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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 17

**The 70 week period is “cut off” from
the beginning of the 2300 day period**

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The Purpose of This Assumption

The purpose of this assumption is to provide a starting date for the beginning of the 2300-day prophecy. The normal logic of the SDA argument on Dan 8 is that the chapter finished without Gabriel providing Daniel with the start of the prophecy since he fainted and could not cope with any more revelation. The explanation in Dn9 answers this need and provides the starting point needed. Therefore, not only are the two periods linked, they *begin together*.

The Method of This Assumption

Traditionally, the method of asserting this assumption is by merely asserting it:

As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventh weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. [E.White, 1950](#), p.326

Could we not logically conclude then, that when Gabriel deals with the seventy weeks, or 490 years, he is explaining the first part of the 2300-day prophecy? [Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p.275

...in the absence of contrary evidence, it may be assumed that the 70 weeks would be cut off from the beginning of that period. ([Nichol, 1976](#), p. 851)

Recently however, the rationale has changed a little. The evidence in this attempt of explaining this is merely the fact that both the vision of Dn8 and the time for starting the 70 weeks both occur in the times of the Persian empire. Notice these comments from Shea:

The only logical conclusion I can come to from the use of the word vision in the query of the holy one in Dn8:13 is, therefore that he included the whole procession of events viewed by the prophet, beginning his question with the Persian ram at the beginning of that vision. Therefore, by virtue of the use of the word vision in the question of Dn8:13, the beginning of the 2300 days should be dated historically sometime during the period of the supremacy of the Persian ram. But when during that period? When Cyrus conquered the period? When the Medes and the Persian ram. But when during that period? When Cyrus conquered Babylon? When Alexander defeated the Persians? The point in the 2300 days were to commence is not clarified in the ch.8.

It should next be noted that the 70 weeks the prophecy in Dan 9:24-27 clearly begin during the same Persians period, at the time when the decree for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem was to go forth. Since the prophetic time periods in Dan 8 and 9 both were to begin during the same Persian period of history in the ancient Near East, it seems reasonable, in view of the connections between these two prophecies discussed above, to take the precise chronological point of commencement for the time period of the second of these two prophecies (the 70 weeks of Dan 9) and employ it as the starting point for the time period for the time period referred to in the first of these two prophecies (the 2300 days of Dan 8). [Shea, 1981](#), p.250

According to Shea, the synchronisation of the 2300 days and the seventy-week period has, as its basis, the assumption that the starting point of the 2300 days is not given in Dn8 with all the concomitant assumptions that are implicit in that assumption. From the assumption that the “vision” referred to in vs13 is vs 3-12, Shea sees the 2300 days starting sometime in the Persian Empire. And given the starting point of the 70 weeks as occurring in the Persian period, “it seems reasonable” to synchronise the starting time of both periods. SDA historicism stands on the assertion “it seems reasonable...”

This assumption is further illustrated by other authors who do not even explain why they align the 70 weeks period with the *beginning* of the 2300-day period:

As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventh weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. [E.White, 1950](#), p.326

Could we not logically conclude then, that when Gabriel deals with the seventy weeks, or 490 years, he is explaining the first part of the 2300-day prophecy? [Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p.275

...in the absence of contrary evidence, it may be assumed that the 70 weeks would be cut off from the beginning of that period. ([Nichol, 1976](#), p. 851)

The Problems with the Method of this Assumption

Mere Assertions

Thus apart from the assumption that the 2300 days apply to the length of the vision in Dn8:3-12, which yields a starting point “somewhere in the Persian period,” the only other means used by SDA writers to justify their synchronisation of the two time periods is just plain assertion of their conclusion – “Could we not logically conclude...?”

Notice also Hasel’s logic in this regard:

If the first auditory revelation (8:13-14) points to the end of the long period of 2300 evenings-mornings, it would seem that the second auditory revelation of the 70 weeks in 9:24-27 would give its *starting point*. Its termination point could then be determined on the basis of such information. The omission of this datum in chapter 8 left Daniel without a starting point. [1982, 1986](#), p. 438; cf. [1981](#), p.197

One can readily see in Hasel’s logic the same as that previous sampled:

1. The appeal to “reasonable” assumptions: “it would seem...”;
2. The assumption that the starting point in Dn8 is not given in that chapter;

3. It was the omission of the starting point in Dn 8 for the 2300 days that “left Daniel without understanding (mébîn, v27).

There is not the slightest shred of evidence that can be used to indicate how the two time periods are to be linked together. The starting date could be given at a number of points in the 490-year prophecy. Where it is said that the two prophecies start together? Where is it written that the start of the 70-weeks is the start also for the 2300-days? How does one decide that the 70-weeks is “cut off” from the first section of the 2300 years? Why not choose one of the other points in the 70 week prophecy? Why not choose any point in the early part of the prophecy? Why not have the 2300-days and the 70-weeks *end* together? There is no explicit guideline to indicate the relation between the two periods. It is all assumption and guesswork. This is all that can be put forward to substantiate this position.

Notice again the assertion of Ellen White:

As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, **it must be the period** from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and **the two periods must begin together**. [E. White, 1950](#), p.326

This is extremely amazing logic. Why is it a necessary truth that if one period of time is a part of another period of time, that they *must, of necessity* begin together? Where is the evidence for this conclusion? This is false logic and is invalid. And as I have shown, the 2300 days is NOT the “only period of time mentioned.” Daniel pleads in his supplication for this new time of favour to begin, a time when God shines his light on Jerusalem and His people according to his promise. Gabriel enters the scene and tells him that this time will come, and he tells him when it will commence – at the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. And with this new beginning also begins a time of probation – the 70-weeks. The time of favour was the item Daniel was seeking in his request. That would be granted and God would fulfil his Word according to the prophets. What he was not seeking was the message concerning the probationary period, yet that was given as well.

Also notice again the assertion of the [SDA Bible Commentary](#):

...**in the absence of contrary evidence, it may be assumed** that the 70 weeks would be cut off from the beginning of that period. ([Nichol, 1976](#), p. 851)

This is another example of truly amazing logic. It is saying in effect, because there is nothing else that anyone has proposed as the period from which the 2300-days could be reasonably “cut off” from, we choose to cut the 70-week prophecy off from the beginning of the 2300-day period, even though there is nothing in the text that indicates that that is the correct thing to do. We are just going to do it, because there are no other contrary options.

Here is another example of this logic from the SDA pioneers, this time from Uriah Smith:

If the 2300 days do not commence with the 70 weeks, no man knows, or can know, when they commence; and we may set them aside at once; for they become a mere cipher in the prophetic chain for which no place can be assigned. (U.Smith

, 1856
, p.389)

Well, I have proposed a much more sensible and textual argument asserting that the 70-week prophecy is “cut off” from the post-exilic period of grace and favour, and is the probationary portion of that period. The successful completion of that probation, would then guarantee an extended period of favour, as foretold in the prophecies. On the other hand, a failure of this probation would mean the loss of privilege and favour. And the period of favour began with the first evidence of favour – when the commandment went forward to restore and build the city. This textually indicates that it is the first part of this period of favour, and not the 2300 days, that begins with the 70-week period.

By their own admission, and in the presence of much more compelling evidence to indicate the period from which the seventy-week is cut off, there is no reason to assume the 2300-days as the period from which the 70-weeks is cut from the 2300-days, and even less that it is cut from the *beginning* of that period.

The Conclusion

Needless to say, the SDA historicist's method of supporting this assumption has nothing substantial in it. It is merely asserted and left at that. Their admission that there is no evidence to support it except a reasonable conclusion made in faith and 'logic,' clearly shows how flimsy their position really is. It is *not necessarily logical to conclude* that their conclusion is valid (contra Seventh-day Adventists, 1957). One does not *have* to make the link between start of the 2300-days and the start of the 70 weeks simply because there is no other differing argument (contra Nichol, 1976); and it is *not necessary* to link the two periods simply because there is no other period to link the 70-weeks with (contra E. White, 1950).

The Assumption Chain used in this assumption

This assumption, like so many before it, is dependent on a whole baggage of other assumptions. The most obvious assumption is that Daniel 9 is given to explain the 2300-day period in Daniel 8. In addition to the assumptions listed below, this assumption just merely asserts that such a conclusion is *logical*. This has been shown to be far from the truth.

This assumption involves all of the assumptions dealing with Daniel 8 and 9 including the following:

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 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 15: The 70-weeks are “cut off” from the 2300-days period

Assumption 14: The meaning of htk is best translated as “cut off.”

Assumption 13: The command of Gabriel in Dn 9: 23 for Daniel to “understand the vision (mar’ê)” specifically meant the mar’ê of Dn 8: 13,14.

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 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 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 9: The 2300 days could not end until after the “time of the end” began in 1798.

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.

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Appendix.

Exercise using the Starting Point for 3½ times in Daniel 7

As a case in point of making an argument merely from assertions like this one we have seen in SDA historicism for the start of the 2300-day period, one need only look to Daniel 7 and note the SDA exposition on this time period. Notice the similarity with Dan8:

- A prophecy is given with a time period
- Daniel is perplexed at the end of the revelation;
- No starting point is given in the chapter;
- Daniel is given an answer, but is not given all the information needed. Yet SDA historicists do not have a problem with the chapter finishing without declaring a start date for the 3½ times.

I could easily develop an argument to show how the seventy week prophecy provides a starting point for the 3½ times using the same argument used by SDA historicists to argue how the seventy week prophecy provides a starting point for the 2300-days.¹

This is simply answered by pointing out that the dábár [in Dn9:23] 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. 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.

One could also examine the question of the use of the Aramaic equivalent of dábár - millah – (“word,” “thing,” “matter”) –used extensively in Dn2-7. Millah is

¹ This argument is developed in [Assumption 13](#) but is repeated here for convenience.

used a number of times in Daniel 7 and naturally Daniel does not use any Aramaic in Dn8. Since Dn7 is the only vision of the two chapters using this word, one would then assume that Dn9:23 refers to one of the references in Dn7. 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 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 Fromm 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] (Fromm, 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 3½ times is not known by Daniel at the end of Dn7. No SDA historicist that I have read has shown specifically that Dn7 shows where to begin the 3½ 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 phase “the vision of the evening and the morning” in Dn8:26. 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 26th verse couples the two visions the one in the evening, 7th chapter, and the one in the morning, 8th chapter, and says “the vision of the evening and morning which was told is true. (Miller, 1836, pp.49,50)

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 historicist’s can do that with “*the vision*” in Dn9:23, linking it with

the vision of Dn8, then someone else has a right to link “*the* matter/word/oracle/thing” in Dn9:23 with the vision/thing/matter of Dn7.

The main questions directed to SDA historicists include:

1. Is the revelation in Daniel 7 complete?
2. Is the start for the 3½ times given in Daniel 7?
3. If it is not given in Daniel 7, where is it given?

Historicists have historically debated over the start over the beginning of the 3½ times. In fact, it was Newton (quoted above) who proffered the answer eventually generally accepted as the correct one:

“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] (From, 1948, p.684f)

His assertion was that we would not know the start of the 3½ times until we saw its completion. This statement is a tacit acknowledgement that the beginning of the 3½ times is not given in Dn7, otherwise we would not need to assert such a position. Therefore, we could use the same argumentation of the SDABC in regard to linking the *beginning* of the 2300-days with the *beginning* of the 70-weeks. We could say, “in the absence of any contrary evidence, it may be assumed that the 3½ times commences with the beginning of the seventy weeks.” (cf., Nichol, 1976, p. 851) From there we could fabricate some fanciful fulfillment and then search the history books, as historicists are wont to do, and find an event to herald the completion of that period.

The point of the exercise is that since there are no robust controls evident in the decision taken by the SDA historicists on this matter, we could use their identical logic to come up with another position that is just as legitimate.