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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 3

**The starting date for the 2300 days is not
declared in Daniel 8**

**BY FRANK BASTEN
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The Purpose of the Assumption

The purpose of this assumption is to pave the way for the explanation of the 2300 days' starting date. This assumption is the logical follow-on from Assumption 2, since, if the vision referred to in Dn8:13 is the entire vision of Dn8: 3-14 (Assumption 1 and 2), then there is no point-in-time indicated when that particular vision should begin. The next step in the argumentation then is the introduction of the seventy weeks prophecy with its explicit starting point as the logical choice for the 2300 day starting point. On the other hand of course, if the vision referred to in vs 13 and 14, is the actions of the little horn and the 2300 days applies to the period of these activities, then the beginning of the 2300 days *is given in Dn8. The 2300 days would begin when the little horn begins his activities*, as Shea has so ably acknowledged.¹

The Method of the Assumption and the Associated Problems

Pioneer's Statements.

Looking firstly at the pioneers on this topic, their position is fairly clear and unambiguous. Here is an example of their argumentation from James White:

But the angel did not explain the time [2300 days] in chapter 8. And, at the very close of the chapter, the prophet says, "I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." It was the time alone that he did not understand, as all else had been explained in that chapter. But Gabriel did explain the time in chapter 9; so that in the first verse of chapter 10, he says that "he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. This understanding, therefore, he did receive in chapter 9. (J. White, 1870, p. 137)

As readers can immediately see, this statement from White has, as the basis of his argument, at least two assumptions: the first, that everything in Dn8 had been explained except "the time," and the second, that the word "vision" in Dan 8:13 refers to vs 3-12, (and that it cannot refer to vs 9-12 alone;).²

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

¹ As Shea (1981) points out, if the word "vision" can be applied to vs 10-12 then "the 2300 days should be represent the period of time during which his (the horn power) pollution of the temple in Jerusalem, or some similar action, was carried out. According to this kind of interpretation, the 2300 days were to begin when such pollution began." (p.249)

² There are in fact another three assumptions, making it *five* in all. The other three are: (a) that it was only "time" that Daniel did not understand; (b) that Gabriel did explain this time in Daniel 9; and third (c) that the text in Dn10 refers to the 2300 days in Dn8. But these are peripheral to the first two.

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)

Examples could be multiplied but they say basically the same thing.

Contemporary Statements.

There are a host of statements that can be quoted here to illustrate the use of this argument in contemporary writers.

a. Ford

Furthermore, it should be noted carefully that the question is not merely, “How long shall the sanctuary be trodden underfoot?” but, “For how long is this vision that culminates in the terrible work of the little horn?” The vision begins with Medo-Persia, and thus we would expect that the 2300-day period should likewise begin in the days of that empire. The vision 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 that sanctuary. What further clue are we given as to the beginning of the period named? In this chapter—none. (1978, p.188)

The following is typical of the standard comment usually encountered in writings on this topic.

b. Woolsey

Right away we must determine the relationship between this appearance and the vision of chapter 8. In that earlier vision Gabriel had said, “Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision” (verse 17). Yet Daniel did not understand. Although the ram and the goat were explained to him, he fainted before he had been given a clear explanation of the 2,300 days. He said, “I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it” (verse 27). (2001, p.47)

c. Maxwell

Maxwell, is an example of one who tries a different approach to the topic. He presents a novel interpretation of the text, to say the very least. He ignores both the beginning of the question, “how long shall be the vision...,” and the word “vision” *entirely* when discussing the meaning of this text, and instead, focuses on one of the oppositional elements in the question of Dn8:13 – “the priestly ministry.”

Everything we have said so far about Daniel 8 has helped to prepare us for our discussion of Daniel 8:14, the verse which has been called the peak and focus of the entire book. In response to an anxious question about how long the priestly ministry (the *tamid*) would be trampled underfoot, the angel Gabriel replied, “**For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be restored to its rightful state.**” What enigmatic words – and how intriguing! And we absolutely must remember that this verse is located in the *symbolic* portion of Daniel 8. The “**sanctuary**” and the “**evenings and mornings**” are no more literal than are the beasts and horns! (1981, p.179)

He has replaced the word “vision” with the concept of “priestly ministry (the *tamid*).” The question becomes how long the high priestly ministry would be trampled underfoot for, not how long the sanctuary would be trampled underfoot. His commentary at the end of that chapter and the continuation into chapter 9 continues in that same vein.³

d. Shea

Shea at least has the candour to admit the possibility of another interpretation of the word “vision” in Dn8:13. He points out, if the word “vision” can be applied to vs 9-12, then “the 2300 days should be represent the period of time during which his (the

³ Just how he explains the fact that the high Priestly ministry was to be obscured by the Pagan and Papal Roman power during the times of the Medo-Persians and the Greeks, *even before* the Romans came on the scene remains to be seen, since he does not cover this problem with his interpretation at all. He does not even raise it. He begins this “trampling down of the high priestly ministry” with the decrees of Ezra. How does the trampling down of the priestly ministry begin then? We are not told? He says on p.178, “We have seen earlier pages that pagan Rome “**magnified itself...up to the Prince of the host,**” destroyed “**the people of the saints,**” and in a limited sense overthrew the “**sanctuary**” and took away the “*tamid*.” (The “fuller sense” is applied to the later papal Rome). It did these things when it crucified Jesus, persecuted “Christians, demolished Herod’s temple, and terminated the Old Testament ritual.” The medieval Church assumed many of Christ’s prerogatives as Prince of the host and obscured His high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.” A further complication for Maxwell’s theory is that although he says the “*tamid*” is to be “trampled underfoot” for 2300 days, he specifically says that this was done by both the Pagan and Papal Roman Empire. So does he begin the 2300 days from the crucifixion of Jesus, the demolition of Herod’s temple, or the assumption by the Pope as the Prince of the “host.” Notice again Maxwell’s sentiments: “ Both pagan and Christian Rome “**took away the continual burnt offering**” and “**overthrew the place of his sanctuary.**” ‘Verse 11. Pagan Rome did this literally – but only in a limited sense, as we shall see later – in A.D. 70 when soldiers under the Roman general (later emperor) Titus set the temple (or Jerusalem sanctuary) on fire, causing its complete destruction and forever terminating its services. [Is Maxwell arguing here that Christ’s priestly ministry was operating in the sanctuary service up until A.D.70?-FB] In the 130s the Roman emperor Hadrian constructed a pagan temple in Jerusalem, renamed the city Aelia Capitolina, and went so far as to forbid Jews ever to live in the city – a rule that was enforced for centuries.” ([op.cit](#)

, p.161) Is Maxwell saying here that Hadrian’s actions are “taking away the continual burnt offering and overthrowing the place of his sanctuary” even though Christ called that religious system desolation a century before? How can the New Testament talk of a priestly ministry in heaven when Maxwell is still talking about the casting down of the priestly ministry in the old city of Jerusalem? What does the book of Hebrews speak against if it is not speaking against what Maxwell is advocating here? Another consideration is, if Maxwell wants to begin the 2300 days in 457 B.C., he has to find an event, besides Dn9, to indicate ‘how the priestly ministry (the *tamid*) would be trampled underfoot’ from that date, continuing through the Grecian empire as well, with an unbroken trampling of the high priestly ministry by a foreign power. If the question must read “how long the priestly ministry (the *tamid*) would be trampled underfoot,” then obviously, we must look for an event when the high priestly ministry begins to be trampled. And to be consistent with the SDA historicists’ chronology, Maxwell has to find the beginning of this trampling in 457 B.C. Readers can see the implausibility of holding to Maxwell’s interpretation of the question of Dn8:13.

Maxwell has locked himself into an unanswerable position. He says the 2300 days is for the “obscuring of the High priestly ministry.” He also says, that the 2300 days began in the times of the Medo-Persian empire. He says thirdly, that the obscuring of the high priestly ministry began with the crucifixion of Jesus and continued with the destruction of Jerusalem and the restrictions against Jews in the centuries to come. He says fourthly, that the Christian Rome continued this obscuration of Christ’s high priestly ministry with its religious substitutes throughout the centuries. In none of this does he seem to understand the contradiction of his synchronisation of when he starts *the time period* compared to when he starts *the events that obscure the high priestly ministry of Christ*. Nor does he understand his contradiction of the events he names as fulfilling Dn8:11.

horn power) pollution of the temple in Jerusalem, or some similar action, was carried out. According to this perspective, the 2300 days were to begin when such pollution began.” (1981, p.249) This does not mean, however, that he supports this position. He is merely highlighting the various possibilities of interpretation.

Using arguments to support the opposing view to this – that the word “vision” in Dn8:13 really refers to vs 3-12, Shea concludes that, in answering the question “how long shall be the vision?” the inquiring one:

“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 Dan8:13, 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 Medes? When the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon? When Alexandra defeated the Persians? The point in the Persian period from which the 2300 days were to commence is not clarified in ch.8.” (1981, p.250)

It should be noticed that Shea acknowledges that the traditional linking of the beginning of the 2300 days with the beginning of the “vision” of vs3-12 is all “by virtue of the use of the word “vision” in the question of Dan8:13.” (Ibid) If the use of the word “vision” in the question of Dan8:13 therefore, is shown to refer to vs 10-12, then the traditional SDA location of starting point for the 2300 days evaporates as also does any support for anything in scripture which could be used in the vaguest sense to impute any prophetic significance to 1844 AD.

From the material presented in Assumption 1 and 2, I believe the evidence supports the starting point of the 2300 days being located with the desolation of the sanctuary rather than being located somewhere in the beginning of the vision. It is only if the starting point is located in the beginning of the vision somewhere that it can be said that the starting date for the 2300 days is not declared in Dn8. If the starting point for the 2300 days is the desolation of the sanctuary, then the starting date for this time period *is* explained in Dn8.

Daniel 7 – A complete or incomplete vision?

The next task is to ascertain whether a precise point in time needs to be specified for us (or for Daniel), in order to comprehend the start of the 2300 days, in a similar manner to that given in Dn9:25? That is to say, do we need to have something like “from the time that the prince abolishes the daily, there shall be two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings...”? in order for us to acknowledge that a beginning point has been given?

Consideration should be given for a moment concerning the “time, times, and the dividing of times” of Dn7:25. This time period has some parallels with the SDA historicists’ explanation of the 2300 days. There is clearly no explanation in Dn7 as to the starting point for this time period. Where is the explanation in Dn7 about the starting point for this period? It merely says, “they shall be given into his hands....” When does this begin? When he [the horn power] begins to speak great words against the Most High? When he begins to wear out the saints of the Most High? When he begins to think to change the times and the laws?

Yet SDA historicists affirm that Dn 7 has both a vision and a complete explanation. Notice Smith:

...the vision of Daniel 7 was explained to Daniel by “one of them that stood by,” probably an angel; but we have no information as to what angel, nor is there anything in that vision which needed further explanation. (1944, p.197)

From Clifford Goldstein :

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)

Froom documents how even Sir Isaac Newton says in his day that the beginning of the 1260 day period will only be known when the end of the period is made plain.

Valpy...mentions Bishop Newton’s observation that we must see the conclusion before we can precisely ascertain the beginning of this notable period. (1948, p.262)

So clearly, even historicists up to Newton’s day could not find an explicit indication of the beginning of the 1260-day period.

The time period in Dn8:14 is no more enigmatic than Dn7:25, and Daniel was certainly perplexed after that revelation (cf. 7:28), yet no SDA publication announces that Dn7 is incomplete nor that the time period of Dn8 or that any other period in Daniel is an explanation of the time period in Dn7. Even considering Dn12:11, where the 1260 days are mentioned again, there is still no starting point given for this period. Is it when the first Jew is killed? Is it when the Prince of the hosts is killed? Is it when the first town is razed? When? There is no answer. Is Daniel 7 complete in the SDA view? According to the corpus of SDA literature, it is. Notice Goldstein again:

Notice too, that Daniel 2 consists of a dream/ vision and a complete interpretation of that dream/vision. Daniel 7 consists of a dream/ vision and a complete interpretation of that dream/ vision. Daniel 8, in contrast, has a dream/ vision but only a partial explanation of that dream/ vision; the *mareh* of the 2,300 days is the only part not explained. Daniel 9 has no dream, no vision, just an explanation – and, as we have seen above, it is an explanation of the *mareh*, the vision of the evenings and the mornings that Daniel 8 doesn’t interpret. (2003, p.111)

No SDA author that I have read argues that a starting date for the 1260 days is present in Dn7. If the starting date is missing, then, by their own admission, the revelation is complete *without* the starting point for the 1260 days. This same logic could apply to Dn8. There does not have to be a starting date given in Dn8 for the vision to be considered complete. Newton said that the starting date of the 1260 day period would be known when the prophetic period of Dn7 ends.⁴ Newton was clear that

⁴ Notice this quote from Froom, Vol II, chapter 35, “Valpy then traces the growth of papal power and the growing acquisitions of “strength and of territory.” He discounts the temporary exiles occasionally suffered by the pontiffs, and mentions Bishop Newton’s observation that we must see the conclusion before we can precisely ascertain the beginning of this notable period. Then he adds, “If we have now witnessed the fall of the Pope’s temporal dominion, it cannot be an unprofitable task to endeavour to trace its origins. Valpy then remarks significantly that “on the expulsion of the Pope from Rome, the attention of many contemplative persons was turned to the prophecies relating to that power.” [Froom, 1948, p. 262]

there had been no starting date given for this period. The same position could be thus taken by SDAs on the 2300 days in Dn8. There is no more need to find another link to anywhere else in the book of Daniel if the vision doesn't explicitly give one. But, as Shea has so lucidly explained, if "vision" in verse 13 applies to the activities of the little horn, then the starting point has indeed been given.

On the other hand, there is some truth in saying that Daniel's confusion in 8:27 was due to the 2300 days. The fact that the vision is called the "vision of the evening and the morning" in v26 indicates that the highlights of that vision could be encapsulated in the events occurring during the 2300 days.⁵ But what aspect of the 2300 days would confuse Daniel? This is where the issue covered in Assumption 1 and 2 come to the fore. If the 2300 days represents the whole vision, then the things that could confuse Daniel include the aspects involved included the whole vision. If the 2300 days represents the activities of the little horn, then the aspects involved include those referred to in the items appositioned to "vision" in verse 13 – "the daily sacrifice, the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot." We obviously will never be given an explicit answer as to the exact details in Daniel's thinking at that point after the revelation, since he has not recorded it. But there is more to that vision than just a time period. Consider these issues. I have earlier given details in Assumption 1 about the trauma of the persecution that SDA writers concur as being a paramount issue in his thinking.⁶ These could have been the matters that causes him to write about his troubled thoughts. He could also have been confused about the relationship between the "time, times, and the dividing of times" and the 2300 evening-mornings for all we know. Dn12:6,8 clearly shows that Daniel still had questions about the 1260 days even at that stage; questions which never received answers. The text in Dn12:6-8 only gives Daniel the location of the "end of these wonders" at the end of the "time, times and a half" period in 12:7. No mention of the starting point for this period occurs either.

This raises the question as to whether Daniel, who was very highly skilled in interpreting visions and dreams (Dn1:17) needed to have every detail of the vision explained to him for him to understand. As has been previously shown, a significant part of the visions given to Daniel remain unexplained, yet to assume that whatever was not explicitly explained was thereby not understood or not able to be understood is to assume that Daniel was not highly skilled in interpreting dreams and visions.⁷

⁵ A consideration needs to be made when Gabriel said "the mar'ê of the evening and the morning is true." If my position concerning the meaning of two words for "vision" is correct as explained in Assumption 1, and the mar'ê refers to the appearance of the Daniel-in-the vision, and the chazôn refers both to the thing seen by the Daniel-in-the-vision, as well as the overall vision itself by the Daniel-having-the-vision, then one should ask the question, since Gabriel is speaking to the Daniel-in-the-vision, what mar'ê would Daniel-in-the-vision understand him to mean? The answer must come back as the mar'ê of verses 13 and 14. Therefore, Shea is correct in applying the mar'ê in verse 26 to these verses.

⁶ Note an example from [Questions on Doctrine](#): "This unexplained portion, it will be observed, pertained to the 'sanctuary and the host,' which were to be 'trodden under foot' for 2300 'days' (evenings-mornings), with special events to occur at their close (verses 13, 14, 26). It involved a persecuting power that was to stand up against the Prince of princes and that was to practice and prosper against the people of God, but that would finally be broken without hands. This revelation profoundly impressed the prophet and, as noted, might well have been the cause of his illness. Chapter 8 closes with certain questions still unanswered." ([Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p.269).

⁷ See comments and quotations in Assumption 2.

Returning to the question of Dn8:13 and its answer in v14, it needs only to be observed that the 2300 evening-mornings are to be associated with the spiritual desolation, physical destruction and the subsequent restoration of the sanctuary (which, of course, presupposes its physical rebuilding), for it is this event which occurs after the expiration of the 2300 days. And the sanctuary is not mentioned until v11 in the vision, thus eliminating any relevance of the time period before the oppressive activities of the horn power of vs9-12.

As has been noted earlier, the question in v13 contains a query concerning the daily sacrifice, the transgression of desolation, the sanctuary and the host being trodden underfoot, yet the answer in v14 refers to only one item in this multi-item question – the sanctuary being trodden underfoot. If 2300 evenings-mornings represents 2300 days, this would mean the time related to the desolation of the sanctuary is the longest of the periods involved in this four item question, since when the 2300 days expire and the sanctuary is restored to its rightful state, the daily sacrifice would have already been restored and the transgression of desolation abolished (the 1290 days of Dn12:11) and the treading down of the host (the 1260 days of Dn12:6-8) would have to cease before the survivors could start to rebuild the sanctuary that would be restored at the end of the 2300 day period.

The only logical way in which to relate these two time elements is that the actual time of taking away of the *tamîd*, the 1290 days of Dan 12:12, must be fitted into the longer period of the “vision” of Dan 8:13 under the umbrella of the 2300 days.

1981, p.250

The larger overall total of 2300 days is more for the vision [which in Shea’s view is Dn8:3-12-FB], while the smaller figure of 1290 days is more specifically for the daily and the transgression of desolation. The latter which is shorter should be subsumed under the former which is longer and more inclusive.

1982, p.82

Thus, in answering the question in terms of the desolation and the restoration of the sanctuary, the holy one is answering every detail in the question. They will have been all finished by the end of the 2300 days.

e. Questions on Doctrine

f. Include other SDA writers here.

The Assumptions Used in This Assumption.

Having surveyed the above writers we can draw some conclusions as to what assumptions they use to develop this assumption. This assumption depends on:

- the assumption that the 2300 days relates, not to the desolation of the sanctuary, but to the whole vision in 8:3-12. (Assumption 2)
- It presupposes that the word “vision” in Dan 8:13 refers to vs 3-12, and that it cannot refer to vs 10-12. (Assumption 1)

The Conclusion.

In summary, the starting point for the 2300 day period is clearly given in Dan8:11, if the 2300 day period is to be associated with the casting down and the restoration of the sanctuary. That starting point is when the sanctuary is cast down and the end of the period is marked with the restoration of the sanctuary to its rightful state, presumably in a dedication ceremony as was done to a newly-built sanctuary in the times of Solomon, Hezekiah, and after the exile in the times of Habukkuk and Zechariah.

If the time period is to be associated with the word “vision” in Dn8:13, then it has to be proven that “vision” can only refer to vs 3-12 to support the traditional SDA starting point for the 2300 days. And as has been shown in the previous section, every argument put forward to prove this is incorrect.

Furthermore, the SDA historicists’ position needs to show how the opposition associated with “vision” in Dn8:13 does not refer exclusively to the activities of the horn power as Daniel saw and recorded in vs10-12, but rather refers or implies the whole vision. Shea’s attempt in proving this was found to be flawed at every point, as also was Hasel’s.

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