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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 5**

**The instruction of Gabriel to Daniel was  
incomplete**

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## The Purpose of the Assumption

This assumption is part of a cluster of assumptions focusing on the end of Dn8. They are interconnected and they depend on each other to cumulatively substantiate the others. We have seen the argument put up in [Assumption No.3](#) that the starting date has not been given in Dn8. Therefore, if there is no starting date for the 2300 days, then obviously, the explanation is incomplete (Assumption 5). Using the argument of [Assumption No. 4](#) that Daniel fainted before the starting date for the 2300-days could be given, they argue that the angel had to break off his explanation. That assumption then leads to conclude that the explanation of Dn8 is incomplete because information has not been given ([Assumption 7](#)), and therefore we would expect to look somewhere else for the completion of that explanation, specifically, Daniel chapter 9 (through the use of Assumptions 10–22).

## The Method of this Assumption

The following quotes illustrate the use of this assumption. In explaining Miller’s study on Dn8, E.G. White says that Gabriel only gave Daniel a partial explanation:

In the eighth chapter of Daniel he [Miller] could find no clue to the starting point of the 2300 days; the angel Gabriel, though commanded to make Daniel understand the vision, gave him only a partial explanation.... There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time – the period of the 2300 days; therefore the angel, in resuming his explanation, dwells chiefly upon the subject of time. (1888, p.325)

Nichol sees all the symbols of the vision explained except the 2300 days:

All the symbols of the vision of ch8:2-14 are explained fully in vs15-26, with the exception of the 2300 “days” of vs13,14 (see GC:325). In fact, all of v13 and 14 is explained in vs 24,25 except the time element involved. In v26 Gabriel mentions the time element, but breaks off his explanation before saying anything further about it....(1976, p.850)

Walter E. Read echoes these sentiments:

We have also observed that the features of Daniel’s prophecies in chapters two and seven were quite fully explained, and that in the main, the features of Daniel 8 were also explained. Only one point was not explained, and that symbol was the

2300-day period. We maintain that this aspect of the Daniel 8 vision was dealt with in Daniel 9... (SDA Ministerial Association, 1961, p.59)

Notice Maxwell's comments on this point. For him as well, the explanation in Dn8 is incomplete:

But in Daniel 8, even though the interpretation begins right away just as it does in chapters 2 and 7, it is not completed within the limits of the chapter. It is continued at the end of chapter 9. The prophetic symbols in Daniel 8 include beasts and horn as before and also a prophetic symbol of a period of time. While still in vision Daniel hears a voice saying, "**Gabriel, make this man understand the vision,**" and immediately Gabriel comes to Daniel's side and bids him "**understand**" it. Verses 16 and 17. But no sooner has Gabriel explained the beasts and horn than he finds he has to stop. The picture he has painted has caused Daniel, now an old man, to faint away. The vision ceases and Daniel says regretfully – almost like a child doing his homework – "**I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.**" Verse 27. This is where Daniel 9 will fit in, a few years later. When Daniel gives himself heart and soul to the understanding of time prophecy, Gabriel will appear again, explaining that he has come to give Daniel "**wisdom and understanding.**" Calling on him once more to "**understand the vision,**" the angel will start right to resolve the time symbolism, just where he had left off at the end of Daniel 8. (1981, p.151 Emphasis his.)

Ford says the objective of Gabriel is not achieved in chapter 8:

The vision [of Dn8] assumes that the sanctuary is a going concern before the little horn comes on the scene, and inasmuch as the sanctuary is central to the revelation, it might be expected that the 2300-day period would begin with some event associated with the restoration of the sanctuary and the people of the sanctuary. What further clue are we given as to the beginning of the period named? In this chapter – none. Despite the admonition from Christ to Gabriel to explain the meaning of the vision to Daniel, *this objective is not accomplished in chapter 8*. The angel began his task, dealt with the early features of the vision and then with the little horn. However, as he came to the place where the meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary should next have been explained, he was permitted only the observation that the vision was to extend many days and that it should be shut up. At this point Daniel fainted, and Gabriel could explain no more. Not yet had Christ's command been fulfilled. The meaning of 8:14 is not understood by Daniel or anyone else. He says so in the final verse of the chapter. Did Gabriel ever fulfill his commission? Did he complete his explanation of the vision. In Daniel 9 we find the prophet praying about the very matter left unexplained – the restoration of the sanctuary. ... Thus Daniel had the unexplained portion of the vision in mind. (1978, p. 189)

And Smith agrees that the explanation must be completed somewhere else than in chapter 8:

Gabriel was commanded to make Daniel understand the entire vision. But at the conclusion of the chapter, Daniel says, "I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." So far, therefore, as the record of the eighth chapter is concerned, Gabriel had not then fulfilled his mission. The point left unexplained was the 2300 days. Why did not Gabriel continue his instructions till this point also was made clear? – Because Daniel had heard all he could endure, and "fainted and was sick certain days." But Gabriel must somewhere explain this matter of the time, or prove disobedient to his instructions. (1898, p.168)

Other contemporary SDA historicist writers echo the same thought:

Clifford Goldstein

In 1988:

Before we tackle Daniel 9, remember that Daniel 2 consisted of a prophetic dream and a full explanation of that dream, that Daniel 7 consisted of a prophetic vision and a full explanation of that vision; and that Daniel 8 consisted of a vision, but only a *partial* explanation of that vision. The ram, the he-goat, and the little horn were explained quite well. The only part not explained was the vision of the 2300 evenings and mornings concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary.

So we have Daniel 2 – dream, full explanation. Daniel 7 – vision, full explanation. Daniel 8 – vision, partial explanation. Daniel 9 – just an explanation. (1988, p.43)

And again in 2003:

The vision in Daniel 8 consists of the ram, the goat, the little horn, and the sanctuary being cleansed (the 2,300 days). The ram was interpreted, the goat was interpreted, and the little horn was interpreted (Daniel 8:19-25); the only part of the vision that wasn't interpreted was the part dealing with the 2,300 days, the part Daniel said he didn't understand.

Listen carefully to what Daniel says here:

‘And the vision of the evening and the morning, which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. 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, but none understood it. (Daniel 8:26-27)

A few salient facts will make our position obvious. First, when Gabriel talks about the vision about the “evening and morning” in the above text, he is talking about Daniel 8:14, which reads (more literally), “Unto evening and morning 2300...” Gabriel's reference, then, in verse 26, to the vision of the “evening and morning” (which he stresses is true) point specifically to the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. Daniel said he didn't understand it, that is, he didn't understand the vision of the 2,300 days, which isn't surprising because everything else in Daniel 8 had been explained. (2003, pp.75f)

Thus, it is made clear that the assumption that Gabriel's instruction to Daniel is incomplete is based on:

- The assumption that Daniel was going to get the starting date explained to him, but as soon as Gabriel started, Daniel fainted and was unable to cope with any more revelation.
- The assumption that the starting point of the 2300 days is not given in Daniel 8 ([Assumption 3](#)). This assumption, in turn, is based on:
- The assumption that the 2300 days begins with the beginning of the vision, ([Assumption 2](#)) and:
- The assumption that the vision referred to in Dn8:13 is vs3-12 ([Assumption 2 and 1](#)).

Thus, we see a veritable chain of assumptions developing to substantiate the SDA's historian's explanation of the relation between Daniel 8 and 9. Each of

these assumptions upon which this assumption is based has been addressed in this paper, and no validity has been found in them.

## The Problems with the Method of this Assumption

The bulk of the argumentation against the problems in this assumption has already been presented in [Assumption 4](#), and readers are urged to read that before reading this. This Assumption will assume the readers are familiar with the contents of the previous paper.

### ***A. No evidence that Gabriel was interrupted in his message.***

In my paper on [Assumption 4](#), I outlined the precedents set by Dn8: 15-19 and Dn10: 4-19 on the way Daniel explains any relevant human-interest material central to the giving of the revelation to Daniel. I argue there that one would expect to find similar type of detail when it came to what the SDA historicist's saying was an interruption in the explanation at the end of Dn8. But the essential details are missing. Admitted, there is a fainting from Daniel; and admitted, there is a period of recuperation before he could resume his duties. But where is the detail to show that Gabriel was interrupted?

#### **1 The Precedence in Daniel's style with human-interest detail**

In studying Daniel's style in chapters 8 and 10<sup>1</sup>, one can be illuminated with some ideas as to what to expect at the end of chapter 8 if there had been an interruption to Gabriel's explanation. We would expect to find at least some indication:

- That Daniel was about to faint and Gabriel had to abruptly end off what he was saying then and there before he finished;
- That Daniel fainted without giving Gabriel any chance to end off what he was saying and that it would be finished another day;
- That like what occurred in Dn10, we might read of a scenario in ch8 after Daniel fainted where he would be touched again by the angel in an attempt to strengthen him again, only to find Daniel faint a further time, so that the angel gives up till a later date;
- With the minimum of information provided, we would at least Daniel indicate that Gabriel was interrupted. But this is not what he find in Dn8:26 or 27.

There is no evidence that Gabriel cut short what he wanted to say.

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<sup>1</sup> Readers should refer to the section entitled, "Appendix 2. Daniel's Inclusion of human-interest material in his writings" in [Assumption 4](#) to get a fuller picture of my statement in this regard here.

## **2 The Evidence in Verse 26.**

On the contrary, there is strong evidence in ch8 that Gabriel's communication to Daniel is completed in ch8 and that Gabriel gave all of the information to Daniel that he was required to give. This evidence comes from v26:<sup>2</sup>

And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true;  
wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

In the clause "the vision of the evening and the morning which was told was true," there is absolutely no hint that the man Gabriel was intending to say more than he in fact said. Having explained the things recorded in vs20-25, he finished his duty by emphasising the validity of this time period. There is nothing to even hint that Gabriel intended to explain something else about the 2300 days besides the fact that the time period is true. The general nature of this statement coming as it does as the penultimate injunction is perfectly regular, since one expects a general statement to round off a detailed communication. The fact that he then moves onto a different topic, indicates that he has exhausted everything he wanted to say about the "evenings and the mornings." Had there been anymore to say on that topic he would have continued in the same vein until he had finished the topic. The fact that he then moves away from the interpretation to deal with an entirely separate matter – Daniel's commission, is evidence enough that in Gabriel's mind, he had finished his commission of providing the detail for Daniel to understand the vision.

For those who see the 2300 days beginning with the pollution or casting down of the sanctuary in v11, the final comment that this time period is a true and fitting way to complete the explanation of the vision. If Gabriel's explanatory mission is about to be aborted by Daniel's assumed impending lack of "information-receptability," one would expect some hint to that end. But this statement in v26 concerning the 2300 days contains nothing to that end. Indeed the opposite is true. The statement that the time period is valid is an entirely regular way to finish the communication. It confirms its truthfulness.

## **3 The Commission to Daniel to Shut the Vision**

The importance of the commission of Gabriel to Daniel has not been given the importance it deserves. It is a clear indication that Gabriel's role has changed toward Daniel. To change from explaining the information to complete his commission to now being the giver of a commission to Daniel is significant. It signals that Daniel is now in the same position that Gabriel was previous to his explanation of the vision. He has passed the torch of responsibility for this vision to Daniel. This is a clear signal that Gabriel's commission has been expedited. Thus the statement to "shut the vision" gives support to the thesis that Gabriel's explanatory mission was complete, and lends no support to the thesis that his explanatory mission was not completed during his visit to Daniel.

In the Hebrew the conjunctive after this statement is w<sup>e</sup>, literally "and," but the force of the relationship between the first clause and the final clause is best conveyed by

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<sup>2</sup> Readers should refer to the section entitled, "1B.2e The Statement that the vision was to be shut." in [Assumption 4](#) for fuller details on this point.

the disjunctive “but.” (cf. RV, ASV, RSV, NIV, Moffat, Jerusalem, Amplified, Living Bible) This has the sense of “But the vision with the 2300 days is indeed true, and will come to pass at the appointed time in the distant future, shut up and preserve this revelation so that those living in those times may understand the events which will occur and what the ultimate outcome will be.”

Daniel is not told to shut the vision because the explanation is unfinished. He is not told to shut the vision because Gabriel can see that Daniel is going to faint. It is *not* because Daniel was “sick” and “faint” that the man Gabriel commands Daniel to “shut up” or preserve the vision and its interpretation. But this should be the type of statement to be expected if Gabriel had to abort his mission. Rather, it is because the vision of the 2300 days and all that occurs during this period – events described in vs 9-11 and reiterated in v13 – is true and will actually come to pass, that Daniel is told to shut the book. Because it *does* portray the events of that distant event, that Gabriel tells Daniel to preserve the revelation. The burden of proof lies with SDA historicist scholars to show that Gabriel’s mission was aborted. There is no evidence to support that position.

In [Assumption 8](#), I have gone into detail to indicate that the command to shut the vision specifically means to preserve the vision, not to keep it beyond the reach of being understood. Readers are referred there to examine these points. The SDA historicist’s concept of keeping it closed from being understood does not fit either the text or the testimony of history. Thus, the statement to “shut the vision” supports the thesis that Gabriel’s explanatory mission was complete, and lends no support to the idea that his explanatory mission was not completed during this interview with Daniel.

### ***B. There is no evidence that Daniel fainted before the explanation was finished.***

This is based on the series of assumptions beginning at this point with the assumption that the start for the 2300-days was not given; and since, it was not given, Daniel must have interrupted Gabriel’s explanation.

Some of the other points also dealt with in the Assumption 4 paper include:

- Gabriel’s strength could support Daniel throughout the ordeal of being exposed to this heavenly being as long as he needed to.
- Gabriel’s strength could support Daniel as long as he needed it;
- The explanation is not incomplete because Daniel fainted because the explanation given to him so far was more than he could bear. Daniel’s fainting recorded in Daniel 8:17-18 and Dn10 is never due to the content of a message, as SDA historicist’s assert was the cause of the fainting in Dn8:27. His fainting was related to the holiness of the messenger. The strength the messenger imparted to Daniel enabled him to remain exposed to this heavenly being. The vision finished at verse 26. Consequently, the withdrawal of this support after the end of the vision with the implied departure of Gabriel, left Daniel to suffer a reaction, as Leupold stated it so well:

The recipient of the vision had already in vv. 17 and 18 been overcome by contact with heavenly beings and supernatural revelation and had required strengthening before he was able even to receive what was to be communicated. It need not seem strange that at the close of this particular revelation his earlier weakness should again befall him – “I was exhausted” – and that a further reaction should set in the form of a temporary sickness “for several days.” It is because of the frailty of man that God does not appear to him directly or reveal himself to man more directly. Daniel records this part of his physical reaction especially, for it is of moment in establishing the sin-weakened state of man. (1949, p.371)

- The evidence in Dn8:17-18 indicates that Gabriel was able to communicate with Daniel regardless as to whether he was conscious or unconscious. Therefore, even if the fainting of verse 27 was related to the explanation, this would be no obstacle to Gabriel to continue the so-called explanation of the start of the 2300-days. The fact that he does not is clear proof that there was nothing more to say.

## **The Conclusions on this Assumption**

### ***The Assumptions Used in This Assumption***

This assumption does not stand on Scriptural facts. It depends on a chain of assumptions for its validity. The following illustrates that chain:

#### **The Explanation in Daniel 8 is incomplete because:**

- **Daniel fainted and was unable to cope with any more revelation; (Assumption No 4)**
- **The starting point of the 2300 days is not given in Daniel 8 (Assumption No 3);**
- **The 2300 days begins with the beginning of the vision, (Assumption No 2);**
- **The vision referred to in Dn8:13 is vs3-12, (Assumption No 1).**
- **Vital information had not been given to Daniel; (Assumption No.7)**
- **Daniel did not understand the 2300 days (Assumption No. 6)**

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