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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
INTERPRETATION OF TWO TIME PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK
OF DANIEL - THE 2300 DAYS OF DANIEL 8 AND THE 70
WEEKS OF DANIEL 9.**

ASSUMPTION 10

**The shutting of the vision did *not* mean that
(1) the explanation was shut or (2) that the
explanation was complete.**

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The Purpose of This Assumption

The specific purpose of this assumption is to assert the completeness of the vision in Dn8:3-12 *and the so-called incompleteness* of the explanation in vs15-26. The reason for this is to develop a rationale to allow additional material from a later revelation (i.e., Dn9) to be included in the explanation of Dn8 that gives the SDA start date for the 2300 days.

As will be demonstrated, this assumption is established through mere assertion and also through association with other assumptions in their argument. Assumption No.10 is an integral part of a constellation of assumptions that focus on the end of Dn8. This cluster of assumptions is used to provide some type of plausibility to the SDA explanation of the connection between Dn8 and Dn9. Since these assumptions are so closely intertwined, the bulk of the material in this paper has been presented before in the Assumption 8 paper, and less so in the other papers on the assumptions 4, 5, 6, and 7.

The Method of This Assumption

This assumption uses a nest of interwoven assumptions focusing on the end of Dn8 with a view to linking Dn9 to the explanation of Dn8. These assumptions are interdependent on each other. They include:

- There is no starting date given in Dn8 for the 2300 days ([Assumption 3](#)):
- Daniel got sick before the explanation of the 2300 days could be given ([Assumption 4](#));
- Daniel 8 is incomplete ([Assumption 5](#));
- Daniel did not understand the 2300 days ([Assumption 6](#));
- Daniel’s statement in ch8:27 that he didn’t understand the “vision” (*mar’ê*) was due to the fact that the information hadn’t been given ([Assumption 7](#));

- The “shutting” of the vision of Dn 8 (vs3-12) meant that it would not be understood until “many days”, that is, until the “time of the end” ([Assumption 8](#)).
- Assumption 8 presupposes [Assumption 9](#), so this is included as well. This assumption says that the time of the end began in 1798 A.D.

This assumption, that the shutting of the vision of Dn8 (Dn8:26) didn’t mean that the explanation of that vision was complete, is vital for SDA historicism in order to argue that Daniel 9 is a completion of the explanation in Dn8. It enables them to provide a start date for the 2300-days from the next chapter, since they argue that this start date is not presented in chapter 8.

There are two parts to this assumption: (a) the vision was shut; (b) the explanation was not shut. These points in turn, presuppose that these parts – vision and explanation – are mutually exclusive. That is to say, an “explanation” cannot be a part of a “vision.” It is always defined as “explanation” in contradistinction to “vision.”

It is not easy to find this idea in the writings of the pioneers. We read of Smith calling the revelation of Dn9 a “vision,”¹ but he still calls the information in Dn9 an “explanation.” (p.171)² And while he calls the explanation in Dn8 a “vision,” he also understands that is just explanation.³ Where the idea originated in SDA writings, is not clear, but

Notice this comment from Shea:

The pattern of the contents of Dan 8 differs somewhat from the pattern of the contents in Dan 7. In Dan8 we have a lengthy vision (vs 2-12) followed by a short intravisional explanation (vs 13,14), which was followed in turn, for the first time recorded in the book, by a lengthy extravisional explanation (vs 17-26). This extravisional explanation was given to Daniel personally by the heaven-sent interpreter and messenger, Gabriel, i.e., an angelophany. The return

¹ “We remember, as Daniel doubtless did, that the 2300 days ended with a promise respecting the sanctuary...In this it was necessary that he now be set right; and for this purpose the angel again visits Daniel. Again the prophet is rapt *in vision*; and a heavenly messenger appears on the scene. We ask the reader to consider who this is. ..This *vision* of the ninth is the very next chapter [after Gabriel’s first visit] so far as we have any account, which the prophet had...The *vision* of chapter 9, therefore, opens as the vision of chapter 8 closed, Daniel and Gabriel in communication with each other And there is no other intervening vision between, these two visions.” (1898, p.170 Emphasis mine)

² “He has now come to complete the instruction which he there omitted...” (Ibid, p.171)

³ “The vision of chapter9, therefore, opens as the vision of chapter 8 closed, Daniel and Gabriel in communication with each other.” (1898, p.170) Notice here Smith sees the communication between Daniel and Gabriel as “vision,” in proper biblical tradition; whereas modern SDA writings do not do this.

of Gabriel with more information for Daniel, as recorded in 9: 21-27, continues the *third* element found in Dan 8 – the extravisional explanation. (Shea, 1981a, p. 221)⁴

What follows in chapter 9 [of Daniel] is therefore not a new and independent vision, but is the continuing literal explanation of the symbolic vision of chapter 8.

We would stress this point, that in chapter 9, Gabriel was not introducing a new line of prophecy. He was simply continuing and completing his interrupted explanation, picking up the thread just where he had laid it down in his previous appearance to the prophet recorded in chapter 8. (Seventh day Adventists, 1957, p271-272).

Daniel 9:24-27 contains no vision, but there is auditory revelation in which the time element figures most prominently. Both Dan 8: 13-14 and Dan 9:24-27 are auditory revelations. The latter provides the beginning of the time span of Dan 8. (Hasel, 1981, p. 197)

The first part – the vision is shut.

The first part of the assumption is – “The vision is shut.” As we shall see shortly, this is argued as not really meaning the *full* vision, like the text says, but only to the 2300-days because it is only this time period that is not explained (see [Assumption 8](#)). This of course gives a clear signal that their understanding of “shut” is to have something unexplained. They say that because other matters in the vision have been explained, they are not shut.

As pointed out in [Assumption 8](#), any comments by SDA historicists on the command to “shut the vision” in Dn8:27 is often made at their comments on Dn12:4, for the very reason that they can weave their application of the meaning of the “time of the end” into the explanation, since it occurs in the same verse that talks about the closing of the vision. This means that comments on the topic often interweave the word “seal” in with the command “to shut,” and “book” often occurs instead of vision, since that is the word in Dn12. Here then are some samples of writers stating that a portion of the vision is shut til the time of the end:

But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.” Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,” Daniel 12:4 (White, E., 1888, p.356)

The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. (White, E., 1898, p,234)

⁴ The concept of “extravisional” in Shea’s writings seem to mean that he is referring to something that is ‘extra’ / ‘in addition to’ / ‘not a part of’ the vision in the writings. That is to say, it is ‘not a part of’ the vision, but is ‘additional to’ it, yet is related to the vision. “Intravisional,” on the other hand, ‘is a part of’ / ‘within’ the vision.

But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.”(1888, p.356)

“the book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days” (White, E., 1911, p. 585).

. Gabriel cannot have meant that all the information in the book of Daniel was to be “shut up” until the time of the end. The identity of the head of gold as Babylon and of the ram as “Media and Persia” and of the goat as Greece is stated explicitly within the book, beyond all doubt or mystery. But Babylon, Persia and Greece were empires which ruled in Daniel’s own day and in his immediate future. The events to be “shut up” were only those that would occur near the end.” (Maxwell, 1981, p. 301)

This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel’s prophecy that dealt with the last days (AA 585; DA 234). Not until that time was reached could a message, based on the fulfilment of these prophecies, be proclaimed (see GC 356). (Nichol, 1976, p.879)

An important part of this section is to define what is “vision.” There are three positions. Firstly, the “vision” can refer to either vs.2-12, since verse 13 refers to what has just transpired as a “vision;” secondly, using v.15 or v.26, it can refer to vs 2-14, which includes the conversation between the two beings in vs.13-14 or thirdly; it can refer to the entire vision, including vs. 2-26. In the writings of SDA historicists on this topic, the possibility of the *whole chapter* being referred to as a “vision,” (cf., vs. 1-2; ch.9:21) is not even entertained.

Looking at the second part of the command – the command to “shut” – the issue here is in relation to the meaning of the word “shut.” In the [Assumption 8](#) paper, I address there the two main positions regarding the meaning of “shut:” as either a precluding from understanding; or a shutting in order to preserve. An examination of SDA historicists in that paper found that they understood “shut” to mean a “preclusion from understand” due to the fact that information had not been given. Therefore, the command to shut up the vision, if it means verses 2 to 26, effectively means that the whole vision would not be understood: Notice this statement from U. Smith:

Book of Daniel sealed. – The “words” and “book” here spoken of doubtless refer to the things which had been revealed to Daniel in this prophecy. These things were to be shut up and sealed until the time of the end; that is, they were not to be specially studied, or to any great extent understood, until that time. The time of the end, as has already been shown, began in 1798. As the book was closed up and sealed *to* that time, the plain inference is that at that time, or from that point, the book would be unsealed. People would be able to understand it, and would have their attention specially called to this part of the inspired word. (1944, p.313)

And from the *SDA Bible Commentary*

Knowledge shall be increased. This clause may be considered the logical sequel to the immediately preceding clause: When the sealed book is opened at the time of the end, knowledge concerning the truths contained in these prophecies will be increased..." [Nichol, 1976](#), p. 879)

Thus although parts of the vision were explained and therefore understood, the whole vision could not be understood until the time when the full explanation was unsealed or opened:

Desmond Ford:

[Dn12:4 quoted] This verse, coupled with 8:14-19, makes it clear that "the time of the end" begins with the unsealing of the closed portions of Daniel. When the prophecy of the 2300 years was illuminated by the Spirit of God in the 1840's, then it could be said that the seal was being removed from the book, and with the end of that period (1844) the time of the end commenced (cf. Rev.10:6 with 14:6, 7). ([1978](#), p. 281)

"Running to and fro" is a Hebrew idiom for "searching." Thus the connection between the unsealing of the book and the increase of knowledge about its prophecies is explained ..." ([1978](#), p.281)

...for the first time in Daniel, the chapter closes with the statement that neither Daniel nor anyone else could understand the revelation just given him. But 12:4, 9, 10, assures us that in the last days "knowledge shall increase" and the visions that have been "shut up" (8:26 KJV) will be unsealed, so that "the wise shall understand." Thus, if these indeed are the last days, *we have every right to expect light on this eighth chapter beyond all that other generations have received.* Evidently, then we must not expect to find all that God has for us on this chapter in the commentaries of former times. Indeed, if knowledge is now to be increased on this prophecy, previous expositions will be exposed as falling apart. Only in "the time of the end" would the book be unsealed. ([1978](#), p.161)

Daniel had been instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end" (Dan.12:4). This admonition applies particularly to the part of Daniel's prophecies that deals with the last days (see on ch. 12:4), and doubtless especially to the time element of the 2300 days (ch.8:14) as it relates to the preaching of the first, second and third angel's messages (Rev. 14:6-12). Inasmuch as the message of the present angel [this quote is from the section in Rev.10 which sees an angel standing on the earth and the sea- FB] deals with time, and presumably with events at the time of the end, when the book of Daniel was to be unsealed (Dan.12:4), it seems reasonable to conclude that the little book open in the hand of the angel was the book of Daniel. With the presentation to John of the little book open, the sealed portions of Daniel's prophecy are revealed. The time element, pointing out the end of the 2300-day prophecy, is made clear. Consequently the present chapter focuses upon the time when the proclamation of vs. 6, 7 was made, that is, during the years 1840 to 1844"...([Nichol, 1957](#), p. 797)

The second part – explanation was not shut.

The second part of the assumption is – “The explanation” was not closed when the vision was closed, but rather is continued on at a later date. This position is taken because in the SDA historicist’s view, the explanation in Dn8 was incomplete (i.e., only the start date for the 2300 days was not explained). Thus, Daniel 9 is not a vision, but the continuation of the explanation of Dn8. Notice Hasel’s statement: “Daniel 9:24-27 contains no vision...” (Hasel, 1981, p. 197) Read again the statement by Shea quoted above. (Shea, 1981a, p. 221) And notice the following statements:

From Questions on Doctrine:

What follows in chapter 9 [of Daniel] is therefore not a new and independent vision, but is the continuing literal explanation of the symbolic vision of chapter 8.

We would stress this point, that in chapter 9, Gabriel was not introducing a new line of prophecy. He was simply continuing and completing his interrupted explanation, picking up the thread just where he had laid it down in his previous appearance to the prophet recorded in chapter 8. ([Seventh day Adventists, 1957](#), p271-272).⁵

From Maxwell:

..in chapter 9 Gabriel returned to continue his interrupted explanation. (1981, p.195)

Frank Holbrook’s comments in the Collegiate Sabbath School Lesson for the first quarter, 1987 says:

The thematic connections between Daniel 8 and 9 make it clear that Gabriel’s explanation in chapter 9 should be understood as an elaboration on chapter 8. Daniel is concerned about the fate of his homeland and of his people. Foremost in both is the issue of restoration from exile. A princely leader is prominent in both. And the problem of time is prominent in both, in the sense that the only dangling thread in the angelic interpretation of the vision of Daniel 8 is *time* – and it is with a concern about *time* that Daniel begins. (McDowell, 1987, p. 91)

Hasel says:

It cannot be overlooked that in Dn8:26-27 the time element of the auditory revelation remains unclear to Daniel (“and...did not understand it.”). Daniel 9:24-27 contains no vision, but there is auditory revelation in which the time element figures most prominently. Both Dan 8: 13-14 and Dan 9:24-27 are auditory revelations. The latter provides the beginning of the time span of Dan 8. (Hasel, 1981, p. 197)

⁵ The SDABC takes the same position. In outlining the book of Daniel, it lists “Daniel’s third prophetic message” as “8:1 to 9:27.” The prayer and “Gabriel’s interpretation” of “the remaining portion of the vision. 9:20-27” are listed as parts 6 and 7 of this third prophetic message, signalling their belief that Dn9 is considered by them to be an integral part of the revelation of chapter 8. (Nichol, 1976, p.754)

Shea says:

A major position in the Adventist historicist interpretation is that this passage (vss. 24-27) is the angel Gabriel's delayed explanation and further elaboration of the 2300 day-year time prophecy of the previous vision (8:14,26). (Shea, 1986, p. 76)

Arthur Ferch has named the so-called break between Dn 8 and Dn9 an "interruption." He says:

If Gabriel's return and mission in Dan 9: 21-23 relates to Dan 8 (cf. Noth's, "Komposition," pp. 160 –161), then the interpretation interrupted years before is resumed and completed. (1979, p.144, footnote 1)⁶

From these quotes, we see a number of things. First, the only part of the vision considered "shut" was that dealing with the 2300-days, and it is shut until the time of the end. Second, since the explanation is incomplete in Dn8, it cannot be shut, but is continued in Dn9. Third, the explanation is continued in Dn9 in order to provide the start date for the 2300 days. And lastly, this continuation of the explanation in Dn9 is also the *completion* of the explanation of the vision in Dn8.

The Problems with the Method of this Assumption

In this section, I will examine the major issues with the method highlighted by SDA historicists quoted above. The first issue I look at is the question as to whether the word "vision" can also mean "explanation," or whether these terms are virtually mutually exclusive. The second issue I examine concerns the specific meaning of the command "shut the vision," with a view to establishing the scope of the word "vision," and the meaning of the action to "shut." The third issue I examine is the dilemma as to how the vision can be kept "shut" if the explanation of that vision is *not* "shut" but on the contrary, has been open to a complete understanding since the times of Daniel?

1. Are "vision" and "explanation" mutually exclusive terms?

The definition of these terms is crucial for the SDA historicist's framework concerning these two chapters. Assumption 1 deals with this issue in greater depth, but in brief, as seen in the quote early in the paper by Shea, there is no way that either Dn8:17-26 or Dn9:24-27 can be classified as "vision." Here is the quote again:

The pattern of the contents of Dan 8 differs somewhat from the pattern of the contents in Dan 7. In Dan8 we have a lengthy vision (vs 2-12) followed by a short intravisional explanation (vs

⁶ One should note carefully the caveat in Ferch's writings – "if...then." Does Ferch believe this position personally? Another weakness in Ferch's position here is that the mere link between Dn9:21 and Dn8 *does not mean* that there was an interrupted explanation years before and is now being resumed. Nor would Noth argue in such a vein.

13,14), which was followed in turn, for the first time recorded in the book, by a lengthy extravisional explanation (vs 17-26). This extravisional explanation was given to Daniel personally by the heaven-sent interpreter and messenger, Gabriel, i.e., an angelophany. The return of Gabriel with more information for Daniel, as recorded in 9: 21-27, continues the *third* element found in Dan 8 – the extravisional explanation. (Shea, 1981a, p. 221)

Other writers reiterate the position of Shea. For example:

From Clifford Goldstein:

To begin, Daniel 2, Daniel 7, and Daniel 8 are chapters that consist of dreams, and/or visions followed by an interpretation of that dream or vision, though in Daniel 8 the interpretation was incomplete. In contrast, Daniel 9, unlike these other previous chapters, has no dreams or visions; it consists, after Daniel's prayer, only of an interpretation – the seventy-week prophecy given to him by Gabriel. (2003, p.75)

Notice too, that Daniel 2 consists of a dream/ vision and a complete interpretation of that dream/vision. Daniel 7 consists of a dream/vision and a complete interpretation of that dream/vision. Daniel 8, in contrast, has a dream/vision but only a partial explanation of that dream/vision; the *mareh* of the 2,300 days is the only part not explained. Daniel 9 has no dream, no vision, just an explanation – and, as we have seen above, it is an explanation of the *mareh*, the vision of the evenings, and mornings that Daniel doesn't interpret. (Ibid, p.111)

The term extravisional in Shea's terminology is the opposite to intravisional, and means that it is not *within* a vision, but rather is outside of and in addition to the vision proper. I showed in my paper on Assumption 1 that Dn9:21 debunks this theory and properly assigns Dn8:15-26 to the category of *hazôn*-vision. This means that in accordance with Dn8:1, 2, the whole experience recorded in Dn8 is a *hazôn*-vision. Shea had to go to extraordinary effort to worm and weasel his theory into some semblance of logic but eventually it failed when he tried to assign the meaning of the adverb "earlier" in Dn9:21 to Dn7 where there is no mention of Gabriel, instead of what the universe of scholars, both Adventist and non-Adventist alike do, and assign it to Dn8, where Gabriel is explicitly introduced to Daniel for the first time.

The upshot of this is that although Dn8:2-12 is properly called a *hazôn*-vision by the heavenly personage in vs.13-14, Dn8: 15-17 applies *hazôn*-"vision" to vs. 2-14, and Dn9:21 also calls the explanation in vs.17-26 a *hazôn*-vision as well. Thus "vision" can refer to either just a vision by itself or a vision with an explanation, or even just as SDA historicists would call it, an explanation in itself, as we have in Dn9, 11-12.

Notice also the interchangeability of "vision" and "dream" in Dn7:1,2. A dream here is a vision, and a vision is a dream. This "vision" includes the explanation as well as the vision. Compare this with Dn8: 1 and Dn9:21 together. These texts calls the whole revelation in chapter 8 a *hazôn*. Yet this chapter includes both a vision as well as an explanation. Similarly, in Dn10:1, Daniel states that he understood the *mar'eh*"-vision," and this vision, recorded in ch11 and 12 was only an explanation. Yet in Dn10:14, the

vision to be presented in Dn11-12 is called a *hazôn*-vision. In each of these chapters, the explanatory section of the revelation is properly called a vision, regardless of whether the vision be a *hazôn* or a *mar'eh*. Therefore, for all practical purposes, these words are synonymous.⁷

Dr. Gerhard Pfandl, author of the 2004 Sabbath School Lesson Guide, also produced a book on the topic to accompany the lesson. In one section, he discusses the concept of vision and explanation:

Explanation. The vision in Daniel 8:1-14 is the climax of the symbolic presentations in the book. What follows from Daniel 8:15 to the end of the book is supplementary to the vision of chapter 8. The end of chapter 8 tells us that Daniel did not understand (verse 27). In chapter 9, therefore, Daniel seeks further understanding (verse 3), and the visiting angel admonishes him to “understand the vision,” saying, “I have now come forth to give you skill to understand” (see verses 22-25). (2004b, p.77)

What is peculiar in this statement from Pfandl is that although he leads us to believe the material subsequent to chapter 8 is explanation supplementary to chapter 8, he refers to Dn10-12 as *vision*. Notice these statements:

The last *vision* in the book of Daniel has three sections: (1) the prologue in chapter 10; (2) the vision proper in Daniel 11:2-12:4; and (3) the epilogue in Daniel 12:5-13 that concludes not only the chapter but the whole book of Daniel. In this *vision*, given about two years after the return of the Jews from Babylon, God lifted the veil of history and showed Daniel some of the background to the conflict going on between the forces of good and evil.

The last *vision* in the book of Daniel contains the most detailed prophecy of future events in the Old Testament. We do well to remember, therefore, that the great prophecies in Daniel are given according to the principle of repetition and enlargement. They begin either in the days of Babylon (Daniel 2 and 7) or Medo-Persia (Daniel 8 and 12), but they each climax in the establishment of the kingdom of God. Daniel 2, 7, and 8 all deal with the same powers. Chapter 7 enlarges Daniel 2, and Daniel 8 expands Daniel 7. We can expect therefore that the vision of Daniel 10-12 will enlarge the outline of Daniel 8. (Pfandl, 2004b, pp.103, 105, emphasis mine)

So in effect, Pfandl is proposing, contrary to the opinion of other SDA historicists like Hasel and Shea, that visions can be seen as explanations of previous visions; in that the material in Dn10-12, although explanatory material of earlier visions, is visionary material in itself. In addition, the concept of vision and explanation is not as clear-cut as some other SDA historicists would make out.

⁷ This matter can be explored further in [Assumption No 1 and 18](#).

2. What vision was “shut”?

A basic question needing to be asked is what vision is Daniel to shut, in order to comply with Gabriel’s command? Gabriel had passed on to Daniel important information for those people living in the time when the things revealed in the vision actually come to pass. Daniel was specifically told that the vision was not for him but for future generations of God’s people. What was Daniel to shut up?

What is “the vision”?

There are three options here.

- First, there is the option that it refers only to verses 2-12. That is the narrowest view of the text.
- The second option includes the consideration in v26a, where Gabriel refers to the vision “that was spoken” which is vs 13-14. This would then include these two verses in the vision, making it vs. 2-14.
- Third, there is the option of taking the command to shut the vision to include vs.2-26 on the precedence of the understanding that Daniel sees the explanation in vs. 15-26 as “vision” as well, since this is what he dubs it a decade later.

Option 1: Verses 2-12

The text in verses 13 and 14 indicate that it is proper to call the revelation given to Daniel prior to verse 12 as a “vision:”

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

To refer to a previous section as a vision, clearly indicates that there is an end to that particular revelation before the person engages in that conversation. The issue over whether the question refers to vs9-12 or vs2-12 here is irrelevant. The fact that what they refer to as “vision” is finished by the time they have a discussion indicates a completion of that segment of the chapter at verse 12. Although readers will know that I support the view that vs. 13-14 refers to only vs. 9-12, I argue that case on the basis of the clause that qualifies the word “vision.” If that clause was not there, then the word “vision” in vs.13 would naturally refer to vs.2-12. So, ignoring the clause in v.13 for the moment, I support the view that the word “vision” by itself in v.13 could refer to vs.2-12. Said differently, it is the clause of vs.13 that narrows the focus of the question from the whole vision, to just

those items referred to in the appositional clause in v.13. Without that clause, it would rightly refer to the whole vision of vs2-12.

Option 2: Verses 2-14

Shea and others take the view that verse 13-14 could be included in the vision as well. He acknowledges that v.15 “could be all inclusive [of vs.2-14] on the basis of analogy with the use of these words in ch 10...” (Shea, 1981a, p. 235) He prefers not to include it in the vision, though he acknowledges that possibility. Questions on Doctrine see verse 13 and 14 as being included in the overall vision:

One feature seen in the overall *chazon* was the “two thousand and three hundred days” of Daniel 8:14. This special scene is referred to as “the vision [*mar’eh*] of the evening and the morning” (verse 26). (Seventh-day Adventists, 1957, p.271)

Smith likewise, lists four parts of the vision in Dn8: scene 1:the ram; scene 2: the he goat and the conflict between these two creatures; scene 3: the little horn; and scene 4: the conversation between two angel. “This is the entire matter of the vision and fills the chapter to the fifteenth verse.” (Smith, 1898, p. 151)

Option 3: Verses 2-26

The question arising out of these considerations is what then to do with the references to “vision” in Dn8: 1-2, and Dn9: 21? They both refer to “vision” in Dn8. What part – the whole? One needs to examine what its usage in SDA literature to see what position is taken.

Daniel 8: 1-2

IN the third year of the reign of the king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.

2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

James White view of Dn8: 1-2 is unequivocal: “The vision relates to what the prophet saw respecting Media and Persia, Grecia and Rome, as recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel...” He then goes through both the vision *with the explanation* provided for each section, indicating the whole chapter is the vision. (1870, p.120)

Smith says on this verse: “Here verse 1 states the time when this vision was given to Daniel.... The vision he refers to as the one which appeared unto him at the first, is doubtless the vision of the seventh chapter, which he had in the first year of Belshazzar’s reign.” (1944, p.149) In his comments, Smith sees no reason to split vision and

explanation. He sees the meaning of the word used to indicate ch7 as referring to a whole chapter.

Daniel 9:21

21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

In referring to the phrase “at the beginning” in Dn9:21, the SDA Bible Commentary says, “this can only refer to the vision of ch. 8: 2-14, as no other vision had been given since that one.” (Nichol, 1976, p.851) On the previous page of the commentary, it refers to the mention of Gabriel to “the same being who had explained the first three sections of the vision of ch.8.” (p. 850.) They refer to the section Dn8: 15-26 for this explanation. So, for the *SDABC*, the name Gabriel in the verse applies to vs.15-26, whereas the clause, “whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning,” refers us to vs. 2-14. Therefore, they clearly indicate that the reference in Dn9:21 covers the whole vision of Dn8.

Smith is very explicit as to what vision Dn9 refers to:

To what vision does Daniel refer by the expression, “the vision at the beginning”? It will be conceded by all that it is a vision of which we have some previous record, and that in that vision we shall find some mention of Gabriel. ...the vision of Daniel 7 was explained to Daniel by “one of them that stood by,” probably an angel; but we have no information as to what angel, nor is there anything in that vision which needed further explanation. The vision of Daniel 8 gives some particulars which show this to be the vision referred to. Gabriel is there introduced by name. ...If therefore the vision of Daniel 8 is not the one referred to, we have no record that Gabriel ever complied fully with the instruction given him, or that the vision had ever been explained. (1944, p.197)

The vision of the ninth chapter is the very next vision, so far as we have any account, which the prophet had. Again he is honored with the presence of a heavenly guest. And who is it? – “Gabriel,” exclaims the prophet; and that there may be no doubt as to his identity, Daniel adds, “whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning.” Thus our minds are carried directly back to the vision of chapter 8, and the prophet declares that the very same angel he had seen at that time was with him again.” (1898, p.170)

Therefore it can be taken as fact that the reference to the vision in Dn9:21 refers to the whole vision in Dn8. It is an umbrella term for the whole event.

After these considerations, we need to return to the original question and draw these thoughts together: what vision then is shut in Dn8? I have argued that textual considerations force us to take the fullest view of the meaning of the word vision, since Gabriel has not limited its meaning by qualifying the word “vision” at all. After

considering the three options of the meaning of “vision,” the only option that satisfies the fullest sense of the word is the last option – that the vision that is shut is the full revelation as detailed in vs. 2-26.

This poses no problems for those who consider the meaning of “shut” as preserved or kept confidential, rather than kept from being understood, since an explanation has not been given. There are further considerations regarding the SDA historicist’s position on this topic needing to be examined.

Further Considerations.

a. More complications for the SDA position

If SDA historicists want the command to “shut” to refer only to the conversation over the 2300 days as outlined in vs.13-14 of chapter 8, they have two problems: firstly, the command to shut the “vision” in v.26b is a command to shut the *hazôn*, whereas the conversation in vs. 13-14 is defined by scripture as a *mar’eh*.⁸ The second problem is if they say *hazôn* can include a *mar’eh*, then by the same argument, vs.15-26 can be included in the *hazôn* of v.26 as well, thus making the full vision a *hazôn* and capable of being the target of the command to “shut the vision,” meaning, in effect, to shut the vision *and* the explanation.⁹

In regard to the first problem, the issue is that SDA historicists say it is not the whole vision that is shut, but rather the information in the *mar’eh* – the time period of the 2300 days; yet, the command is to shut the *hazôn*. So the question is how can these two different ideas be harmonised? If *hazôn* only applies to vs.2-12, then the items that SDA historicists say are *not* shut. are referred to in this *hazôn*, since the command in v.26b would need to say, “shut the *mar’eh*,” or “shut the *mar’eh* of the evening and the morning,” in order to just refer to the conversation about the 2300 days. If *hazôn* in v.26 refers to vs.2-14, then the items in vs.13-14 can be included, but this also means that the other parts of the vision in vs. 2-12 are also shut, since it is the *hazôn* that is shut, not the

⁸Dn8:26; See also [Shea, 1981a](#), p. 237; and [Seventh-day Adventist, 1957](#), p.271 This argument takes the view that for SDA historicists, this point is important, and mitigates against a simple correlation between the two English words here. The reference, in their view, in v.26a is just to the 2300 days, whereas the reference in v.26b to close the vision, is unqualified, referring to the whole revelation.

⁹ Shea admits Dn8:15-26 could be a *mar’eh*. “ Because *mar’ê* is also applied to Gabriel on one occasion (Dan. 10 : 18), one might consider the possibility that the references to the *mar’ê* in Dan 8:26 and 9:23 could include the explanatory information given to Daniel both on the occasions of the intravisional appearance of the two holy ones in Dan 8:13-14 **and the extravisional appearance of Gabriel in Dan 8:15-26...**Dan8:15-26 the extravisional appearance and explanation of Gabriel: **could be included in the *mar’ê* of 8:26 and 9:23 but does not have to be...**” (1981a, pp.236f.) He eschews any mention of Dn8:15-26 being classified as *hazôn* as Dn9:21 classifies it. But accepting his admission that *mar’eh* could apply to Dn8: 15-26 and accepting Dn9:21’s application of *hazôn* to Dn8:15-26 it is clear to the unbiased reader that we have here an incidence where *hazôn* and *mar’eh* refer to the same thing here and thus are, for all practical purposes, synonymous.

mar'eh, and both common sense and SDA historicists dictate that this is not the case. So, this solution is not feasible. If *hazôn* in v.26 refers to vs. 2-26 then this means that all of the *hazôn* in vs 2-12, all of the *mar'eh* in vs.13-14 and all of the *hazôn* in vs.15-26 are to be shut. This would be the worst option for the SDA historicists to choose. Why is that? It is because they would only want the explanation of the 2300-days shut, not the whole vision.¹⁰

Another consideration on this is that there is no way that the word *hazôn* in Dn8:26b can be limited to mean just the *mar'eh* in vs. 13-14. The only way SDA historicists get around it is by asserting that the text *does not really mean* the whole vision, when it says “the vision.” So there is a real problem here for their answer to the question posed in the previous paragraph. They have tried various attempts but all have failed to stand examination. QOD’s arguments are faulty, as are Shea’s and Hasel’s, and the traditional method of just assertion and assumption lacks any rigour at all.¹¹ Therefore, this dilemma is unsolvable given the three factors needed in the SDA historicists’ answer: (a) shut means to preclude from understanding because of a lack of an explanation; (b) only a portion of the vision is to be shut and not the full vision; and finally, (c) the portion SDA historicists want to be shut is a *mar'eh* whereas the command is to shut the *hazôn* – words that are not harmonious in the SDA historicists’ definitions – definitions which create more problems than they solve.

In regard to the second problem SDA historicists have in trying to twist the command in Dn8:26b to refer only to the 2300 days, Questions on Doctrine provides another argument that supports my position opposing Shea, QOD and other SDA historicists quoted on this question. QOD says that a *mar'eh* is a subpart of a *hazôn*.¹² This means that using this definition by QOD, classifying vs.15-26 as a *mar'eh*, as Shea admits can be rightfully done, would apply, thereby allowing the whole of chapter 8 to be classified as a *hazôn*. In QOD’s view, vs.2-12 are *hazôn*, vs.13-14 are *mar'eh*, and I propose vs.15-26 could be classified *mar'eh* too using their own definitions. The conclusion of this line of reasoning is that the command to “Shut the vision” can, by QOD’s definition, correctly mean that the *whole chapter of Daniel 8* is to be shut, and not just the 2300 days. Shea, on the other hand, cannot allow *mar'eh* to be a part of a *hazôn*. In his failed thesis, it is a specialised word and should only be applied to vs.13-14.¹³

¹⁰ But this raises the question, Why would you want something ‘shut’ when it is not yet explained? Surely, it is those parts of the vision that have been explained, that should be shut, since they are complete, having the appropriate explanation. If the 2300 days are yet to be explained a decade later, then the command to shut the vision should be emended, and placed at the end of Dn9, instead of Dn8.

¹¹ See [Assumption 1](#) and [Assumption 2](#) papers for the argumentation on this.

¹² [Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p. 271

¹³ [Shea, loc cit.](#)

b. My opinion on the matter.

My position is that both texts refer to the whole chapter, in much the same way as the reference to Dn7 in Dn8:1 refers us to the whole revelation in Dn7, not just to the vision section before the explanation. He calls the whole revelation of Dn7 a “vision.” In committing his revelation in Dn8 to writing, he summarises the whole experience in verse 1-2 and Dn9:21 as a “vision.” And to add sting to those SDA historicists who oppose such a sensible view, Daniel clearly embarrasses them in Dn9:21 by including Gabriel’s explanatory part in Dn8: 15-26.

In addition, when Daniel is told to shut the vision in Dn8:26, it is my belief that since there is nothing qualifying the word vision here, we can take it as read, that the whole vision is included – both the visionary part, the conversation part and the explanatory part – *all* are to be preserved for posterity. This opinion is based on a careful respect for the grammar of verse 26a. In this part of the verse, Gabriel shows total competence in the use of language by using the correct identifiers to signal to Daniel what part of the vision he wanted to emphasise. In the first instance he chooses a construct genitival structure to indicate it was the vision “of the evening and the morning” he wanted to focus in on. Gabriel then goes even further and leaves no doubt as to what part of the vision of the evening and the morning he was referring to. He then uses a clausal structure to complete his qualification of the word “vision” by adding that it was the one “which was spoken.” From these two parts of this sentence, Gabriel shows us what to expect from him.

In considering the last part of verse 26, if Gabriel wanted to reduce the scope of the command to something smaller than the whole vision, he would have employed the same use of grammar we have witnessed in the first half of the verse. One only needs to read Shea or Doukhan’s work on the grammatical structure used by Gabriel in Daniel 9: 24-27 to realise that Gabriel is no grammatical idiot. He can use the finest poetical grammatical structures possible if there is a need.¹⁴ Therefore, to just leave the word “vision” unqualified in Dn8:26 is a clear sign that he intends the *whole* of the vision to be included in the command. There is no way around it. It is as clear as day. Shut the vision – period. No abridgements, no short forms, no qualifiers added to the noun here; it is the total vision, SDA historicists’ objections notwithstanding.¹⁵

¹⁴ Shea, 1981b; Doukhan, 1979,

¹⁵ Froom, quotes 10th century Jewish scholar Jepheth Ibn Ali Halevi of Palestine, who wrote a commentary on Daniel, indicates that the whole of Daniel’s words are to be shut. He says, “the Almighty Himself has said that the *words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end*. At that time it shall be revealed by the hand of the wise; *the wise shall understand*. God Almighty, in His mercy and lovingkindness, bring near their realisation. (Froom

, 1948

, p. 209) Although Froom would like that statement to align with the SDA interpretation of Dan12:4, the quotation makes no reference to the 2300 days alone; instead Jepheth makes the comment as a general statement for all of the revelation given to Daniel in that chapter.

One of the major problems in the SDA historicist position is their definition of the word to “shut.” This is covered more fully in [Assumption 8](#). If they incorporated the concept of preservation in the meaning, they would be closer to the mark. But they need their present erroneous logic to bolster the bevy of assumptions that are clustered around the last few verses of Dn8, and so the chance of seeing a change of their definition of “shut” is remote. But the fact that not just the part that relates to the last days, but the whole vision, the whole of the conversation in vs. 13-14 and the whole of the explanation by Gabriel has been preserved down to our day is evidence of the success of Daniel’s action in securing the preservation of the document in the most effective manner. Regardless of the SDA historicists’ definition of the matter, Daniel’s response to this command preserved more than vs. 13-14.

3. How can the vision be shut if the explanation is open and completed in Dn9?

Consider for a moment the meaning of “shut” as “unable to understand” / “kept secret.” From just the sheer logic of the issue, if an explanation makes a vision understandable and a “shut” vision means that it is not understood because an explanation has not been provided, then *providing an explanation for a vision means that the vision to which the explanation applies is not shut*, since the explanation makes it understandable. Applying this to Dn8 then, SDA historicists say the explanation begun in Dn8 is completed in Dn9, meaning that the vision is then fully understandable. Therefore, since the explanation is provided, the vision of Dn8 is thereby fully understood, regardless of whether it is the full vision or only those parts of the vision that relate to the last days. Therefore, the vision of Dn8 is no longer shut, but rather is “open” from the first year of King Darius, son of Ahasuerus (Dn9:1).¹⁶

If Dn9 is the completion of the explanation of the vision in Dn8, then at the completion of that explanation, no command is given to “shut” the explanation; therefore one can only assume that the explanation was left “open” and thus it renders understandable the vision of chapter 8. A further complication comes if they argue that the command in Dn12 to shut the book means that the vision of Dn8 and the explanation of Dn9 were also “shut” then as well. The problem with this is that if the meaning of “shut” is to preclude from understanding, then Gabriel is saying that the whole book is now locked up from being understood; even the vision of Dn2 etc. If they argue however, for a different meaning of “shut” in Dn12, that does not mean to ‘preclude from understanding,’ then there is no reason not to argue for a similar meaning in Dn8. And to complicate matters even further, Jesus said to the disciples in the first century (Matt24) to understand “the abomination of desolation” referred to in Dn9:26-27. Now this means that the so-called explanation of the vision of Dn8 *was open in the Days of Christ for all*

¹⁶ In the SDA view, the vision is to be shut for “many days.” (Dn8:26) This is because no explanation is given for it. (REF?) But since it *is* explained in Dn9, a little more than a decade after the vision of Dn8, the “many days” here have expired, and the 2300 days are no longer shut from being understood.

to understand; not, as SDA historicists say, it could be gained only after 1798. This stands in stark contrast to their view, which states that the command to shut the vision in Dn8 and Dn12 only referred to those matters relating to the last days, i.e., the time of the end (which, they say, began in 1798 AD). This mainly referred to the 2300-day interpretation. The bottom line for this logic is that Dn12 does not include any caveats about those parts of the visions relating to the last days, were to be “shut and closed.” He refers to the book in toto.

This question is explored more extensively in [Assumption 8](#) to which readers are recommended, under the heading: “3E. *Vision being ‘shut’ vs Explanation being ‘open.’*” Suffice it to say that SDA historicists’ view fails on this issue on two major points: their meaning of “shut” is incorrect; and their definition of the vision to be shut is incorrect as well.

The Assumptions used

As has been shown, there is a lot of dependence in this assumption on a cluster of interwoven assumptions focusing on the end of Dn8 with a view to linking Dn9 to the explanation of Dn8. These assumptions are interdependent on each other. They include:

- There is no starting date given in Dn8 for the 2300 days ([Assumption 3](#));
- Daniel got sick before the explanation of the 2300 days could be given ([Assumption 4](#));
- Daniel 8 is incomplete ([Assumption 5](#));
- Daniel did not understand the 2300 days ([Assumption 6](#));
- Daniel’s statement in ch8:27 that he didn’t understand the “vision” (mar’ê) was due to the fact that the information hadn’t been given ([Assumption 7](#));
- The “shutting” of the vision of Dn 8 (vs3-12) meant that it would not be understood until “many days”, that is, until the “time of the end” ([Assumption 8](#)).
- Assumption 8 presupposes [Assumption 9](#), so this is included as well. This assumption says that the time of the end began in 1798 A.D.

This assumption, that the shutting of the vision of Dn8 (Dn8:26) didn’t mean that the explanation of that vision was complete, has been shown *not* to depend on any scriptural data, but rather to depend on the support of assumption listed above. It is *only* by invoking these that the remotest hope can be entertained of supporting this assumption.

Given then that these assumptions have been found to be wanting, this assumption too must share the same embarrassment as its supporting assumptions.

1. There is no scriptural evidence in this assumption that is used to support this assumption that has not been considered in former papers. The meanings of the Hebrew words used for “vision” have been addressed elsewhere, as well as the structure of the verses in Dn8. On the contrary, a close examination of verse 26 reveals exactly the opposite position of that proposed by SDA historicists concerning the scope of the word “vision” to be shut. It is the full vision (including the explanation) that is to be shut.
2. There is no evidence that the word “vision” cannot apply to an explanation. It is done in every chapter of the last chapters of Daniel – from chapter 7 through to chapter 12. In every chapter the word for vision can and does encompass both vision and explanation. The vision that Daniel is commanded to shut in Dn8:26 properly refers to the whole chapter, not just the conversation regarding the 2300 days.
3. The specific manner Gabriel refers to Dn8:13-14 in v.26a with two grammatical functions indicates the lack of any qualifiers in the clause “shut the vision” indicates that the whole revelation of Dn8 is intended.

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