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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.

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ASSUMPTION 7

Daniel's statement in ch8:27 that he didn't understand the "vision" (mar'ê) was due to the fact that the information hadn't been given.

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The Purpose of This Assumption

The purpose of this assumption is to support the SDA arguments that information on the start 2300 days should have been given in Dn8. but was not. They argue that there is no explanation in Dn8 for the start of the 2300 days. They say it is given in Dn9. They then provide a series of arguments to support the view that Dn9 provides the start date for the 2300 days in Dn8. There are a cluster of assumptions related to the

This assumption is part of a constellation of assumptions that conglomerate around the end of Dn8 in the SDA explanation of the relationship between these two time periods. The cluster of assumptions include:

- There is no starting date given in Dn8 for the 2300 days ([Assumption 3](#)):
- Daniel got sick before the explanation of the 2300 days could be given ([Assumption 4](#));
- Daniel did not understand the 2300 days ([Assumption 6](#));
- Daniel’s statement in ch8:27 that he didn’t understand the “vision” (mar’ê) was due to the fact that the information hadn’t been given ([Assumption 7](#));
- Daniel 8 is incomplete ([Assumption 5](#));
- The shutting of the vision didn’t mean that the explanation of that vision was complete ([Assumption 10](#)).

It is difficult to organise these assumptions into the correct sequence, since sometimes one assumption precedes the other in the logical chain, and other times with a different sequence of arguments, a different sequence will surface. Suffice it to say that the basis of the argumentation is the start date for the 2300 days with a view to establishing the point that (a) it is not given in Dn8 and (b) therefore, the explanation in Dn8 is incomplete.

The Method of This Assumption

Like the method examined in of many of these assumptions, the usual way of establishing it is merely to assert it. (The emphasis in these quotations is mine.). This is readily seen in a sample of extracts from standard SDA publications:

1. **All the symbols of the vision of ch8:2-14 are fully explained** in vs15-26 **with the exception of the 2300 “days”** of vs13,14 (see GC:325). In fact, all of vs13 and 14 is explained in vs24,25 except the time element involved. In v26 Gabriel mentions the time element, but **breaks off his explanation before saying anything further about it**.

3. **Daniel did not understand the 2300-day time period**, the only part of the vision not yet explained (ch8:27; see No.1 above).... ([Nichol, 1957](#), p.850)

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 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. ([Ministerial Association, 1988](#), p.323)

What then did he [Daniel] not understand? Plainly it was the prophecy of the twenty-three hundred years. **Because Daniel had fainted, the angel could not make the meaning of this long period clear to the prophet, and therefore Daniel did not understand it. From Daniel’s statement that he did not understand it, it is clear that the commission the angel had been given to make him understand was not yet completely fulfilled, and we shall certainly expect the angel to return and accomplish this unfulfilled commission**. In obedience to God’s command, he will surely make Daniel know the meaning of this long period of time. ([Haynes, 1930](#), p.47)

Gabriel began to explain “the evenings and the mornings,” but **broke off his explanation** because Daniel “fainted, and was sick certain days” (King James Version). ([Cottrell, 1963](#), p.302)

“The vision of the evening and the morning” refers to the period of the 2300 days. In view of the long period of oppression, and the calamities which were to come upon his people, Daniel fainted and was sick certain days. He was astonished at the vision, but did not understand it. **Why did not Gabriel at this time fully carry out his instructions, and cause Daniel to understand the vision?** Undoubtedly because Daniel had received all that he could bear. **Further instruction is therefore deferred to a future time**. ([Smith, 1944](#), p.191)

Daniel heard from the lips of Gabriel the announcement that at the end of a 2300-day period the sanctuary would be cleansed. At that time, part of the vision was not clear to him. He was unable to comprehend its meaning. **No details concerning it had been given**. He had no starting point to enable him to reckon the time. ([Branson, 1950](#), p.288)

It will be remembered that according to Daniel 8:26,27, it was the mar'èh “of the evening and the morning” that Daniel did not understand. It was not the vision as a whole, **for all but the scene of the evening and the morning had been explained.** ([Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p.271)

As has been argued in earlier papers and will be demonstrated again in this paper, this argument relies upon a chain of assumptions.

The Problems with the Method of this Assumption.

Things Unexplained Yet Understood; Things Explained yet not Understood.

My paper on Assumption 6 examined this phrase in verse 27. I examined the assertion that it was the vision of the 2300 days that did not understand. In that paper I argued that Daniel’s lack of understanding need not be due to the fact that some information was not given. I expounded on a number of issues that would be just as, if not more so, an issue in Daniel’s mind.

These included the following points:

- It could mean the 2300 days were not understood?
- It could mean other things beside the 2300 days were not understood.

I then looked at some examples of what it could mean, including:

- He could not understand how God could allow it to happen to Israel again.
- His lack of understanding could involve more than just a date.
- His statement of lack of understanding could mean that he did understand the broad outline of the vision.

This assumption has another assumption implied in its statement: that whatever is explicitly explained in the interpretation or the vision is understood and conversely, whatever is not explicitly explained in the interpretation or the vision is thereby not understood. But as has been shown earlier, there are many things in the vision that are not actually explained in the explanation, whereas the major part (63%) of the details remained unexplained. On the other hand, the fact that Daniel hears an explanation does not mean that it is understood. Notice Daniel says in 12:8: “And I heard, but I understood not.” This is supported also by the following statement from Ellen White:

His wonderful prophecies as recorded by him in chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood, even by the prophet himself; but before his life labors closed, he was given the blessed assurance that “at the end of the days” – in the closing period of this world’s history – he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place. It was not given him to

understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. ([White, 1917](#), p.547)¹

Thus, although Daniel's prophecies may have had all the details and symbols of the prophecies explained as SDA's assert occurs in the explanations of the prophecies in chs7-12, Daniel still doesn't "fully" understand the prophecies, according to Ellen White. What was "revealed of the divine purpose" in his prophecies – prophecies which are explained, "was not given him to understand."

The Worries in Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 compared

It is clear then that Daniel's lack of understanding in Dn8:27 need not necessarily be due to the fact that information had not been given. It could be that the divine purpose as explained by the vision posed more questions than answers. Notice also Dn7:16, 19:

16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others

Yet, given that this vision was indeed explained fully to Daniel by the interpreter, this still did not stop Daniel having thoughts about what he already knew from the information given to him, or its implications.

Daniel says, on the contrary, in v28:

As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me....

Dan8:27 could be then just an intensification of his feelings due to the release of a more explicit material concerning God's people in Dn8 when compared to what he was given about the impending trouble for the people of God. Dn7:25 just has the cryptic statement:

And he [the little horn] shall speak great words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change the times and the laws; and they shall be given into his hands for a time, times and a dividing of times.

When we get to Dn8, we read in vs9-12 that this power will do terrible things indeed, and that detail is more explicit than the details of Dn7:

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

¹ Does that mean Daniel is going to be resurrected after 1798 and have the rest of the vision explained to him allowing him to go again into the grave until the general resurrection?

10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down

12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered

The new features of the horn's violent aggression that this vision introduces over that of Dn7 include the fact that:

1. he was able to magnify himself against the Prince of the host;
2. he was able to take away the daily sacrifice;
3. he was able to cast down the sanctuary which had rebuilt after the exile;
4. he was able to have power over the host due to/ on account of transgression
5. he was able to cast the truth to the ground;
6. he was able to practise and also to prosper for a time determined by God.

And to confirm this incredulous revelation, Gabriel repeats at the end of the vision that what Daniel saw was true; it would occur:

26. And the vision of the evening and the morning is true.

In any case, the cause of his lack of understanding is not explicitly stated, and so any reason for this lack of understanding can only be inferred. As stated in my paper on Assumption 6, Dn12:8 is an excellent text to link Daniel's lack of understanding to the issue over the matters associated with the destruction of the people of God. He associates those thoughts together explicitly in those two verses, and so provided good textual support for this association

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

One can see in this text that during the 3 ½ times, the enemy of God's people "scatters" the power of the holy people until they are finally decimated, and then the end

comes. Daniel's next response to that explanation is puzzlement. The explanation does not in itself pose a problem to understanding. He understands, because his question is not related to a detail of the material just explained. It relates to a matter that is provoked by understanding verse 7. So a lack of understanding is not because of a lack of an explanation.

The important connection to see here is that Daniel is shown the obliteration of God's people, even more clearly than at Dn8, and he writes his book in such a way that the very next thing he wants us to associate with this awful outlook is Daniel's lack of understanding about it. He then presses for a greater clarification as to the outcome of all these things.

Notice also the statement by Shea discussing the same issue in Dn8, as quoted in that paper:

Perhaps the particular part of the of the instruction from the *mar'ê* that Daniel did not understand and that shocked him so much was how the little horn power could trample down God's host, his sanctuary, and its sacrifice under foot for so long a period of time as the 2300 evening-mornings mentioned in this connection. ([1981](#), p.236)

Thus, the concept the thing troubling Daniel at the end of Dn8 being the uncomfortable thoughts over the future trials for the people of God is far more credible than the SDA concept that it was the start date for the 2300 days.

This is another assumption which has no basis in fact, but rather not only is an argument from silence, and it depends on a series of assumptions and implications which themselves are dependent on other assumptions. Indeed, his statement regarding his lack of understanding regarding the vision could be because he understood the basic message of the vision but that he did not understand the *implications* of the vision in relation to the purposes of God.

Probable Issues in Daniel's Mind

Many questions would have arisen in the prophet's mind. And probably the most fundamental question, which would have risen to the surface, would have been why? Why was the horn allowed to invade God's people? Was it because of the same reason that Israel was invaded in Daniel's time –Israel's stubborn refusal to do God's will? Or was there another reason? It was on account of transgression that the host was given into his hands against the daily sacrifice. Whose transgression was this talking about? Was it Israel's transgressions or the transgressions of the little horn? Was it because of the transgressions of the people of God that this horn power is allowed to desecrate the holy place? Daniel would have remembered a similar scene with the armies looting the temple when he was captured and taken to Babylon. Was it the same in this incident too? The answer is not clear from the two visions in Dn7 and 8. As discussed in [Assumption 6](#), even at the end of chapter 12, the question as to the reason of these things happening to the people of God remains unanswered.

Dn7 has the enemies "wearing out the saints of the Most High." Dn8 adds detail to that. He is going to "cast some of the stars to the ground to the ground and trample on them." He is going to destroy the people of God and make a stand against their prince.

Furthermore, he will overtake the land then abuse the worship system of the Israelites. It is not clear in Dn8 whether the Prince of the host is overcome by the horn power or just challenged. If one sees the cessation of the sacrifices in Dn9 as equivalent to the same in Dn8:11, then Dn9 makes it clear, that the hostile power does indeed overthrow the anointed One of God's people.

This is different from what Daniel experienced from the Babylonians. The Babylonians only destroyed the city and the sanctuary. They did not set up a parody of the sanctuary system in the place the Israelites considered sacred. The enemy referred to in Dn8 will do things differently than the Assyrians, the Babylonians or the Persians. He is going to indulge in satanic activities against the people of God. He is going to practise "craft" and will be successful in achieving his malevolent designs. And God will not intervene. He will let it happen.

This will be different from what Daniel is familiar with. There are no conditions here. There is no deal: "If you follow me and are obedient to my ways, I will deliver you." Here again we have a change in the way Israel's relationship with God impacts on the outcome on the way Israel was to be delivered from her enemies.

- In the times of Isaiah and Hezekiah, the arrangement was simple: Trust in the Lord and the Lord will deliver you from having these Assyrians ruling over you."
- In the times of Jeremiah and Daniel, it was a case of "Submit to the enemy, and acknowledge his sovereignty over you and you will be spared from being violated and destroyed as a city and a people."
- In the time of the end, it is irrelevant whether Israel is faithful to God or not. The enemy was going to be allowed to sport not only with the people of God and their property, but also with their worship service – the ultimate insult to the national psyche of the people – since the worship service represented to them their relationship to God, the universe, each other and their own souls. To sport with what would insult the very core of the people. And this prophecy states that this enemy will be allowed to do this until he comes to his end.

The tone of the prophecy in Dn8 has the tone of fatalism. That is to say, regardless of the faithfulness of the people of God, this enemy is going to destroy the people of God. This is different from the unctious from the old covenant spoken in the Torah. Why should this be? What is the purpose of going through the whole drama of rebuilding the national icons and enticing the people back to Palestine, when everything that is done is going to be destroyed *yet again*? The very things experienced by Daniel and his peers at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar are going to be repeated, but this time there is nothing the people of God can do to prevent it. God has decreed it to occur and it will happen. No national repentance, no total national holiness will avert this crisis.

How could anyone in Babylon understand this? It is outside the scope of the concepts of the Torah. It is outside the parameters, not only of the early prophets but also the exilic prophets as well. There was nothing in the scriptures that Daniel had access to that could help him understand this concept. This prophecy was pushing the

barriers of God's purposes in the earth beyond anything known up to that time. It was fearful news. It put a cloud over all the hope that was in the promise of the return to Palestine after the seventy years of exile.

Summary

I have looked the assertion that Daniel did not understand at the end of Dn8 because information had not been given to him.

- I examined the idea that whatever is not understood is due to the fact that information has not been given. I showed that even when an explanation is given, it may not be understood.
- I compared the mental anguish of Daniel at the end of Dn7 and Dn8 and showed that there is no basic difference between the two, yet SDA historicists do not intimate that Dn7 is incomplete.

The Conclusion

Thus in conclusion, it is not necessarily true in regard to Dn8:27 that whatever is not explicitly explained in the vision or the interpretation is thereby not understood and conversely, whatever is explicitly explained in the vision or the interpretation is thereby understood. There is no support for the argument that the reason "there was not understanding" at the end of Dn8 was due to the fact that the start for the 2300 days was not given. There is only a chain of assumption to support that position.

I believe that the deeper issues of the vision are the central problems that cause distress to Daniel, as he sees the awful catastrophes for his people in the distant future. What is a further worry to Daniel is the way God acts, or better does *not* act, in relation to this catastrophe.

The Assumption Chain used in this assumption

The specific assumptions in this assumption include:

1. Daniel's statement in Dn8:27 that he didn't understand the mar'ê meant that he didn't understand the 2300 days .
2. Daniel was sick before the instruction of Daniel was finished.
3. The instruction of Gabriel to Daniel in ch8 is incomplete.
4. The starting point for the 2300 days is not declared in Dn8.
5. The meaning of "vision" in Dn8:13, where it asks "How long shall be the vision...?" refers specifically to vs 2-12 and not to vs 9-11.
6. The two Hebrew words in Dn8-12 translated by the English word "vision" have specialised meanings which support the SDA argument

linking the 70 weeks of Dn9 with the 2300 days of Dn8.

There is positively no evidence that the lack of understanding on Daniel's part is related to the lack of information regarding the *starting point* of the 2300 evenings-mornings.

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