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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 13**

**The command of Gabriel in Dn9:23 for Daniel to  
“understand the vision” specifically meant the vi-  
sion of Dn 8:13-14.**

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### The Purpose of This Assumption

The purpose of this assumption is to establish a topical relationship between Dn 8 and Dn 9, that is, a relationship which establishes a common subject between the material in Dn 8 and Dn9 – the common subject being the vision of Dn8: 2-14 in general and verses 13 and 14 in particular. If the vision that Gabriel is referring to in Dn9:23 (and even in verse 24, as some pioneers argue) where he says “consider the vision” is that of Dn 8, then Gabriel is, in effect, saying “Here’s a bit more information about the vision of Dn 8 for you to consider”. Thus Dn9 is then just a continuation of the explanation of Dn 8: 15-26, and should be taken as such.

The effect of this conclusion would be that the time period of Dn9: 24-27 is the chronological explanation of the section of the 2,300-day period of Dn8: 14 not explained by Gabriel in Dn8.

### **The Methods of Establishing this Assumption and the Problems associated with these methods.**

The argument explained above is developed by linking Dn9:23 with Dn8:26,27 and then in turn with Dn8:13,14. The line of reasoning used states that Daniel did not understand the vision at the end of Daniel 8, therefore Gabriel had not completed his task of making Daniel understand it. Therefore, we must look to some later explanation from Gabriel to complete this assignment. And this is exactly what happened in Dn9, we are told. Daniel did not understand the time period in Daniel 8:14, and so Gabriel starts in Daniel 9:24 by explaining a time period. After the revelation of Daniel 9, Daniel says in Daniel 10:1 that he understood the thing, which must be the vision of Daniel 8. Therefore, Daniel 9 explains the time period of Daniel 8.

It should be noted though that by itself this assumption does not establish exactly how the 70-week period of Dn 9 should be considered in relation to the 2,300-day period. It is only one of many assumptions which, taken together, yield the conventional SDA conclusion regarding the synchronised starting date for the two periods.

This assumption has been approached in two ways. Prior to 1957, the method used has been one of aligning this assumption with a chain of other assumptions concerning both the vision, the explanation, and the conclusion of Daniel’s revelatory experience in Dn 8. It was on this basis that this assumption was given validity. The actual chains of assumptions used for support are listed later in this section. Another method uses the definite article “*the* vision” in Dn9:21 and verses 23, 24 to point to the vision of Dn8. This argument has been used since the early days of the SDA church.

The second approach, introduced only recently, asserts lexical arguments based on the meaning of the two Hebrew words that are translated by the English word “vision,” and also based on the usage of the verb for “to understand.” To that approach we will turn after examining the first approach.

## The First Approach

### Miller's Approach.

The first approach to Dn 9: 23 in linking it with Dn 8: 13,14 has traditionally been one of assumption. This is illustrated firstly from the principles and assumptions adopted by William Miller during his two years study assignment (1816-1818) which yielded his conclusions that the advent was only a few decades away.

Bliss quotes Miller's "rules of interpretation" which Miller adopted from his study and lists Rule VI thus:

God has revealed things to come, by visions in figures and parables; and in this way the same things are often time revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. (1853 pp.,70,71)

In his proof texts, which he offers in support, he lists "Dan. 2d, 7th & 8<sup>th</sup>" (*ibid*). What he implies by this grouping of these three chapters is explained in his first book (1836). In explaining Dan 8: 13,14 he says on p.38 "we shall now try to understand what is meant by the 'vision' in the text".

The vision spoken of in the text alludes to three separate times in which God revealed unto Daniel all that may be considered a prophecy in the book of Daniel, which vision was explained to Daniel by a heavenly messenger called Gabriel, at three separate times, the last of which closes the book of Daniel, which last instruction will be the subject of a future lecture. (p. 38,39)

He then details these three visions in chs 2,7 and 8, which he sees as one vision presented in three different ways, each one with material supplementing the others. This means that Dn9 supplements Dn8, even aside from any consideration of the links between Dn8 and Dn9. On p. 46 he takes up a discussion of Dn 9 and says:

We learn that the angel Gabriel was sent to instruct Daniel and make him understand the vision. You may inquire what vision? I answer the one Daniel had in the beginning, for he has had no other. (1836, p. 48)

This ambiguous answer begs the question: Does "the beginning" mean Dn 8, Dn 7 or Dn 2? On the one hand, Miller says that the phrase "in the beginning" (Dn 9: 21) referred to Dn 8: 16:

And while he [Daniel] was speaking and praying, as he tells us, Dan ix. 21, "Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, Daniel viii. 16,17, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation... (p. 47)

Yet on the other hand, when it is considered that Miller saw the visions of these three chapters as just portions of the full vision which is only perceived when all three are combined together, the intent of his answer becomes a bit clearer, though certainly not free from problems. He is saying that in Dn 9, Gabriel has returned to clarify details of the vision still left unexplained, the vision which chs 2,7 and 8 have unveiled.

After giving his interpretation of Dn 9: 24-27 along historicist's lines of argument, he summarizes by saying:

Is not the seventy weeks fairly proved to have been fulfilled by years? And does not this prove that our vision and the 2,300 days ought to be so reckoned? Yes, if the seventy weeks are a part of the vision. **Does not the angel say plainly, I have come to shew thee, therefore under-**

**stand the matter, and consider the vision? Yes.** Well, what can a man ask for more than plain positive testimony, and cloud of circumstance agreeing with it? But on thing remains still to be proved. When did the 2,300 years begin? ... Let us begin it where the angel told us, from the going forth of the decree to build the walls of Jerusalem in troublous times; 457 years before Christ...

We learn that the vision, which Daniel saw, was revealed at three separate times. 1<sup>st</sup> in Nebuchadnezzar's dream...The next vision Daniel saw was similar to this; he saw four great beasts...In the third vision which Daniel has coupled with the former by saying that it was after (or like) the one which appeared unto him at the first...Daniel then, in the 26<sup>th</sup> verse couples the two visions the one in the evening, 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, and the one in the morning, 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, and says "the vision of the evening and morning which was told is true.

We learn that this vision is two thousand three hundred days long, that days are to be reckoned years...We learn by the instruction of Gabriel, that the seventy weeks were a part of the vision, that the Daniel was commanded to begin the seventy weeks at the going forth of the decree...We think the vision of Daniel begins 457 years before Christ, take which from 2,300 leaves 1843, after Christ, when the vision must be finished. But the objector may say, perhaps your vision does not begin with the 70 weeks. Let me ask two or three questions. **Does not the Angel say to Daniel, ix 23 "Therefore understand the matter and consider the vision?"** Yes. Do you believe the bible is true? We do. Then if the bible is true, Daniels 70 weeks are a part of the vision and 490 years were accomplished when the Messiah was cut off and not for himself. The 1810 years afterwards the vision is completed...(1836, pp.49,50,51-52, Emphasis mine)

Now although Miller's logic here can be shown to be highly questionable and loose, certain assumptions which are used to link Dn 9:23 to Dan 8:13, 14 stand out:

The vision mentioned in Dn 9:23 is the one which includes the 2300 year-day time day;

The 70 weeks are cut off from the 2300 year-day period;

The 70 weeks are cut off from the beginning of the 2300 year-day period;

The fact that that the 70 week (490 days) period is cut off from the beginning of the 2300 year-day period, and yet is proved to be fulfilled in the 490 years, validating the year for a day principle, is substantial evidence arguing in favour of the 2300 day period being 2300 literal years and not 2300 literal days or 6.3 years.

And has been noted before, Miller can say that the reference in Dn 9:23 to "the vision" has a direct connection with Dn8: 14 because from his perspective, there is only one vision in the book of Daniel—the vision which combines all the visionary details of Dn 2, Dn 7, Dn 8 and Dn9. Miller's opponents never disputed this logic; rather it was considered Biblical.

The fact that this line of argument has long since fallen by the way in SDA publications and periodicals comments succinctly on the validity of Miller's argument and consequently Miller's method of linking Dn 9:23 with Dn 8:14 through his idiosyncratic definition of "vision." Nobody argues anymore that Dn9 is a part of Dn8 because Dn7, 8 and 9 comprise one vision.

Apart from the early mistakes of exposition by Miller, most other assumptions he used to develop the link between the "vision" in Dn8 and that in Dn9 are identical to those assumptions used today:-

The command of Gabriel to Daniel to “understand” (Dn 9:23) is in relation to his lack of understanding, and specifically of his lack of understanding of something Gabriel was commanded to make him understand, i.e. the mar’ê of ch 8 (Dn8: 16).

Daniel says at the end of the explanation of the vision in Dn8 that he didn’t understand it (v 27);

All has been explained in the vision of Dn8 except the starting date for the 2300 day period, yet Gabriel had been told to make him understand;

Dn 10: 1 says that “the time appointed was long and he understood that thing, and had understanding of the vision.” Gabriel therefore had fulfilled his duty to make Daniel understand by then. Since Dn 9 is the only scripture between Dn10 and Dn8: 26, Dn 9 must be the explanation needed by Daniel to understand the vision of ch. 8;

Daniel had assumed that the 2300 days would terminate with the end of the seventy years of captivity, and Gabriel is sent to undeceive him;

Dan 9: 21 refers back to Dn 8: 16;

Since Gabriel hadn’t finished his job at the end of ch. 8, the statement “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding” (Dn 9: 22) clearly indicates that Gabriel was about to complete his mission given in Dn 8: 16;

The fact that Gabriel begins on the subject of time, the very detail not discussed in the first part of the interpretation of the vision of Dn 8, is very strong evidence that supports the close connection between Dn 8 and Dn 9 proposed by SDAs;

The verb chathak/htk used in Dn 9: 24 supports the view that the 70 week period is related to the 2300 day period by being “cut off” from the latter.

These assumptions are present in the two following examples, which highlight the type of argumentation presented by SDA’s – one in 1852 and the other in 1957:-

## **The Traditional Approach Continues with a raft of Assumptions**

### **Example No. 1: J. N. Andrews. 1852.**

The field of vision, then, is the empires of Persia, Greece and Rome.

That part of the vision that now engages our attention is the time- reckoning of the 2300 days.

THE 2300 DAYS NOT EXPLAINED IN DAN. VII.

Gabriel did explain to Daniel what was meant by the symbols of the beasts and of the horns, but did not in this vision explain to him the 2300 days and the sanctuary. Hence, Daniel tells us at the end of the chapter that he “was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.” But there are several facts that will give us some light on this matter.

It is a fact the 2300 literal days [not quite seven years] would not cover the duration of a single power in this prophecy, much less extend over them all. Therefore, the days must be symbols, even as the beast and horns are shown to be symbols.

It is a fact, that a symbolic or prophetic day is one year. Eze iv, 5,6; Num xiv, 34. Hence, the period is 2300 years.

It must begin with “the vision;” consequently it commences in the height of the Medo-Persian power.

But the angel had not yet explained the “manner of time,” or given its date to the prophet. If Gabriel never did explain this subject to Daniel, he is a fallen angel; for he was commanded in plain terms thus to do. Dan viii. 16. But he is not a fallen angel as appears from the fact that

some hundred years after this, he was sent by Jehovah to Zacharias and to Mary. Luke 1. Gabriel did explain to Daniel at that time more than he could bear, [verse 27,] and at a later period, as we shall now show, he did make Daniel understand the vision.

#### GABRIEL EXPLAINS IN DAN. IX WHAT HE OMITTED IN DAN. VIII.

As we have seen, the charge had been given to Gabriel to make Daniel understand the vision. Verse 16. But in the last verse of the chapter we learn that “none understood” the vision. This must refer particularly to the 2300 days, and to the sanctuary, as the other parts of the vision had been clearly explained.

But in the first verse of chapter x he informs us that a thing was revealed to him; “and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” Hence, it is evident that between chapters viii and x, he must have obtained the desired understanding of the time. In other words the explanation must be found in chapter ix.

Dan. ix commences with the earnest, importunate prayer of the prophet, from the reading of which it is evident that he had so far misunderstood the vision of chapter viii, that he concluded that the 2300 days of treading under foot the sanctuary would terminate with the 70 years desolation of the city and sanctuary predicted by Jeremiah. Compare verses 1 and 2 with verses 16 and 17. The man Gabriel is now sent to undeceive him, and to complete the explanation of the vision. “While I was speaking in prayer,” says Daniel, “even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, [here he cites us back to chapter viii, 15,16,] being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.” – Verses 21-23. Note these facts:

In verse 21, Daniel cites us to the vision of chapter viii.

In verse 22, Gabriel states that he had come to give Daniel skill and understanding. This being the object of Gabriel’s mission, Daniel, who at the close of chapter viii did not understand the vision, may, ere Gabriel leaves him, fully understand its import.

As Daniel testifies at the close of chapter viii that none understand the vision, it is certain that the charge given to Gabriel, “Make this man to understand the vision,” still rested upon him. **Hence it is that he tells Daniel, “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding,” and in verse 23, commands him to “understand the matter and to consider the vision.” This is undeniable proof that Gabriel’s mission in chapter ix, was for the purpose of explaining what he omitted in chapter viii.** If any ask further evidence, the fact that Gabriel proceeds to explain the very point in question, most fully meets the request. That he does do this, we will now show.

#### GABRIEL’S EXPLANATION OF THE TIME.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon the people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” Dan. ix 24-27.

“DETERMINED” IN VERSE 24, MEANS CUT OFF.

“ ‘Seventy weeks are determined,’ literally ‘cut off.’ The Hebraists all admit that the word determined, in our English version, does signify ‘cut off.’ Not one has disputed it.” – Josiah Litch. *Midnight Cry*, Vol. IV, No.25.

“Thus Chaldaic and Rabbinical authority, and that of the earliest versions, the Septuagint and Vulgate, give the single signification of ‘cutting off’ to this verb. Should it be inquired why a

tropical sense has been attributed to it, such as ‘determining’ or ‘decreeing,’ it may be answered that the reference of the verse (in which it occurs to Dan viii, 12, was unobserved. It was therefore supposed that there was no propriety in saying ‘seventy weeks are cut off,’ when there was no other period of which they could have formed a portion. But as the period of 2300 days is first given, and verses 21 and 23, compared with Dan viii, 16, show that the ninth chapter furnishes an explanation of the vision in which Gabriel appeared to Daniel, and of the ‘matter’ (the commencement of the 2300 days)- the literal (or rather, to speak properly, the only) signification demanded by the subject matter, is that of ‘cut off.’” – Prof. Whiting. *Midnight Cry*, Vol. IV, No. 17.

“Seventy weeks have been cut off upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin-offerings, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.” Dan. ix, 24. Whiting’s Translation.

The facts which are set before us in the above, from Litch and Whiting, should not be forgotten. The word rendered “determined.” [verse 24,] literally signifies “cut off.”

“The vision” which Gabriel came to explain, contained the period of 2300 days; and in the explanation he tells us that “seventy weeks have been cut off” upon Jerusalem and the Jews. This is a demonstration that the seventy weeks are a part of the 2300 days. Hence the commencement of the seventy weeks is the date of the 2300 days. And the fact that the seventy weeks were fulfilled in 490 years, as all admit, is a demonstration that the 2300 days from which this period of 400 days was cut off is 2300 years.

THE ANGEL’S DATE OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.

We have seen that the seventy weeks are cut off from the 2300 days. Hence, when the date of the seventy weeks is established, the key to unlock and understand the reckoning of the days is in our hand. [Andrews \(1852\)](#)

### **Example No.2: The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary:**

Some commentators have missed the close connection between chs. 8 and 9, and thus the relationship between the 2300 “days” of ch. 8 and the 70 “weeks” of ch. 9. The context, however, requires precisely this relationship, as the following facts make evident:

All symbols of the vision of ch. 8: 2-14 are explained fully in vs. 15-26, with the exception for the 2300 “days” of vs. 13,14 (see GC 325). In fact, all of vs. 13 and 14 is explained in vs. 24, 25 except the time element involved. In v. 26 Gabriel mentions the time element, but breaks off his explanation before saying anything further about it (see No. 3. below).

Daniel knew that the 70 years of captivity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah were nearly at an end (ch. 9:2; see Vol. III, pp. 90-92, 94-97; see Jer. 25:11).

Daniel did not understand the 2300 day time period, the only part of the vision not yet explained (ch. 8:27: see No. 1. above), and evidently feared that it implied an extension of the Captivity and the continued desolation of the Sanctuary (see ch. 9-19). He knew that the promise of restoration was conditional upon Israel’s sincere repentance (SL 48; see Vol. iv, p 34).

The prospect of terrible persecution during the course of the 2300 “days” (Dan. 8:10-13, 23-25) proved more than the aged Daniel could bear, and as a result he “fainted, and was sick certain days” (ch.8:27; GC 325). Accordingly, the angel discontinued the explanation of the vision at this time.

During the interval preceding the angel’s return (ch. 9:21) Daniel turned to the prophecies of Jeremiah for a clearer understanding of the divine purpose in the Captivity (see Vol. IV, p. 31), particularly with respect to the 70 years (ch. 9:2).

Concluding that Israel’s transgression as a nation was responsible for what he evidently took to be a extension of the 70 years (see No.3, above). Daniel interceded most earnestly with God for forgiveness, for the return of the captive exiles, and for the restoration of the now desolate sanctuary in Jerusalem (see ch. 9:3-19). His prayer closes with a reiteration of the petition that God will “forgive” the sins of the nation and “defer not” the promise of restoration (v. 19).

Note particularly that the unexplained portion of the vision of ch. 8 had foretold that “the sanctuary and the host” would be “trodden under foot” (vs. 13,14,24) for a period of 2300 “days.” In his prayer Daniel pleads with God that the time allotted to the Captivity should not be extended

(see vs. 16-19). A careful comparison of the prayer of ch. 9 with the problem of ch. 8 makes it clear beyond possible doubt that Daniel had the problem in mind as he prayed. He thought that the vision of the 2300 “days” of desolation for the sanctuary and persecution for God’s people implied that God would “deter” the restoration (ch.9:19).

In answer to this prayer, Gabriel, who had been commissioned to explain the vision of ch. 8 (ch. 8:15-19) but had not as yet completed the explanation (see No. 4 above), greeted Daniel with the announcement, “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding”. (ch. 9:22)

The explanation of ch. 9:24-27 is clearly Heaven’s reply to Daniel’s prayer (v. 23), and the solution of the problem about which he was praying (see Nos. 6,7. above). Compare the original command to Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel (ch. 8:16) with the renewal of the command at the time of Daniel’s prayer (ch. 9:23), and Gabriel’s command to Daniel to “understand” and “know” (ch. 8:17,19), with similar expressions in ch. 9:23.

Note particularly that Daniel was told to “understand the matter, and consider the vision” (ch. 9:23), that is, the vision he had seen “at the beginning” (v. 21). This can refer only to the vision of ch. 8:2-14, as no other vision had been given since that one. Compare the words “understand the vision” (ch. 8:16) with “consider the vision” (ch.9:23).

The context thus makes certain beyond the possibility of doubt that the explanation of ch. 9:24-27 is a continuation, and completion, of the explanation begun in ch. 8:15-26, and that the explanation of ch. 9:24-27 deals exclusively with the unexplained portion of the vision, that is, with the time element of the 2300 “days” of ch. 8:13,14. The angel is Gabriel in both instances (chs. 8:16 9:21), the subject matter is identical, and the context makes evident that the concluding portion of the explanation picks up the thread of explanation at the point it was laid down in ch. 8. (Nichol, 1976, p.850-851)

### **Example No.3: From Woolsey:**

Although the ram and the goat were explained to him, he fainted before he had been given a clear explanation of the 2,300 days. He said, “I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it” (verse 27).

Now in the ninth chapter Daniel introduces Gabriel as the one “whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning” (verse 21), and Gabriel describes his purpose as “to give thee skill and understanding...Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (verses 22,23). Obviously, it was the vision of chapter 8 that Daniel was to understand, and it was the time factor that yet remained to be explained. (2001, p.47).

As can be seen from the three examples above, Assumption 13 involves many assumptions. Most of the other assumptions are still being used today in contemporary SDA scholarship. A few, like that of Miller’s definition of “vision” have been quietly dropped in time.

A second argument dropped from use is the argument using Dn10:1 as referring to Dn8:26,27. That argument used the following faulty line of logic: Dn 10: 1 says that “the time appointed was long and he understood that thing, and had understanding of the vision”, therefore Gabriel had fulfilled his duty by the time of chapter 10. Since Dn 9 is the only scripture between Dn8: 26. 27, Dn 9 must be the explanation needed by Daniel to understand the vision of ch. 8<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> . Says James White: “Now the Prophet can say in the first verse of chapter ten: “The time appointed was long, and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” The 70 weeks then, is the key to unlock the vision of 2300 days, and gives us understanding of the matter.” (1853b, pp.170f)

A third argument dropped through the years is the use of the statement “to seal up the vision and the prophecy” in Dn9:24 to refer to Dn8:14.<sup>2</sup> though some SDA historicists still tend to use it in a much more diluted fashion, knowing they cannot use the logic used by the pioneers.

### **The Argument that Dn9 deals with the subject of time, the very thing unexplained in Dn8**

The eighth point above lists the connection of the two chapters on the basis that both talk about time. The fifth argument associated with assumption No. 13 and listed on p.318 uses the fact that Dn9:24 begins with the subject of time, and the assumption that it was only a detail in regard to time (i.e., the starting date of the 2300 days) that was not given in Dn8, thus giving clear indication that Dn9 is a continuation of the explanation of Dn8: 15-16.

This is answered by stating that the starting date of the 2300 days is not given in Dn 8 is an assumption, not a basic fact. One has to assume that the 2300 days applies to the length of the vision, not to the polluting of the sanctuary, in order to say no starting point is given in Dn8. The only clear fact in this argument is that Dn9: 24 begins with the subject of time. But this does not thereby support the SDA’s argument because the quantity of the time period in Dn9: 24 is directly related, not to Dn8: 14, but to Dn9: 2 where time was the subject matter from the outset of the chapter.

The fact that chapter 9:24 begins with the subject of time was a standard proof used by SDA church writers to prove that the vision referred to in Dn9:23, 24 was the vision of chapter 8: 13, 14. Notice this statement by Uriah Smith:

Now we will introduce a test to settle beyond peradventure the truthfulness or falsity of the

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Smith: “We call attention to one fact which shows that there is a necessary ‘connection’ between the seventy weeks of the ninth chapter, and something else which precedes or follows it, called ‘the vision.’ It is found in the 24<sup>th</sup> verse: ‘Seventy weeks are determined, or cut off, upon thy people... to seal up the vision.’ &c. Now there are but two significations to the phrase ‘seal up.’ They are, first, “to make secret,” and second ‘to make sure.’ We care not now in which of these significations the phrase is supposed to be used. That is not the point now before us. Let the signification be what it may, it shows that the prediction of the seventy weeks necessarily relates to something else beyond itself, called ‘the vision,’ in reference to which it performs this work, ‘to seal up.’ To talk of its sealing up itself is as much of an absurdity as to suppose that Josephus was so much afraid of the Romans that he refrained from telling the world that he thought the fourth kingdom of Daniel was ‘the kingdom of the Greeks.’ It is no more proper to say that the ninth chapter of Daniel ‘is complete in itself,’ than it would be to say that a map which was designed to show the relation of Massachusetts to the United States, referred to nothing but Massachusetts. It is no more complete in itself than a bond given in security for a note, or some other document to which it refers, is complete in itself; and we doubt if there is a school-boy fourteen in the land, of ordinary capacity, who would not on reading the ninth chapter, with an understanding of the clause before us, decide that it referred to something distinct from itself, called the vision. What vision it is, there is no difficulty in determining. It naturally and obviously refers to the vision which was not fully explained to Daniel, and to which Gabriel calls his attention in the preceding verse- the vision of the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter. Daniel tells us that Gabriel was commanded to make him understand that vision (8: 16). This was not fully done at that interview connected with the vision; he is therefore sent to give Daniel the needed ‘skill and understanding,’ to explain its ‘meaning’ by communicating to him the prediction of the seventy weeks.” ( [Smith, 1870, p.478](#))

proposition here taken. *If* chapter 9 is connected with chapter 8; *if* the vision of chapter 9 is the sequel of that of chapter 8; *if* the expression used by Gabriel in chapter 9 “consider the vision,” refers to the vision of chapter 8; and *if* he has now come to complete the instruction which he there omitted; it is certain that he will commence with the very subject which he was there obliged to leave unexplained in that vision, namely the subject of the time. If he does this, this connection between these two chapters for which we here contend is established. If he does not, it is perhaps still an open question.

And what does he say? “*Seventy weeks are determined* upon thy people and upon thy holy city.” He does therefore commence with the subject of time. But how do we know that this time has any connection with the time of chapter 8? Because he says of it that it is “determined;” and the word determined here signifies “cut off.” But there is no period of time from which they could be said to be cut off, except the 2300 days of chapter 8. Thus are the expressions relating to the time connected together; and Gabriel undertakes an explanation of the 2300 days by dividing it into two periods, the first of the seventy weeks or 490 days, and the remainder of 1810 days, and the explaining the shorter, which is the key to the whole..(1876, pp. 507f)

The fact that Dn9 begins with the matter of time cannot be used to prove that the 70 weeks is the explanation of the 2300 days. That argumentation is naïve. The obvious answer why Gabriel deals with the matter of time, is because Daniel has been considering seriously the time prophecies of Jeremiah, to the point that his study of these prophecies drove him to prayer. The answer of the angel is in line not only with the topic of probationary time for Israel, but also the quantity of the period under consideration. There is no connection with either of these matters to the 2300 days. One has to make a bundle of assumptions to arrive at that conclusion. There is however, explicit evidence within the chapter that the time details of Dn9:24-27 are related to the 70-years of exile studied by Daniel from the book of Jeremiah. A recent paper by Shea confirms this association.(1986b) And that evidence is within chapter 9 without reference to anything in chapter 8 or chapter 7.

All of the other assertions on the alignment between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days cannot be substantiated from Gabriel introducing the matter of time as Smith has implied is possible. The readers are referred to the pertinent sections which deal with those assumptions.

### **The Argument that “the vision” is understood by Dn10:1**

Dn 10: 1 says that “the time appointed was long<sup>3</sup> and he understood that thing, and had understanding of the vision”, therefore Gabriel had fulfilled his duty by then. Since Dn 9 is

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<sup>3</sup> Many early SDA historicist’s like those quoted in this paper used the statement in Dn10:1: “the time was long” to infer that the long period being referred to is the 2300 days/years. This confirmed in their thinking that Dn10:1 was referring to Dn8. This is ignored today since the translation of the Hebrew has been corrected in modern translations and have forced this argument to be dropped. Typical of them is James White who argues in the article to be quoted that the explanation in Dn9 by Gabriel gives Daniel the key to show that the 2300 days are not literal days, but years, thus showing that the period of the 2300 days is not 6.3 years but rather 2300 years, and he quotes Dn10:1 in the process. He offers Dn9 as a key for the year-day principle: “But in his visit to the Prophet in chapter nine, he gives a rule by which the days might be known to be years, and also names the event from which the period should be dated. Now the Prophet can say in the first verse of chapter ten: “The time appointed was *long*, and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” The 70 weeks, then, is the key to unlock the vision of the 2300 days, and give us understanding of the matter.

the only scripture between Dn8 and Dn10, Dn 9 must be the completion of the explanation to the vision of ch. 8.

Notice this example from James White:

Now Gabriel has obeyed the command to make Daniel “understand the vision.” He did this to in part in the eighth chapter. He there explained the symbols of Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome, yet none understood the vision. But in his visit to the Prophet in chapter nine, he gives a rule by which the days might be known to be years, and also names the event from which the period should be dated. Now the Prophet can say in the first verse of chapter ten: “The time appointed was *long*, and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” The 70 weeks then, is the key to unlock the vision of 2300 days, and gives us understanding of the matter. (1853b, pp.170f)

Then what was it that “none understood,” at the close of this visit from Gabriel? Answer, the *time*. The angel in this chapter gives no starting point for the 2300 days. Now pass over the ninth chapter, and read the first verse of the tenth. “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a thing was revealed unto Daniel whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was *long*; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” He must have received this “understanding of the vision” in the ninth chapter. (1853a, p. 170)

And here is another example in the same vein from Andrews:

As we have seen, the charge had been given to Gabriel to make Daniel understand the vision. Verse 16. But in the last verse of the chapter we learn that “none understood” the vision. This must refer particularly to the 2300 days, and to the sanctuary, as the other parts of the vision had been clearly explained.

But in the first verse of chapter x he informs us that a thing was revealed to him; “and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long; and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” Hence it is evident that between chapters viii and ix, he must have obtained the desire understanding of the time. In other words the explanation must be found in chapter ix. (1852b, p.263)

Today, SDA scholars shun the use of Dn10:1, 2 as referring to the revelations of Dn 8 and 9, freely admitting that the statement in these verses is a proleptic reference to Dn 11-12. Here is an example from the SDA Bible Commentary:

Dan10:1 introduces the final section of the book, ch10 providing the setting in Daniel’s experience for his fourth great prophecy, recorded in chs. 11 and 12. The main body of the prophetic narrative begins with ch.11:2 and closes with ch.12:4, the remainder of ch.12 being a sort of postscript to the prophecy. ...

**A thing.** A unique expression used by Daniel to describe his fourth great prophetic outline (chs. 10-12), which was apparently revealed without a preceding symbolic representation without any allusion to symbols (cf. chs. 7:16-24; 8:20-26). The word *mar’ah*, “vision,” of vs 7, 8, 16 refers simply to the appearance of Daniel’s two celestial visitants, mentioned in vs. 5, 6 and 10-21 respectively. Accordingly, some have considered the fourth prophetic outline a further, more detailed explanation of events pictured symbolically in the “vision” of ch. 8: 1-14. On this basis chs. 10-12 would be interpreted in terms of the vision of chs. 8, 9. However, the relationship between chs. 10-12 and 8, 9 is by no means so clear or certain as that between ch. 8 and 9....

**He understood.** In contrast with the three other visions (chs. 2, 7, 8-9), which were couched in highly symbolic terms, this final revelation was given largely in literal language. The angel stated specifically that he had come to make Daniel “understand what shall befall thy people in

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(1853a, pp.170f) Clearly White uses Dn10:1 here as another proof that 2300 years are meant as opposed to 2300 days, and that Dn9 is the key to endorse using a day for a year principle with respect to the 2300 days.

the latter days” (ch.10:14). This is the subject matter of chs. 11 and 12. It is not until near the end of the vision (ch.12:8) that Daniel encounters a revelation concerning which he confesses, “I heard, but I understood not.” (Nichol, 1976, pp. 856f.)

### **The Argument that Daniel thought the 2300-days would terminate with the end of the seventy years of exile.**

As seen in the quotations above, SDA historicists have Daniel assuming that the 2300 days would terminate with the end of the seventy years of captivity, and Gabriel is sent to undeceive him. An example of this argument is Uriah Smith:

Daniel then intercedes for the city of Jerusalem, called by God’s name, and His Holy mountain, for which He has had such love, and beseeches Him, for His mercies sake, to let His anger be turned away. Finally, his mind centers upon the holy sanctuary, God’s own dwelling place upon this earth, and he pleads that its desolations may be repaired. Daniel understood the seventy years of captivity to be near their termination. From his allusion to the sanctuary, it is evident that he so far misunderstood the important vision given him in Daniel 8 as to suppose that the 2300 days expired at the same time. This misapprehension was at once corrected when the angel came to give him further instruction in answer to his prayer. (1944, p. 196)

A more intricate development of this novel concept is presented by George Storrs:

It was to make Daniel understand the vision, Gabriel came – [chapter 8] verse 17: “at the time of the end shall be the vision.” He would have Daniel understand that the end intended was the last end of indignation, - verse 19: “Behold I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation;” and he would have Daniel know that “ at the time appointed, the end shall be.” The 2300 days is the only time appointed. ... Now let us inquire what Daniel did understand, and what not. The angel explained every thing to him respecting the ram, he-goat, and little horn. But Daniel tells us in the last verse. “I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.” What did not Daniel understand? There were evidently, three things he did not understand; 1<sup>st</sup> What “sanctuary” was intended in verse 13; 2<sup>nd</sup>. He did not understand how to reckon the days; and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Where to commence his reckoning. As Gabriel is not to be charged with disobedience to the command to make Daniel understand the vision, and as he has not fulfilled that command in this chapter, we must look elsewhere to see if he ever did what he was directed to do, and what he promised Daniel he would do.

Let us look into the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter. Daniel there informs us that he found out “by books, the number of years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” We might here inquire, Why did not Daniel “find out before?” It was written in the book, but he did not discover it till now. ... When Daniel discovered this fact, fifteen years had passed since the vision of the eighth chapter, and he had all that time been in uncertainty about the points that were not explained to him in that vision. He now seems to catch at the thought, that it must be the sanctuary at Jerusalem, to which the vision related, and he at once commences praying accordingly. He, at the 17<sup>th</sup> verse, prays especially about the sanctuary. “Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.” Daniel’s mind is evidently in the vision, and he seems to suppose he has got the clue to the sanctuary that is to be cleansed; but Gabriel comes flying *swiftly*, to stop Daniel in the midst of his prayer. See verse 21: “Yea, while 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.”

Gabriel why this haste? Why, I see Daniel is wrong – he doesn’t understand the matter – he thinks the vision related to the sanctuary at Jerusalem, and I must stop him, for he is going astray.

“Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision,” says Daniel. What vision? Where had Daniel seen

Gabriel in vision? Evidently, nowhere but in the vision of the 2300 days. Well, says Gabriel, “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding – therefore understand the matter and consider the vision.”

How is it possible that anything can be plainer than that both Daniel and Gabriel have the vision in mind that “none understood,” at the close of the eighth chapter? Now, says Gabriel, “understand the matter, as by your I see you did not, and consider the vision – direct your attention to what I have not to say of it. (1853, p.720) [Interestingly, this is a reprint of an 1843 article, indicating that this rationale was used during the Millerite movement and cannot be attributed only to the SDA church later–FB]

This argumentation has no basis in Scripture. Neither Dn9: 1, 2, 16, 17, 19 nor any reference to the sanctuary give any clue that this concept was present in Daniel’s mind. It is an argument from silence and SDA historicists have put unsubstantiated thoughts in Daniel’s mind. This can be dismissed with dispatch, in spite of the SDA Bible’s Commentary assertion that astute students of chapter nine would discover this truth as obvious. The SDABC asserts “A careful comparison of the prayer of ch. 9 with the problem of ch. 8 makes it clear beyond possible doubt that Daniel had the problem in mind as he prayed.” This is fallacious. There is no evidence “beyond possible doubt” that Daniel is thinking of Dn8 in Dn9. Contra Smith and the SDABC, it is definitely *not* evident that Daniel was thinking of the reference to the sanctuary in Dn8:13, 14 when he referred to the “sanctuary” in Dn9: 17. There is no evidence at all, let alone evidence “beyond doubt,” unless SDA historicist’s rose-coloured glasses are first donned when reading Daniel 9!

No other rebuttal need be brought against this argument, as there is no argumentation offered; it is just asserted and taken as correct and self-evident.

### **The Argument that the phrase “to seal up the vision and the prophecy” meant to make the vision of Dn8:13, 14 understood.**

Typical of those who argued this point is the following:

For example, Smith:

“We call attention to one fact which shows that there is a necessary ‘connection’ between the seventy weeks of the ninth chapter, and something else which precedes or follows it, called ‘the vision.’ It is found in the 24<sup>th</sup> verse: ‘Seventy weeks are determined, or cut off, upon thy people... to seal up the vision.’ &c. Now there are but two significations to the phrase ‘seal up.’ They are, first, ‘to make secret,’ and second ‘to make sure.’ We care not now in which of these significations the phrase is supposed to be used. That is not the point now before us. Let the signification be what it may, it shows that the prediction of the seventy weeks necessarily relates to something else beyond itself, called ‘the vision,’ in reference to which it performs this work, ‘to seal up.’ To talk of its sealing up itself is as much of an absurdity as to suppose that Josephus was so much afraid of the Romans that he refrained from telling the world that he thought the fourth kingdom of Daniel was ‘the kingdom of the Greeks.’ It is no more proper to say that the ninth chapter of Daniel ‘is complete in itself,’ than it would be to say that a map which was designed to show the relation of Massachusetts to the United States, referred to nothing but Massachusetts. It is no more complete in itself than a bond given in security for a note, or some other document to which it refers, is complete in itself; and we doubt if there is a school-boy fourteen in the land, of ordinary capacity, who would not on reading the ninth chapter, with an understanding of the clause before us, decide that it referred to something distinct from itself, called the vision. What vision it is, there is no difficulty in determining. It naturally and obviously refers to the vision which was not fully explained to Daniel, and to which Gabriel calls his attention in the preceding verse- the vision of the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter. Daniel tells us that Gabriel was commanded to make him understand that vision (8: 16). This was not fully done at that inter-

view connected with the vision; he is therefore sent to give Daniel the needed ‘skill and understanding,’ to explain its ‘meaning’ by communicating to him the prediction of the seventy weeks.” (Smith, 1870, p.478)

Smith wants us to see the clause “to seal up the vision” as inferring that the vision of chapter 9 cannot seal itself up; so, it must seal up something else, namely the unexplained vision of Dn8:

we doubt if there is a school-boy fourteen in the land, of ordinary capacity, who would not on reading the ninth chapter, with an understanding of the clause before us, decide that it referred to something distinct from itself, called the vision. What vision it is, there is no difficulty in determining. It naturally and obviously refers to the vision which was not fully explained to Daniel, and to which Gabriel calls his attention in the preceding verse- the vision of the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter.

What Smith has failed to understand in verse 24 is that “vision and prophecy” have no definite article. There is no “*the* vision” or “*the* prophecy” in verse 24. They are just generic terms “to seal vision and prophet/prophecy.”

Keil makes an important comment on this matter:

The interpretation of the object hazôn and nabi’ is also disputed. Some refer it to the prophecy of the seventy weeks [sic. should be years-FB] (Jer.xxv. and xxix), mentioned in ver.2. But against this view stands the fact of the absence of the article; for if by hazôn that prophecy is intended, an intimation of this would have been expected at least by the definite article, and here particularly would have been altogether indispensable. It is also condemned by the word nabi’ added, which shows that both words are used in comprehensive generality for all existing prophecies and prophets. Not only the prophecy, but also the calling of the prophet, must be sealed. Prophecies and prophets are sealed, when by full realization of all prophecies ceases, no prophets any more appear. The extinction of prophecy in consequence of its fulfillment is not, however (with Hengstenberg), to be sought in the time of the manifestation of Christ in the flesh; for then only the prophecy of the Old Covenant reached its end (cf. Matt.xi,13; Luke xxii,37, John i,46) and its place is occupied by the prophecy of the N.T., the fulfilling of which is still in the future, and which will not come to an end and terminate...till the kingdom of God is perfected in glory at the termination of the present course of the world’s history, at the same time with the full conclusive fulfillment of the O.T. prophecy; cf., Acts iii.21. (1978, p.344)

Smith’s argument is not used today. Yet, even today, even though the absence of the definite article is acknowledged to refer to vision and prophecy in general, it is still ever so remotely tied by SDA historicists to the 2300-days of Dn8. The SDA Bible Commentary, has this to say on the text:

**To seal up.** Here evidently not in the sense of “shutting up,” but of “confirming,” or “ratifying.” The fulfillment of the predictions connected with the first coming of the Messiah at the time specified in the prophecy gives assurance that the other features of the prophecy, notably the 2300 prophetic days, will be as precisely fulfilled. (Nichol, 1976, p. 852)

Other SDA commentators take a similar vein – that the fulfillment of the prophecy in Dn9 “seals up” or guarantees the fulfillment of the 2300-days:

Maxwell:

...”Seal” is used in the sense of sealing a document to guarantee its authenticity. The fulfillment of the seventy-week prophecy as outlined in verses 25-27 was to be so spiritually significant and so strikingly timely that it would confirm, or guarantee, or “seal,” the fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy of which it is a part. (1981, p.215)

Ford argues a similar line:

“To seal both vision and prophet” means both to ratify and fulfill prophetic vision. In a special sense the events of the seventy weeks guarantee the fulfillment of the particular promise of the previous vision – “then the sanctuary shall be restored” (8:14). The accomplishment in history of the events of the 490 years ratify, or make certain, the accomplishment of what has been promised for the period following the 2300 years. But the clause points to even more. The Crucifixion was the fulfillment of the chief prophecies of the Old Testament such as Is 53, Ps 22, the present passage, and a host of others. Again, the end of this present age will see the consummation of all that the prophets of both Testaments have foretold. (1978, p. 227)

William Miller in his 1836 paper argues that the fulfillment of the time periods in the prophecy “seal” the vision:

We also learn that this seventy weeks is divided into three parts, seven weeks being employed in building the streets and walls in troublous times, which is forty-nine years sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and eighty three years and one week the gospel was preached; John three and a half years and Christ three and a half years, which makes the seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years; which when accomplished, would seal up the vision and make the prophecy true.

From David Arnold in *The Present Truth* in 1850 we get this statement arguing that the crucifixion “seals the vision:”

The great crowning event which establishes the whole, and puts upon it the “SEAL” of eternal truth is the cross. The angel Gabriel says to Daniel, “I am now come forth to make thee skilful of understanding, therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.” The vision was given in days, therefore seven of those days make a week, and the days being prophetic, that is, a year for a day, a week is seven years. Gabriel then measures off seventy weeks of the “vision” and places the cross, and other events connected with it, right at this point, and then declares that this “SEALS” the “vision.” Yet with this plain and positive declaration of Gabriel, many, in order to avoid the inevitable result of Gabriel’s explanation, (viz, the end of the 2300 days and shut door in 1844) will write, preach and publish in contradiction of ‘Gabriel’s plain explanation of the vision. (1850, p.133)

James White took a similar view:

In the midst [middle] of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, the “sacrifice and oblation” of the Jews was to cease. This ceased to be of any virtue, when Christ, the antitypical sacrifice, was nailed to the cross. Here is the great way-mark that makes the prophecy sure. Dating from the seventh of Artaxerxes, the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week (when Christ was crucified) would fall on the Spring of A.D. 31. (1853a, p.170)

From this “way-mark” he then develops the rest of the SDA prophetic chronology:

In one week there are 7 years. From the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week to its close was three and a half years, which being added to the Spring of A.D.31, brings us to the Autumn of A.D. 34 for the close of the 70 weeks. Seventy weeks, or 490 years taken from the 2300 leaves 1810, which being added to the Autumn of A.D. 34. The end of the 2300 years is shown to have been in the Autumn of 1844. (Ibid)

In contrast to these views, we get a more general picture of the meaning of both “vision” and “prophet” from non-SDA commentators. Firstly from Keil:

Prophecies and prophets are sealed, when by the full realization of all prophecies prophecy ceases, no prophets any more appear. The extinction of prophecy in consequence of its fulfillment is not, however..., to be sought in the time of the manifestation of Christ in the flesh; for then only the prophecy of the Old Covenant reached its end (cf. Matt.xi.13, Luke xxii.37, John i, 46), and its place is occupied by the prophecy of the N.T., the fulfilling of which is still in the future, and which will not come to an end and terminate (Gr. *katargethesetai*, 1 Cor xiii.8), till

the kingdom of God is perfected in glory at the termination of the present course of the world's history, at the same time with the full conclusive fulfillment of the O.T. prophecy; cf., Acts. iii. 21. (1978, p. 344)

Edward Young takes a different position from Keil:

Keil believes that this prophecy is to be fulfilled in the future. However, the particular description herein chosen very clearly refers to the OT period. Vision was a technical name for revelation given to the OT prophets (cf. Isa 1:1, Amos 1:1 etc.) The *prophet* was the one through whom this vision was revealed to the people. The two words, vision and prophet, therefore serves to designate the prophetic revelation of the OT period. This revelation was a temporary, preparatory, typical nature. It pointed forward to the coming of Him who was the great Prophet (Deut. 18:15). When Christ came, there was no further need of prophetic revelation in the OT sense. (1949, p. 200)

From Leupold:

This righteousness, or the Messiah who accomplishes it, was the treasure above all treasures that was most eagerly longed for by the Old Testament saints. This leads to the next point. Since this righteousness was, in the last analysis, the purpose of all vision and prophecy, after the end has been achieved, the means become outmoded, and so "to seal up vision and prophecy" follows. The same verb "to seal up" is used here that was employed earlier in the verse, *chatham*. The objective is the same: to dispose summarily and finally of a thing that deserves to be relegated to the category of achieved things. Why perpetuate visions if the purpose for which they are given is fully realized, and no higher achievement is possible? For "prophecy" we have the word "prophet," *nabhi'* though the man is involved, it is primarily his *prophecy* that is under consideration. He, too, needs no longer to function after the things he prophesied are fully attained. The term could be translated, "the vision of the prophet" – hendiadys (*Charles*). (1949, p. 414)

And from Walvoord:

... "to seal up the vision and prophecy," is probably best understood to mean the termination of unusual direct revelation by means of vision and oral prophecy. The expression *to seal up* indicates that no more is to be added and that what has been predicted will receive divine confirmation and recognition in the form of actual fulfillment. Once a letter is sealed, its contents are irreversible (cf. 6:8). Young applies this only to the Old Testament prophet, but it is preferable to include it in the cessation of the New Testament prophetic gift seen both in oral prophecy and in the writing of the Scriptures. (1971, p. 222)

From a brief survey of contemporary writers, we see their understanding of this statement in Dn9:24 is a very general one regardless of their minor differences. Few, if any, outside the SDA historicists world of thought says there is any remote connection to Dn8:14. The text has no explicit indicators that point us in that direction. Only the baggage of SDA assumptions can make us think that way.

Some recent SDA scholarship supports the position of these non-SDA writers, in that these SDA scholars have just sought the meaning of the text without trying to accommodate old defunct historicist theories. Typical of this are the following:

From Shea:

"To seal up vision and prophet." The verb "to seal up" (*hatam*) is the same as that which occurs three phases earlier in this verse. Three meanings appear possible for it here: (1) to validate; (2) to close up (until a later opening); or (3) to bring to an end.

If the second object of the infinitive ("to seal up") were "prophecy," either of the first two meanings would be preferred. However its objects are "vision" (*hazōn*) and "prophet" (*nabi'*),

not “prophecy.” Since this second word occurs without the article it probably refers to “prophet” in a collective or corporate sense.

The third of these meanings (“to bring to an end”) makes the best sense if it is applied to prophets as persons rather than to their words. This sense is supported by the fact that it is the same as its parallel, used earlier in the verse (“to seal up / to make an end of sins”). As far as Daniel’s people and his holy city are concerned, therefore, “vision” and “prophet” are to come to an end by the time this prophetic period closes. (Shea, 1986a, p.80)

From Doukhan:

“To seal [htm]sins” is in parallelism with “to seal [htm] both vision and prophet,” with htm being common to the two stichs. Thus, the seal of the prophecy – ie., its fulfillment – is related to the seal of the sins – ie., their forgiveness. (Doukhan, 1979, p.259)<sup>4</sup>

Notice the similarity of Doukhan’s comments with that of Keil:

The figure of sealing is regarded by many interpreters in the sense of confirming, and that by filling up, with reference to the custom of impressing a seal on a writing for the confirmation of its contents; and in illustration these references are given: 1 Kings xxi, 8; and Jer. xxxvii. 10, 11, 44 (Hävernicks, v. Lengerke, Ewald, Hitzig, and others). But for this figurative use of the word to seal, no proof-passages are adduced from the O.T. Add to this that the word cannot be used here in a different sense from that in which it is used in the second passage [i.e., “to seal up sins”-FB] The sealing of prophecy corresponds to the sealing of the transgression, and must be similarly understood. The prophecy is sealed when it is laid under a seal, so that it can no longer actively show itself. (1978, p.344)

Some comments should be made of the argument proposed by Ford, Maxwell and Nichol above. The SDA commentary firstly argues a meaning of *chatham* as meaning “confirming” or “ratifying” in this text. Their argument is that the fulfillment of the 70 weeks precisely as foretold “confirms” that the 2300-days will be “as precisely fulfilled.” Maxwell takes a similar line with the meaning of *chatham* as meaning “sealing a document to guarantee its authenticity.” He then argues that the fulfillment of the 70 weeks “would confirm, or guarantee, or ‘seal, the fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy” since the former is a part of the latter. Ford virtually repeats the arguments of the SDA commentary.

What this line of reasoning overlooks is that the seventy weeks are not given for God to ratify his own ability to fulfill his own prophecies; rather, the seventy weeks are allotted to the Jews to “seal up the vision and prophecy.” The text is saying that it is their responsibility to accomplish this task. They have the ability to “seal” or not to seal the vision and the prophecy. Therefore the question needs to be asked in what way could the Jews seal the prophecy?

There is nothing in the actions of the Jews – whether obedient or disobedient – that could influence the coming of the Messiah or his work of redemption. This work was completed without their faithfulness. It was God’s unconditional act of love to the world. The same actions of the Messiah would have occurred if the nation was anticipating the coming of Jesus and was prepared to receive him. But it is not an aspect of the prophecy that is the responsibility of the Jews.

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<sup>4</sup> Doukhan’s attempt to argue for the validity of using “seal vision and prophet” with a definite article – “the vision” is discussed in [Assumption 18](#).

Looking at this argument from a lexical point of view yields the same conclusion. In the statement “Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and the Holy City... to seal up the vision and the prophecy...” The observation should be made that the verb “be determined/ cut off” is a passive verb which takes two objects— “your people” and “your holy city.” Both of these objects are subordinated to the verb “determined” by the use of the preposition “’al” with each noun. (Kautzsch, 1982, §119, p.377f) Keil says, “In the ‘al there does not lie the conception of that which is burdensome, or that this period would be a time of suffering like the seventy years of exile. The word only indicates that such a period of time was determined upon the people.” (Ibid, p.340). The next set of six phrases in the text are all prefixed with the common preposition *l<sup>e</sup>* prefixed to the infinitive construct. The purpose of these infinitive constructs are to “express the most varied ideas of purpose or aim,” for which the seventy weeks were “determined.” (Kautzsch, 1982, §114.f, p.348). The infinitive constructs are both related to the main passive verb “determined” and to the objects of that verb. In the words of Keil again, “The following infinitive clauses present the object for which the seventy weeks are determined...” (Ibid) In the classification of the different types of uses of the infinitive construct, the usage here in Dn9:24 comes under the category of using the infinitive “with *l<sup>e</sup>* ...used ...in connexion to state motives, attendant circumstances, or otherwise to define more exactly.” (Kautzsch, loc cit, §114.o, p.351) From this perspective, the infinitive clauses define “more exactly” the purposes for which the seventy years were “determined.”

It should be noticed that the passive verb here takes more than one object. There are the seventy weeks, which are the *direct* object of the verb. And the *indirect* objects of the verb are “your people and your holy city.” The subordinated objects of the verb “determined” are “your people and your holy city.” With *both direct and indirect* objects of the verb under consideration, the question must be asked, does the actions of the infinitive clauses relate to the *direct* object of the verb or the *indirect* objects? Do the infinitive clauses belong to the “seventy weeks” or “your people and your holy city?” Clearly the infinitival clauses are related to both the indirect and the direct object. It is during the seventy weeks that the actions of the infinitival clauses can be accomplished. But the actions of the infinitival clauses can only be accomplished by the indirect objects in this case. So, the commonsense answer is that they apply properly to the *indirect* objects, since the actions of the infinitive clauses cannot be effected by an inanimate period of time; rather, these clauses spell out religious actions to be engaged in by “your people and your holy city.” So the sense of the statement is that time (70 weeks) has been apportioned to “your people and your holy city” so that they can achieve these six things. The concept that time has been apportioned to “your people and your holy city” so that *time* can achieve these six things does not fit the sense of the text.

An equivalent statement in English would be, “Two weeks have been allocated for you to finish reading this paper.” In this sentence, we have two objects of the verb “allocated.” The first is the direct object “two weeks” and the second is the indirect object “you.” The infinitival clause “to finish reading this paper,” is related to both the direct object and the indirect object, but the action of the infinitival clause will be effected by the indirect object “you.” The direct object is merely the temporal medium for the indirect object to achieve the action required.

The question must be asked, who or what is the subject of the infinitive “to seal?” Is it the seventy weeks that “seal up the vision and the prophecy” as proposed by the SDA commentators quoted above or is it Daniel’s people and the Holy City that are to “seal up the vision and prophecy?”

Taking Maxwell, Ford and Nichol’s position on the subject of the infinitive we could paraphrase the text according to the following if we include the ellided sections of the text: “Seventy weeks are determined upon you people and your Holy City in order for the seventy weeks.... to “seal up the vision and the prophecy...” To put it more simply, “Seventy weeks are determined upon the seventy weeks...to seal up the vision and prophecy.” This is what they are arguing for. They want us to believe that the subject of the infinitive is the seventy weeks. They want us to believe that it is *the time prophecy* that seals up the vision and the prophecy. Notice Maxwell again: “The fulfillment of the seventy-week prophecy as outlined in verses 25-27 was to be so spiritually significant and so strikingly timely that it would confirm, or guarantee, or “seal,”.... (1981, p.215) Maxwell sees the seventy-week prophecy as the subject of “seal.”

Similarly with Nichol: “The fulfillment of the predictions connected with the first coming of the Messiah at the time specified in the prophecy gives assurance that the other features of the prophecy, notably the 2300 prophetic days, will be as precisely fulfilled.” (Nichol, 1976, p. 852) Nichol’s choice of definition of “seal” here as giving assurance shows that he sees the seventy weeks as the subject of “seal.” Notice also that it is the fulfillment of the predictions in relation to “the first coming of the Messiah” in this prophecy that are the specific items that “gives assurance that the other features of the prophecy, notably the 2300 prophetic days, will be as precisely fulfilled.” (Ibid)

Yet these aspects of the time prophecy were not within the control of Daniel’s people nor that of the Holy City. When God decreed the fullness of time had come, he sent His Son, regardless of the spiritual condition of Daniel’s people. And although this confirmed the validity of God’s word, the seventy weeks were not allotted to prove the validity of God’s word. The seventy weeks were allotted to the Jews to get their house in order. And one of those tasks was to “seal up the vision and prophecy.” Nothing that they could do could prevent the coming of the Messiah. But they could prevent the sealing up of the vision and prophecy. And that is exactly what occurred. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The good things that the Lord promised Israel in the prophetic utterances concerning the new covenant God would make with Israel after the exile never came to pass because of their disobedience. Consequently, with the passing of the time to fulfil these visions and prophecies, came also the passing of their right to be the covenant people. Notice Leupold again, “... the purpose of all vision and prophecy, after the end has been achieved, the means become outmoded, and so ‘to seal up vision and prophecy’ follows. The same verb ‘to seal up’ is used here that was employed earlier in the verse, *chatham*. The objective is the same: to dispose summarily and finally of a thing that deserves to be relegated to the category of achieved things. Why perpetuate visions if the purpose for which they are given is fully realized, and no higher achievement is possible? For “prophecy” we have the word “prophet,” *nabhi*’ though the man is involved, it is primarily his *prophecy* that is under consideration. He, too, needs no longer to function after the things he prophesied are fully attained. The term could be translated, ‘the vision of the prophet’ – hendiadys (*Charles*).” (1949, p. 414) Because so much of the Old Testament could never be relegated to the category of achieved things, the vision and prophecy of

The view of these three SDA-writers is incorrect. The proper paraphrase of the text should read as follows: “Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and your Holy City in order for them...to seal up the vision and prophecy...” The text is saying that it is the task of *Daniel’s people and the Holy City* to seal up the vision and prophecy. And in that she failed.

We must look to another meaning of the word *chatham* that involves the actions of the Jewish nation than the meaning proposed by these SDA writers.. That meaning has been specified by the non-SDA writers above.. Leupold’s definition of sealing up the vision by completing it or achieving it fits the text like hand and glove. With the completion of the Old Testament prophecies outlined by major and minor prophets concerning the restoration and the reformation of Israel would come the relegation of those prophecies to redundant prophecies, no longer active and possibilities, but instead realities. We could use Maxwell, Ford and Nichol’s concept of “ratify,” “fulfill,” “guarantee its authenticity,” “confirm,” if we could say that the completion of those Old Testament prophecies by Israel thereby “ratified” or “confirmed” that those prophecies needed to be “fulfilled” in order to complete their responsibilities under the post-exilic covenant. The realisation of their position as God’s elect in the Messianic kingdom, had they been prepared to receive the Messiah, would thus have “guaranteed the authenticity” of those prophecies followed by Israel in their quest to do all they could to acquit themselves of their responsibilities under that covenant. But this is not a meaning that Maxwell, Nichol or Ford are meaning. They do not want the ratification of the fulfillment of the post-exilic prophecies as the conditions for Israel’s position under the post-exilic covenant. They only want the ratification of the fulfillment of the 2300 days. But the meaning of the text does not fit their intention.

SDA historicists have chosen only one meaning of *chatham* and have ignored the other meanings. They do not use this meaning of “seal” when it comes to the sealing of Daniel’s prophecies in Daniel 12:8. There they choose the meaning of precluding or locking out from being understood. The better translation of the verb in Daniel 12 is related to the preservation of the writing of Daniel as a now-completed document. It was sealed because it was completed; finished. This same concept could apply to the vision and the prophet. With the completion of the demands of the visions and prophecies, that very act “stamps” or ”seals” those prophecies and vision as fulfilled, and consequently able to be closed.

In the words of Keil,

“The sealing of the prophecy corresponds to the sealing of the transgression, and must be similarly understood....The prophecy is sealed when it is laid under a seal, so that it can no longer actively show itself....Prophecies and prophets are sealed, when by the full realization of all prophecies prophecy ceases, no prophets any more appear...” (*Ibid*);

Or Kliefoth:

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the Old Testament became redundant in another sense, since they would never be fulfilled, with God’s purpose moving on with the choosing of the believing Gentiles as his new Israel. With this new election and a new covenant came new prophecies and the old was done away with, no longer to be fulfilled, unable to be sealed as accomplished.

“When sins are sealed, the prophecy is also sealed, for prophecy is needed in the war against sin; when sin is thus so placed that it can no longer operate, then prophecy also may come to a state of rest; when sin comes to an end in its place, prophecy can come to an end also by its fulfillment, there being no place for it after the setting aside of sin. And when apostasy is shut up, so that it can no more spread about, then righteousness will be brought, that it may possess the earth, now freed from sin, shut up in its own place.” (quoted in Keil, 1978, p.344f.)

Or in Leupold’s words,

“the objective is the same: to dispose summarily and finally of a thing that deserves to be relegated to the category of achieved things.... He, [the prophet] too, needs no longer to function after the things he prophesied are fully attained.” (Ibid).

Or from recent SDA scholars:

From Shea:

“To seal up vision and prophet.” The verb “to seal up” (hatam) is the same as that which occurs three phases earlier in this verse. Three meanings appear possible for it here: (1) to validate; (2) to close up (until a later opening); or (3) to bring to an end.

If the second object of the infinitive (“to seal up”) were “prophecy,” either of the first two meanings would be preferred. However its objects are “vision” (hazōn) and “prophet” (nabi’), not “prophecy.” Since this second word occurs without the article it probably refers to “prophet” in a collective or corporate sense.

The third of these meanings (“to bring to an end”) makes the best sense if it is applied to prophets as persons rather than to their words. This sense is supported by the fact that it is the same as its parallel, used earlier in the verse (“to seal up / to make an end of sins”). As far as Daniel’s people and his holy city are concerned, therefore, “vision” and “prophet” are to come to an end by the time this prophetic period closes. (Shea, 1986a, p.80)

Although Shea exegetes correctly here, he then applies this statement concerning the ending of prophet and vision to Stephen at the end of the seventy weeks rather than seeing the possibility of an eschatological climax at the end of the seventy weeks, which the text supports.<sup>6</sup>

All the tasks outlined in verse 24 could have been achieved by Israel fulfilling the things spoken of by the prophets for their good. It was the action of the Jews that “sealed” these proclamations. The fulfillment of the seventy weeks in time does not seal the vision and the prophecy/prophet as advocated by Ford, Maxwell and Nichol above. It is the fulfillment by Israel of the things specified by the prophecies that would seal the vision and the prophecy.

### **The Argument using the Definite Article associated with “*the* vision in Dn9:23.”**

Another argument developed through the use of the definite article associated with mar’e in Dn9:23 (“the vision”), proposes that the reference to “the” vision could only refer

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<sup>6</sup> Note Keil statement here on this matter: “The seventieth week ends, according to ver.27, with the judgment on the destroyer of the city and the sanctuary of God; but with this judgment shall be the conclusion of the divine counsel of salvation, or the kingdom of God shall be consummated. (Ibid, p.374)

to a particular mar'e – vision which had already been given. It could not refer to a mar'e – vision which had not yet been given to Daniel.

One of the earliest Advent proponents for the significance of the definite article “*the vision*” was William Miller. His argument was that it was easy to identify the vision since there is only one vision in the book of Daniel – the one God had given to him from the beginning, (i.e., chapter 2). Dn2, 7, 8 and 9 are just different manifestations of *the same vision*.

We learn that the angel Gabriel was sent to instruct Daniel and make him understand the vision. You may inquire what vision? I answer the one Daniel had in the beginning, for he has had no other. (1836, p. 48)

We learn that the vision, which Daniel saw, was revealed at three separate times. 1<sup>st</sup> in Nebuchadnezzar's dream...The next vision Daniel saw was similar to this; he saw four great beasts...In the third vision which Daniel has coupled with the former by saying that it was after (or like) the one which appeared unto him at the first...Daniel then, in the 26<sup>th</sup> verse couples the two visions the one in the evening, 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, and the one in the morning, 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, and says “the vision of the evening and morning which was told is true.

We learn that this vision is two thousand three hundred days long, that days are to be reckoned years...We learn by the instruction of Gabriel, that the seventy weeks were a part of the vision, that the Daniel was commanded to begin the seventy weeks at the going forth of the decree...We think the vision of Daniel begins 457 years before Christ, take which from 2,300 leaves 1843, after Christ, when the vision must be finished. But the objector may say, perhaps your vision does not begin with the 70 weeks. Let me ask two or three questions. Does not the Angel say to Daniel, ix 23 “Therefore understand the matter and consider the vision? Yes. Do you believe the bible is true? We do. Then if the bible is true, Daniels 70 weeks are a part of the vision and 490 years were accomplished when the Messiah was cut off and not for himself. The 1810 years afterwards the vision is completed... (1836, pp.49,50,51-52)

Here are some typical examples of arguments using the definite article of the phrase “the vision:”

Uriah Smith:

Direct reference is made to *the vision* at the beginning; and if that is not the vision of chapter viii it is impossible to find it. And again, if Gabriel does not explain in chapter ix, what he omitted in chap. viii, it is impossible for any man to show wherein Gabriel fulfilled his commission to make this man understand the vision; and we have nothing then to shield him in our minds from the charge of being a fallen angel. But a position which will lead to either of these results, is utterly unallowable (1857, p.401 Emphasis his.)

We here have the result of Daniel's supplication. He is suddenly, interrupted by a heavenly messenger. The man Gabriel, appearing again as he had before, in the form of a man, whom Daniel had seen in the vision at the beginning, touched him. A very important question is here to be determined. It is to be decided whether the vision of chapter 8 has ever been explained, and can ever be understood. The question is 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 mention, and that in that vision we shall find some mention of Gabriel. We must go back beyond this ninth chapter; for all that we have in this chapter previous to this appearance of Gabriel is simply a record of Daniel's prayer. Looking back then through previous chapters we find mention of only three visions given to Daniel. 1. This interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was given in a night vision. Chap. 2:19. But there is no record of any angelic agency on the matter. 2. The vision of chap.7. This was explained to Daniel by “one of them that stood by;” probably an angel; but we have no information as to what one; nor is there anything in that vision which needed further explanation. 8. The vision of chapter 8. Here we find some particulars which show this to be the vision referred to: 1. Gabriel is brought to view for the first and only previous time in the book. 2. He was commanded to make Daniel understand the vision. 3. Daniel at the conclusion says he did not understand it; showing that Gabriel, at conclusion of

that chapter, had not fulfilled his mission. 4. There is no place in all the Bible where this instruction is carried out, if it is not in chapter 9. If, therefore, the vision of chapter 8, is not the one referred to, we have no record that Gabriel ever complied with the instructions given him, or that that vision has ever been explained. The instruction which the angel now gives to Daniel as we shall see from the following verses, does exactly complete what was lacking in chapter 8. These considerations prove beyond a doubt the connection between Daniel 8 and 9 and this conclusion will be still further strengthened, when we come to look at the angel's instructions.

Verse 22. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 28. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee for thou art greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

The manner in which Gabriel introduces himself on this occasion, shows that he has come to complete some unfulfilled mission. It can be nothing less than to carry out the instruction to make this man "understand the vision," as recorded in chapter 8. I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. As the charge still rested upon him to make Daniel understand; and as he explained to Daniel in chapter 8, all that he could then bear, and yet he did not understand, he now comes to resume his work and complete his mission. As soon as Daniel commenced his fervent supplication, the commandment came forth; that is, Gabriel received instruction to visit Daniel and impart to him the requisite information. From the time it takes to read Daniel's prayer down to the point at which Gabriel made his appearance upon the scene, the reader can judge of the speed with which this messenger was despatched from the court of Heaven to this servant of God. No wonder Daniel says that he was caused to fly swiftly, or that Ezekiel compares the movements of these celestial beings to a flash of lightening. Eze. 1:14. **"Understand the matter," he says to him. What matter? That, evidently, which he did not before understand, as stated in the last verse of chapter 8. "Consider the vision." What vision? Not interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's image, nor the vision of chapter 7; for there was no difficulty with either of these; but the vision of chapter 8, in reference to which his mind was filled with doubt and astonishment. "I am come to show thee," also said the angel. Show thee in reference to what? Certainly in reference to something, wherein he was entertaining wrong ideas, and something, at the same time, pertaining to his prayer; as it was this which had called forth Gabriel on his mission at this time. But Daniel has no difficulty in understanding what the angel told him about the ram, he-goat, and little horn, the kingdoms of Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Nor was he mistaken in regard to the ending of the seventy years' captivity. But the burden of his petition was respecting the repairing the desolations of the sanctuary, which lay in ruins; and he had undoubtedly drawn the conclusion that when the end of the seventy years' captivity came, the time would come for the fulfilment of what the angel had said respecting the cleansing of the sanctuary at the end of the 2300 days. Now he must be set right. And this explains why at this particular time instruction should be sent him after a delay of fifteen years. Now the seventy years' captivity were drawing to their close, and Daniel was applying the instruction he had before received from the angel, to a wrong issue. He was falling into a misunderstanding, and was acting upon it; hence he must not be suffered longer to remain ignorant of the true import of the former vision. "I am come to show thee," "understand the matter," "consider the vision." Such were the words used by the very person Daniel has seen in the former vision, and to whom he had heard the command given, "make this man understand the vision," and who he knew had never carried out that instruction. But now he appears and says. "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." How could Daniel's mind be more emphatically carried back to the vision of chapter 8, and the connection between that visit of the angel and this, be more distinctly shown, than by such words from such a person? The considerations already presented are sufficient to conclusively show the connection between Dan. 8 and 9; but this will still further appear, in subsequent verses. (1870, pp. 475f)**

James White:

After Gabriel had given the explanation of the *events* of the vision in the eighth chapter, he told

Daniel to “shut thou up the vision.” I conclude Daniel did as he was told to. Thus he was left 16 years with only an understanding of the events of the vision, without an understanding of the data of it; in this time, among other things, he read “books.” He, at length, set himself to fast and pray: while thus engaged Gabriel came to him about the time of the evening oblation. What did he say? Ans. “I am now come to give thee skill and understanding.”

Understanding about what? Ans. The vision – what vision? Ans. The one in which he had seen him at the beginning 16 years before. Why should we rend apart that God hath joined together? Some of our brethren in New York think you are “throwing away” “Father Miller’s key”!!

You say Daniel, when he said none understood it, meant none but himself. He does not say none but himself. Why infer? If he did understand all of it why did Gabriel come for his words to make him understand the Vision? He had never at this time had but two visions, that the Bible speaks of. Well, it could not have been the first one, recorded in the seventh chapter, because that he did understand (see Dan, vii, 16), so then it must have been the data of the eighth vision. (1853b, p.179)

“In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel, is recorded a vision which was to extend to the cleansing of the sanctuary, and to continue 2300 days. Daniel had ‘sought for the meaning’ of that vision, and a voice said: ‘Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.’ Gabriel said to Daniel, ‘I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation; for, at the time appointed, the end shall be;’ and then proceeded to explain the symbols, but said nothing of their duration. At the close of the explanation, Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; and he says, he ‘was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.’

“Three years subsequent to that vision, Daniel-understanding” ‘by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem’-set his face unto the Lord to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes. He proceeded to confess his own sins and the sins of his people, and to supplicate the Lord’s favour on the sanctuary that was desolate. While he was thus speaking, Daniel says: ‘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; and he informed me and talked with me, and said: O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am now come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined,’ &c., ‘from the going forth of the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince.’ After which Jerusalem was to be desolate ‘until the consummation.’ Dan. ix, 20-27.

Mr Miller claimed that the vision which Daniel was called on to consider, and respecting which Gabriel was to give him skill and understanding, was the vision of the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter; of which Daniel sought the meaning, which Gabriel was commanded to make him understand, but which, after Gabriel’s explanation, none understood; and that the seventy weeks of years- i.e., four hundred and ninety that were cut off were cut off from the 2300 days of that vision; and, consequently, that those two periods must be dated from the same epoch, and the longer extend 1810 years after the termination of the shorter. (Bliss, 1853b, p. 721)

“We call attention to one fact which shows that there is a necessary ‘connection’ between the seventy weeks of the ninth chapter, and something else which precedes or follows it, called ‘the vision.’ It is found in the 24<sup>th</sup> verse: ‘Seventy weeks are determined, or cut off, upon thy people... to seal up the vision.’ &c. Now there are but two significations to the phrase ‘seal up.’ They are, first, “to make secret,” and second ‘to make sure.’ We care not now in which of these significations the phrase is supposed to be used. That is not the point now before us. Let the signification be what it may, it shows that the prediction of the seventy weeks necessarily relates to something else beyond itself, called ‘the vision,’ in reference to which it performs this work, ‘to seal up.’ To talk of its sealing up itself is as much of an absurdity as to suppose that Josephus was so much afraid of the Romans that he refrained from telling the world that he thought the fourth kingdom of Daniel was ‘the kingdom of the Greeks.’ It is no more proper to say that the ninth chapter of Daniel ‘is complete in itself,’ than it would be to say that a map which was designed to show the relation of Massachusetts to the United States, referred to nothing but Massachusetts. It is no more complete in itself than a bond given in security for a note, or some

other document to which it refers, is complete in itself; and we doubt if there is a school-boy fourteen in the land, of ordinary capacity, who would not on reading the ninth chapter, with an understanding of the clause before us, decide that it referred to something distinct from itself, called the vision. What vision it is, there is no difficulty in determining. It naturally and obviously refers to the vision which was not fully explained to Daniel, and to which Gabriel calls his attention in the preceding verse- the vision of the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter. Daniel tells us that Gabriel was commanded to make him understand that vision (8: 16). This was not fully done at that interview connected with the vision; he is therefore sent to give Daniel the needed 'skill and understanding,' to explain its 'meaning' by communicating to him the prediction of the seventy weeks. ( Smith, 1870, p.478)

Gabriel continues; and every word he utters strengthens this conclusion: "At the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter and consider the vision."...It would be useless for any one to deny that a previous vision is here referred to; and it would be equally useless for him to deny that that is the vision of chapter 8 (Smith, 1876, pp. 807f.)<sup>7</sup>

This is simply answered by pointing out that the dábár that that was about to be given during the visit of Gabriel recorded in Dn9 was also called the dábár. The word dábár is *not* used in Daniel previous to Dn9, with the exception of Dn1:5, 14, and verse 20. None of these texts are relevant here. There is no use of dábár in Dn8 where we should expect to find it, if the words "vision" and "matter/thing/revelation" in verse 23 refer to matters in Dn8.

Therefore, the word dábár *cannot* refer to a previous dábár because Scripture does not specify a previous dábár, except if use Dn2 or Dn7 in the case of the word millah. SDA historicists would not want to use this because it creates more complications for them than it solves. The only possible option is that dábár refers to verses 24-27 of Daniel 9. When Gabriel says: "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision," the word "matter" – dábár refers to what Gabriel had come to show him. Similarly the same argument can be raised in favour of *the mar'e* in verse 23, referring to the same verses, since it is referring to the same thing as dábár.

Examining the question of the use of the Aramaic equivalent of dábár, if the argument be proposed that it refers to the Aramaic millah – ("word," "thing," "matter") –used extensively in Dn2-7, this would create more problems than it intends to solve. Millah is used a number of times in Daniel 7 and naturally Daniel does not use and Aramaic word in Dn8. Since this is the only vision of the two chapters using this word, one would then assume that Dn9:23 refers to one of the references there. After one looks at the usage of millah in verses 1, 11, 16, 25, 28, of chapter 7, verse:1 and verse 28 in particular, are relevant, Dn9:23 could then be used to identify the starting time of the 3½ times period– in 457 B.C. The argument could be put forward that the vision at the end of Dn7 leaves Daniel unsettled and certainly

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<sup>7</sup> We can see in these statements there is an implicit assumption that Dn9:24-27 could not be a vision, and so the only vision that could be referred to is a previous one, and specifically the vision of chapter 8:13, 14. The other assumptions supporting this argument are that the explanation of chapter 8 was still incomplete, and that the purpose of Gabriel's visit was to complete that explanation. It is significant that none of the early writers dealt with the argument that the vision referred to could be verses 24-27. Nothing that I have read attempts to refute this argument.

without full understanding. The text says: “Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the *matter* (millah) in my heart.” What did he not understand? What was it that troubled him in mind? (To use a well-worn SDA historicist’s phrase –) “Without doubt”, it was when to begin the 3½ times period. Interestingly, there is no starting date for the 3½ times in Dn7. And Froom quotes author after author who stated like Sir Isaac Newton that the beginning of the 1260 year prophecy would not be known until the end of that time is shown:

“Concerning this and related periods, he says, “Here are then those different periods assigned, 1260 years, 1290 years and 1335 years: and what is the precise time of their beginning and consequently of their ending, as well as what are the great and signal events, which will take place at the end of each period, we can only conjecture, time alone can with certainty discover.” [Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, (1796 ed.) p. 277]... It is difficult to fix the precise time, when the prophetic dates begin, and when they end, till the prophecies are fulfilled, and the event declares the certainty of them.” [*Ibid.*, p. 218] <sup>8</sup> (Froom, 1948, p.684f)

Therefore, if at this stage in historicist’s exegesis, there was no known beginning, then it must be acknowledged that the beginning of the 3 ½ times is not known by Daniel at the end of Dn7. No SDA writer that I have written has shown specifically that Dn7 shows where to begin the 3 ½ times. In Dn9: 23 Gabriel tells Daniel to understand the dábár – matter, the Hebrew equivalent of the Aramaic word - millah. Therefore, Gabriel has come to explain the starting point for the 3½ times. Or perhaps he has come to explain the starting time for *both* the 2300 days and the 3½ times, if we use the word mar’e in Dn9:23 to refer to Dn8: 13, 14, and the word dábár in the same verse to refer to Dn7:28. This would mean that the 70 weeks, the 2300 days and the 1260 days should *all* start at the same time. This would concur with William Miller’s definition of “the vision of the evening and the morning.” He saw the “the vision of the evening” as referring to Dn7 since it was given when Daniel was asleep and “the vision of the morning” as referring to Dn8 since it was given during the daylight hours. In his words:

Daniel then, in the 26<sup>th</sup> verse couples the two visions the one in the evening, 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, and the one in the morning, 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, and says “the vision of the evening and morning which was told is true. ([loc cit](#))

Therefore, if someone wanted to argue a simultaneous beginning for all three time periods in Dn7-9 (which I do not), there would be a reasonable case for that argument based on the logic that the SDA historicists use to link “*the vision*” in Dn9 with Dn8. If SDA’s can do that with “*the vision*” in Dn9:23, then someone else has a right to link “*the matter/word/oracle/thing*” in Dn9:23 with Dn7.

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<sup>8</sup> “Valpy then traces the growth of papal power and the growing acquisitions of “strength and of territory.” He discounts the temporary exiles occasionally suffered by the pontiffs, and mentions Bishop Newton’s observation that we must see the conclusion before we can precisely ascertain the beginning of this notable period. Then he adds, “If we have now witnessed the fall of the Pope’s temporal dominion, it cannot be an unprofitable task to endeavour to trace its origins. Valpy then remarks significantly that “on the expulsion of the Pope from Rome, the attention of many contemplative persons was turned to the prophecies relating to that power.” [*Ibid.*, p. 262]” (Froom, 1948, pp765-782)

## The Proleptic Use of the Definite Article.

There is a better answer to the use of the definite article. The use of the definite article here highlights a very common use of the definite article called prolepsis where the mention of the subject is done with the definite article as though the hearer understands which subject is being spoken about, even before the subject is revealed or explained. (OED: The stating of a subject in summary form before the subject is given in detail)

A second example of the proleptic use of the definite article is in Dn10:1 where Daniel refers to the revelation written in chapters 10 to 12 using “*the*” vision and “*the*” matter, even before he had given the information. He says: “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long; and he understood **the thing**, and had understanding of **the vision**.”

The use of proleptic articles is quite in order for a writer like Daniel. He was given the revelation **before** it was committed to writing. When he came to write it, the revelation was a **completed** unit in his *thinking*, and he refers to what he is about to write as though it was already given, since, in matter of **time of the occurrence**, the revelation was given **before** the experience was committed to writing and **before** the introductory statement in Dn10:1. Yet in terms of the **sequence** in the written document, the revelation comes **after** the introductory statement.<sup>9</sup>

To quote the SDA Commentary on this point again. Notice how the proleptic use in Dn10 is seen to refer to matter yet to unfold.

Dan10:1 introduces the final section of the book, ch10 providing the setting in Daniel’s experience for his fourth great prophecy, recorded in chs. 11 and 12. The main body of the prophetic narrative begins with ch.11:2 and closes with ch.12:4, the remainder of ch.12 being a sort of postscript to the prophecy...

**A thing.** A unique expression used by Daniel to describe his fourth great prophetic outline (chs. 10-12), which was apparently revealed without a preceding symbolic representation without a

<sup>9</sup> Although many centuries later, and from a different author, John the Revelator, we see the same type of prolepsis with the definite article and the writer referring to something that is not described until later in the book. These include *the* tree of life (Rev2:7 cf. ch.22:1, 2); *the* morning star (Rev2: 28 cf., Rev22: 16); *the* second death (ch. 2:11, cf., ch. 20:14); *the* book of life (ch3:5; cf., 20:11-15); *the* hour of temptation to tempt the whole world (Rev3:10, cf., Rev 13); *the* key to *the* bottomless pit (Rev9:1cf., the key not explained?; the bottomless pit (cf.,11:7; 17:5; 20: 1,2, ) ); *the* four angels bound at the river Euphrates (Rev9:14 cf not explained?); the two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands (Rev11: 4, not explained?); the false prophet (ch16: 13; 19:20; 20:10; not explained?); *the* seven last plagues (ch.15: 1; cf., ch16); the great prostitute (ch17:1; cf., verse 3f); the great supper of God (ch. 19:17, cf., vs 19-21); *the* bride (ch21:9; cf., vs 10f).

Note that the proleptic use of the article is not used to indicate that there is one item among many items or that there is only one of that kind, which is in many cases indeed correct; it is just used before the explanation is given, if one is given at all. In some cases, the tension is heightened, because the definite article is given, assuming the reader understands the implication, but no explanation of the phrase is given later in the book at all. The device has the effect of the hearer asking the question: What key? What bottomless pit? What hour of temptation to test the whole world? What false prophet? What great prostitute? What great supper? What bride? What olive trees? What lampstands? What seven last plagues? What book of life? What morning star? What second death?

any allusion to symbols (cf. chs. 7:16-24; 8:20-26). The word *mar'ah*, “vision,” of vs. 7, 8, 16 refers simply to the appearance of Daniel’s two celestial visitants, mentioned in vs. 5, 6 and 10-21 respectively. Accordingly, some have considered the fourth prophetic outline a further, more detailed explanation of events pictured symbolically in the “vision” of ch. 8: 1-14. On this basis chs. 10-12 would be interpreted in terms of the vision of chs. 8, 9. However, the relationship between chs. 10-12 and 8, 9 is by no means so clear or certain as that between ch. 8 and 9....

**He understood.** In contrast with the three other visions (chs. 2, 7, 8-9), which were couched in highly symbolic terms, this final revelation was given largely in literal language. The angel stated specifically that he had come to make Daniel “understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days” (ch.10:14). This is the subject matter of chs. 11 and 12. It is not until near the end of the vision (ch.12:8) that Daniel encounters a revelation concerning which he confesses, “I heard, but I understood not.” (Nichol, 1976, pp. 856f.)

In the same vein as the style in Dn10-12, Daniel here in Dn9 refers to the vision about to be given as “*the vision*,” or “*the thing/matter/word*” and then goes ahead and gives it. So to conclude this section on the use of the article in Dn9:23, we can say that it refers proleptically to “the vision,” or “the matter” immediately following verse 23; that is to say, the vision or the matter/thing/word expressed or revealed in verses 24 to 27. The vision referred to in Dn9:23 is that of Dn9:24-27, not that of chapter 7 or even chapter 8.

## The Second Approach – Using Lexical Arguments

Modern scholars have added some recent rationale’s for this assumption. They include:

The use of the same word in Dn9:23 for “to understand” in Dn8:15-16 indicating the understanding commanded to be given in Dn8 is completed in Dn9;

The word for “vision” in Dn9:23 is the same as that used in Dn8:15-16 to refer to the conversation between the two holy ones in Dn8:13-14, thus allowing SDA historicists to connect Dn9:23 to Dn8:13-14 on the basis of the use of the same word.

### The First Lexical Argument – The Verbs used in Dn9:23.

Examples of the recent argumentation on this topic include the following:

#### Goldstein:

Its interesting, too, that the Hebrew word translated “understanding” in 9:22 is derived from the same Hebrew root word (*bin*) Daniel used in 8:27, when he said he was astonished at the *mareh* and “none understood [*bin*] it” (Daniel 8:27). Thus, it seems that Gabriel appears in chapter 9 to give Daniel the *bin*, the understanding, that he didn’t have in chapter 8....Gabriel then promises [in Dn9:23-FB] to give Daniel *bin* (understanding), and the last time we saw Daniel needing *bin* was in reference to the 2,300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14. Gabriel then points him specifically to the *mareh* and tells him to “consider” it (“consider” also comes from *bin*). (2003, p.77)

Goldstein argues the same use of the Hebrew word for “understand” occurs in Dn8:15,16,17,23,27 as well as in Dn 9:1,22,23. The same imperative form of the verb occurs in Dn8:17 and Dn9:23. This is a strong terminological link between the two chapters (Hasel, 1981, p. 197).

This recent lexical argument associated with assumption No. 13, argues a terminological link between the mar’e of Dn 8: 17 and Dn9: 23 on the basis of the similar verb and the similar verbal form used in two places. (Doukhan 1979, p.254-255 Hasel, 1981, p.197) Although this point has been refuted earlier in the paper, some extra considerations are

worth noting. Four main B.H words are translated “to know; to understand”: bin (Hebrew); yada (Hebrew); sakal (Hebrew) and nakar (Hebrew). Bin occurs around 166 times in the O.T. (22x in Dn (Qal: 1:4; 2:3; 9:25; 10:20; 11:32,38; hiph: 8:19) sakal occurs around 72 times (8x in Dn (Hiph: 1: 4,17; 9:13,22,25; 11:33,35; 12:3)); nakar occurs around 49 times (2x in Dn (11:38,39)). Yd occurs in the B.A. section of Daniel 36 times. Thus in the book of Daniel, out of a total of 75 instances of these four words, bin is used 30%; yada is used 2%.

When we look at Daniel 8: 16,17, the Hiphil form of bin is used. Because bin in v.16 occurs in conjunction with mar’e, as it also does in Dn 9: 23, Hasel wants to see a terminological link between Dn 8:16 and Dn9:23. What Hasel has failed to notice is that the text in Dn8 undoes the very theory he is trying to establish. In response to the command to “make this man understand (bin) the vision”, the man Gabriel says to Daniel in 8:19 “I will make you know (yada) what shall be...” Thus it seems that this terminological link even eluded the man Gabriel because he used bin and yada interchangeably. And yet he is the one whom Hasel says uses bin in such a discriminative way.

The text is 8: 19 is Gabriel’s second response to the man’s command as recorded in Dn8: 16. His first response recorded in v.17 used bin, thus indicating even more clearly synonymous use of bin and yada.

Furthermore, when Dn 9 is considered, the terminological significance of bin in explaining the cognitive processes for understanding the mar’e become even more elusive. The verbs nagad (Hebrew) (v.23), sakal (v.22, 25) and yada (v.25) are all used to describe the same cognitive process desired of Daniel by Gabriel in ch. 9. The fact that bin only occurs with mar’e in isolation to the other verbs used to describe the same mental process on the same subject matter by the same person at the same time.

Thus the evidence is fairly clearly that the use of bin as a terminological link between mar’e in 8:16 and 9:23 is a hopeful fabrication by [Doukhan, 1979](#) which has no basis in the text, as evidenced by Gabriel’s use of bin, and yada in Dn8, and by his use of bin, sakal and yada in Dn9.

### **The Second Lexical Argument –The Proposal that “vision” in v.23 refers to Dn8: 13, 14.**

Here are examples of contemporary reasoning by SDA authors who use this argument:

#### **Goldstein:**

Also two different Hebrew words are translated “vision” in Daniel 8. In verses 1 and 2, Daniel three times makes reference to the “vision” of the chapter, and each time it comes from the same Hebrew word, *hazôn*....Daniel then describes what he sees in the *hazôn*: the ram, the goat, the little horn, etc. *Hazon* therefore, refers to the general vision of chapter 8. In contrast, when he talks specifically about the 2,300 days, Daniel uses a different word for vision, *mareh*. “And the vision [*mareh*] of the evening and the morning which was told is true...And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business; and I was astonished at the vision [*mareh*], but none understood it” (Daniel 8:26, 27).

Thus, we have two words for “vision” in Daniel 8: *hazôn* for the whole vision, and *mareh* for Daniel 8:14, the vision about the 2,300 days and the sanctuary being cleansed – the part that Daniel didn’t understand (Daniel 8:27).

Now, these two words appear again, in Daniel 9, when Gabriel appears to Daniel after his prayer....Notice, Daniel refers to Gabriel, the angel he had seen in the *hazôn* of Daniel 8 (Gabriel is

the one who, in Daniel 8:16, is told to explain to Daniel the vision). Notice too, that Gabriel comes to Daniel and says that he's here to give him "skill and understanding." Skill and understanding about what? The last time we left Daniel, he didn't understand the *mareh* of Daniel 8:14....

This point becomes even clearer when we examine the word for "vision" that Gabriel uses in verse 23 just before giving Daniel the seventy-week prophecy. Look at this carefully: "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision [*mareh*]."

*Mareh? What mareh?* There's only one, the *mareh* of the 2,300 evenings and mornings in 8:14 that Daniel didn't understand. We have the same angel interpreter as in the *hazôn* of Daniel 8, to which Daniel himself refers when Gabriel first appears. ...Gabriel then points him specifically to the *mareh* and tells him to "consider" it ("consider" also comes from *bin*).

Another point. What kind of prophecy was the *mareh* of Daniel 8:14? It was a time prophecy. What is the first thing that Gabriel gives to Daniel? Of course, a time prophecy – the seventy weeks – the he begins to explain in Daniel 9:24.

Without question, Gabriel comes to Daniel in chapter 9 in order to give him the explanation about the 2,300 days in chapter 8. (2003, pp.76f)

Daniel is told to understand the mar'e. Daniel is not told to understand the hazôn. Dn8: 26,27 specifically indicates that it was the mar'e of the evening and the morning which Daniel didn't previously understand. "It was not the vision as a whole, for all but the scene of the evening and the morning had been explained" (Seventh-day Adventists, 1957, p. 271).

Coupled together with the reference in verse 21 to Gabriel's previous visit, the visit recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel, and the mention in verse 21 of the vision of ch 8, the evidence is strong that where as Dn9:21 refers to the hazôn of ch 8, Dn9:23 refers to the mar'e of ch 8. Thus the mar'e that Daniel was to understand in Dn9 is the mar'e he didn't understand in ch 8, i.e., the mar'e of the evening and the morning (8:13,14).

Possibly the greatest weakness in the papers presented to date on this subject is that no SDA scholar has addressed the argument that mar'e in Dn9:23 refers to Dn9:24-27, yet the discounting of this point is absolutely crucial for the chain of argument which yields the SDA rationale for starting point of the 2300 days. One would think that someone would have at least attempted to overthrow the relationship between mar'e in verse 23 and the actual revelation in verses 24-27, especially given that many of the non-SDA scholarly works used by SDA authors on this subject actually take mar'e in Dn 9:23 to refer to vs. 24-27. It is quite out of character with the nature of professional research that such a crucial argument should be passed over without mention. Yet this has been done, for whatever reason.

It may be that SDA scholars have felt that their position was so unassailable that any other possibilities could not even be entertained, let alone given serious examination. SDA historicist's say: "Consider for a minute the explicit reference to the vision of ch 8 in Dn9: 21! And consider the fact that Daniel was left in ch 8 not understanding the mar'e! Consider also the fact that Gabriel (the same messenger as in ch8) tells Daniel to understand the mar'e! (Dn9: 23). Surely this is ample proof that the traditional SDA position is correct!" To the SDA historicist's mind, the conclusion is fairly obvious that the mar'e of Dn8: 26,27 and that of Dn9:23 are identical. Both texts must refer to Dn8: 13,14 in the SDA reasoning.

But as has been shown previous to this, the arguments used to support the assertion that "vision" in Dn9:23 refers to Dn8:13,14 are open to question, and that there is strong ev-

idence for an alternative position. The basic assumption underlying the SDA position on this point is that Daniel didn't understand the *mar'e* of ch8, because essential information wasn't given ([Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p271; [Nichol, 1976](#), p.850, 851 etc). From this assumption comes the rationale for the arguments listed above linking Dn9: 23 to Dn8: 26,27 and 8: 13,14. Following the lead of their arguments, SDA scholars have concluded that "what follows in chapter 9 is therefore not a new and independent vision, but is the continuing literal explanation of the symbolic 'vision' of chapter 8" ([Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p. 271 cf also [Shea 1981a](#), p.229-231).

James White says on this:

I have never yet found any *vision*, or "appearances" in the ninth chapter of Daniel, unless you make Gabriel himself a vision. ([1853b](#), p. 179)

Interestingly enough, there are other SDA writers who do designate Dn9 a "vision," for example:

Uriah Smith says:

Again the prophet is rapt in vision; and a heavenly messenger appears upon the scene. We ask the reader to consider carefully who this is. We last beheld Daniel in converse with Gabriel. The angel was explaining to him the things he had seen in compliance with the mandate of One qualified to command even so high an angel as Gabriel, "Make this man to understand the vision." He had explained all but the time, when Daniel's powers gave way, the prophet fainted, and he was obliged to desist. Thus the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter leaves us, Gabriel departing Heavenward, his work unfinished, and Daniel, though sufficiently recovered to attend the king's business, wondering at the vision but not understanding it. **This 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.

**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 intervening vision to cut off the connection between the two scenes. And here we behold two of the manifold links that bind these chapters together: the same vision called up, and the same angel introduced whom we there beheld. ([1876](#), p.507)<sup>10</sup> (Emphasis mine.)

Smith says the same thing in his book "Looking unto Jesus:"

**The vision of chapter 9** opens as the vision of chapter 8 closed. Daniel and Gabriel in communication with each other. And there is no intervening vision to cut off the connection between these two scenes. ([1898](#), p. 170) (Emphasis mine)

Goldstein quotes Shea, who inadvertently admits the same:

Also in the same volume, Dr. William Shea ("Unity of Daniel") not only *writes* that the **visions** of chapters 8 and 9 are closely linked, being for all practical purposes one vision" – he *proves* that they are. (2003, p.74) [Goldstein footnotes: "*Symposium on Daniel*, Frank Holbrook editor, (Biblical Research Institute, Silver Spring, MD) 1986, p.221." ] [Emphasis mine]

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<sup>10</sup> Yet notice Smith also considers chapter ix as "a continuation of the explanation of the vision of chapter viii" which "would seem sufficiently evident from the very face of the matter, without the aid of any special argument to prove it so." ([1857](#), p. 401)

Having considered these points, I would like to focus on the reasons why the command of Gabriel to “understand the vision” more correctly refers to the four verses that immediately follow on from the command, viz., 9:24-27. Most of these reasons have been raised previously in this paper, but I wish to present them together here so that their force can be felt.

The first point to consider concerning Gabriel’s mission to Daniel in ch.9 is that it is to convey to him the dábár which came forth from God (9: 23). This dábár is variously translated “word.” (JB), “commandment,” (KJV), “answer,” (NIV), “message,” (NIV), “matter,” (KJV), and “oracle.” (Moffat).

This dábár is something that Gabriel came to reveal to Daniel, and the only revelation which Gabriel gives Daniel in ch9 is vs. 24-27. Thus it is fairly clear to see that the dábár that came forward (presumably from God) is the same matter which the man Gabriel had “come to shew” Daniel (Dn9: 23). Therefore, what Gabriel came to show Daniel, and what Daniel was to understand was the message which is documented in vs. 24-27. It is through this dábár that Gabriel was to give Daniel “skill and understanding” (Dan9:22), for there is nothing else in ch9 apart from vs.24-27 through which Gabriel could give Daniel “skill and understanding.”

Thus the argument that vs. 24-27 is the dábár of v.23 seems to clear enough. The next argument that I wish to develop is that dábár and mar’e in Dn 9:23 are virtually synonymous, as they are in Dn 10:1. The first thing that is to be noticed about mar’e in Dn9: 23 is that it is unqualified apart from the definite article. There is nothing in the text which says that a certain mar’e is meant; there is no phrase saying, “which you are about to experience” (i.e., verses 24-27) or “which I showed you in the first vision” (i.e., ch8:16-26) to settle the matter unambiguously. The matter must be decided from the context. Taking the clause itself where mar’e occurs we have Wehaben bammar’e.

The verbal form haben is the Hiphil masc sing., imperative bin “to understand”. The prepositional phrase bammar’e “by the vision” is functioning in an adverbial manner here in that it modifies the action of the verb “understand” as occurring by means of, or through the instrumentality of the mar’e. Thus the understanding (v.22), which Gabriel came to give Daniel on this occasion, was to be given via the mar’e.

But the previous clause we bin baddabar also the same thing except that this understanding was to come through the dábár. The verb bin is the Qal masc., sing., imperative of **bin** “to understand”. The prepositional phrase baddabar “by the message” is also functioning in an adverbial manner here in that it modifies the action of the verb “to understand” as occurring by means of, or through the instrumentality of the dábár.

Put together, these two clauses are saying that the communication Gabriel had brought to Daniel, which Gabriel wants Daniel to understand is to be given by means of the dábár, the mar’e. There are not two different “understandings” involved in Dn 9, so the mar’e and the dábár cannot refer to two discrete experiences of understanding. The understanding which Gabriel is about to give Daniel is understanding in respect to Daniel’s petition (vs4-20) as stated explicitly by Gabriel (v23). By virtue of the fact that understanding was to be conveyed to Daniel by means of both the dábár and the mar’e, yet the beginning of the same

verse (v23) only states that a dábár came out (presumably from God), it seems fairly obvious that the mar'e and the dábár are to be taken as synonymous.

Further evidence which supports this conclusion is the identical form of both clauses (reading from right to left with the conjunction “and” first):

|          |    |       |    |
|----------|----|-------|----|
| Haddabar | be | bin   | we |
| Hammar'e | be | haben | we |

Apart from the change between the regular Qal forms of the verb to the causative Hiphil form, both clauses are parallel. Furthermore, for a writer to use a parallel clause / phrase to reiterate or emphasize a statement, the change in verbal form, or the selection of a stronger verbal meaning for the second clause is entirely regular in Biblical Hebrew.

In considering the relation of dábár with mar'e, the following points should be noted. It was only a dábár that came forth from God in answer to Daniel's prayer. Mar'e, as in Dn8: 26 refers not just to the appearance of beings, but also to the content of their interaction with each other. This is further supported by the use of mar'e in Dn 8: 16, which, according to the interpretation given in vs. 20-26, actually refers to vs. 2-14 where no heavenly messenger is the vehicle of the revelation. Apart from the support given to this position by the content of the explanation in vs. 20-26, this is also supported by use of the verbal root RAA during the vision (cf vb: nira; hannira; v.2: ere etc)

Thus mar'e in Dn9: 23 can either be synonymous with dábár – the message; or it could refer to the message as well as the perceptual experience of receiving it from another personage. In either case, it is quite in keeping with the context to apply the meaning of mar'e to either vs.24-27 (message only) or vs. 21-27 (message via a personal medium).

Another point, which supports the synonymous relationship between dábár and mar'e, comes from Dn 10: 1.

In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. (NIV)

The last two phrases of verse one can be read from the BHS Hebrew text as follows:

10 בַּשָּׁנָה שְׁלוֹשׁ לְכוֹרֵשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרֶס דָּבַר נִגְלָה לְדָנִיֵּאל אֲשֶׁר-  
 נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בִּלְשָׁאֲזָר וְאַמֶּת הַדְּבָר וְצָבָא גְדוֹל וּבִין אֶת-הַדְּבָר  
 2 וּבִינָה לוֹ בַּמְרָאָה: 2 בְּיָמִים הָהֵם אָנֹכִי דָנִיֵּאל הִיטִי מִתְּאֵבֶל

The first clause cited here uses the Qal pft 3<sup>rd</sup>. sg. masc. Verb **bin** “he understood”. The second nominal clause uses the noun and two prepositional words to convey the same meaning as that conveyed by the verb in the first phrase. The second clause has “understanding (was) to him by means of ...” The purpose of the second clause is slightly more specific than the first clause in that it gives reasons as to how Daniel did indeed understand the dábár; he understood it by means of the mar'e. Thus the mar'e was the instrument, the manner in which the dábár was conveyed. This definition concurs with Keil's definition of mar'e and dábár. Here are his comments on Dn9:23:

Dabar, not a commandment, or the divine commandment to Gabriel to go to Daniel, but a word of God, and particularly the word which he commanded to Daniel in vers. 24-27. . . . Mar'e stands not for revelation, but is the *vision*, the *appearance* of the angel by whom the word of God was communicated to the prophet. Mar'e is accordingly not the contents of the word spoken, but the form for its communication to Daniel. To both – the word and the form of its revelation – Daniel must give heed. This revelation was, moreover, not communicated to him in a vision, but while in the state of natural consciousness. . . .

And his comments on Dn10:1,2:

Dabar is the following revelation, which was communicated to the prophet not by a vision (hazôn), but by a manifestation of God (mar'e), and was given in the form of a simple human discourse. (1978, pp. 335f, 406)

As can be easily seen from a quick comparison between Dn9: 24-27 and Dn 11: 3 to 12: 3, the mar'e of Dn 11: 3 to 12: 3 is identical in form and style to vs. 24-27. Thus these two clauses in Dn 10:1 lend support to my position that dábár and mar'e in Dn 9:23 refer to the same revelation, that is, vs.24-27.

There is another consideration concerning the implication of the prepositional phrase bammar'e in Dn9:23 which rules out the possibility of this phrase referring to Dn8. According to the standard SDA position, the prophet Daniel did not understand the mar'e of Dn 8 because crucial information (the starting date for the 2300 days) was not given. Thus it is by means of the revelation – explanation of Dn 9 that the mar'e of Dn 8 is understood. This is why Daniel is told in 9:23 to “understand the vision”! Thus the explanation in 9: 24-27 is the instrument, which explains the mar'e in Dn8.

The problem with this position is that since, in their view, there is only one mar'e in Dn9: 23 and Dn8: 26,27 under discussion – the mar'e of Daniel 8:14, how can this enigmatic mar'e explain itself? That is to say, Dn9: 23 literally says “understand by means of the mar'e.” If this reference is to the mar'e of Dn8, then it is saying that you can understand the enigmatic mar'e in Dn8 if you understand the mar'e, which is a nonsensical statement. Yet the instrumental force of the prepositional phrase bammar'e conveys that message if the mar'e referred to is the one in Dn8. To paraphrase the prepositional phrase differently: “Through the instrumentality of the mar'e, understand!”

If the mention of mar'e in Dn9: 23 refers to the mar'e of Dn8, then far from saying that Dn9:24-27 explains Dn8, it says that the mar'e of Dn8 explains the mar'e of Dn8. One cannot invoke the message of Dn9: 24-27 to explain the enigmatic mar'e of Dn8. On the other hand, the command “by the instrumentality of the mar'e, understand!” is quite correct if the mar'e refers to verses 24-27 of ch.9, since it is *this* revelation that Gabriel has come to impart to Daniel in order to answer the questions in his mind as recorded in the beginning of the chapter.

Considered alongside the arguments in favour of dábár and mar'e in Dn9: 23 and 10: 1 being used in a couplet arrangement, and the similar comparison between the mar'e of Dn10: 1, namely Dn11: 3 to 12: 3, and the contents and style of revelation displayed in Dn9: 24-27, the evidence supports the conclusion that the mar'e referred to in Dn9: 23 is 9: 24-27.

In what seems to be an effort to make the subject more confusing than it really is, some recent scholars have published some odd comments on the issue of the relation of the revelation in Dn9 with that of Dn8. Included below is one of them:

### Hasel's Gobbledegook

One needs to consider the arguments of Hasel concerning his definition of auditory revelation and his attempt to explain away the clear reference of Dn9: 23 to verses 24-27. On the subject of Dn9: 24-27, Hasel has this to say:

Daniel9: 24-27 contains no vision, but there is auditory revelation in which the time element figures most prominently. Both Dn8: 13-14 and Dan9: 24-27 are auditory revelations. The latter provides the beginning of the time span of Dan8. (1981,p.197; 1986,p.438)

In Hasel's terms what is an auditory revelation? It is not hazôn –vision (this is only vs. 3-12, 1986, p434-5, 454). Notice Hasel's comments:

The revelation itself [Dn8] consists of three major parts: (1) vision (vss 3-12), (2) audition (vss 13-14), and (3) Gabriel's explanation of the vision (vss 15-26)...

The audition is also a part of the supernatural revelation given to Daniel. It takes place while the seer's eyes fixed upon the little horn's activity on earth. However, it is separate from the preceding portion of the revelation by an important shift from "seeing" in verses 3-12 to "hearing" in verses 13-14.

The audition is marked by the introductory words "and I heard" in verse 13a. The audition accordingly breaks the flow of what is shown in the vision. It introduces something new, namely, the question – answer dialog of the heavenly beings (1986,pp.380-381).

Hasel regards mar'eh as referring to this audition:

The mar'eh ("appearance") more narrowly refers to the "appearance" of the heavenly beings who engage in conversation regarding the trampling of the sanctuary and its restoration (cf.8: 16,26a-27)" (1986,p.434).

(It should be noted that Hasel has hazôn meaning both vs 3-12 (1986,pp.434-5,454) and vs2-14 (1986,p.436).)

Now notice his self-contradiction.

For Hasel, the auditory revelation of Dn8:13-14 is a mar'eh – "The mar'eh ("appearance") more narrowly refers to the "appearance" of the heavenly beings who engage in conversation regarding the trampling of the sanctuary and its restoration."

He has also acknowledged Dn9:24-27 as an auditory revelation. "Both Dn8: 13-14 and Dan9: 24-27 are auditory revelations" –not an explanation of a vision, his third category (1986,p.380).

Thus, unless Hasel wants to argue that there are some auditory revelations that are mar'eh and some auditory revelations that are not mar'eh, it becomes obvious that he has inadvertently implicated that the "auditory revelation" in Dn9:24-27 is a mar'eh, the term used in Dn9: 23. Thus Dn9: 23 according to Hasel's own argument can quite correctly refer to vs. 24-27!

His statement that "Daniel 9:24-27 contains no vision but there is auditory revelation..." also needs comment before moving on. Hasel has called the of Dn8: 13,14 an auditory revelation, and on pp.384 and 437 (1986) Hasel specifically refers to mar'eh as "vision". Thus for Hasel, an auditory revelation is a vision. To be specific, he calls it a mar'eh – vision. How one can call it a mar'eh –vision, and yet say it is not a vision has yet to be explained by Hasel. Perhaps he has purposely created confusion where none exists. Although he calls Dn9:24-27 an auditory revelation, he refuses to call it a vision (mar'eh). Perhaps the

statement “Dn9: 24-27 contains no vision...” should be read as referring to hazôn rather the mar’eh. But even so, there is vision (mar’eh) in Dn9: 24-27 if there is auditory revelation, according to Hasel’s own definition. Let us pause for a moment and consider some of the implications of Hasel’s definition of the revelation in vs24-27. If, according to Hasel’s reasoning Dn9: 24-27 is an auditory revelation (which, according to his definition of Dn8:14 is also a mar’e), then Dn9: 24-27 can quite rightly be referred to using his criteria as the mar’e of Dn9: 23.

In summarising this section on the lexical reference of mar’eh in Dn9:23 as referring to Dn8, the arguments presented in this section clearly show that there is more evidence to support mar’e in Dn9: 23 applying to Dn9: 24-27 than there is to support its application to Dn8: 13,14.

### **Goldstein’s acknowledges Dn9:24-27 has the attributes of a mar’eh.**

Goldstein also makes the inadvertent slip by admitting that the characteristics of the mar’eh in Dn8:13, 14 also apply to Dn9:24-27:

How interesting too, that the *mareh* of Daniel 8:14, unlike the rest of the *hazôn*, constitutes an audition, something that Daniel *hears*, as opposed to something he *sees*, as in the rest of the vision. Read Daniel 8; the *mareh* of the 2,300 days is revealed in words, not in visible symbols. In Daniel 9, when Gabriel returns and gives him the explanation, he doesn’t give Daniel a vision of rams, goats, little horns etc.; he gives him something to hear, an audition, as with the *mareh* of chapter 8. (2003, p.78)

By Goldstein’s own admission, we could then quite rightly classify the reference in Dn9:23 to understand the *mar’eh*, to refer to verses 24-27!! Not a conclusion that Goldstein would concur with, but he has quite correctly admitted the similarity.<sup>11</sup>

### **Doukhan’s use of “vision.”**

Doukhan surprises us in his important study on the “Seventy Weeks of Daniel9: an Exegetical Study” by explicitly referring to Dn9:24-27 as a vision in its own right. He also calls it a prophecy a number of times. Here are a sample of his statements:

It is in this context that one should understand the first words of the prophecy: “70 weeks are decreed concerning your people and your holy city.” The vision has two sides. The first concerns the people; it is on a level of man, and it will speak of atonement and salvation. The second concerns the holy city, Jerusalem...(p. 257)

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<sup>11</sup> Another point to note in Goldstein’s comment here is that in his efforts to explain the difference between these two Hebrew words, he forgets Dn9:21 which he calls the mar’eh in Dn8, a hazôn. Even the Jewish Art Scroll Tanach commentary on Daniel, he cites on p.79, is forced by Dn9:21 to admit that Dn8:16-26 is not only a mar’eh, as this Jewish commentary supports, but also that it is a hazôn, since Dn9 refers to the place where we encounter Gabriel (verses 16-26) as being a hazôn. This makes the two words synonymous in this instance. This issue is conveniently overlooked *entirely* by Goldstein in his book Graffiti in the Holy of Holies. Always eager to quote support from the “much deeper, and more scholarly” DARCOM series for his arguments (2003, p.74), perhaps Goldstein was too ashamed or embarrassed to quote Shea’s work on this topic. (See Assumption No.1 for a discussion on this Achilles’ heel of Shea’s theories.)

His next subsection is entitled “The Vision” and he then proceeds to discuss verses 25-27 under that heading. Clearly Doukhan’s work endorses the view, perhaps unwittingly, that the command to “understand the vision” in Dn9:23 refers to the vision in vs24-27.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined the connection between the word “vision” in Dn9:23 and the arguments linking it to Dn8: 13, 14. It has searched for the Scriptural evidence to support the argument. What has been found instead is a string of assumptions in a patchy attempt to link the two chapters. The evidence shows there is more internal consistency linking the reference in Dn9:23 to the revelation given to Daniel in verses 24-27 of the same chapter, than there is to link the reference to Dn8:13, 14.

Therefore, the command in Dn9: 23 to understand the vision does not refer to Dn8 but rather to Dn9: 24-27. Daniel is commanded to understand the vision that Gabriel has come to reveal to him. It does *not* refer to the 2300-days in Dn8.

## The Assumption Chain used in this Assumption

The following are a list of the assumptions used as a basis for this assumption.

**Assumption 22:** The same angel that explained the vision of Dn 8 is the one who returns in Dn 9, thus proving that Dn 9 is a continuation of the explanation that was begun in Dn 8.

**Assumption 20:** Dn9 is an appended explanation to Dn8 because time is the only unexplained feature of Dn8, and Dn9:24 begins with the subject of time.

**Assumption 18:** The reference to “vision” in Dn 9:24 refers to Dn 8.

**Assumption 12:** Dan9: 1-19 reveals that Daniel was perplexed over the relationship between the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah and the 2300 days of Dn 8.

**Assumption 11:** Only a little time elapsed between Dn 8 and Dn 9.

**Assumption 10:** The “shutting” of the vision did not mean the shutting of the explanation of the vision (that is, the “vision” was complete and could be shut, but the explanation was not complete).

**Assumption 9:** The time of the end began in 1798.

**Assumption 8:** 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 7:** Daniel’s statement in Dn 8:27 on the lack of the understanding is due to the fact that the information had not been given.

**Assumption 6:** Daniel’s statement in Dn 8:27 that he did not understand the mar’ê meant that he did not understand the 2300 days .

**Assumption 5:** The instruction of Gabriel to Daniel in ch8 is incomplete.

**Assumption 4:** Daniel was sick before the instruction of Daniel was finished.

**Assumption 3:** The starting point for the 2300 days is not declared in Dn 8.

**Assumption 2:** The meaning of “vision” in Dn 8:13, where it asks “How long shall be the vision...?” refers specifically to vs2-12 and not to vs9-11.

**Assumption 1:** The two Hebrew words in Dn 8-12 translated by the English word “vision” have specialised meanings that support the SDA argument linking the 70 weeks of Dn 9 with the 2300 days of Dn 8.

### Assumptions Specific To Assumption 13.

In addition to this list, there are some assumptions specific to this assumption. They include the following:

The use of the definite article in Dn9:23 “the mar’eh” indicates Gabriel is talking about a specific vision and it must be a previous mar’eh. The only previous mar’eh is Dn8: 13, 14. This argument was shown to be invalid and more correctly refers to verses 24-27.

The lexical arguments with the verb “to understand” used by modern SDA historicists to link Dn9:23-27 to Dn8: 13, 14 holds no weight. As shown in my argumentation, the textual use of these lexical items for “understanding” have more consistency when referring to the revelation about to be given to Daniel in verses 24 –27.

The now-defunct argument that Dn 10: 1 says that “the time appointed was long and he understood that thing, and had understanding of the vision”, means that Gabriel had fulfilled his duty to make Daniel understand by then. Since Dn 9 is the only scripture between Dn10 and Dn8: 26, Dn 9 must be the explanation needed by Daniel to understand the vision of ch. 8;

Daniel had assumed that the 2300 days would terminate with the end of the seventy years of captivity, and Gabriel is sent to undeceive him. This is a fanciful fabrication with no basis in sound exegesis.

Also defunct is the argument flowing from Dn 9:24 using the statement “to seal up the prophecy and the vision” to refer to the vision of Dn8.

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## Appendix.

In this section I wish to look at the position of various commentators on the book of Daniel in regard to whether the phrase “consider the vision” in Dn9:23 refers to Dn8 or what follows after that verse in Dn9:24-27. As will become apparent, the consensus of opinion among those who have made a comment at all on this phrase favour the meaning as referring to verses 24 to 27 of Dn9.

Of the commentaries that were surveyed, around half of them did not make any explicit reference to these two phrases in Dn9:23 at all. Those who did not have a comment on these phrases included: Samuel Tregelles (1883); W. A. Criswell (1972); Gleason L. Archer (1977, 1985); Geoffrey R. King (1966); W. Sibley Towner (1984, 1988); Andre Lacocque (1979); Daniel L. Smith-Christopher (1996); Ronald S. Wallace (1979); C. L. Seow (2003); Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella (1983); George Duke of Manchester (1845); Alexander Di Lella (1995); Paul L. Reddit (1999); James Montgomery Boice (1989); Robert M. Gurney (1980); J. Dyneley Prince (1899); E. J. Young (1954); George A. F. Knight (1971); Otto Kaiser (1975); Robert A. Anderson (1984); John E. Goldingay (1989); Phillip Mauro (1965).<sup>12</sup>

### Commentators who see Dn9:23 refer to Dn8

#### Andrew Reid

From God, Gabriel arrived with an explanation, stressing God’s readiness to answer Daniel’s prayer: *‘Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision.’*

The words of Gabriel were strange because they spoke about a ‘vision.’ However, fear and confusion about the vision was not the immediate problem. There had been no vision of recent times about which Daniel had been concerned. His concerns had been more with the exile and its end.

Gabriel’s words told Daniel that the two were linked. Daniel was worried and appalled about the vision in chapter 8 because it showed an evil power exerting itself against God and against his people. He was also worried about the situation in the exile because it was a situation in which God was being mocked and scorned and his people were away from their land and their city Jerusalem. What is happening in these verses is that Gabriel was reinterpreting Jeremiah for Daniel, pointing out that if Daniel was really interested in God’s purpose in history then he needed to look beyond the exile and think beyond seventy weeks. He needed to think in terms of seven times seventy. (1993, p. 199)

#### Harry Bultema

“Therefore understand the matter and consider the vision,” Gabriel says to Daniel....Not one but two matters are mentioned to which the prophet must pay heed. Gabriel is not simply using the two different words for one and the same thing, as Scripture often does, for the following verses are indeed a word of the Lord, but they are not a vision. It seems to us there are some indications which tell us that Gabriel was referring to the vision in the preceding chapter. In the first place it is remarkable that the preceding said so little about Israel. So what was not said

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<sup>12</sup> Details for these can be found in the [General Bibliography](#) paper.

there is apparently revealed to Daniel only a few months later.<sup>13</sup> In the second place, it is not without significance that the same angel who gave Daniel the vision of the preceding chapter also comes and gives this revelation, whereas we know that Gabriel seldom if ever gives revelations. In the third place, in verse 21, this revelation is to some extent connected with the vision of chapter 8. Finally, concerning the meaning of these words, they can become clear in Van Hamelsveld's translation, "so understand this command and compare it attentively with that vision." It seems to us that this very well reflects the meaning of these words. If viewed that way, then the remarkable words in verses 24-27 are a continuation of the previous vision. (1988, p.278)

It will be immediately apparent to readers that Bultema's mistake with this position is his initial assertion that the repetition of the two ideas in verse 23 does not refer to the same subject matter, and that the material in verses 24-27 is not a vision. He does not provide any proof for his assertion that Gabriel is using two different words for different things, even though he admits Scripture often does this when referring to the same thing.

### **Commentators who see Dn9:23 refer to Dn9.**

#### **Edward J. Young**

Vs. 23. *At the beginning of thy supplications a word went forth, and I am come to make (it) known, for very precious art thou, so mark the word, and understand the vision.* When Dan. began to pray, a word (the interpretation given in vv. 24-27) went forth from God, and Gabriel has come to make this word known. The reason why God immediately sent forth the word (i.e., answered the prayer) is that Dan. was a man greatly beloved (lit., most desired). *For* – to be construed with *went forth*, not with *I am come*. *The word*] –The word is the Divine revelation itself, and the vision is in the form in which this revelation came, namely, the appearance of the angel, and the manner in which he communicates the revelation. (1949, p.190)

#### **H. C. Leupold**

The angel informs Daniel that "a word went forth," *yatsa' dhabhar*, at the beginning of his prayer. This "word" was apparently that remarkable prophecy about to follow (v. 24-27), which is the actual revelation granted by God, and which "word" (again *dabhar*) Daniel is, at the close of the verse, asked to consider. (1949, p. 403)

#### **John F. Walvoord**

Upon arrival, Gabriel talks with Daniel and states that the purpose of his coming is "to give thee skill in understanding." Although Daniel's prayer was not directed to his own need and of understanding God's dealings with the people of Israel, this is the underlying assumption of his entire prayer. God, in a word, wants to assure Daniel of His unswerving purpose to fulfill all His commitments to Israel, including their ultimate restoration. In verse 23, Gabriel confirms what is implied in verse 20 that he was given instructions to go to Daniel early in Daniel's prayer. The commandment apparently came from God Himself, although conceivably he might have been sent by Michael the Archangel. Because of the magnitude of the revelation which follows, however, it is better to ascribe it to God Himself. According to Gabriel's own statement, he had come to show Daniel what was necessary to understand the entire matter of Israel's program, and specifically, to consider the vision of the seventy weeks described in the verses which follow. Gabriel bears witness to the special relationship which Daniel had to the Lord in that he was one "greatly beloved," in many spiritual and moral characteristics like the Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (Jn 13:23). The long preamble of twenty-three verses leading up to

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<sup>13</sup> Bultema sees the time difference between Daniel 8 and Daniel 9 as being as short as a "few months." A very misinformed statement! This is unacceptable coming from a publication printed in the 1980s. Bultema has not done his homework correctly.

the great revelation of the seventy weeks is, in itself, a testimony to the importance of this revelation. The stage is now set for God to reveal to Daniel God's purposes for Israel, culminating in the second coming of Christ to establish His kingdom on the earth. (1971, pp.215-216)

### Joyce G. Baldwin

*Wisdom and understanding* were a gift (22), but he was still told to *consider the word and understand the vision* (23). In the light of what follows *vision* may seem a strange word to use, for in this context the Hebrew *mar'eh*, like *hāzôn* in verse 21, refers to what is heard rather than what is seen; it has acquired the general meaning 'revelation' (Ob. 1:1; Na. 1:1). If his prayer was heard, then the period of exile would come to an end and God's house and city would be rebuilt. The oracle, however, looks even further ahead. (1978, pp.177-178)

### Norman Porteous

Gabriel explains to Daniel that, at the moment that the latter began his prayer of confession and supplication, a revelation was given for Daniel which Gabriel had been commissioned by God, and that all the time Daniel had been praying Gabriel had spent on the way....In the concluding verses of the chapter the revelation which Gabriel had been sent to communicate is given. (1979, p.139).

### James A Montgomery

The 'word' is the oracle of revelation in response to Dan's study of the Scriptures, v.<sup>2</sup>;....'Heed the word and give heed to the vision': so with *Mar*.; the two vbs differ as stems of the one rt., *Kal* and *Hif*.; the second vb has the more exact mng of 'understand' as elsewhere. *JV.s tr* of the first clause, 'look in the word,' is not comprehensible. *Mar* interprets here to the point: the two sides of revelations are represented, the word of God and the human vision; he would paraphrase 'vision' with 'revelation.' The word 'vision' here, [Heb *mr'h*], like the more usual [Heb *chzôn*], refers to auditory as well as to ocular vision. (1927, pp.371-372)

### George Buttrick (Ed)

Consider and understand are two forms of the same verb. The seer is bidden to "heed" the word that will be spoken to him and "give heed" to the vision. (1951-57, p.493)

### Leon Wood

*Consider the word and understand the appearance.* Before relating the information, Gabriel urged Daniel to give close attention. The same root verb (*bîn*) is used for both "consider" and "understand," but the first is in the *qal* form and the second is in the *hiphil*, suggesting a desired increase in the degree of understanding. The word for "appearance" (*mar'eh*) is often translated "vision" here, but "appearance" is better, for not only is this the basic meaning of the word (root, *ra'ah*, "to see"), but "vision" tends to confuse, implying that Gabriel's appearance was only in vision rather than actual. The overall thought might be paraphrased thus "Consider the word I am about to give and understand all concerned in connection with my appearance to you." (1973, pp.246-247)

### D. S. Russell

In response to Daniel's prayer of confession and repentance on behalf of his people Israel, God utters his word and Gabriel sets forth to make known the divine oracle disclosing the meaning of Jeremiah's prophecy (see verses 25-27). It contains a revelation concerning the end and gives the assurance that God will indeed deliver his people. It is no merely human interpretation which Daniel discovers for himself; it is a divine revelation which he receives from the mouth of God. (1981, p.182)

### John J. Collins

*At the beginning of your supplication the word went forth:* The "word" that went forth is the revelation that follows in vv.24-27. At the end of v 23, "word" and "vision" ([Heb *mar'eh*]) are apparently equivalent, both referring to a revelation that has both visual and auditory aspects. That the word is said to go forth "at the beginning of the supplication" is noteworthy. The revelation is a response not to the content of the prayer (which is not a request for illumination) but to the fact that Daniel prays. It is reasonable to infer that the course of events foretold by the angel was already determined before and independently of Daniel's prayer. (1993, p.352)

**John Calvin**

At the end of the verse [24], as I have already mentioned, the angel stimulates Daniel to greater zeal, and urges him to apply his mind and all his senses attentively to understand the prophecy which the angel was commanded to bring before him. (1948, p.195)

**E. W. Heaton**

...at the time of the evening sacrifice, Gabriel explains that at the beginning of Daniel's prayer, the meaning of Jeremiah's prophecy had been revealed to him and that he had now arrived to tell it to Daniel, who was much beloved (v. 23; cf. 10, 11, 19). The COMMANDMENT which went forth (v.23) is 'the oracle of revelation in response to Daniel's study of the Scriptures', given in vv. 24-27. [Heaton footnotes: "J. A. Montgomery, *op. cit.* p. 371"]

**S. R. Driver**

*The matter*] the word (x.1), i.e., the prophetic word following (vv. 24-27).

*The vision*] viii. 16, 27, x. 1. Also a term descriptive of the revelation following, and implying that the appearance of Gabriel to Daniel took place in a vision. The word ([Heb *mr'h*]) is not the one found in Is i. 1 (*hazôn*), which does sometimes mean no more than 'prophecy.' (1922, p.135)

**Frederick Tatford**

What was about to be revealed had gone forth as a Divine declaration at the commencement of Daniel's supplications and Gabriel declared that he had come for the express purpose of declaring it to the prophet, who should therefore, consider was about to be stated, and have an understanding of the revelation. (1971, p.150)