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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 22

**The same angel that explained the vision of Dn8 is
the one who returns in Dn9, thus proving along with other
considerations that Dn9 is a continuation of the
explanation which was begun in Dn8.**

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The Purpose of This Assumption

The purpose of this assumption is to provide another argument in a cluster that centre around the links being used to support a connection between Daniel, chapters 8 and chapter 9. Furthermore, in SDA circles, it is used to specifically link the 2300-days to the 70-weeks. These arguments are used together to give weight to each other in order to give credibility to the overall concept of linking these two time periods together.

The Method of This Assumption and its Associated Problems

There is no rocket science in this assumption. It basically states the obvious. Gabriel does revisit Daniel. And it is the second time that this encounter has occurred for Daniel. Here are some samples of the use of this experience.

From 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...

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 ch9:24-27 deals exclusively with the unexplained portion of the vision, that is, with the time element of the 2300 “days” of ch8:13,14. **The angel is Gabriel in both instances** (ch.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. 851) Emphasis mine.

Nichol here lists a number of factors that together provide certainty “beyond the possibility of doubt.” They include:

1. “The angel is Gabriel in both instances;”
2. “The subject matter is the same;”
3. “The context makes evident that the concluding portion of the explanation picks up the thread of explanation at the point of which it was laid down in ch.8.”

In this quote we can see the issue of the visitation of Gabriel used in a cluster with other ideas to strengthen these ideas. As can be seen from these points listed, points 2 and three are loaded with other assumptions listed in these papers, but the first point is obvious enough.

Here is another example from Ellen G. White:

Yet God had bidden his messenger [Gabriel]: “Make this man to understand the vision.” That commission must be fulfilled. In obedience to it, the angel, some time afterward, returned to Daniel, saying: “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding;” “therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.” Daniel 8:27, 16; 9:22, 23, 25-27. There one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had

been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time – the period of the 2,300 days; therefore the angel, in resuming his explanation, dwells chiefly upon the subject of time. (1950, p.325)

Notice the points in this statement:

1. Gabriel did not give the understanding necessary in chapter 8.
2. Gabriel should revisit in order to carry out commission.
3. Gabriel does in fact revisit the second time.
4. He talks on the very topic he never completed – the subject of time.
5. Therefore, what Gabriel says relates to the 2300-days.

Here again we have a bundle of assumptions associated with each of these points, and in amongst these assumptions is added the fact of Gabriel's second visit.

Here is a sample statement from Uriah Smith that is virtually a verbatim repeat of the statement of Ellen White:

The manner in which Gabriel introduces himself on this occasion shows that he has come to complete some unfinished mission. This can be nothing less than to carry out the instruction to make this man "understand the vision;" as recorded in Daniel 8. He says, "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 had explained to Daniel in chapter 8 all that he could then bear, and yet he did not understand the vision, he now comes to resume his work and complete his mission. As soon as Daniel began his fervent supplication, the commandment came forth; for Gabriel received instruction to visit Daniel, and impart to him the requisite information. (1944, p.198)

And in this statement Smith argues that the appearance of the same angel for the second time is a link between the two chapters:

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 these 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 whom we there beheld. (1876, p.507)

And from Questions on Doctrine:

...Gabriel was sent to unfold the plan of God more fully.

Gabriel had previously explained to Daniel all but the time portion of the symbolic vision of chapter 8. Now he reappears to complete the explanation *in literal terms* (Dan. 9:21, 22) and to clarify this remaining part. (Seventh-day Adventists, 1957, p.270)

Ford reiterates the same thoughts:

...a number of scholars regard the prophecy as an appendix to chapter 8. In 8:16 Gabriel was told to make Daniel to understand the vision that had just been given. The explanation then begun was interrupted by Daniel's collapse before Gabriel had explained the significance of the high point of the vision, namely, verse 14. No "what" or "when" as to the fulfillment of

this was given to the prophet...Daniel tells us that his visitor as “the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first” – at the time of Dan 8. And the angel’s first words link precisely with Daniel’s concern, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding; ...therefore consider the word and understand the vision.” Gabriel’s next words continue the interpretation previously begun. He now speaks of the *what* and the *when* intended by the “restoring” or “vindicating” of the sanctuary. (1978, p.205)

The same position is stated by the SDA Ministerial Association:

God commissioned the angel Gabriel to make Daniel “‘understand the vision’” (Dan. 8:16). But its impact was so shocking that Daniel became ill and Gabriel had to discontinue his explanation. At the close of the chapter Daniel remarked: “I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it” (Dan. 8:27 RSV).

Because of this interruption, Gabriel had to delay his explanation of the time period – the only aspect of the vision he had not yet explained. Daniel 9 describes his return to complete this responsibility. Daniel 8 and 9 then, are connected, the latter being the key to unlocking the mystery of the 2300 days. When Gabriel appeared he said to Daniel: “‘I have come forth to give you skill to understand...therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision’” (Daniel 9:23). Here he refers back to the vision of the 2300 days. His desire to explain the time elements of the vision of Daniel 8 makes clear why he introduces his explanation with the 70-week prophecy. (1988, p.323)

And from James White:

Mark now the lines of thought by which these two visions of Dan. viii and ix, are inseparately woven:

1. Reference is made in chap.ix to the “vision at the beginning,” in which Gabriel appeared to the prophet. This must refer to the vision of chap. viii, as that is the only previous vision in which that angel is said to have been present.
2. Gabriel was seen in the former vision: **the same person appears again** and cites the mind of the prophet back to that vision.
3. Gabriel was commanded in chap.viii, to make Daniel understand the vision. Daniel declared at the close of the chapter that he did not understand it; but says Gabriel in chap. ix, “I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. Understand the matter and consider *the* vision.”
4. The point which was omitted in chap. viii, was time; all else was fully explained; and hence the angel in giving Daniel further understanding, as recorded in chap. ix, takes up that point, and that only: “seventy weeks are determined (cut off) &c.
5. Seventy weeks are said to be cut off from something; but there is no period given from which they can be taken, but the 2300 days of chap. viii.

In view of this conclusive testimony that the seventy weeks are a part of the 2300 days, is it strange that strong confidence should have existed on this point? (1863, p.205) Emphasis mine.

The Prophet then says: “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. And he informed me and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding, . . . understand the matter and consider the vision,” Verses 20-23. Now the angel has come to finish what the voice from between the banks of Ulai, commanded him to do. [Chap. ix. 16] (sic) viz., “Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.” Verses 20-23. Here the prophet’s attention is called to a former vision. He has come to give him “skill and understanding,” relative to his vision of 2300 days, for he says, “Understand the matter, and consider the vision.” And what are the first words he utters to the Prophet, as he gives him “understanding of the vision,” which he declares at the close of the eighth chapter “none understood”? “Seventy weeks are determined [cut off] upon thy people.” &c. These weeks, all agree, are 490 years. Cut off from what? Time can only be cut off from time; therefore the 70 weeks are cut off from the 2300 days. Can they be cut off from 2300 literal days? They cannot. Therefore the days are prophetic, each day for a year. (1853, p.170)

From J. N. Andrews:

Note these facts:

1. In verse 21, Daniel cites us to the vision of chapter viii.
2. 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.
3. As Daniel testifies at the close of chapter viii that none understood 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 the Gabriel proceeds to explain the very point in question, most fully meets the request. (1852, p.263)

Thus because Gabriel is the communicator in both Dn8 and Dn9, the argument continues to assert that he must of necessity be referring to the vision of Dn8, and thus his communiqué in Dn9 is undisputedly connected to Dn8.

From Maxwell:

The link between Daniel 8 and Daniel 9. It is basic to keep on remembering that Daniel 9 explains Daniel 8: 14, and that Daniel 8 and 9 form a unit. When Gabriel appeared, Daniel recognized that he was the same person “**whom I had seen in the vision at the first.**” (1981, p.205)

Maxwell then goes on to regurgitate the standard argument:

Gabriel had been commissioned to “**make this man understand the vision**” of chapter 8. He had, within that chapter, explained everything except verse 14, with its references to the cleansing of the sanctuary and to the 2300 evening and morning days. Daniel had not needed an explanation of the cleansing of the sanctuary, but the 2300 days perplexed

him. Were they literal days, (as he must have hoped), or were they symbolic like the other items in Daniel 8:3-14 and like the days in Ezekiel 4:6? And if they did refer to 2300 *years*, was God saying that the *tamid* services at the Jerusalem temple would not be restored for 2300 years? If so, what about Jeremiah's prophecy of only 70 years? Daniel was concerned about the calculation of time. Gabriel began his explanation with a statement about time. (Ibid).

Time – a common subject matter between Dn8 and Dn9. I have previously shown in the paper on Assumption 20, that although the subject matter – time – is common to both Dn9 and Dn8, that *does not mean* that Dn9:24-27 is referring to Dn8:14. Rather, I have shown that the evidence is overwhelming in favour of linking Dn9:24-27 not to Dn8:14, but rather to Dn9:2,3 where the 70 year exile period is revealed as the major subject of concern in the prophet's mind, not the 2300 days of Dn8:14.

Command to “consider the vision.” I have shown that Gabriel's command to Daniel to “consider the vision and understand the matter” refers more properly to the vision which was about to be given to Daniel, viz., ch.9:24-27 and not to ch8:13,14. (See on Assumption 13)

Gabriel – the same visitor. The statement that the visitor in Dn9 was the same as the interpreter of Dn8 does in no way imply any continuation of the subject matter that had been discussed in the first encounter. Daniel only states in 9:21 that the person who appeared to him while he was in vision a decade or so previous was the same man who visited him on this occasion, That is all. The clause in which we find the statement “whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning,” (verse 21) is an adjectival clause describing / clarifying the person Gabriel. It is not defining the relationship between the first vision and the revelation in Dn9. It is merely stating where he first encountered Gabriel, and he could say it no other way than when he was in the previous vision, because when the vision finished, Gabriel was no longer there. It was *only* during the vision that Daniel saw the man Gabriel. He locates in time the person he sees again, and that location places the visitor in a revelation. Said differently, the adjectival clause describes the man Gabriel, not “the vision.” It is *not* saying he has come regarding the vision that he saw previously. That is a perverse twisting of the grammar of this clause. The subject of the clause is “Gabriel,” not “the vision.”

What the SDA interpretation of this point desperately needs is a slight change of the text to suit their position. The adjectival clause as it stands, has Gabriel for the subject of the clause. What they need is to have “the vision” in verse as the subject of the clause. There would need to be a juggle of the terms “Gabriel” and “vision,” but other than that, the rest of the clause can remain intact. This would produce the following text.

20. And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21. Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, **even the man Gabriel, being caused to fly swiftly**, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23. 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, **which I had seen in the beginning.**

If Daniel had only written his text in this manner, the SDA historicists' argument linking the two chapters the way they do could be substantiated. But the text is not written thus, and the adjectival clause defining the heavenly visitor as the same one who visited earlier, merely says what it does – it is the same visitor as before. There is no pressure in this text to link the second revelation as the completion of the first. If the text appeared the way it is emended above, then clearly Gabriel is referring Daniel to consider the earlier vision, and this explicit statement could be quoted as a reason to bind Dn9:24-27 to Dn8. But that cannot be, and the present text we have does not support the SDA historicists' position.

In addition, one has to assume that Gabriel has some unfulfilled obligation in regard to the earlier vision (Dn8) in order to argue that the vision of Dn9 is a continuation of Dn8. And as has been shown in this paper, one has in turn to assume a whole chain of assumptions in order to support this assumption. Thus even the identical communicant in both Dn8 and Dn9 doesn't support the argument that he is continuing his explanation of Dn8.

Shea says that “Gabriel was the interpreter-messenger who appeared on each occasion when Daniel was given all four of his major prophecies.” (1981, p.238) Ellen White says that Gabriel was the angel who communicated heaven's message to the Old Testament prophets; who gave John the Apocalypse; who instructed Jesus' mother; who instructed John the Baptist's father; in short “is the one chosen to open the purposes of God to sinful men.” (1950, pp.99, 81f., 98, 97f., 99) Notice the full paragraph:

The words of the angel, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,” show that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts. When he came with a message to Daniel, he said, “There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael [Christ] your Prince.” Dan. 10:21. Of Gabriel the Saviour speaks in the Revelation, saying that “He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.” Rev 1:1. And to John the angel declared, “I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets.” Rev.22:9, R.V. Wonderful thought – that the angel who stands next in honor to the Son of God is the one chosen to open the purposes of God to sinful men. (Ibid, p.99)¹

Thus by their own admission regarding Gabriel's office and work, one would not expect anyone *except Gabriel* visiting Daniel. It is *his* mission to do this work, not some assumed uncompleted task that explains the reason for Gabriel's presence in Dn9.

The Conclusion

Thus in conclusion, the mere fact that the same messenger explains the vision of Dn8 and gives Daniel the vision in Dn9 is no evidence that Dn9 is a continued explanation of the vision of Dn8. In fact, by their own statements on this issue, one would *not expect any other messenger to visit Daniel other than Gabriel* (the Lord

¹ Another SDA writer sees Gabriel in Dn 10-12. “Gabriel (for it must have been he) is sent immediately to answer Daniel's prayer. (Woolsey, 2001, p.54)

accepted, of course.). Therefore, the fact that Gabriel appears does not force us to conclude that he appears to complete a previous communication, or even that a previous communication was incomplete.

The Assumption Chain used in this assumption

As stated above, one has to assume that Gabriel has some unfulfilled obligation in regard to the earlier vision in Dn8 in order to argue that the vision of Dn9 is a continuation of Dn8. And as has been shown in this paper, one has, to assume, in turn, a whole chain of assumptions in order to support this assumption.

This assumption brings with it a whole collection of assumptions listed in these papers. For Gabriel to continue his explanation from chapter 8 in chapter 9, implies both that Dn8 is incomplete, since there is no starting point given for the vision in Dn8, and also that Dn9 is the completion of that explanation. This position draws in the following assumptions:

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 17: The seventy weeks are cut off from the start of the 2300 days.

Assumption 16: The use of the year-day principle in Daniel 9 proves that the 2300 days is a longer time period than the 70 weeks, and thus the 70 weeks is "cut off" from the 2300 days.

Assumption 15: The seventy weeks of Dn9 are "cut off" from the 2300 days of Dn8:14.

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 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.

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