernatural being? Clearly, Daniel 10:20-21 is talking about a significant opposition from a preternatural—that is, supernatural, but evil—agent who was doing everything he could to convince Cyrus to stop the Jews from rebuilding the temple.

24. Ezekiel 28:11-19 talks about a similar experience regarding the fall of the king of Tyre. Clearly, the king of Tyre was only a human agent; the real enemy was Satan himself.
25. While we cannot in our human understanding fully comprehend what was going on between Satan and Christ in their efforts to influence the thinking of Cyrus, it must have been a real battle.

The most prominent character in the book of Daniel is the figure initially called "Son of Man" (*Dan. 7:13, NKJV*) or "Prince of the host" (*Dan. 8:11, NKJV*). Eventually we learn that His name is Michael (*Dan. 10:21*), which means "Who is like God?" He comes to help Gabriel in the conflict with the king of Persia (*Dan. 10:13*). The angel refers to this heavenly being as "Michael your prince" (*Dan. 10:21*), namely, the prince of God's people. Michael appears later in the book of Daniel as the One who stands for God's people (*Dan. 12:1*). From **Jude 9**, we learn that Michael, also called an archangel, fights against Satan and resurrects Moses. **Revelation 12:7** reveals that Michael stands as the leader of the heavenly army, which defeats Satan and his fallen angels. Thus, Michael is none other than Jesus Christ. As the Persian Empire has a supreme commander, a spiritual force who stands behind its human leader, so God's people have in Michael their Commander in Chief, who steps in to fight and win the cosmic war on their behalf.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, March 12.^{†§}

26. Are we surrounded by both good and evil angels at all times? Do the Devil's angels come to our Sabbath school classes? (1 Peter 5:8) Does the Holy Spirit ever suggest that we can pray and that will substitute for careful study of the truth and evidence? Even on television, people talk about praying for the Holy Spirit to guide them, and then, they teach things which we consider to be very wrong. How should we feel about that? How should we act?
27. The use of reason scares many religious people. What is the role of reason in religion today? Is our own reason a trustworthy tool in studying Scripture? In 1870, the Roman Catholic Church declared that the pope speaking *ex cathedra* was infallible. Think of all the preparation that goes into the presentation of an *ex cathedra* statement from the Roman Catholic Church. The pope carefully meets with his advisors and counselors and spends a lot of time. And Protestants say: "Oh. No! No human being is infallible." But, Protestants in some cases seem to be suggesting that when they pray and the Holy Spirit "guides them," they are infallible, acting on their own without any other human assistance!

Colossians 2:15: And on that cross Christ freed himself from the power of the spiritual rulers and authorities; he made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in his victory procession.—*Good News Bible*.*

28. How does that work? The life and death of Jesus leave us a clear choice: (1) We can choose to follow Him and ask the Holy Spirit to help us live lives following the example of His life, or (2) we will die the kind of death He died, separated from God the only Source of life. Jesus faced Satan and his most fierce temptations. God protected Him from being killed as an infant by sending Him to Egypt. When He began His ministry, Jesus faced Satan and those terrible temptations at the end of that forty days of fasting and prayer. He repeatedly

cast out demons, releasing people from their demonic hold. He recognized the Devil even when the Devil was speaking through Peter, suggesting He should not go to Calvary. (Matthew 16:21-23)

29. During His last day in the temple in Jerusalem, **Jesus Himself broadened the plan of salvation to include the entire universe.** Notice how Ellen White commented:

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. **And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.**” John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—*Patriarchs and Prophets* 68.2-69.0 (1890).[†] Compare *Reflecting Christ* 50.3-4 (1985) [which quotes John 12:31-32, *KJV*, ending with “will draw all men unto me” although *men* is in italics in the *KJV*, indicating that *men* was added by the translators].[‡]

30. How much information did Jesus as a human being have about His future death before it happened? Did Jesus ever observe a crucifixion so that He might have some idea about what was coming? Maybe!
31. It might seem like a simple task: (1) Choose Satan’s side, or (2) choose God’s side. But, if we choose to walk the walk, then it needs to be a daily experience, every day learning more about Jesus and how we can serve Him. If we do make that commitment, then we have this promise.

Romans 8:37-39: ³⁷No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! ³⁸For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, ³⁹neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

Though we are not the first people in Christian history to see this truth, as Seventh-day Adventists we are strong proponents of the “great controversy” motif, or the idea that the entire universe is part of an epic struggle between Christ and Satan. And we believe that every human being is, indeed, involved in this controversy. Others, even secular people, have talked about the reality of some kind of battle in which we are all immersed. What has been your own experience in the great controversy? How have you seen it manifested in your own life? What have you learned that could help others struggling, as well?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Friday, March 13.

32. While many, including John Milton in *Paradise Lost*, have talked about a great battle in the universe between good and evil, it is only the Bible amplified greatly by Ellen White that emphasizes the conflict as being over the character and government of God—that He values our freedom of choice so much that He came to this earth to show us what God is really like and what will happen if we should choose to turn away from Him.

33. Paul suggested that there is a certain amount of armor that we need to be developing and using to thwart Satan's attacks against us. (See Ephesians 6:10-18.) Are we doing that?
34. Most of us live busy lives without obvious human enemies. We may have difficulties at work or at home; but, we do not regard these problems as being real enemies.
35. As you try to live your life and you are attacked by Satan, does it seem like a fair battle? Do we have any influence on how this battle is waged? Does Jesus fight for us even if we do not ask Him to? Or, must we ask in order to get His assistance? If God fought for us without our asking, wouldn't the Devil cry, "Foul"?
36. How much do you suppose Daniel understood about the great controversy and its implications? He clearly understood the situation of the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Persians. Those were groups with which he was quite familiar. But, what about the forces behind the scenes? **He must have because through Daniel, God chose to give us a picture of what is happening behind the scenes.**
37. One of the critical interpretive challenges in studying Daniel 10 is our understanding of the word *sar* or *prince*. Some scholars want to make Cambyses—the son of Cyrus, and thus, the prince of Babylon at that point in time—the “prince” of Persia. Cambyses was, in fact, very hostile to foreign religions, probably as a result of Satan's influences. It is difficult, however, to believe that Cambyses would be the one to influence Cyrus in opposition to Gabriel. One of the most convincing arguments that this “Prince” is more than a human prince is the fact that Michael is also called the *sar* or *Prince* of God's people. Thus, we are certain that the great war here described is a war between Satan, the prince of darkness who represents the enemies of God's people, and Christ, the great Prince representing the people of God.
38. We are not used to thinking of being in constant danger of war. In ancient times, the children of Israel were constantly at risk of being attacked by an enemy. So, to them it was very important that the true God was mighty in battle (Psalm 24:8) and a great warrior. (Exodus 15:3) There are many psalms that talk about how God defeated Israel's enemies such as the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians.
39. It is very interesting to note that in situations where God is depicted as a Warrior, some form of the interjection—“Who is like God?”—appears. See Exodus 15:11; Jeremiah 50:44; Psalm 35:10; 71:19; 77:13; 89:6,8; and Micah 7:18. There should not be any question in our minds that when someone is referred to as *the One who is like God* or the question, “Who is like God?” is asked, we are referring to none other than Jesus Christ Himself.
40. What kind of war took place in heaven as recorded in Revelation 12:7-12? It could not have been a war using physical strength alone because God would have won almost instantly! But, it certainly was a real war! God certainly did not turn to Lucifer and ask him politely to leave heaven! Was it a war of ideas? When that war comes to an end, some of God's people will join the winning side and sacrifice their lives rather than give up their loyalty to God. Like Jesus, they will win by dying! (Revelation 12:11)
41. We are now nearing the end of that great controversy. What are we supposed to do to battle alongside our Supreme Commander? Are we willing to fight His spiritual battle, if necessary, not by killing others but by dying? Our weapons are not guns or bombs; our weapon is faith in the Word of God. Does this study help us to better understand some of the parameters of the great controversy?

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