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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 9.4**

# **SUMMARY PAPER**

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## PREFACE

This document is just a summary of a much larger and more detailed project that is posted by chapter on this site. The purpose of this summary is to give some type of brief synopsis of the thrust of the project without getting lost in the detail.

In this paper I have taken the liberty of dispensing with a large proportion of the evidence and the argumentation for the sake of clarity. For those who wish to pursue the references, I would suggest a closer study of the full document would be appropriate. The concept of a summary paper would be defeated if all the accompanying supporting arguments had to be included.

## BRIEF BACKGROUND

The debate concerning the validity of the SDA interpretation of the biblical prophecies they consider fundamental to their doctrinal position has been reoccurring in the SDA church since its formation in 1863. The twentieth century has seen a number of denominational disturbances over this debate. In 1979-1981 Dr. Desmond Ford, an Australian lecturer in theology, who taught at Avondale College, near Newcastle, NSW, and who was at the time, a visiting lecturer at an SDA college in California USA, brought the debate to the forefront again. The results of the material he presented on this and related areas spawned conflict and a widespread debate. It also triggered repressive reaction from church authorities.

Along with the retrenchment of Dr. Ford, a significant number of church ministers and teachers in Australia changed their employer. Hundreds of people in each Australian state and New Zealand left the SDA church.

In the USA, the same reaction was experienced including the withdrawal of whole churches from the denomination. Reactions occurred in South Africa, England and also in Europe to a lesser degree. The Third World countries, not understanding the issues at the time, were not drastically affected by the debate.

Immediately after this, a rash of publications from SDA printing houses produced a flood of "scholarly" material. These were intended to give additional support to those traditional doctrinal positions of the church being challenged, including papers by Drs. Hasel and Shea referred to later in this discourse.

## THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF THIS RESEARCH

### Basic Assumptions

**This paper addresses just one question in the multifaceted issue which this debate highlighted: the relation between the 2300 day period in Daniel 8:24 and the 70 week period in Dn 9: 24-27.** In many ways this is the foundational point of belief from which so many other doctrines have developed. In addressing this question I have approached the subject as a Seventh-day Adventist would, assuming the validity of certain details about prophecy, the book of Daniel, Scripture etc. This liberty has been taken so that I could use arguments that would address SDA scholars on their own ground.

Some of these assumed points include:

- (1) The belief that the book of Daniel was written as one;
- (2) The book of Daniel is substantially the product of a single author;
- (3) Its date of composition is the sixth century BC, not the second century B.C;

(4) The 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14 represent 2300 days;

(5) The "evenings-mornings" of Dn 8:14 relate to time rather than sacrifices, although this could be a valid point worthy of examination.

These are topics which in themselves, could demand extensive examination but are beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>1</sup>

## The Importance of the 2300 Days and the 70 Weeks.

The time periods discussed in Dn 8 and 9 provide the foundation for those beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that relate to their definition of what they consider to be "the time of the end." This is the period, according to the Bible, which occurs just prior to the Day of Judgment by God on the whole world. In other metaphors, this period is also called the second coming of Christ or "the day of the Lord."

The Seventh-day Adventist church has a detailed scenario concerning this final period of world history based largely on analogy from the Old Testament sanctuary service system. Closely connected with these beliefs is their interpretation of the prophecies of both the Old and New Testaments, specifically the apocalyptic prophecies of the book of Revelation, the book of Daniel, and Jesus' "little apocalypse" in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

Their interpretation of a great portion of these prophecies is not unique to them. Leroy Froom (1946-1954), in an important work for Seventh-day Adventists, traces through many denominations the various commentators who presented a Biblical rationale in favour of the Second Advent Movement arising in the nineteenth century, and even traced their theoretical roots to pre-Reformation scholars in some cases. Froom argues, as does the church itself, that it is the combination of all these particular beliefs together in one denomination that constitutes the uniqueness, indeed remnancy, of the SDA church.<sup>2</sup>

Typical of statements in this vein is the following from the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary:

The interpretation of 25 centuries show that our role, as Seventh-day Adventists, is that of recoverers and continuators of honored and orthodox prophetic expositions of the centuries, cumulatively developed and now restored, re-emphasized and **perfected**<sup>3</sup> [emphasis mine] in these latter times<sup>4</sup>. Our special emphasis today is appropriately, and

<sup>1</sup> Good reviews on this topic by Arthur Ferch, Gerhard Hasel and William Shea of the first three topics can be found in [Holbrook, Frank B., \*Symposium on Daniel\*](#) in the first section called "Introductory Studies on Daniel."

<sup>2</sup> See also the succinct summary of this topic in [Hyde \(1974\)](#) in the section entitled, "History of Biblical Interpretation," pp.17-125.

<sup>3</sup> Smith calls it a "faultless chain of harmony" (1898, p.234) "The reader will now perceive another beautiful link in the **faultless chain of harmony** which the Bible presents to us on this subject."

<sup>4</sup> In what way does the SDA church see their teaching of prophecy a *perfection* of this accumulation of tradition throughout the ages?

Note this statement from the end of the same article on "[the History of the Interpretation of Daniel](#):" "We have retained what others have let slip. That, in a word, expresses our relationship to God's line of prophetic witnesses through all past time. We have gathered up the gems of prophetic truth concerning Dan. 2; 7; 8; 9; 11; 12, that have been buried under the debris of churchly discard and neglect. We have

logically, on those last-day segments of the prophecies not heretofore perceived or stressed. In the past the time had not yet come for their fulfillment, and consequent recognition, application and emphasis.

All of our present-day basic interpretations, including all the great outline prophecies (such as the 1844 terminus of the 2300 years of Dan. 8:14, and their synchronous beginning with the 70 weeks of Dan. 9: 25), can consequently be traced back to former expositors of note. Thus we as Seventh-day Adventists simply stand in the line of sound expositors of the years, gratefully recognizing our indebtedness to the noble pathfinders. We are the inheritors of the prophetic truths of past expositors and the special heralds of last-day fulfillments. (Nichol, 1976, p.43)

In many ways, the book of Daniel forms the starting point for the explanation of their eschatological dogma and especially the visions of Dn7,8,9,10-12. Perhaps the most significant aspect in their interpretation of Daniel is the 2300 "evenings-mornings" of Dan 8:14.

These prophecies provide a chronological foundation for their explanation of Jesus' activity in heaven and the role and message of the SDA church to the world. They define this activity in terminology associated with the O.T. sanctuary services and rituals. Their development of the "antitypical day of Atonement" concept is wholly dependent upon their traditional explanation of the time periods in Daniel.

All these concepts come together in an umbrella teaching called the "three angel's message" - an allusion to the messages of Rev 14:6-11. These messages are really the charter of the SDA church's mission to the world and yet it has as its basis, the validity of their interpretation of the 2300 evening- mornings. It is this chronology that enables the SDA church to assert that they can prove that "the hour of his judgment has come" (Rev14:6), and that the world should receive the message that the SDA church has to say on the pre-advent Judgment.

### The Main Thesis of the Paper.

**It is the argument of this research that the starting date for the 2300-day period as proposed by the Second Advent Movement in the nineteenth century, and carried on by the SDA Church, has no explicit factual basis in Scripture.**

Rather, the standard SDA explanation for the 2300 day prophecy is based on a specific synchronisation between the 2300 day period in Dn 8 and the 70 week prophecy in Dn 9 which is, in turn, based on a complicated and confusing series of assumptions used collectively to give support to each other. This paper endeavours to identify all the

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simply reset these honored expositions in the framework of the "everlasting gospel" - God's message for today...

Most of our major positions on Daniel's prophecies came directly from the Millerite expositors, for this was the chief area of their study in prophetic lines. Most of our major advances, and the area of our most intense study, have been in the complementary prophecies of the Apocalypse, pertaining to the latter days. This is particularly true of Rev. 13-18, relating to the last things, or end events, for which neither the early church nor Reformation expositors were prepared, simply because this portion was not yet applicable." (Nicole, 1976, p. 76)

Note this statement from Don Neufeld, "In turn the Seventh-day Adventist interpreters later corrected and clarified earlier prophetic positions. So far as apocalyptic principles are concerned, Seventh-day Adventists introduced few if any new principles, though they enlarged and systematized the interpretation particularly of the two apocalyptic biblical books Daniel and Revelation." (Hyde, 1974, p.113)

assumptions used in supporting the orthodox SDA position for the starting point. It then examines the evidence put forward to support a so-called factual basis for these assumptions. The premises for each assumption are listed and examined to see whether they have any basis in fact or whether they have other assumptions as their basis.

Finally, a composite picture is drawn of how the complicated system of interdependent assumptions is used to support the conclusions upheld by the SDA church concerning their linking of the two time periods of Dn 8 and 9. **Seventh-day Adventists argue that the question of Dn 8:13 is phrased in such a way to indicate that the answer in Dn 8:14 to the question of v13 applies to the whole vision of Dn 8:2-13.**

On the other hand, the conclusion of this paper is that from a purely textual viewpoint, the 2300 days begins with the desolation of the sanctuary in Dn 8:9-12, and that the culmination of the 2300 days involves the reversal of that desolation and the subsequent restoration of the sanctuary. Thus the start for the 2300 days in Dn 8 occurs when the desolation of the sanctuary begins, not when the whole vision begins.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 2300 DAYS AND THE 70 WEEKS IN THE SDA WORLD VIEW**

### **The Crucial Nature of Dn 8:13,14**

In essence, the pivotal area of this whole paper is the grammatical construction of the question in Dn 8:13 and its corresponding answer in Dn 8:14. It is the construction of the question in Dn 8:13 which determines the meaning of "vision" in that verse, and which dictates the portion of the revelation in Dn 8 to which the 2300 days of v14 applies. It is because of the importance of the grammar in Dn 8:13 that a good third of my paper is devoted to a detailed examination of arguments thrown up in defense of the SDA position on this question. The traditional arguments are examined first. Then I examine the novel proposals disseminated by the Biblical Research Institute in their publications during the 1980s. The discussions in this research do not extend to an examination of the fulfilment of the prophecies. It is limited only to contextual considerations.

### **The Pioneer's View**

The time period in Dn 8:14 is a crucial, if not the crucial point of doctrine in the SDA movement of the early 1800's. So important was it in the eyes of those who would later, in the 1860's, establish the SDA church, that they called it the "landmark." Notice this comment on "landmark" from the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*:\_

Landmark. An expression taken apparently from Pr22.28 ("Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set;" cf., Pro 23:10; see also Deut 19:14) and used by SDA's to describe the doctrines that have made them a distinct religious group. These doctrines are commonly understood to be those relating to the sanctuary, the three angels' messages of Rev 14, the second advent, the millennium death, the seventh day Sabbath, and the spirit of prophecy. Among other terms used with a meaning similar to landmarks are "waymarks," "special points," "pillars of our faith," "the foundation," "pegs," "pins," etc. In SDA thinking the landmarks are doctrines of such vital importance that they cannot be altered without changing the nature of the SDA church.

Among the early Sabbathkeeping Adventists, the term "landmark" was used with reference to the ending of the 2300 days of Dan 8:14. It was later that the expression came to

denote other doctrines that have made the SDA's a distinct religious group. (Neufeld and Neuffer, 1966, p.682)

So crucial was the issue concerning the chronology surrounding Dn 8:14 that James White, a founding member, could say in 1850:

The 2300 days - This prophetic period has been and still is, the main pillar of the Advent faith. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we have a correct view of the commencement and termination of this period, in order to understand our present position (R&H, Dec, 1850)

It was considered a denial of the original "Advent faith" or spiritual apostasy to deny the relation of the 70-week prophecy of Dn 9 and the 2300 days of Dn 8 as taught by the Millerite movement. Notice James White's statements in 1863:

What need we say anymore? The arguments, which show the seventy weeks to be a part of the 2300 days, are all iron-clad and invulnerable. We may consider this question decided, and hereafter appeal to this decision as authoritative...Hence they who have taken the position that the seventy weeks are not part of the 2300 days, have abandoned truth for error, and have taken ground that is untenable. (R&H, July 21 1863)

The 70 weeks are an inseparable part of the 2300 days. To endeavour to disconnect them is to outrage every principle of interpretation, and to brand a portion of the word of God as aimless and absurd. Railers of God, and despisers of his word may take such a position as this, but Christians never. (R&H, July, 28,1863)

This sentiment was reinforced by Ellen White, wife of James and the SDA church's prophet. In commenting on the three angel's messages of Revelation 14, of which the chronology of the 2300 days was a fundamental premise, she had this to say:

I was shown three steps- the first, second and third angel's messages. Said my accompanying angel, "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages." The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received. I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished major improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid

wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaining, for God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him. (White, E., 1945, p.258f)

The SDA church still officially supports her opinion on this matter. Any critical examination of this subject invariably invokes all kinds of moral and spiritual judgments from those committed to these beliefs. To be able to frankly and openly debate problematic issues on a subject which defines "the nature of the SDA church" (Neufeld and Neuffer, 1966, p.682), becomes well nigh impossible within the church organisation itself without dire consequences, as a separate study of SDA history would so clearly illustrate.

### Formative Advent Attempts at Defining Dn 8:13,14

Initially, the Advent movement in the early nineteenth century believed that the 2300-day prophecy of Dn 8 foretold the **time** of the Second Advent. For this reason the prophecy became the main point of doctrine for the Movement. After the Second Advent failed to occur as predicted in 1843, 1844 and few more set dates later, members of the Movement decided either to alter their interpretation of the time period or to alter their interpretation of the **event** to transpire at the end of the 2300 days. A third group decided that it was all a hoax, and went their various ways.

The SDA church was spawned from the second group who altered their interpretation of the **event**<sup>5</sup>, while still upholding the chronological arguments that were associated with the time period.

F.D. Nichol, in his book "Midnight Cry," comments on the group of Millerites who restudied the teachings of Miller. Whereas Miller saw the cleansing of the sanctuary as meaning the earth being burned with fire at the second coming of Christ, these Millerites saw the cleansing of the sanctuary as applying to the "sanctuary in heaven." He comments on a formative meeting of these people together to study this topic

Here in a few bold strokes from the pen of a pioneer of the Seventh-day Adventist, we have the story of the beginning of this religious body, at least so far as the key doctrine of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is concerned." (1944, p482)

Nichol makes no mistake here in pointing out that historically, the key doctrine of the SDA church was their explanation of Dn 8:14. Initially it was a difference in the explanation of the meaning of Dn 8:14 that set this group as distinct from the Millerites. As time went on, other doctrines were added to this "landmark" of the SDA church.

### The Pivotal Nature of the SDA Synchronisation of Dn8 and Dn9.

Not only was the 2300-days of Dn8: 13.14 considered the foundation of the SDA faith, so also was their peculiar explanation of the

<sup>5</sup> Instead of teaching Christ's second Advent was scheduled for 1844 according to their prophetic interpretations, they proposed the idea that Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary where God the Father dwelt and began a work they termed the Investigative Judgement. The interpretation was extremely literal in all respects, being fundamentalist by nature, and basically contradicts another SDA tenet of belief, i.e., the omnipresence of God. It also denies clear post-resurrection pictures of Jesus in the book of Acts with Jesus seated at the right hand of God, i.e., in His very presence (c.f., Acts 7<sup>55</sup>; also Hebrews 8<sup>1</sup>, 9<sup>12,24</sup> 10<sup>12</sup>; Rev 4<sup>whole</sup> 5<sup>whole</sup>). For a good review of the family of churches and sects that sprung up from the Advent movement in the early nineteenth century, see Melton, J. Gordon, 1978. A succinct summary of the Adventist family of denominations can be gained from Mead, 1980, pp. 19-24. Another informative overview of the Millerite movement and the movements it spawned can be found at [http://www.heraldmag.org/2006\\_history/06history\\_4.htm](http://www.heraldmag.org/2006_history/06history_4.htm)



relationship between Dn8 and Dn9. Indeed, as one can read in the following extract from the Review and Herald by Uriah Smith, to depart from the "party line" on the relationship between the 2300-days and the 70 weeks was to make shipwreck of the original faith:

We claim, and will show, that we are the only ones who are following out that movement to its logical results and conclusions..."We claim that the ninth of Daniel is an appendix to the eighth, and that the seventy weeks and the 2300 days or years commence together. OUR opponents [apostatised Adventists] DENY THIS." Who then are the original Adventists? Again, to show the importance which was formerly attached to this matter, we quote from the Advent Shield..."The grand principle involved in the interpretation of the 2300 days of Dan. 8:24, is, that the 70 weeks of Dan. 9:24, are the first 490 days of the 2300, of the eighth chapter." Those who have yielded this point, have therefore given up the "grand principle involved in the interpretation of the 2300 days." If to do this and go over to the position of "our [their] opponents," is not a serious defection from the original Advent faith, we greatly err. The following well-founded opinion was expressed by Apollos Hale in 1846:—"The second point to be settled, in explaining the text [Dan.9:24], is to show what vision it is which the 70 weeks are said to seal. And it should be understood this involves one of the great questions which constitute the main pillars in our system of interpretation, so far as prophetic times are concerned. If the connection between the 70 weeks of Dan.9, and the 2300 days of Dan. 8, does not exist, the whole system is shaken to its foundation; if it does exist, as we suppose, the system must stand."—Harmony of Prophetic Chronology, page 33. Mark this language. The connection between Daniel 8 and 9 constitutes one of the "main pillars" of our system of interpretation. If it does not exist the whole system is shaken to its foundation. If it does exist, the system must stand. (1876, p.520)<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, as one can readily see, the main pillars of the church were considered to be centrally located around the time issues relating to Dn 8 and Dn9, and the explanation proposed by the SDA Church.

## **MY PERSONAL QUEST FOR A SOLUTION**

Given then the pivotal nature of this subject in SDA thinking and not withstanding the problems encountered in raising this subject within the SDA church, I decided to pursue my enquiry into this question in order to establish a conclusion as to whether my line of research was legitimate, or whether perhaps there were answers to my questions in an area of research that I had not previously investigated. My original desire was just to satisfy my own curiosity and answer questions in a way that could bear the closest scrutiny I could bring to bear on them.

### **My Methodology for Collating Assumptions**

1. My first effort in this regard was to read the many and various SDA presentations of this subject so that I could glean out all the assumptions that were or are being used by SDA writers to support the traditional position on the 2300 day and 70 week prophecies (See [Appendix](#) for bibliography of these apologetic work used. See the [general bibliography](#) for a greater listing). Gradually a picture emerged and a series of assumptions were drawn up.
2. I tried to line up each assumption in relation to the other

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<sup>6</sup> This view was also taken by other groups of the Advent movement who did not join with the SDA church. Typical of these were the Editor of *The Advent Shield* who states (and was often quoted by SDA writers), "If the connection between the seventy weeks of Dan, ix, and the 2300 days of Dan, viii, does not exist, the whole system is shaken to its foundation; if it does exist, as we suppose, *the system must stand*" (J. White, 1863, p.206)

assumptions, so that their perceived interdependence could be summarily expressed in the same manner as used by these writers. In some cases, this was difficult because there was more than one assumption being used as premises for arguments.

3. After identifying the assumptions used in this subject and correlating each to the other in the "stream of consciousness" as it appeared in various SDA references, I proceeded to examine the validity of each assumption. My goal was to ascertain whether each assumption was based on some fact of Scripture, or whether it was based on another assumption. By approaching the subject in this manner, I was able to firstly, isolate the items of Scripture that were used; secondly, establish whether the Scriptural items were being used correctly; and thirdly, to establish the chain of assumptions being used.

It should be stated that, as would be expected, there was a great variety in the presentations over time and across authors. This variety included the number of assumptions used, and even the number of assumptions that were assumed rather than stated!

Some authors, such as the late Dr. Gerhard Hasel and Dr. William Shea introduce their own assumptions that were unique to their research.

Many assumptions used in the SDA references that I examined did not apply directly to the question of the relationship of the two time periods, and these have not been included. Examples of these include the meaning of "the daily," "the sanctuary," and the identification of the "little horn" that arises out of the second beast in Dn 8.

Although the variety of texts I examined were products from SDA publishing house, it should be stated that this does not mean all the views expressed in SDA publications reflect the "official" position of the SDA church.<sup>7</sup>

## **PRÉCIS OF ASSUMPTIONS USED BY SDA'S AND MY CONCLUSIONS**

I have listed below the assumptions I have extracted from standard SDA apologetic presentations and with each assumption I have placed the conclusion of my research. In this précis, I have not documented the chain of assumptions each assumptions uses to support its argument. This is done later in the paper.

**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.

**My Conclusion:** The words in Daniel for "vision" are for all

<sup>7</sup> A sample of classic SDA apologetic books on the topic include: Andrews, 1892; Cottrell, 1963; Ford, 1978; Gordon, 1983; Gilbert, 1902,1937; Haskell, 1914; Haynes, 1930; Schuler, 1943; White, E., [1972]; Maxwell, 1981; Andreason, 1937, 1948; Andross, 1912; Heppenstall, 1972; Smith, 1877, 1898,1944; White, E., 1888

The official publications of the church include: *Seventh-day Adventists*, 1957, Ministerial Association. 1988.

practical purposes, used interchangeably, and any current version of the Bible is correct in their translation of *both* these words as "vision."

**Assumption 2:** The meaning of "vision" in Dn 8:13, where it asks "How long shall be the vision...?" refers specifically to vs3-12 and not to vs9-12.

**My Conclusion:** The meaning of "vision" in Dn 8:13, where it asks, "How long shall be the vision...?" refers specifically to vs9-12 and not to vs3-12 as is clearly illustrated by the apposition underlined in the following text from a published Bible:

"How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled-the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot? (New International Version)

**Assumption 3:** The starting point for the 2300 days is not declared in Dn 8.

**My Conclusion:** The starting point for the 2300 days is declared in Dn 8. It begins from the time that the unholy power desecrates the sanctuary.

**Assumption 4:** Daniel was sick *before* the instruction of Daniel was finished.

**My Conclusion:** Daniel was sick *after* the instruction of Daniel was finished.

**Assumption 5:** The instruction of Gabriel to Daniel in ch8 is *incomplete*.

**My Conclusion:** The instruction of Gabriel to Daniel in ch8 is *complete*.

**Assumption 6:** Daniel's statement in Dn 8:27 that he did not understand the mar'ê<sup>8</sup> meant that he did not understand the 2300 days.

**My Conclusion:** Daniel's statement in Dn 8:27 that he did not understand the mar'ê could mean many things. The fact that an explanation is given does not mean that it does not raise

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<sup>8</sup> The reader will encounter this Hebrew word encountered as mar'ê or mar'eh. They are to be recognized as the same word. The same rule applies for a variety of words used in the documents on this site. A great deal of variation occurs in the typing of the transliteration of the text, depending on whether there is familiarity with the extended ASCII keyboard or some folk have access to other hardware (special keyboards

[http://www.andale.com/store?sid=168981&cid=6771623&mode=1&catId=&pnum=1&tpages=null&psize=10&lid=64369336&storeLayout=classic&storeTheme=midnight&view=ITEM\\_DETAIL&newStore=null&parentCatId=](http://www.andale.com/store?sid=168981&cid=6771623&mode=1&catId=&pnum=1&tpages=null&psize=10&lid=64369336&storeLayout=classic&storeTheme=midnight&view=ITEM_DETAIL&newStore=null&parentCatId=) or <http://www.jewishsoftware.com/default.asp?page=categorytype&type=hebrew&id=85> ) or software fonts etc see <http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Tyndale/Fonts.htm> or <http://www.zigzagworld.com/HKTutor/> ) which enables one to type in characters not available on the standard US keyboard.

unanswerable questions in Daniel's mind.

**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.

**My Conclusion:** Daniel's statement in Dn 8:27 on the lack of the understanding is ambiguous and need not be due to the fact that the information had not been given. It could be because he understood the details of the vision.

**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."

**My Conclusion:** The "shutting" of the vision of Dn 8 (vs3-12) does *not* mean that it would not be understood until "many days," that is, at the "time of the end." The purpose of the "shutting" of the vision is because it is completed. The act of "shutting" is an act of preservation not mystification. It was part of the process of archiving the document. The shutting includes the whole vision and does not mean only the section of the vision that related to the "time of the end."

**Assumption 9:** The time of the end began in 1798.

**My Conclusion:** The principles used to interpret the 3½ times in Daniel by SDA's is incorrect because they take the "decoding" of the time period one step too far.

**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).

**My Conclusion:** The "shutting" of the vision meant the shutting of both the vision and the explanation of the vision was complete in ch. 8.

**Assumption 11:** Only a little time elapsed between Dn 8 and Dn 9.

**My Conclusion:** A time period of 10-16 years elapsed between Dn 8 and Dn 9.

**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.

**My Conclusion:** Dan9:1-19 does not reveal that Daniel was perplexed over the relationship between the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah and the 2300 days of Dn 8. He was just perplexed over "the desolations of Jerusalem" for seventy years foretold by Jeremiah as is clearly explained in Dn 9: 2,3.

**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.

**My Conclusion:** The command of Gabriel in Dn 9: 23 for Daniel to "understand the vision (mar'ê)" specifically meant the mar'ê of Dn 9: 24-27.

**Assumption 14:** The meaning of htk is best translated as "cut off."

**My Conclusion:** The meaning of htk can be translated as either "cut off," or "determined."

**Assumption 15:** The 70-week period is "cut off" from another prophetic period, namely the 2300 days of Dn 8.

**My Conclusion:** The 70-week period is "cut off" from the time given them under the covenant to the Israelites. Their period of covenantal privilege was limited to "seventy weeks" of years to get their house in order.

**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.

**My Conclusion:** The 2300 days (6.3 calendar years) is a shorter time period than the 70 weeks (490 calendar years).

**Assumption 17:** The 70-week period is "cut off" from the beginning of the 2300 days, and not any other section of that time period.

**My Conclusion:** The 70-week period is not "cut off" from any section of the 2300 days. It is cut off from the time when they would return from exile.

**Assumption 18:** The reference to "vision" in Dn 9:24 refers to Dn 8.

**My Conclusion:** The reference to "vision" in Dn 9: 24 refers to visions in general. These are the kingdom prophecies that refer to the covenantal relationship of Israel with God, including the promises given by the prophets, conditional of course, on Israel's compliance.

**Assumption 19:** The structure of Daniel's prophecies (e.g., vision, then explanation with a time period) dictates that Dn 9 is not a separate vision but rather is a completion of the explanation. This assumption is a recent addition by Dr Shea.

**My Conclusion:** There is no pattern as prescribed by Shea. Dn7 does not set a precedent for Dn 8. Each vision is unique in and of itself. In the case of Dn 8, it is the vision that has a time period in it. This time period is then endorsed in the explanation. The proposed pattern of Daniel's prophecies (e.g., vision, then explanation with a time period included) does not represent Dn7 correctly. Both the time period and the explanation in Dn7 are included in the "vision." The evidence clearly supports firstly, that Dn 9 is called a vision in and of itself and secondly, that what in Dn 8 Shea and others call "explanation," Dn 9: 21 calls "vision."

**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.

**My Conclusion:** Dn9 is not an appended explanation to Dn8 and time is not an unexplained feature of Dn8. Dn9: 24 begins with the subject of time because that is the subject in the beginning of Dn9. Neither the *quantity* of time nor the *unit* of time used in Dn8 and Dn9 have any correspondence between each other.

**Assumption 21:** The same angel that explained the vision of Dn 8 is the one who returns in Dn 9, thus proving that Dn 9 is a continuation of the explanation that was begun in Dn 8.

**My Conclusion:** The angel that explained the vision of Dn 8 is the one who returns in Dn 9. But this does not prove that Dn 9 is a continuation of the explanation that was begun in Dn 8. No one else except Gabriel would be expected to be the messenger.

**Assumption 22:** History has confirmed the SDA explanation of the relationship between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days.

**My Conclusion:** This argument has no validity since it is merely a circular argument. It uses SDA exposition and SDA selection of historical data to fit their interpretation of the prophecy. It also uses SDA neglect of other conflicting data to filter out any doubt in their application of historical events to prophecy. In addition, there are no external independent (non-historicist) controls on the verification of historical data used as "evidence" to prove the validity of the SDA position.

And finally, when the details of the events held up as fulfilment of prophecy are examined, the uncertainty and vagary of that interpretation becomes obvious.

**Assumption 23:** The leading of God during the development of this doctrine both with Miller, the Advent movement and the Seventh-day Adventist church proves that the SDA interpretation of the relation between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days is God-inspired.

**My Conclusion:**

My research argues that this belief has no relationship with the issue of the correctness of their explanation of the time prophecies in Dn 8 and Dn 9. It is not correct to use the early Advent believers experience as the lodestone to judge validity in Biblical interpretation. Many of the things believed by the early Advent believers were later disregarded. The same goes for the development of these concepts within the SDA church.

However, this argument is shown to be probably the core assumption motivating official SDA administrative confrontation when any re-evaluation has been proposed throughout the history of the SDA church for the relationship between the 2300 evening-mornings and the 70 weeks. "God has led in the formation of this doctrine" has been the catch-cry time and time again at the expense of candid biblical research. And, as was witnessed in the publications in the 1980s by the BRI, research emanating from the official publications on this topic was neither honest nor rigorous. It was expedient to produce something that had some pretence of scholarship to endorse this core belief.

Regardless of any evidence presented to support a position differing from that adopted by the pioneers and Ellen G White, the church's prophet, this assumption is a major reason behind the irrational resistance to any change in thought or exegetical position on the relationship between the 2300 days and the 70 weeks. It believes implicitly in the arguments used

since the inception of the Advent movement and endorsed by EGW as to the relationship between the time periods in Dn 8 and Dn 9. In doing this, it thereby assumes as correct all the assumptions in this paper.

## **MORE DETAILED SUMMARY OF EACH ASSUMPTION**

More detail is given in this section from the summary above in that the major sections of each assumption are outlined and the arguments addressed are profiled.

### **ASSUMPTION 1: SPECIALISED MEANINGS FOR WORD "VISION"**

**Rationale: The two Hebrew words in Dn 8-12 translated by the English word "vision" have special meanings that support the SDA argument linking the 70 weeks of Dn 9 with the 2300 days of Dn 8**

#### **Four Attempts**

Four SDA attempts to justify this assumption were surveyed in this section:

1. The outright assumption from pioneer days that "vision" has the same meaning throughout Dn 8-12;
2. The defense in *Questions on Doctrine* which argues for specialised meanings for chazon and mar'eh and the attempts of both
3. William H. Shea and;
4. Gerhard B Hasel.

#### **First Attempt – Outright Assertion**

This is the standard presentation used from the times of Miller. They just assert that the word "vision" in Dn 8:13 refers to Dn 8:3-12. I point out that they do not consider the context of the question. Rather, for their part, the question in v13 may as well finish at the end of the first phrase "How long shall be the vision?" The simplistic logic of the SDA pioneers is examined and rebutted.

#### **Second Attempt-Questions on Doctrine**

##### **Sequence of Thought**

The defence by *Questions on Doctrine* uses the following assumptions as crucial links in its argument. (I have placed in brackets after each point a list of assumptions that are implicit in that point. The reader may wish to refer to those assumptions to assess whether I am correct.)

- "Gabriel had previously explained to Daniel all but the time portion of the symbolic vision of chapter 8." (p.270) (cf., Assumptions 3,4,5,6,7,22)

- "Now he reappears to complete the explanation..."(p.270) (cf. Assumptions 3,4,6,7, 22).

- to complete the explanation in literal terms.(p.270) "What follows in chapter 9 is therefore not a new and independent vision, but is the continuing literal explanation of the symbolic vision of chapter 8." (p.271) (cf. Assumptions 13,19,20).

- in chapter 9, "Gabriel was not introducing a new line of prophecy." (p.271) (cf. Assumptions 13,19,20,)

- "When the angel Gabriel returned to complete his explanation of the vision he directed Daniel's attention specifically to the vision (mar'eh) when he said, 'consider the vision (mar'eh)' (verse 23)." (p.271) (cf. Assumption 13,22). What vision do they refer to? Dn 8:3-14, or Dn 8:16-26?

### **My Conclusion on Questions on Doctrine**

None of these assumptions are adequately defended in Questions on Doctrine. My research highlighted some very grave problems in their argumentation, including the following:

- Their definition of chazon and mar'eh is contradicted by the occurrence of chazon in Dn 9:21 since this text calls Dn 8:20-26 a chazon, whereas they take pains to argue it is mar'eh;
- Their dichotomy of "symbolic" and "literal" in the vision and explanation respectively is contrived;
- they have not even addressed the question which is raised in Dn 8:13 in terms of its grammar and syntax; it is ignored completely.

Third Attempt – William H. Shea

### **Sequence of Thought**

The defense by Shea, though worthy of commendation for at least broaching the subject, is just as tenuous as the defense by Questions on Doctrine. Shea does however address some assumptions in his paper. These include:

1. A distinction between mar'ê and hazon in the book of Daniel is clearly demonstrated in Daniel 10, thus enabling us to use this distinction in Dn 8 and 9 where its usage, according to Shea, is more "complex" (1982, p.234).
2. The use of hazon in Dn 8 refers only to verses 3 to 12. Not vs. 2 - 14 Questions on Doctrine proposes;
3. The use of mar'ê in Dn 8 refers only to vs. 13-14 where there is the "appearance of the two beings who discussed the evenings-mornings..."(p.234), and not "to the particular things seen and heard in the chazon" as proposed by Questions on Doctrine;
4. The reference to mar'ê in Dn 8:26,27 refers specifically to Dn 8:13,14, and the fact that Dn 9:23 uses mar'ê refers us back to Dn 8:13,14, proving that Dn 9 is the completion of the explanation begun in Dn 8:15-26.
5. The problem of Dn 9:21 where it is said that Gabriel appeared to Daniel in the hazôn batt'hilla (literally, "at the first," "in the beginning," thus conveying the adverbial temporal concept of "previously," "before"), is solved, according to Shea, by making it refer to Dn7 and not Dn 8, thus eliminating the possibility of hazôn being applied to Dn 8:15-26.

These points comprise the major contribution of Shea's article on this subject.

### **My Conclusion on William H. Shea's approach.**

It will be noticed that Shea has attempted to explain the question of Dn 8:13, not by looking at the construction of the question itself, but by imposing a contrived meaning on the word hazôn in this question that he fabricated using Dn10, and concluding that the meaning is identical here also.



Shea's material also invokes and supports Assumptions 3-10,13. Concerning these assumptions, Shea says since Daniel was told to understand the mar'ê (Dn 8:16,17,) and because at the end of ch8 Daniel still did not understand the mar'ê, and moreover, because Dn 9:23 says that Daniel was to understand the mar'ê, the material in Dn 9:24-27 is to be considered the continuation of Dn 8.

Shea surprises his readers with the very fanciful argument that Dn 9:21 refers us to an implied appearance of Gabriel to Daniel in ch7. This is shown to be without any solid evidence at all. Shea had to do something novel with this reference in Dn 9:21 because it calls Dn 8:20-26 a hazon. This would destroy his linguistic proposals for mar'eh and hazon and so he avoids the obvious and deflects the reference to Dn7. His desperation to find any pretext to justify his argument is clearly evident. Hasel, on the other hand, rightly points out that Dn 9:21 does refer to Dn 8. His conclusion that the adverbial expression batt'hilla in Dn 9:21, "as at first," refers back to Dn 8:16 offers a succinct rebuttal to Shea's proposal that it refers us instead to Dn7.

Thus Shea's efforts to support the first assumption use a combination of data and assumption. Neither his data nor his assumptions were found to be valid.

#### Fourth Attempt – Gerhard Hasel

##### Sequence of Thought

Hasel's line of argument is virtually identical to Questions on Doctrine's and also to Shea's argument. In his paper he looked for links that tie Dn 8 and 9 together, in much the same way as the Adventist pioneers attempted to do.

One of those links proffered was the meaning of the word for "vision." Hasel offered a novel but invalid approach in his definitions of hazôn and mar'êh by using the terms "vision," "interpretation," "auditory revelation" and "audition" to differentiate between what he sees as various types of revelation. My research argues that his efforts in this regard are an erroneous fabrication. In fact, his classification tends to befuddle the issue rather than clarify it.

##### My Conclusion on Gerhard Hasel's approach.

In my examination of Hasel's contribution, he is shown to employ the same assumptions as used by Questions on Doctrine. The closest Hasel comes to addressing this assumption is by merely asserting that hazôn in Dn 8:13 refers to vs. 3-12 in much the same manner as the pioneers did.

#### ASSUMPTION 2: "VISION" MEANS DN8:3-12 NOT DN8:9-12

**Rationale: The meaning of "vision" in Dn 8:13 where it asks, "How long shall be the vision..." refers specifically to vs. 3-12, and not to vs. 9-12.**

The material in this section addressed the two traditional SDA approaches to this assumption; it examined Hasel's and finally, Shea's recent contributions.

#### The first traditional approach

**Sequence of Thought**

The first traditional approach just assumed that "the vision" in Dn 8:13 referred to Dn 8:3-12, and would then argue that since 2,300 literal solar days could not cover the time span which encompassed the Persian, Greek and Roman empires, the year-day principle is therefore at work applying the 2,300 days to 2,300 literal years.

**My Conclusion on the First Traditional Approach**

This approach is shown to be invalid because it ignores the textual issues resident in the question of Dn 8:13. It merely assumes that the question is the first phrase "How long shall be the vision?"

**The second traditional approach****Sequence of Thought**

The second traditional approach is identical to the first, yet in reverse. One would assume, the argument goes, that time periods in prophecies are symbolic. Then, on that basis, it is said such a long period as 2,300 years could not possibly apply just to the activity of the horn power recorded in Dn 8:9-12, therefore the word vision must mean the whole vision of Dn 8:3-12

**My Conclusion on the Second Traditional Approach**

This approach is also shown to be invalid because like the previous approach, it ignores the textual issues in the question of Dn 8:13. It merely assumes that the question is the first phrase "How long shall be the vision?"

As can be seen from the above, both these approaches begin with unsubstantiated assumptions that are not able to stand up under examination.

**Hasel's approach****Sequence of Thought**

The third approach has virtually the same goal as the first two. Hasel wanted to establish the traditional view that the question in Dn 8:13 is really only "How long shall be the vision?" and he wanted to do it with some appearance of scholarly acumen. He examined the grammatical construction of Dn 8:13 in his paper, and decided that the question has a chain of genitive constructs. He asserted that the question is really a series of three questions with the interrogative "until when?" elided in the last two questions. Yet even Hasel, when he stated "however that may be"...," is not too sure about his own proposal. However, he is sure that the first question is only: "How long shall be the vision?" From there, of course it is an easy matter for him to show how the vision referred to is Dn 8:3-12.

**My Conclusion on Hasel's approach**

My material examines the naive proposals that Hasel raised and shows that his treatment of this subject fell far short of the mark. I highlight the failures of his analysis on the grammatical structure of the question in Dn 8:13 and also compare his work with other writers on the topic, including Shea, showing how inept Hasel's efforts really were.

**Shea's approach**

Shea on the other hand displays good scholarship when he comes to the conclusion, in recognizing, as have most other scholars, that the relationship of the latter half of the question with the former half of the question in Dn 8:13 is one of apposition. He acknowledged that the question could refer to the whole vision of vs. 3-12, or it could refer just to the activities of the horn power (vs9-12). He then proposed five reasons why he considered the question to be referring to vs. 3-12.

**Shea's first reason**

Shea's first reason, that the elements in Dn 8:13 are cited in reverse order, indicating that the whole vision is being referred to.

**My Conclusion**

This position, is incorrect for two reasons:

- Firstly, the elements cited in Dn 8:13 are not in reverse order, and
- Secondly, even if they were, it certainly would not be a reason to assume that the whole vision was being referred to.

**Shea's second reason**

- 1) Shea's second reason, that if vs13 referred to vs9-12, then there would be two visions in ch8, has overlooked the significance of why the apposition is used at all.

**My Conclusion**

It is because there is only one vision in Dn 8 that apposition needs to be used to qualify certain aspects of that vision, so that the person who was to answer the question would understand that the questioner is referring to a certain portion of the vision. The use of apposition does not thereby imply more than one vision; rather it supports the point that the vision is a unit.

**Shea's third and fourth reasons**

- 2) Shea's third and fourth reason are based on the use of hazôn and mar'ê firstly, in Daniel 8, and secondly; outside of Daniel 8.

**My Conclusion**

Here I merely repeated the arguments from the material addressing the first assumption showing that his differentiated meanings are contrived.

**Shea's fifth reason**

- 3) Shea's fifth reason is that the statements concerning the daily in Dn 8:13 and Dn12:11 indicate that the principle difference in these two statements, the word "vision in Dn 8:13, explain the difference between the two time periods which occur in both places. This means the difference in these time periods is for the vision, indicating that the 2300 days must refer to the full vision, and the 1290 days must refer to the daily. Thus "vision" in Dn 8:13 means vs. 3-12.

**My Conclusion**

This reason is rebutted by pointing out that the word "vision" is not the principle difference between Dn 8:13 and Dn12: 11. He has also neglected the significance of the inclusion of the "sanctuary" in Dn 8:13, he has also neglected the fact that the time period of 2,300 evenings-mornings is not given in terms of the "vision" but rather of the "sanctuary." The 2,300 evenings-mornings refer to the treading down

of the sanctuary and its subsequent restoration. Since this activity first occurs in Dn 8:11, the question in Dn 8:13 can quite legitimately refer, not to vs. 3-12, but vs9-12, as Shea himself has mooted.

In summary, his five reasons for referring the question to the whole vision of Dn 8 rather than the acts of the little horn fall apart under the rigour of close examination. As a consequence, the position he was prepared to acknowledge as being correct if it was not for his arguments must stand. That is to say, the question of Dn 8:14 refers to vs9-12.

**Using "Vision" to refer a part or the whole of a vision.**

After dealing with Shea's five reasons, I examined the issue as to whether a "vision" (*hazôn*) could have parts of it that could also be called "visions." This question was answered in the affirmative with evidence from Dn2, 4 and 7. Thus the fact that vs. 9-12 may be called a "vision" does not mean that there is more than one vision in Dn 8.

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**ASSUMPTION 3: NO STARTING DATE FOR 2300 DAYS IN DN 8.**

**Rationale: The starting date for the 2,300 days is not declared in Dn 8.**

**Sequence of Thought**

The SDA reasoning behind this assumption is that if the 2,300 days cover the full vision in vs3-12, then the difficulty for interpreting this time period is that there is no definite point in vs3-12 that locates the point of time in the Persian Empire that may be rightly called the beginning of the vision.

**My Conclusion**

As the reader can immediately see, this assumption is dependent on the validity of Assumption No.2, that is, that the word "vision" in vs13 means vs3-12 and not vs9-12. As Shea has explicitly stated, if the "vision" in v13 applies to vs9-12, then the beginning of the 2,300 days is given in ch8. The starting point for the time period in this case would be when the "pollution of the temple in Jerusalem, or some similar action, was carried out." (1982,p.249)

Thus this assumption has no independent Biblical data for its basis, but rather depends on Assumption 2.

**ASSUMPTION 4: DANIEL GOT SICK BEFORE THE VISION FINISHED.**

**Rationale: Daniel was sick before the explanation by Gabriel was finished.**

**Sequence of Thought**

The basis of this SDA assumption is that the explanation by Gabriel was to include the details concerning the 2,300 days. Since this was not given, Daniel's sudden illness must have interrupted the explanation, so that the rest of the information had to be given at a later date in

order for Gabriel to complete his task. We are led to assume this additional information is given in ch9.

### **My Conclusion**

This assumption assumes that a starting date for the 2300-day period had not been given; that the instruction for the vision of ch8 was incomplete and; that the question "How long shall be the vision applies to Dn 8:3-12.

### **ASSUMPTION 5: DN 8 IS INCOMPLETE.**

**Rationale: The instruction of Gabriel to Daniel (in ch 8) was incomplete.**

### **Sequence of Thought**

The usual SDA presentation of Daniel's illness has this sequence:

- (1) Unpleasant aspects of the vision are unfolded by the man Gabriel;
- (2) Daniel cannot bear the revelation anymore and subsequently loses his physical strength and faints;
- (3) The man Gabriel has to abort his mission.

### **My Conclusion**

This presentation has the problem of trying to prove firstly, that Daniel loses his strength *before* the explanation was completed and secondly, that Daniel's sickness forced Gabriel's mission to be aborted. My research argues firstly, that the statement of v26 by Gabriel to Daniel to "shut up the vision" indicates the communiqué was completed, and only after this was Daniel "sick certain days." (v.27). Thus Daniel's sickness did not interfere with Gabriel's completion of his explanation in Dn 8:15-26. It is complete in and of itself.

Secondly, I examined the end of the vision in ch.8, with that of ch 7,9 and 9-12 and concluded that ch 8 is no more incomplete than are these chapters.

Thirdly, I examined the question, Would Daniel's sickness really pose a problem for Gabriel in his efforts to convey his explanation of the vision to Daniel and thereby fulfill his commission? Other instances where Daniel is adversely affected by supernatural experiences are noted in Dn 8:17-19; 10:8-11,15-19 and it is concluded that Daniel's sickness would have posed no problem for Gabriel, but rather he would have invoked his healing powers in order to strengthen Daniel until the explanation was completed. At any rate, the explicit nature of v26 and the sequence of events in vs26 and 27 indicate the explanation was completed by v26.

The argument for this assumption says that since there is no starting point given by Gabriel to Daniel in ch 8, the instruction is consequently incomplete. Obviously, this assumption has Assumptions 3,2 and 1 for its basis, and has no independent Biblical data for its basis.

### **ASSUMPTION 6: DANIEL DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE 2300 DAYS.**

**Rationale: Daniel's statement in ch.8:27 that he did not understand the mar'ê meant that he did not understand the 2,300-day period.**

### The Sequence of Thought

The SDA chain of reasoning that is associated with this assumption includes the following:

- 1) The mar'ê referred to in v27, is the same as the one referred to in v26, which is the mar'ê of the evenings-mornings;
- 2) The word hazôn is not used in vs26,27;
- 3) Evenings-mornings is a term that occurs only in v14;
- 4) The conversation between the two holy ones is properly called a mar'ê rather than a hazôn, according to Shea, Hasel, and QOD's proposal for the meaning of the word;
- 5) The nature of the revelation in vs. 13,14 being a mar'ê and not a hazôn; as well as the mention of evenings-mornings only in v14 qualify vs13, 14 as the object of the reference in v26 when the man Gabriel refers to the mar'ê of the evenings-mornings;
- 6) Dan8:27 does not refer to the hazôn of vs3-12, but to the mar'ê of vs. 13,14;
- 7) And since the answer in v14 refers to the 2300 evenings-mornings, for which no starting point is given in the explanation;
- 8) **THEREFORE** it is *this* point that Daniel says he does not understand.

### My Conclusion

The first three of these points are of course quite correct. It is from the fourth point where the problems occur. According to my critique of Shea, Hasel and QOD's definitions for hazôn and mar'ê, as well as my own considerations on the text itself, mar'ê in Dn 8 can refer to a number of things.

Firstly, as noted above, a comparison of Dn 8:20-26 with Dn 8:3-12 clearly shows that the mar'ê Gabriel explained (cf.v16) was the hazôn of vs. 3-12. that mar'ê in Dn 8:26 refers to the revelation in ch8:20-26. But this mar'ê, where Gabriel appears, is also a hazôn as Dn 9:21 unequivocally states.

Secondly, a comparison of Dn 9:24-27 with Dn 8:20-26 with their identical styles of auditory revelation augurs quite legitimately to conclude that the reference to understand the mar'ê in Dn 9:23 refers to the revelation in vs. 24-27.

Thirdly, it is not the appearance of the two holy ones in Dn 8:13,14 that could rightly be called the mar'ê of v27, since the mar'ê is that which was spoken of between them i.e., the vision of the 2,300 evenings-mornings. It is this vision, the vision of the evening and the morning that is referred to in v.26. But this mar'ê is also a hazôn as can be noticed from the following: The question in v13 "How long shall be the hazôn...?" received an elided answer: "Unto 2300 evenings-mornings...." The full unellided answer should be understood as saying: "The hazôn shall be unto 2300 evenings-mornings." The clause - "the hazon shall be unto 2300 evening-mornings" - is seen to be virtually identical to the phrase "the mar'eh of the evening and the morning" to the point that they can rightly be assumed to be synonymous. Thus the mar'ê of the evening and the morning is seen to be the hazôn, which shall be unto 2300 evening- mornings. Therefore, in both instances of mar'ê (Dn 8:16,26) it is clearly synonymous with hazôn.

My conclusion on this point is that v26 refers to the mar'ê as one that was "spoken." Since vs16-26 are spoken, it could rightly refer to them. On the other hand, the conversation of the two holy ones in vs13, 14, is another revelation that was "spoken." And since my research argues in favour of the revelation in Dn 8 being called both a hazôn and a mar'ê, then the conversation in vs13,14 could also be the one referred to in v26. This does not mean it refers to the appearance of the two holy ones as the mar'ê, but rather it is that which was spoken of by them --the message of the time period -- which is the mar'ê of the evening and the morning. It is the vision referred to in v13, seen also in vs9-12, which is the vision of the evening and the morning.

Even though v26 may refer to v14, this does not mean that Daniel's lack of understanding is due to the fact no starting point is given in vs20-26. Many SDA writers have acknowledged that Daniel's lack of understanding may have been more directly related to the great persecution and destruction unleashed by this horn power upon the Israelites and their homeland. At the very least, this is very ambiguous and nothing can be assumed as to what caused Daniel's statement concerning his lack of understanding. There were patently many more aspects about the vision that would provoke troublesome thoughts than just the beginning of the time period. Thus it cannot be said that v.27 means Daniel did not understand the 2300 days. But it can be said that Daniel did not understand the hazôn of the 2300 evenings-mornings; and there was more in that hazôn than just a time period.

### **ASSUMPTION 7: INFORMATION HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN TO DANIEL.**

**Rationale: Daniel's statement concerning his lack of understanding (8:27) was due to the fact that the information had not been given.**

#### **Sequence of Thought**

This SDA assumption has as its basis another assumption -- that whatever is explicitly explained in either the vision or the interpretation is thereby understood and, conversely, whatever is not explicitly explained in either the vision or the interpretation is thereby not understood.

#### **My Conclusion**

My research concludes this assumption to be incorrect due to the fact that there are many details in the vision that are not explained in the interpretation, and conversely, there are details in the

interpretation which are not present in the vision. In fact, Dn 8:16-26 is in many ways a vision in and of itself, since it gives new details that do not occur in vs3-14. This would fit appropriately with the fact that Dn 9:21 calls a hazon the section of Dn 8 where Gabriel appears, i.e., Dn 8:16-26. This is not to say however, that there is an extra vision in Dn 8.

Furthermore, I show that Daniel's lack of understanding could equally come from the fact that because he understood the interpretation of the vision, he found that it posed more questions than what it offered in answers. It need not be that his lack of understanding is due to the fact certain information had not been given.

### **ASSUMPTION 8: THE VISION WAS SHUT FROM BEING UNDERSTOOD.**

**Rationale: The shutting of the vision (Dn 8:26) meant that it would not be understood for "many days" (i.e., until the "time of the end").**

#### **Sequence of Thought**

This SDA assumption has as its premise the assertion that the meaning of the command to "shut the vision" is to shut it so as to preclude anyone from understanding it properly until the "many days" had expired. For SDA's this means that only after the expiry of what they understand to be the "many days" will a proper explanation of Dn 8 be found in Christendom. Fortuitously, they say, the SDA explanation of Dn 8 was formulated after the expiration of the "many days." They understand the phrase "many days" to mean the passing of time from Daniel's time up until 1798 AD when the "time of the end" began. This, they say, qualifies the SDA explanation as the correct view, and is just another evidence of the validity of their position.

One of the SDA church's claims to "remnancy" is that it is the only church group in Christendom at present that is promulgating such an interpretation of the 2300 evening-mornings. According to the SDA view, because no one else has ever proclaimed this interpretation of this time period, no one could ever gain a full understanding of the prophecy until the "time of the end" arrived and the Seventh-day Adventist church arose to provide a true knowledge of the prophecy.

#### **My Conclusion**

My research concluded that to shut the vision indicates that the explanation in Dn 8:20-26 was complete. Furthermore, Dn 8:20-26 together with vs3-14 comprises one hazon, and was to be preserved for posterity.

This preservation would enable its message to be read and understood not only by those who would live between Daniel's time and the time when these things would occur, but also by those who would live during and after these events. I conclude there is nothing in the sense of the word "shut" that indicates that preclusion from understanding the true meaning of the revelation is intended.

The most obvious answer to the "shutting" of this book to stop



certain persons from reading and understanding this vision would be the fact that Daniel wrote this book in his native tongue - Hebrew - and not in the lingua franca of his day - Aramaic. The first seven chapters of Daniel are in Aramaic and the last chapters are in Hebrew. In that sense, the vision is locked from being understood until either it is translated, or the seeker learns Hebrew. The choice to write the vision in Hebrew also aids the preservation of the document since it would have been rendered politically innocuous to curious Persian eyes. An Aramaic official searching through documents would have put the document aside. But this does not mean the vision of Dn8 was incapable of being understood correctly by the Israelites. Its preservation in the Hebrew language could have enabled them to be thoroughly prepared for the events when they transpired.

This position does not align with the SDA view because the knowledge was readily available to any Hebrew reader before "the time of the end."

### **ASSUMPTION 9: THE TIME OF THE END BEGAN IN 1798 AD.**

#### **Sequence of Thought**

This assumption is used with the previous one to argue that only after 1798 A.D. could a true interpretation of Dn 8 be given. Providentially, the SDA interpretation was formulated not long after 1798 and is therefore proposed as further evidence for the validity of the SDA interpretation.

#### **My Conclusion**

My research argues that there are tenuous arguments related to the events around the beginning and the end of the 1260-day period. Furthermore, the use of the year-day principle for the time periods in Dn 8,9 is invalid because it "desymbolises" these periods one-step too many. I argue concerning the form in which the time periods are given, that if they are not expressed in literal terms (days, months, years), they are indeed symbolic. But as soon as the terms are converted into normal nomenclature, they are then literal periods, and need not be reinterpreted as though the literal terms were in themselves symbolic. Thus 'iddan ("times"), 'ereb-boqer ("evening-morning"), and shebu'â ("seven," "seven-unit," "week") are symbolic units and the interpretation of them as a year, a day and a week respectively, transform into literal periods needing no further interpretation.

### **ASSUMPTION 10: THE VISION THOUGH SHUT, WAS INCOMPLETE.**

**Rationale: The shutting of the vision did not mean that the explanation was complete.**

#### **Sequence of Thought**

This assumption uses as its premise the SDA notion that "vision" and "explanation" are two separate units of revelation and as such cannot be both included under the word "vision." This allows SDA's to allege that though Dn 8:26 says that the "vision" is shut (i.e., completed), the explanation of the vision is not shut (i.e., completed) by the end of Dn 8. They can then follow this through by saying that Dn 9 is the completion of the explanation. This assumption also includes the premise that the word "shut" is virtually identical to the concept of completeness. According to the converse of their rationale, if "vision" and "explanation" were the same, then the shutting of the

vision would indicate both vision and explanation would be complete. Thus their premise for this assumption contradicts their Assumption No.8 that "shut" means not to complete, but rather to preclude from understanding.

### **My Conclusion**

I argue in my research that the SDA distinction between vision and explanation is forced. Dn 9:21 explicitly refers to the explanation in Dn 8:20-26 by Gabriel as part of the hazôn of Dn 8. Furthermore, Dn 8:1 refers only to Daniel receiving a hazôn and there is no mention of an explanation being received, even though one was given. This also supports the position taken in regard to Dn 9:21--that hazôn includes the explanation as well. This position would also support the argument that hazôn in Dn 8:26 refers to the whole revelation of Dn 8:2-26, explanation included.

### **ASSUMPTION 11: THERE IS ONLY A SHORT TIME BETWEEN DN 8 AND DN 9.**

**Rationale: Only a little time elapsed between the revelation in Dn 8 and Daniel's experience as recorded in Dn 9.**

### **Sequence of Thought**

The position was taken early in the Advent movement that only about a year or two elapsed between Dn 8 and 9. It highlighted the supposed cognitive intensity going on in Daniel's mind regarding the starting point for the 2300 evenings-mornings and Gabriel's subsequent mission to relieve Daniel of his mental anguish. This assumption was one of the first attempts to create a textual link between Dn 9 and Dn 8. It attempted to tie the perplexity Daniel expressed at the end of Dn 8 to the perplexity he described in Dn 9. Their goal was to assume that the subject that caused the mental anguish in both instances was the same- it was an issue over time - over the starting point for the 2300 days.

Complicating the exposition of Dn 9:1,2 was the absence of any evidence of Darius the Mede in extant records. Some, like U. Smith, just assumed Darius the Mede was the next in the annals of rulers for Babylon after Belshazzar was deposed. Clarification on the identity and the chronology for the first year of Darius the Mede never came to light until later.

### **Later Revision of this Position**

As early as 1853 Adventist spokesman, James White, revised the period to 16 years between Dn 8 and 9. Further revision has led contemporary scholars to specifically the period 549 to 539BC. (Shea,1982,p.239)

Though considered irrelevant today, it is included because it was used as one of the initial links between Dn 8 and Dn 9. In addition, current republications from the early writers of the Advent Movement still abound in SDA circles and are often used in doctrinal apologetics.

### **ASSUMPTION 12: DN 9 SHOWS DANIEL WAS PERPLEXED ABOUT THE 2300 DAYS.**

**Rationale: Dn 9:1-19 reveals that Daniel was perplexed over the relationship between the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah and the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8.**

**Sequence of Thought**

There are three main premises used by SDA's which undergird this assumption:

1. Daniel's concern in reading Jeremiah's prophecy was to try and help him understand the starting date for the 2300 evenings-mornings;
2. Daniel's prayer indicates that he had an incorrect understanding of the relationship between the seventy years of captivity and the 2300 evenings-mornings;
3. When the angel Gabriel appeared, the 2300 evenings-mornings and the seventy years of captivity were uppermost in Daniel's mind and the angel's command to "consider" and "understand" is in reference to the true start for the 2300 evenings-mornings.

**My Conclusion**

In my research, all three premises are dismissed and I conclude there is no scriptural evidence to indicate the 2300 evenings-mornings is in Daniel's mind before, during or after his prayer (vs3-19). Neither is there any evidence that Daniel was considering the relationship between the seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy and the 2300 evenings-mornings.

**ASSUMPTION 13: DANIEL IS TOLD IN DANIEL 9 TO UNDERSTAND THE 2300 DAYS.**

**Rationale: The command of Gabriel in Dn 9:23 for Daniel to understand the mar'ê specifically meant the mar'ê of Dn 8:13,14.**

**Sequence of Thought**

By using this assumption, the apparent goal of SDA's is to establish a topical relationship between Dn 9:24-27 and Dn 8:2-14. If, so the SDA argument goes, the vision to be understood as referred to in Dn 9:23 is that of Dn 8:14, then Dn 9:24-27 could be considered a continuation of the explanation of Dn 8:15-26. Furthermore, since Dn 9:24-27 discusses time as its major theme, it must be explaining the time portion of Dn 8, that is, verse 14.

**Two approaches** are made by SDA's in supporting this assumption. The first uses the chain of assumptions listed so far as the basis for validity. The second approach, one which has only been used recently by Shea and Hasel, uses the lexical argument based on the occurrence of the word mar'ê for vision in Dn 9:23.

## The First Approach

The first approach is defended by SDA's in the following way:

1. The command of Gabriel to Daniel in Dn 9:23 to "understand" was in relation to his lack of understanding, specifically

to something which Gabriel was previously commanded to make him understand (cf.8:16), namely, the vision of ch8 (Assumption 4,5,6,7,13)

2. Daniel had said at the conclusion to Gabriel's explanation of the vision in ch8 that he did not understand the vision (Assumption 6,7,10);
3. Gabriel's explanation of the vision of ch8 was interrupted when Daniel fell ill, so the rest of the explanation was not given at that time (Assumption 5);
4. Every point of the vision was explained except the starting point for the 2300 evenings-mornings; yet Gabriel was told to make him understand (Assumption 5,6);
5. Early SDA writers also used to insert another argument at this point using Dn10:1. They allege since Daniel says "he understood the thing and had understanding of the vision" (we must assume with them here, of course, that "the thing," and "the vision" could only possibly apply to Dn 8), Gabriel had fulfilled by then his duty to make Daniel understand. And since Dn 9 is the only visit by Gabriel mentioned by Daniel, then Dn 9 must be the explanation needed by Daniel to understand the vision of ch8 (This is answered in my rebuttal to Shea's argument in Assumption 1);
6. Some SDA writers (early and contemporary) also insert the argument here that ch9 reveals Daniel had assumed the 2300 evenings-mornings were to terminate with the end of the seventy years of captivity, Gabriel being sent to correct him (Assumption 12);
7. Dn 9:21 refers back to Dn 8:16, thus strengthening the links between Dn 9 and Dn 8 (Assumption 13);
8. Since Gabriel had not finished his job at the end of ch8, the statement in Dn 9:22 with Gabriel saying "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding," clearly indicates that Gabriel was about to complete his mission given in Dn 8:16 (Assumption 13,20);
9. The fact that Gabriel begins on the subject of time in Dn 9, the very detail not explained in ch8, is very strong evidence, according to SDA's that supports the close connection between Dn 8 and Dn 9 (Assumption 20);
10. The verb htk used in Dn 9:24 supports the view say SDA's that the seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 is "cut off" from some time period and the only one it could refer to is the 2300 days. Thus it is related to the 2300 evenings-mornings in the sense that the 70 weeks is "cut off" from the 2300 "days" (Assumption 13,14,15,16,17).

These arguments constitute the bases for the first approach in supporting Assumption 13. After each of the points listed above, I have bracketed certain assumptions. The purpose of these is to indicate which of the assumptions are implicit in each of the points. Rather than repeating the same information ad nauseum, I ask the reader to examine whether they can see the assumptions listed in parentheses are used in that point and I refer the reader to those sections of my paper that deal with the arguments concerning those assumptions.

## The Second Approach

The second approach, one used recently by SDA scholars introduces three new lexical arguments:

### The first argument

This argument runs thus: In Dn 9:23 Daniel is told to understand the mar'ê. He is not told to understand the hazôn. Dn 8:26,27 specifically says that it was the mar'ê of the evening and the morning that he did not understand previously. Thus Dn 9:23 refers to the mar'ê of Dn 8:14, and the mar'ê that Gabriel had come to explain was the mar'ê of Dn 8:14, i.e., the 2300 evenings-mornings.

### My Conclusion on the first argument

It is immediately apparent that the specialised meanings for mar'ê and hazôn proposed by these SDA scholars forms the basis of the first argument stated above. I refer my readers to the section under Assumption 1 where this argument is rebutted. I argue that these words are synonymous. Furthermore, I show how it does better justice to the text to see Dn 9:23 referring Daniel to understand the revelation Gabriel was about to unfold to him in verses 24 to 27.

### The second argument,

The second argument, sometimes developed through the use of the definite article associated with mar'ê in Dn 9:23, is that the reference to "the" vision could only refer to a mar'ê which had already been given. It could not refer to a mar'ê that had not yet been given.

### My Conclusion on the second argument

I answer the second argument in my research by examining the biblical use of prolepsis. On this point alone I argue my proposal for mar'ê in Dn 9:23, referring to vs24-27 has greater weight. In addition to this, I cite the use of dábár in v23, the form of the clauses in v23, and the implications of the preposition b° which prefixes mar'ê as reasons why these two arguments proposed by SDA scholars are invalid, and why vs24-27 are preferred as the object of the mar'ê reference in v23.

### The third argument,

This argument says that the same use of the Hebrew word for the verb "to understand" occurs in Dn 8: 15,16,23,27 as well as in Dn 8:17 and 9:23. We are persuaded by the proponents of this argument that this is a strong terminological link between the mar'ê of Dn 9:23 and the mar'ê of Dn 8:14.

### My Conclusion on the third argument

My research invalidates the third argument concerning the use of the verb "to understand" (bîn). In addition it shows there is no distinction between bîn, yada`, nagad, and sakal in Dn 8 and Dn 9.

**ASSUMPTION 14: HTK MEANS "CUT-OFF" AND NOT "DETERMINED."**

**Rationale: The meaning of htk is best translated as "cut off" rather than "determined."**

### Sequence of Thought

This assumption is invoked by SDA's to help explain how the seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 is related to the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14. The seventy weeks, it is alleged, are to be "cut off" from the 2300 evenings-mornings. This implies a mathematical process, that is, subtraction.

On the other hand, if the verb *htk* means "to determine," then it does not imply a mathematical process and makes it difficult to try and link both time periods. It gives the sense that this time period is merely "tagged" for the completion of the various tasks in Dn 9:24. The seventy weeks would be merely "decreed" by God for Israel to complete the nation's covenantal tasks, which they were negligent in pursuing. No other time period is needed to "determine" this final period of covenantal grace to Israel. There would be no need to link the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14 and the seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27. And this is why the SDA church vehemently argues for a sense of "to cut off" as the appropriate meaning of the verb as opposed to "determined."

However, as Shea has so honestly pointed out, the verb can take both meanings, though he prefers the sense of "to cut off."

### My Conclusion

The conclusion of my research is identical that of Shea's. I acknowledge that both senses are legitimate and the more difficult problem for SDA's is not the meaning of the verb, but rather how they can assert that the 2300 days is the **only** period from which the seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 can be "cut."

The two meanings of *htk* as "cut-off" and "determined" both have the sense of limiting or making smaller from the original thing referred to. Both words indicate that the 70 weeks have been especially apportioned from a larger portion of time. It conveys the sense that there is a smaller time frame apportioned to the tasks defined in Dn 9:24 than what had originally allowed. Instead of operating on a longer time schedule to complete those tasks, they were now limited to the 70 weeks. My research concludes that the 70 weeks was a probationary period for the people of Israel after being released from captivity. They can no longer assume that their special status will continue forever. It has been pared back to just 70 weeks. The continuation of their favour with God was dependent on their fulfilment of the terms of their probation as defined in Dn 9:24.

One may liken this contract of probation to that given to an incarcerated person after serving a prison term. They are released upon condition that certain things are complied with for a set period of time. Failure to do so meant a relinquishing of their privileges and freedoms. Successful completion of their obligations during the time period allocated meant that they could retain their privileges and freedoms with the additional freedom of not being under a shadow of conditional acceptance (i.e., the probationary period).

Put differently, the 70 weeks of probationary years were cut off, *not from the 2300 days, but rather from a much longer period (unending, in fact) of everlasting favour with God* - the privilege of those who, under the everlasting covenant, are his inheritance. If Israel did not succeed in the seventy weeks, they would no longer be his chosen people, and the election would pass forever from them. They would not taste of that everlasting privilege at the right hand of God depicted in the prophets for the Israel of God. Yes, God would still have his "Israel of God," but it would not be those who could claim genetic ancestry with Abraham. On the other hand, if they did succeed, the parent stock of time from which the 70 weeks was cut, would be theirs

as well - time that measures with the everlasting covenant, i.e., everlasting. The seventy weeks could have been for them, a downpayment, as it were, on the much larger period of favour -eternity. Having been faithful servants, they would have been invited to share in the inheritance of eternal life and eternal time. Therefore, contrary to what is asserted by SDA historicists, there is another period related to the seventy weeks. The 2300 days is not the default period to be chosen.

So many of Jesus' statements and parables made toward the end of the 70-week period highlight the nation's failure with the conditions of probation. Consequently, he spelt out the consequences - total abolition of the national religious privilege afforded them under the old covenant. (cf., the Parable of the Vineyard (Matt21:33-45). They had failed the terms of the agreement and God was going to honour their decision. They chose to ignore the conditions of the return from captivity - he was going to ignore their special place as His envoys in the world. Apart from a clear time frame to ascertain the coming of the Messiah, it spelt out in such a way that anybody could understand their probationary contract and the time frame to which they were limited.<sup>9</sup>

### **ASSUMPTION 15: THE 70 WEEKS ARE "CUT OFF" FROM THE 2300 DAYS**

**Rationale: The seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 are "cut off" from another prophetic period, namely the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14.**

#### **Sequence of Thought**

The arguments that are used by SDA's as premises for this assumption include the following:

- (1) The seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 are "cut off" from another time period,
- (2) The 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14 is the only time period in Dn 8 or 9 from which it could be "cut," and
- (3) Dn 9 is the exposition of the unexplained portion of Dn 8, namely the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14.

#### **My Conclusion**

<sup>9</sup> "The Talmud places a curse in those who attempt to compute the seventy weeks of Daniel." [La Rondelle adds a footnote: *Sanhedrin* 97b (Socino ed.), p. 659] ([La Rondelle, 1983](#), p. 170) The following comes from an article by Richard Coffin, *Spectrum*, 8(1), p.21, and quoted in [Ford, 1980](#): "Blasted be the bones of those who calculate the end of the Messiah's advent. For they would say, since the predetermined time has arrived, and yet He has not come, He will never come. But even so, wait for Him, as it is written, *Though He tarry, wait for Him*...What delays His coming? - The attribute of Justice delays it [footnote: because of Israel's unworthiness of it-Coffin]" (*Sanhedrin*, 97b) ([Ford, 1980](#), p. 184) Doukhan, in his publication entitled, *The Mystery of Israel*, clarifies this curse, often misused by Christians, by saying: "Some Christian have suggested that rabbis uttered a specific curse against those Jews who read the book of Daniel, thus seeking to discourage them from studying his prophecies and preventing them from concluding that Jesus was the Messiah. In fact, the curse simply attempts to prevent Jews from speculating about the time of the end and the coming of the Messiah lest they be discouraged if the Messiah did not come and thus err in their belief." (2004, pp.41-42) Then Doukhan gives a slightly different translation of the pertinent reference: "R. Sh'muel bar Nahmani said in the name of R. Yohanan: 'May the bones of those who calculate the [messianic] end be blown away! As soon as the time [calculated by them] arrived and the Messiah does not come, they say: "He will no longer come at all." Rather, wait for him, for it is said, *Though he tarry, wait for him* (Hab. 2:3).'" [Doukhan footnotes: "B. *Sanhedrin* 97b."]

1. This third argument invokes nearly all the assumptions treated so far.
2. The second argument is seen to be possible but not necessary.
3. The first argument needs special attention. The results of my study show that the seventy-week period should be "cut off," not from the 2300 days, but from the initial period of covenantal privilege and grace after the exile. It is the final probationary period of the "everlasting" covenant between God and Israel which, had they been faithful, would have qualified them to continue after the seventy week period as His chosen servants forever. Rather than encouraging Israel to view their future as the assured chosen ones, this unnerving revelation declares to them a final ultimatum where their status depends on their response over the 70 weeks.
4. Thus, it is simply not true that there is no other time period from which the seventy weeks can be cut off. The terminological links between Dn 9 and the covenant of God with Israel are vastly superior to the invalid chain of SDA assumptions used to link the 2300 days to the seventy weeks.

**ASSUMPTION 16: THE USE OF THE YEAR-DAY PRINCIPLE IN DANIEL 9  
PROVE THAT THE 2300 DAYS ARE A LONGER TIME THAN THE 70 WEEKS.**

**Rationale: 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.**

**Sequence of Thought**

The arguments used by SDA's to support this assumption are the following:

- (1) The seventy weeks are "cut off" from the 2300 days;
- (2) The seventy weeks are 490 years (some SDA's argue with the use of the year-day principle, other SDA's argue without the use of the year-day principle);
- (3) Since 490 yrs are to be "cut off" from the 2300 days, the latter must be longer than 490 yrs;
- (4) Therefore the 2300 days must represent 2300 yrs.

**My Conclusion**

I argue the seventy weeks does represent 490 years without the use of the year-day principle. I argue that the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14 are 6.3 calendar years, not 2.3 millenniums and that the SDA church had decoded the term "evening-morning" one-step too many. It only be needed interpreting as "day" and that is the step needed to give us the literal meaning of this symbolic phrase "evening-morning." To go one step further is just as unjustifiable as taking it two steps further and coming up with a time frame of 828,000 years or even three steps further and coming up with 298,080,000 years. These steps are entirely unjustified.



Given then that these conclusions are correct, the seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 is longer than the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14. Thus the seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 is **not** "cut off" from the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14, since 490 years cannot be extracted from 6.3 years.

**ASSUMPTION 17: THE 70 WEEKS ARE CUT-OFF FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 2300 DAYS.**

**Rationale: The seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 is "cut off" from the beginning of the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14.**

**Sequence of Thought**

The usual SDA argument to support the validity of this assumption is that it is only the starting point of the vision of Dn 8 that is not given in the explanation to the vision (Dn 8:20-26). Therefore any further time reference in Daniel should give us a starting point for that vision some time during the Persian Empire. This is exactly what Dn 9 gives us, say SDA's. Therefore, to provide the starting point for the vision in Dn 8, they link it to the beginning of the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14.

**My Conclusion**

My paper argues that there is nothing explicitly associated with the word "cut off" to indicate that the seventy weeks of Dn 9:24-27 should be associated with the beginning of the vision of Dn 8. We cannot point to a single word or phrase in Dn 9 that provides the justification for this alignment of the two periods.

The only way any remote connection can be made between the beginning of the two time periods is **if we accept the assumptions** which go along with the assertion that the word "vision" in Dn 8:13 means vs3-12, and **if we accept the assumptions** related to the assertion that the starting point of the vision is not given in Dn 8, and **if we accept the assumptions** associated with the assertion that Dn 9 is the completion of the explanation in Dn 8. But I demonstrate this possibility is not substantiated by the facts. Rather, it uses a chain of invalid assumptions to prop itself up.

**ASSUMPTION 18: "VISION" IN DN 9:24 REFERS TO DN 8.**

**Rationale: The reference to "vision" in Dn 9:24 refers to Dn 8.**

**Sequence of Thought**

SDA scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries asserted the statement in Dn 9:24 "to seal up the vision and prophecy" meant the fulfilment of the 2300 years in 1844 was assured by the fulfilment of the events predicted in the seventy weeks prophecy.

**My Conclusion**

However, Shea argues the sense of the verb "to seal up" means that the "vision" and "prophecy" are to come to an end by the time the seventy-week period closes. This is in accord with the position of a large group of non-SDA scholars. Dn 9:24 is not seen by the vast majority of scholars to have any link with Dn 8:14. Neither does it

refer to specific visions of prophets but instead to the phenomenon of vision and to prophets and prophecy in general. If all things had went according to plan, the kingdom of God would have been initiated after the expiration of the 70 weeks as predicted by all the vision and the prophets. Prophecy would have then come to an end (1 Cor 13).

**ASSUMPTION 19: THE STRUCTURE OF DANIEL'S PROPHECIES DICTATES THAT DN 9 IS AN APPENDIX TO DN 8**

**Rationale: The structure of Daniel's prophecies (e.g., vision then explanation with a time period) dictates that Dn 9 is not a separate vision because it lacks the usual elements. Rather it is the completion of the explanation or an appendix of Dn 8.**

**Sequence of Thought**

This is an assumption whose main advocate to date is Shea. He proposes a structural analysis of Dn7-12 that contains two parallel pairs forming a couplet. Dn7 and Dn 8, he says, are a parallel pair of "vision + explanation;" and Dn 9 and Dn9-12 are a parallel pair of "explanation only."

He then proposes that

- although Dn 9 and Dn10-12 supplies "more detailed explanations of the visions given previously in Dn7 and Dn 8," and;
- because Dn 9 stands first in the second parallel pair of "explanation only," and, further;
- because "it is only one of four major lines of prophecy which "was not immediately preceded by a vision,"
- **THEN** these two factors forge a strong link between the vision of Dn 8 and the continuation of its explanation by Gabriel in Dn 9." (Shea, 1981,p.230f)

**My Conclusion**

This argument is refuted by demonstrating, that the explanations in Dn7 and 8 are not separate from the vision, but rather, are an integral part of the vision proper. Dn7:1 and Dn 8:1 both clearly summarise the whole revelation experienced (including the explanation) in each chapter as a vision. Shea's dichotomy of vision plus explanation is forced and incorrect. The correct format is vision with an explanation included in the vision.

Secondly, evidence is provided to show that Dn 9 and Dn10-12 are not a parallel pair in the way Shea wants them to be related. Shea wants to link Dn 9 with Dn 8 and 7. But if Dn 9 is a part of Dn 8, then it cannot stand with Dn10-12 as an independent unit. Furthermore, the whole idea is again dependent on Shea's belief in specialised meanings for hazôn, mar'ê and d'barim.

In contrast, I propose that Dn7 coupled with Dn 8 and Dn 9 coupled with Dn10-12 can be seen as a couplet of parallel pairs of revelations, with the first pair being "God Initiated Revelations" and the second

pair being "Daniel Initiated Revelations." The first pair (Dn7 and 8) are called "God Initiated Revelations" because they were entirely unsolicited by Daniel. They appear "out of the blue." The second pair (Dn10-12) are called " Daniel Initiated Revelations" because they are heaven's response to Daniel's request. They are sought by Daniel. They are expected.

This analysis, in contrast to Shea's proposal, does align with scriptural evidence but it does not support the theory that Dn 9 is an appended explanation of Dn 8. It sees Dn 9 as a portion standing on its own as a distinct revelation, and possibly having closer ties with Dn10-12 than with Dn7 or Dn 8.

### **ASSUMPTION 20: TIME IS THE COMMON THEME THAT LINKS DN 9 TO DN 8.**

**Rationale: Dn 9 is an appended explanation of Dn 8 because time is the only unexplained feature of Dn 8, and Dn 9:24 begins with the subject of time.**

#### **Sequence of Thought**

The SDA argument for this assumption runs thus:

- (1) Time was the only item omitted in the explanation of the vision in Dn 8;
- (2) Time ought to be the subject of Gabriel's return visit in Dn 9 ;
- (3) Time is, in fact, the very issue that Gabriel discusses in Dn 9;
- (4) Therefore Dn 9 is the continued explanation of Dn 8.

#### **My Conclusion**

I highlight the long list of assumptions connected with these arguments and I show how this assumption completely ignores the relation of Dn 9:24-27 with Dn 9:2-20. The chapter begins with a consideration of the seventy-year captivity period. It continues with a prayer that is explicitly related to the seventy years of shameful captivity and exile. SDA literature acknowledges the intimate relationship between the seventy years of exile and the seventy sevens of Dn 9:24-27. There is correspondence between these two parts of Dn 9, both in the quantity and the unit of time expressed. On the other hand, there is no correspondence between either the quantity of time expressed in Dn 9:24 and Dn 8:14, or the unit of time expressed in Dn 9:24 and Dn 8:14.

Thus Dn 9:24-27 begins with the subject of time, not because time is the only unexplained aspect of Daniel's visions in ch8, but because it is the subject on which his mind was being exercised at the time prior to Gabriel's revelation. It is because time was the major burden on his mind both prior to and during his prayer that time was understandably the subject of Heaven's response.

Therefore the context of Dn 9:1-23 rules out the argument that Dn 9:24-27 must be an explanation of the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8:14 merely because the vision in Dn 9:24-27 begins with the subject of time.

**ASSUMPTION 21: GABRIEL IS THE SAME MESSENGER IN BOTH DN 8 AND DN9**

**Rationale: The same angel who explained the vision of Dn 8 is the one who returned in Dn 9 thus proving, along with other considerations, that Dn 9 is a continuation of the explanation begun in Dn 8.**

**Sequence of Thought**

This assumption is really predicated on the statement in Dn 9:21-23 where it says:

...Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning...talked with me and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

Coupling this allusion to Gabriel's first visit in Dn 8 with the other assumptions examined previously, the assertion is made by SDA's that since Dn 9 has the same communicator from heaven as that of Dn 8, he must therefore be continuing and completing the explanation of the vision of Dn 8. This line of reasoning invokes nearly all the assumptions listed previously, since it is using this argument as a tie-in for the connection between Dn 8 and Dn 9 in a way that supports the SDA exposition of the 2300 days.

**My Conclusion**

My research explains how God's use of the same communicator does not necessarily mean that the same subject has to be under consideration. Furthermore, SDA writers consider Gabriel to be the communicator between heaven and earth on most, if not all occasions. Therefore by their very own admission, one would not expect any other angel apart from Gabriel to appear to Daniel in ch9. In reality then, the fact that the same communicator is present in Dn 8 and 9 is no logical argument that Gabriel's messages on both occasions are related, or that a previous explanation was being continued and completed.

-

**ASSUMPTION 22: HISTORY HAS CONFIRMED THE SDA EXPLANATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE 70 WEEKS AND THE 2300 DAYS.**

**Rationale: SDA's have provided a very precise chronology of the time prophecies in Daniel and Revelation. The centrepiece of that chronology is the 2300 days, which they say was fulfilled in 1844 A.D. The historical evidence they quote as verifying the dates of those prophecies prove beyond question the validity of interpreting the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation the way they have done.**

**Sequence of Thought**

My ConclusionASSUMPTION 23: THE LEADING OF GOD DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DOCTRINE BOTH WITH MILLER, THE ADVENT MOVEMENT AND THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH PROVES THAT THE SDA INTERPRETATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN THE 70 WEEKS AND THE 2300 DAYS IS GOD-INSPIRED.

Rationale: Above and beyond all other arguments, the SDA interpretation of these time periods has the immutability of what I call the "Advent experience" argument. This argument says that the spiritual experience of the SDA pioneers during the 1840s confirms the validity of their interpretation of these two time periods, regardless of any arguments that can be brought to bear on the subject. It also argues that the Holy Spirit aided the developing of the landmark doctrines in the Advent Movement, therefore He confirmed the validity of the teaching of the Movement.

Sequence of ThoughtMy Conclusion.

The "Advent experience" argument is based on the combination of the united study of the pioneers of the church together with the endorsement of Ellen G. White, the SDA church's prophet. This endorsement is also emphasised in SDA official church literature. This argument is not open to debate or question. The Holy Spirit guided the development of the use of the prophecies of Daniel in the manner traditionally presented by the SDA church and to deny the validity of these teachings is to deny the work of the Holy Spirit in the Advent Movement.

In effect, this argument says God gave the exegesis of this doctrine and the understanding given to Edson, Crosier and the pioneers and their exposition of these texts was from God, given in the form of visions and inspirational guidance. To open this explanation to question then is to question God Himself.

I argue that this is the assumption par excellence in that it assumes the validity, not only of all the assumption listed in this project, but also the archaic logic used by the pioneers of the Advent Movement and long since dropped. An amended version of this assumption would still admit the guidance of God to these pioneers but would qualify it by saying that God used their knowledge at the time, even

though some of it was faulty, to come to the correct conclusions. That is to say, their reasoning was sometimes incorrect, but their conclusions were correct. This is a very interesting position - to endorse a conclusion without endorsing the argumentation that was used to arrive at the conclusion. The reason for this logic is that modern scholarship wants to replace the original argumentation used to arrive at the accepted conclusion with something that appears more plausible to contemporary minds. This avoids the embarrassment of explaining the problems with the old argumentation.

This assumption is one of the core reasons for the vigorous defense of this "landmark" doctrine throughout the history of the SDA church by the administration of the day. It is persistent and it is stubborn.

Yet it is basically an irrational assumption. It is not interested in any information that contradicts the arguments traditionally put forward to defend the church's position. It is blind to any reasoning or demonstration of Biblical arguments. It will only endorse arguments that support its position. In the face of strong arguments to admit a problem in traditional reasoning, it will hold out believing that God will justify the traditional position in time.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The whole scheme used by SDA's for the prophetic interpretation of the 2300 days and the 70 weeks is flawed. The scriptural arguments proposed to support the scheme are, on the whole, incorrect. Fifteen of the twenty-three assumptions depend on a chain of assumptions for their validity.

In a few cases, (Assumption 6,13,14,18) the scriptural evidence is correct but that the **inference** made from it is not correct.

The outcome of this exercise proves "beyond a shadow of doubt" that the SDA defense for their explanation of the relationship between the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn 8 and the 70 weeks of Dn 9 cannot be sustained. Overall, it is a fanciful fabrication of unsubstantiated assumptions used collectively to give validity to each other, but which have no validity in themselves individually. In short, it is a relic from the Protestant fervour of earlier centuries that cannot endure the rigour of examination with the advance of Biblical knowledge as it stands today.

Apart from the incorrectness of most of the assumptions in themselves, there is the interdependence of the latter assumptions on the validity of the earlier assumptions. So when the earlier assumptions are shown to be invalid as I have done, the whole schema falls apart.

## **APPENDIX 1 TABULATED SUMMARY OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE ASSUMPTIONS.**

The following is a tabulated presentation of the results of my paper. It is an attempt to portray visually the interdependence of each assumption on a whole chain of assumptions. It is hoped that this format can summarise in one page what I took 300 pages to do in the research. Where an assumption is dependent in any way on another assumption, it receives a mark in that cell on the table.

TABLE 1. INTERDEPENDENCE OF ASSUMPTIONS  
DEPENDENT ASSUMPTIONS

6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
X	X													
	X													
X														
X	X													
X	X	X	X	X	X	X								X
X	X	X	X	X		X	X							
X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X						
X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X					
X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				
X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Reading the chart:** For example, Assumption 20 (the numbers on the left column) is dependent upon Assumptions 2-7,10,12-18 (by seeing what horizontal numbers have a "X"). If you then look at each one of the assumptions that Assumption 20 is dependent on (i.e., 2-7,10,12-18), you will notice they *in turn* also have a chain of assumptions that they are dependent on. And so the cycle continues. My study has broken this chain of assumption at every step and has shown it to be without defense.

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