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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 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.**

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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 time. The essence of this assumption is this: time was the only omitted item in the explanation of the vision in Dn8; time ought to be the subject of Gabriel’s return visit in Dn9; time is, in fact, the very issue that Gabriel discusses; therefore Dn9 is the continued explanation of Dn8

## The Method of Establishing this Assumption

The following examples from standard SDA works highlight how this assumption is developed. The arguments used by both pioneers and contemporary apologists within Seventh-day Adventism are virtually identical:

### 1. Ellen White’s Statement

There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which has 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 [Dn9:24-27 quoted]. E.G. White, 1948, p.325f.

Taking the first example from the pen of Ellen White, we read, “There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which has been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time – the period of the 2300 days;” this statement assumes:

- The start of the 2300-days is the start of the full vision;
- The starting point of the 2300-days is the only point unexplained;

In the part of the statement from Ellen White she says, “therefore the angel, in resuming his explanation dwells chiefly upon the subject of time [Dn9:24-27 quoted].” This statement assumes:

- That Daniel is concerned in Dn9:2-19 with the 2300-day period;
- The command in Dn9:23 to “consider the vision” refers to Dn8;
- The same angel *resumes* his explanation from Dn8.

### 2. Uriah Smith’s Statements

There was only one point which the angel had omitted to mention; and that was Time; hence that was what troubled Daniel, and what none understood. But Gabriel must explain this also; for he had received his commission, Make this man to understand the vision; and he must fulfill it. Therefore he says in chapter 9:22, “I am now come to give thee skill and understanding... Understand the matter and consider the vision. He then commences his explanation upon the very point which he omitted in chapter 8; namely, Time. (U. Smith, R & H, March 21, 1854.)

Notice how crucial this point is in Smith's mind:

Now we will introduce a test to settle beyond a peradventure the truthfulness or falsity of the position 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 obliged to leave unexplained in that vision; namely, the subject of the time. If he does this, the connection between these two chapters, for which we here contend, is established. If he does not, it is perhaps still an open question. (Smith, 1898, p.171)

The points in these statements assume the following:

- The starting point of the vision was not given in Dn8;
- It was the *only* point unexplained;
- It was the starting point of the 2300-days that troubled Daniel;
- When Gabriel says to Daniel in Dn9, "consider the vision," he was explaining the starting point for the 2300-days;
- The information given in Dn9:24-27 is related to time because time is the only component unexplained in Dn8.

### 3. Seventh-day Adventist Commentary Statement.

11. The context thus makes certain beyond the possibility of doubt that the explanation of ch9:24-27 is a continuation, and completion, of the explanation began in ch8: 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 (ch8:16;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.851

Nichol's work not only uses a whole bunch of assumptions strung together to build his case, but he adds the idea that this explanation is "certain" to the extent that it is "beyond the possibility of doubt."

Nichol's assumptions include:

- Dn9 is a continuation of and completion of the explanation in Dn8: 15-26;
- The unexplained start of the 2300 days is the focus of the explanation in Dn9;
- In fact, Dn9 deals "exclusively with the unexplained portion of the vision;"

- It was the same angel who explained the matter to Daniel on both occasions;
- It is the context of Dn9 that provides the evidence to confirm this association between the 70 weeks of Dn9 and the 2300-days of Dn8.

#### 4. Questions on Doctrine Statement.

We need to remember that in the symbolic vision of Daniel 8, reference was made to the 2300-day period. This was left unexplained. If Daniel 9 is the explanation of this unexplained portion of the vision, the explanation would inevitably have to deal with time. But the only prophetic time mentioned in the vision of Daniel 9 is the seventy weeks. 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 days prophecy? (Seventh-day Adventists, 1957, p. 275)

Questions on Doctrine repeats the same assertions as the other authors listed above:

- The start of the 2300-days was left unexplained in Dn8;
- If Dn9 deals with time it must be an explanation of the 2300-days of Dn8;
- Since the only prophetic time included in Dn9 is the seventy weeks, it would be “logical” to conclude that the seventy weeks are the explanation of the 2300-days.

#### 5. List of Assumptions Used in these Statements

As can be seen from the list of assumptions accompanying the sample quotes from standard SDA works, there argument is built, not on any independently verifiable Scriptural fact, but rather a chain of assumptions. The following is a composite list of the assumptions listed above:

1. The starting date is not given in Dn8 for the 2300-day period;
2. The starting date is the only feature not explained;
3. It was the starting point of the 2300-days that troubled Daniel;
4. It was the same angel who explained the matter to Daniel on both occasions;
5. If Dn9 deals with time it must be an explanation of the 2300-days of Dn8;
6. It is the context of Dn9 that provides the evidence to confirm this association between the 70 weeks of Dn9 and the 2300-days of Dn8.
7. When Gabriel says to Daniel in Dn9, “understand the vision,” he was explaining the starting point for the 2300-days;

8. Daniel is concerned in Dn9:2-19 with the 2300-day period;
9. Dn9 deals “exclusively with the unexplained portion of the vision;”
10. Since the only prophetic time included in Dn9 is the seventy weeks, it would be “logical” to conclude that the seventy weeks are the explanation of the 2300-days.

None of the points listed above have any Scriptural evidence to examine to ascertain their truthfulness. They all have other assumptions as their foundation.

## Rebuttal to this Assumption

The argument of this assumption is that merely due to the fact that “time” is a part of the revelation of Dn9, it must “logically” be associated with the 2300 days in Dn8. The obvious reply to this argument is that those who argue this position overlook the significance of the time period discussed in Dn9:2,3.

Indeed, some have even argued that Daniel was considering the 2300-day prophecy when he turned to Jeremiah’s prophecy of the 70-year exile period ([see samples in Assumption 12](#)). But as has been shown, evidence for this is lacking, and Daniel’s reference to the 70-year captivity period should best be taken at face value, that is, Daniel was only considering the 70-year captivity period.

### 1. The *Quantity of Time*.

There are two aspects to any time period. There is firstly, the *quantity* of that time period, and secondly, there is *the unit of measurement* used. In regard to the *quantity* of the time period involved, Daniel 9 begins with the consideration of the seventy-year captivity period. It continues with a prayer that is explicitly related to the seventy-year exile period, and it finishes the chapter with a prophecy given in the same time *quantity* as the exile period – “70.”

In regard to the unit of *measurement*, both Shea and a host of SDA scholars have convincingly argued for an explicit relationship between the *shabu’im* of Dn9:24-27 and the seventy years exile. (cf. 1982, pp.74-77) Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude, even by Shea’s own admissions, that the reason Gabriel’s second visit deals with the subject of time is because Daniel’s prayer agonises with the issues involved with a time period – the 70 year exile period and specifically with the conditions associated with that restoration- confession and repentance by the Israelites.

The relation between the *quantity of time* in Dn9:24-27 and 9:3-19 is complete and harmonious. Thus, Dn9:24-uses the *quantity of seventy*, not because time is the only unexplained aspect of Daniel’s vision in ch 8, but because it is the quantity of time in Daniel’s mind from the prophecies of Jeremiah, and upon which his mind was being exercised at the time prior to the Gabrielic revelation. But that period of time is not the 2300 days, but the seventy years of exile, and no SDA historicist has made any explicit connection between either the quantification or the unit of time scale used in the 2300 evening-mornings and the seventy “sevens.” Until that connection can be

demonstrated, there is no explicit link between the 2300 evening-mornings and the seventy weeks. On the other hand, there is no correspondence between either the quantity of the period referred to in Dn9:24-27 or the unit of time used (shabu'â) in Dn9:24-27, when compared to the 2300-evenings-mornings of Dn8.

There is no need to look elsewhere for explanations to explain the shabu'im period. The period shabu'â has been shown to be linked with the 70-year exile period (cf., 2 Chr 36:21). It is because time is the major burden on his mind both prior to and during the prayer, that time is understandably the subject of Heaven's response.

## 2. The Unit of Time Used.

In this section, I wish to examine the idea of continuity of the unit of time used between what SDA's call the initial part of the explanation of Dn8 and the final part of that explanation in Dn9. The title of the vision containing the 2300-days was called by the man Gabriel "the vision of the evening and the morning." (Dn8:26) This highlights the salient feature of the vision, and it will be noticed that the man Gabriel chose, not the "2300" – that is, the quantity of the time unit, to give a name to the vision; but rather he chose the "evening and the morning," – the unit of time used – to name the vision. Therefore, we would expect the man Gabriel to express the rest of the explanation in the term *he* considered the most important part of the vision – the unit of time "evenings-mornings."

### Consistency with the Unit of Time.

**Daniel 4.** On both occasions when the seven "times" to come upon Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned in v.23, v.25 and v.32, it is always referred to as "seven times." There is internal consistency in the use of the nomenclature. Even v.34 where it says "at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me," this consistency is not impaired, since this statement "end of the days" is just an idiom for "at the end of the time." It does not have the numeral prefixed to it, as do the other occasions. In all cases where it is referring to the length of the period and the text uses the numerals, it uses the same unit of time. To highlight this consistency even further, the same chapter uses the time units of "one hour," (v.19), "twelve months," (v.29). So he shows perfect consistency when referring to the seven times by the same unit of time. He could have talked in terms of 7 years, 84 months, or even 2,555 days. Instead, he chose the same unit of time when using the numeral "seven."

**3½ times.** With regard to the 3½ times (Dn7:25), there is consistency across visions, times and languages. Dn12:7 uses the same time unit when referring to the same time period in an earlier vision. This is significant. It is the only example where the same time period is referred to more than once in the book of Daniel. And what do we find here? The period is discussed in a section of the book of Daniel that SDA scholars understand is literal language. We get the prophetic time periods of this section referred to in the literal term "days." So we find 1290 days, and 1335 days. But when it comes to referring to a prophetic time period of an earlier vision, is it given as 1260 "days"? No!! It is referred to in the identical unit of time as that used when it was first mentioned – "times." This is the first example of internal consistency. What is the

implication of this? It reinforces the position that if Dn9 was really explaining the time period of Dn8, then it should be show the same internal consistency with the time periods being used as that used in Dn8-“evenings-mornings.”

**Daniel 8.** When referring to the time period used in Dn8: 14, Dn8 uses the same *unit* of time throughout the chapter – “evenings-mornings” (*‘ereb-bôqer*). There is consistency. If Dn8:20 to 9:27 is one unit of explanation Gabriel was commanded to give to Daniel immediately after the vision in Dn8, then one would expect the same unit of time in the same block of material. The unit of time “evenings-mornings” used by the angel Gabriel during the so-called first half of the explanation (Dn8: 20-26) is the same unit we would expect to find in the second half of the explanation. There is no reason to assume that the unit of time should change in the second half of the explanation. According to SDA historicists, all the explanation had been in Gabriel’s head as one unit, and he was planning to give it to Daniel uninterrupted.

Why would Daniel’s sickness be reason to change the means of expressing the unit of time? Was it the unit of time that made Daniel sick? Were the calculations with that unit far too heady for him? The man Gabriel called the 2300-days the “vision of the evening and the morning.” So, if that is the title of the 2300-day revelation, then there is no reason for it to be explained in any other unit of time than that by which it is entitled – “evenings-mornings.” To raise the unit of time to the significance of the title instead of a more salient title such as the vision of the “horror/ little horn/ sheep and the goat/ great persecution/ desecration of the daily / abomination of desolation etc., at least leads the reader to expect an internal emphasis on the unit of time, if only through the use of it. Thus the concluding half of the explanation regarding the time period would in all likelihood be expressed in *‘ereb-bôqer* units, as was done in the first half.

Apparently, Gabriel understood the vision because he is merely commanded in Dn8:16 to make Daniel “understand the vision.” Thus Gabriel didn’t have to wait for a later revelation direct from God to complete the explanation to Daniel. He did not need to wait more than perhaps a day or two, or at most a few months. Certainly not over a decade!!!<sup>1</sup> According to the SDA view, Gabriel already had the entire explanation in his head when he was divulging it to Daniel, including the explanation of the start for the 2300 days. This would have been given in its entirety had not Daniel’s apparent sickness halted Gabriel’s efforts. With Gabriel having the entire explanation in his head as he was explaining it to Daniel, the contents of his explanation regarding the start of the 2300-evenings-mornings would have been present in his mind as well for him to entitle the section he was about to explain to Daniel as the “vision of the evening and the morning.” This naturally leads the reader to expect references to “evening-morning” in the body of the soon-forthcoming explanation.

Another important point needs to be considered before we present the text how it would have appeared had not Daniel’s apparent illness circumvented Gabriel’s ability to convey the full message at that time. Many, if not all writers, both SDA and non-SDA,

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<sup>1</sup> In fact he did not have to wait at all. See my comments on [Assumption 5](#).



acknowledge the dependence of the seventy-week prophecy in Dn9 to be dependent in its quantification on the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah, read by Daniel just before the revelation given in 9:24-27. Consider also that SDA historicists argue that this text in Dn9 is the continuation of the explanation that could not have been given ten years previously. This then begs the question, If Gabriel already had the explanation –full and complete – in his mind at the time he gave the explanation, why do we have the rest of the explanation given in units of *quantification* that would not have had any relevance until much later when Daniel came to read the book of Jeremiah? Put differently, if we say that the quantification of the revelation in Dn9:24-27 is dependent upon its relationship with the seventy years of exile from Jeremiah, then surely, if the explanation of the vision of Daniel 8 had not been interrupted with Daniel’s illness, then on the same line of logic, the explanation would have been completed in the same *units of time* as used earlier in chapter 8, viz. evenings-mornings. We would not expect the explanation of chapter 8 to be given in a scale entirely foreign to the rest of the text (which is what the seventy weeks is), since the rest of the explanation in Dn9 is expressed in a measure relating to Daniel’s reading of the book of Jeremiah, which he had *not* done at the time that Gabriel was told in chapter 8 to explain the vision. We would expect the time scale to have some relevance to the time scale used earlier in chapter 8, as is indicated by the reference again in verse 26 to the earlier time scale in verse 14, in exactly the same units of time – “evening” and “morning.”

The following adaptation of Dn8 and 9 gives us some idea of how Dn9 would have flowed if it was the completion of the explanation of Dn8:

15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gà:briel, make this man to understand the vision

17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright

19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.

21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true:

27 Four hundred and ninety *evening-mornings* are determined upon thy 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.

28 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 nine and forty *evening-mornings*, and four hundred and thirty four *evening-mornings*: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

29 And after four hundred and thirty four *evening-mornings* 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.

30 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for seven *evening-mornings*: and in the midst of the seven *evening-mornings* 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.

To argue for a correspondence between the 2300 evening- mornings of Dn8:14 and the time period in Dn9, one would expect a period of 490 evening-mornings, since this supposed to have been given at the same time when the rest of Dn8 was given. If it had been given uninterruptedly as is argued at the time the Dn8 was given, v26 clearly shows that the phrase would have been present as the unit of time used to explain the starting point. *This* would give explicit evidence that both periods are to be related, if Dn9 is just an appended explanation to Dn8.

If we consider Dn8:20 to 9:27 to be one block of material explaining “the vision of the evening and the morning,” it is quite anomalous that the explanation begins in the same units as the vision —“evenings mornings” and then halfway through the explanation, it switches to an entirely different unit of time that relates to something a decade in the future (the reading of Jeremiah’s prophecy). Arthur Ferch has, in true SDA tradition, correctly named the so-called break between Dn 8 and Dn9 an “interruption:” He says:

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

Following this idea, Ferch asserts the completion of the explanation is merely a resumption of the interrupted explanation years before<sup>2</sup>. It is the continuation of the same material that Gabriel was going to give in Dn8. There is *no* hint at all, according to Ferch's statement, that Gabriel remoulded the time frame he originally had in mind to suit the time elements in prophecy of Jeremiah. Gabriel's "interpretation interrupted years before is resumed and completed." No wonder Ferch prefaces his statement with the pregnant "if." The onus is on SDA's to explain why there is consistency with the quoting of time periods from a previous prophecy in the same unit of time (as in the case of Dn7:25 and Dn12:7), yet there is no consistency in Dn8 and Dn9 if they are both parts of the explanation of the vision in Dn8? Why change the unit of time when, in Ferch's words, the interrupted explanation is merely "resumed," not remoulded?

**Daniel 9.** Dn9: 24-27 uses its own unit of time throughout the chapter – shabu'â. If Daniel was to faint after the start of the explanation in Dn9:24, so that Gabriel had to return another day, week, month or year later to reveal to him the information contained in vs 25-27, we would expect the same line of thought to be carried forward. We would not expect Gabriel to talk in terms of "ereb-bôqer," "iddan," ("times") or any other time unit. We would expect Gabriel to finish the explanation in the same units of time as those used in verse 24. To use Ferch's words, when Gabriel would return to complete the revelation as contained in vs 25-27, "the interpretation interrupted years before is [then] resumed and completed." What unit of time would we expect Gabriel to speak in? To be internally consistent, "sevens." It would be very odd for one verse to talk in "sevens" or "weeks" and then change in the next verse to talk in terms of "62 times" or 434 evenings mornings."

Thus, on the balance of evidence presented, considering the internal consistency both within revelations and across revelations, if the SDA theory is to have any credibility at all regarding the relationship between the 2300 evenings-mornings and the seventy weeks, then the word used by the man Gabriel to name the unit of time should be identical in Dn8 and Dn9 since that are supposedly part of the same explanation. And since this is not the case, their argument dissolves.

***Shea's effort to make the shabu'â a collection of seven " 'ereb-bôqer"s.***

An interesting effort to try and argue a relationship between "ereb-bôqer" and "shabu'â" comes from Shea (1981):

It is the 70 "weeks" that were cut off, or determined, upon God's people to which our attention is drawn in this case. The unusual feature of the word for "weeks" used here is that it is written with a masculine plural ending, whereas everywhere else in

<sup>2</sup> Questions on Doctrine says: "So the explanation broke off precipitately at that point." (Seventh-day Adventists, 1957, p. 269) "Precipitately" is defined in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* in the context of this sentence: as "**a.** to cause to move, pass, act or proceed very rapidly; to hasten, hurry, urge on; **b.** to bring on quickly, suddenly or unexpectedly..." (Onions, 1980, Article, "Precipitately"). Thus, QOD endorses Ferch's position that Gabriel seems to have been unexpectedly gagged between sentences due to Daniel's sickness, and that Gabriel picks up this sentence when he returns.

the OT outside the book of Daniel the word for week was treated as a feminine noun. The classic case in point here is *hag shabu'oth* (The feast of Weeks). In contrast to these occurrences of *week* elsewhere in the OT, this word is attested eight times in Daniel, and in six of these eight instances it clearly had been treated as a masculine noun inasmuch as it occurs with the masculine plural ending. The gender of this word is not evident in the other cases in which it occurs in Daniel .

Six of the eight occurrences of the word for *week* in Daniel are found in the prophecy of 9:24-27. The other cases occur in Dan10:2-3. The occurrences of this word in the latter passage is of some interest here because the word for *days* must be in apposition to the word for *weeks* here because *weeks* is in the absolute and not in the construct state. The reference here to “weeks of days” actually is a Hebrew idiom for “full weeks.” This is evident from Gn41:1 and Lev25:29, where this construction was used to refer to “full years,” and from Gn29:14 and 2Kgs 15:13, where it was used to refer to a “full month.”

In this appositional use the word for *days* does not govern and is not governed by either the gender or the number of the word with which it is in apposition. *Days* remains a masculine plural regardless of whether the preceding word is masculine or feminine, singular or plural. Inasmuch as the gender and number of the word for *days* does not affect the gender and number of the word that precedes it in this idiom, it cannot be used as an unexpressed but understood explanation for the unusual masculine ending for the masculine plural used for *weeks* in Daniel. Such an understood idiom would not fit well with all the occurrences of *week(s)* here either because the 70<sup>th</sup> week at least was broken up into subdivisions. Nor can an understood but unexpressed appositional element of *years* be proposed here either inasmuch as *years* is feminine and thus would not explain Daniel’s masculine weeks.

The only remaining possibility for an unexpressed but understood appositional element to explain these masculine *weeks*, is the compound time unit *'ereb-bôqer* (evening-morning) from the reference to 2300 of them in the preceding prophecy. The plural of *'ereb*, or evening, does not occur in the OT; but the plural of *bôqer*, or morning, does so, and it is masculine. One possibility why this unusual masculine form of the word for *week* was used in Daniel in contrast to its gender in the rest of the OT is that it was used to designate an unexpressed but understood relationship to the evening-mornings of the preceding prophecy.

In this case the 70 weeks of Dan 9 would not be 70 weeks of prophetic days (historical years) in general but 70 weeks, more specifically, of that unit expressed as evening-mornings.

Although this explanation remains hypothetical at the present time, such a connection would – if correct – naturally tie the 70 weeks directly to the 2300 days. The feminine plural noun *shebu'oth* in Eze 21:28 (English 21:23) is the word for *oaths*, not weeks, and as such it is not relevant here. It is also unlikely that Daniel’s plural ending of *-îm* for weeks was derived from his Aramaic by analogy because the masculine plural ending for nouns in Imperial Aramaic and the Aramaic of Qumran was *-în*. (Ibid, pp. 246f.)

Shea is arguing here that the 70 “weeks” are actually 70 “weeks,” each with seven days, or *'ereb-bôqers*, thus totalling in all 490 evenings- mornings.

The basis of his argument is the fact that the word used for “weeks” in the Hebrew – shabu’im – is masculine in Dn9, whereas outside of Daniel the word is feminine. The choice of the masculine form of this word, according to Shea is specifically “to designate an unexpressed but understood relationship to the evening-mornings of the preceding prophecy.” (1981, p.247)

Apparently, this unexpressed but understood relationship suddenly became an *unexpressed and nonexistent* relationship the following year when Shea discovered that “it is one of the many Hebrew nouns with dual gender” (1982, p.75). The implications of shabu’im as a dual gender noun means that it is just as normal to have a feminine inflection as it is to have a masculine inflection.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the argument of applying the masculine in Dn9 to the implication of a reference to ‘ereb-bôqer just dissolves completely.

A comment on his reasoning in 1981 should be made before leaving this. He says:

In this appositional use the word for *days* does not govern and is not governed by either the gender or the number of the word with which it is in apposition. *Days* remains a masculine plural regardless of whether the preceding word is masculine or feminine, singular or plural. Inasmuch as the gender and number of the word for *days* does not affect the gender and number of the word that precedes it in this idiom, it cannot be used as an unexpressed but understood explanation for the unusual masculine ending for the masculine plural used for *weeks* in Daniel. Such an understood idiom would not fit well with all the occurrences of *week(s)* here either because the 70<sup>th</sup> week at least was broken up into subdivisions. Nor can an understood but unexpressed appositional element of *years* be proposed here either inasmuch as *years* is feminine and thus would not explain Daniel’s masculine weeks.

The only remaining possibility for an unexpressed but understood appositional element to explain these masculine weeks, [in Dn9 –F.B.] is the compound time unit ‘ereb-bôqer (evening-morning) from the reference to 2300 of them in the preceding prophecy. The plural of ‘ereb, or evening, does not occur in the OT; but the plural of bôqer, or morning, does so, and it is masculine. One possibility why this unusual masculine form of the word for *week* was used in Daniel in contrast to its gender in the rest of the OT is that it was used to designate an unexpressed but understood relationship to the evening-mornings of the preceding prophecy. (Ibid)

Some of the most glaring problems with this argument is the fact that the ‘ereb-bôqer is not in a construct relation so it is not as simple as determining the gender of the absolute second word “bôqer” (because that is known) and saying that the masc pl. of shabu’im applies to it. The phrase is a compound nominal phrase and this complicates matters. Because Shea could not nail down the gender of the ‘ereb to suit his theory he just ignored the first word in the phrase – ‘ereb – and kept on ploughing through with his notion, regardless of the travesty of his position. The difficulty of applying a masculine noun (“shabu’im”) to a nominal phrase when only the *second* component is

<sup>3</sup> Cf. [Hasel, 1993](#). Also Konkel, 1993.TDOT.

explicitly masculine (“bôqer”) is a difficulty that could be explored, but Shea has buried it and so it should be left as that – a dead argument. It does serve to highlight how desperate the SDA church is to publish anything that will give some credibility to the dubious explanations attached to their version of the meaning of the 2300-days, irrespective of how hastily or ignorantly it is created.

Ten points to Shea for a resourceful though futile attempt! The fact that he himself does not bother to raise this point in his 1982 publication is a succinct comment on how Shea regards it and how he wants us to regard it – just stupid nonsense.

Note in passing, dear reader, this is another evidence of the desperation of the Biblical Research Institute to find some credible and scholarly contribution to prop up a flawed foundation in the SDA links between the 2300-days and the 70 weeks. In years gone by, I suspect the SDA church would have vetted papers like this for such failings. Is this what we can expect from the church in future – argumentation that is found to be flawed *after* it is sent out to the world field as a sample of the best the church can produce? Or more to the point, is it because the debate is making plainer the indefensibility of the SDA position, the errors and crooked thinking in the arguments of scholars trying to defend the indefensible are becoming more and more obvious?

### ***Conclusion***

After assessing the above arguments, there is absolutely nothing in the time period of Dn9:24 to suggest a link with the 2300-days in Dn8:14. If it indeed is true that Gabriel broke off the explanation by the statement “wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days,” one would expect the finishing of the explanation of Gabriel regarding the 2300-days (8:14) to be given in terms of “‘ereb-bôqer” –the same unit as that used in v14 and v26.

Furthermore, SDA historicist’s argue that Daniel broke the communication by his lack of strength. Thus, at the time of interruption, Gabriel would have had the full explanation of this time period right on the tip of his tongue ready to pass it on to Daniel. This supports the point that Gabriel didn’t need a subsequent revelation in God’s own time to convey the information to Daniel. We may safely conclude therefore, that Gabriel’s explanation of the vision was complete in Gabriel’s mind at least, at the time he is first commanded to explain it to Daniel (Dn8:16). One would expect certain uniformity in that communication, even though it is interrupted by more than a ten-year interlude.

In the text (Dn8:26) where SDA historicist’s say Gabriel begins the explanation of the time period, he starts with the use of the term ‘ereb-bôqer (v26) as the phrase he has chosen to name the vision. To use the unit of time as the *title* of the vision is a fairly strong argument to expect the use of this unit of time throughout the explanation he was, in the SDA historicist view, about to give.

SDA historicists may say that this is just an argument from silence, but witness the following points that give a precedence to believe in a consistency in the use of ‘ereb-bôqer in the explanation of Dn8 and Dn9:

- In the choice of the title for his so-called explanation beginning at Dn8:26 he uses the same term as that used earlier in the vision at Dn8:14. There is an internal consistency here with the use of the *unit* of time.
- Witness the use of the *same time unit* between Dan 7:25 with Dan 12:7. The same unit of time is used when talking of the same time prophecy, though there are many years between the visions of ch7 and ch11-12. Notice also when Gabriel does introduce new time prophecies in Dn12:11, 12, he follows an internally consistent pattern and continues in the same non-figurative as he has been explaining the rest of the vision in Dn11-12. The time unit given is in “days” – a time unit one would expect in a literal explanation. One would also expect Gabriel to continue using the same unit of time when he picks up from where he left off when it comes to finishing the explanation of the time period in Dn8.
- The evidence in Dn9:24-27 how *the same unit of time* (shabu’â) is used throughout the communiqué is evidence in itself to expect a similar style of internal consistency with the explanation of the time period in Dn8 if Dn9 is to be a completion of the explanation in Dn8.

To my way of thinking, these points augur well to support the anticipation of the use of ‘ereb-bôqer in the explanation of the vision of Dn8.

For what it is worth, SDA historicists argue that because it is the same messenger who returns in Dn9, there is a connection between the time prophecies of Dn8 and that of Dn9. I would argue that if they want to use that logic then I can use it also. If they wish to use the presence of the same messenger to highlight a link between the two chapters, then I will use the absence of the same unit of time to highlight the absence of a link between the time periods of the two chapters. If Dn9 is a continuation of Dn8 you would expect nothing else than the same unit of time to be used in both instances. In the argument of the SDAs it is the sameness of *the person* that provides a connection between the two time prophecies. In my argument, it is the sameness of *the time unit* that would provide any connection between the two time prophecies. The desperation of Shea to find some evidence of this in the dual gender of shabu’îm shows that SDA scholars are aware of the validity of my argument and are scrambling for any chimera of evidence to get shabu’â to be lexically linked to ‘ereb-bôqer.

In closing this section, let us apply Uriah Smith’s argument here (1898, p.171), howbeit in a parody of his logic:

Now we will introduce a test to settle beyond a peradventure the truthfulness or falsity of the position 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 use the same unit of time which he used to describe the vision – “evening morning [‘ereb-bôqer]” If he does this, the connection between these two chapters for which we here contend is established. If he does not, it is refuted, and the connection does not stand.** [Emphasis mine]

And unfortunately, the same unit of time is **not** used and so because of this and the additional arguments listed above, **Smith's connection does not stand. The 70 weeks in Dn9 is not the completion of the explanation for Dn8.**

### 3. A General Consideration.

Furthermore, the use of the *general* category of time as the indicator which links the 70 weeks with the 2300-days, is just as futile as saying if the subject matter of Dn9 is religious then that shows that it is linked with the subject matter of Dn8 because the subject matter there is religious too. As the topic of "time" is as broad as "religion," it is pointless to argue along the lines that Smith has tried to argue. Thus the context of Dn9:1-23 rules out the argument that Dn9:24-27 must be an explanation of the 2300-day period of Dn8:14 merely because the vision in Dn9:24-27 begins with the subject matter of time.

## CONCLUSION: ASSUMPTIONS OR SCRIPTURAL DATA?

Thus with the other arguments considered previous to this, I conclude that this assumption has no basis in fact but rather is based on the following assumptions:

1. The starting date is not given in Dn8 for the 2300-day period. This in turn assumes:
  - a. the time 2300-days applies to the whole vision;
  - b. the word "vision" means vs.3-12 and not vs. 9-11;
2. The starting date is the only feature not explained. This in turn assumes:
  - a. The meaning of the word "vision" refers to vs. 3-12 and not vs. 9-11;
  - b. There are two different meanings for "vision" in Dn8 which makes the 2300-days apply to the whole vision.
3. If Dn9 deals with time it must be an explanation of the 2300-days of Dn8;
4. Daniel is concerned in Dn9:2-19 with the 2300-day period. This includes all of the above as well as:
  - a. Daniel was perplexed about the relationship between the 2300-days and the 70 years of exile;
  - b. Daniel's statement in Dn8:27 that he did not understand the mar'ê meant he did not understand the 2300-days;
  - c. The shutting of the vision did not mean the shutting of the explanation of the vision (i.e., the vision was complete but the explanation was incomplete);



5. The command in Dn9:23 to “consider the vision” refers to Dn8. This in turn assumes all the previous assumptions as well as:
  - a. The meaning of “htk” is best translated as “cut off;”
  - b. The 70 weeks of Dn9 are “cut off” from the 2300-days;
  - c. The 70 weeks are “cut off” from the beginning of the 2300-days;
  - d. The 70 weeks are a shorter period than the 2300-days;
  - e. The term “vision” in Dn9:24 refers to Dn8;
  - f. The structure of Daniel’s prophecies (i.e., vision then explanation) dictates that Dn9 is not a separate vision but is a completion of the explanation.
6. It is the same angel who came to Daniel Dn 9 as in Dn8.
7. It is the context of Dn9 that provides the evidence to confirm this association between the 70 weeks of Dn9 and the 2300-days of Dn8.

None of the points listed above have any Scriptural evidence to examine to ascertain their truthfulness. They all have other assumptions as their foundation.

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