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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
INTERPRETATION OF TWO TIME PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL
- THE 2300 DAYS OF DANIEL 8 AND THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL 9.**

ASSUMPTION 15

**The 70-weeks are “cut off” from another
prophetic period, namely the 2300-days of Dn8.**

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The Purpose of This Assumption

The purpose of this assumption is two-fold. Its first purpose is to provide a time period from which the seventy weeks of Dn9:24 is to be “cut off,” (i.e., 2300 days) since “cut off” is judged by SDA historicists as the correct implication of the verb *chathak* in Dn9:24, and would imply that the 70-weeks is “cut off” from the 2300 days. The second purpose is to provide a starting point for the 2300 days of Dan8. By linking the 70 weeks with the 2300 days, the starting date for the 70 weeks then provides a starting date for the 2300 days which, SDAs argue, is missing from Dn8. If the seventy weeks are not “cut off” from the 2300 days, then, in their view, the starting date for the 2300-day period is not given in the book of Daniel *at all*.

Given the pivotal nature of the relationship between these two time periods in SDA thinking, this assumption is absolutely critical. But, as will be shown throughout this paper, there is no solid evidence on which to base an explicit link between the two periods. In the final analysis, SDA historicists have to appeal to a curious type of reasoning to support their argument in the absence of any explicit link between the two periods. The connection is inferred. They use such assertions as: “*Is it not reasonable to say that the 70 weeks is “cut off” from the 2300 days?*” or “*it is logical to conclude that the 70 weeks, or 490 years, were to be “cut off” from that longer period,*” or it “*seems to be the only consistent position.*”

The Method of This Assumption and the Problems with this Method.

The following quotes illustrate this assumption in SDA literature:

Seventy weeks, representing 490 years, are declared by the angel to be cut off, as specially pertaining to the Jews. But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be a part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. ([E.G.White, 1948](#), p.326)

The first question which arises is, Are the seventy weeks a part of the 2300 days? We learn that they are from the following facts:

The same person whom Daniel saw at the beginning appears the second time to give him understanding refers back to the vision, which can be none other than that of chapter 8.

He explains the very point which he there omitted; namely Time.

He informs us that seventy weeks are cut off; and there is no period given from which they can be taken, but the 2300 days. Hence it follows that the seventy weeks are the first 490 days of the 2300, and the two periods commence together. ([U.Smith, 1854](#), p.368)

With this background, Gabriel's comments are very revealing. He tells Daniel that 490 years were to be cut off from the long period of 2300 years. ([Ministerial Assoc. 1988](#), p.324)

The exact shade of meaning here intended [of chathak] must be determined from the context. In view of the fact that ch.9 is an exposition of the unexplained portion of the vision of ch.8 (see on 9:3, 21-23) and inasmuch as the unexplained portion had to do with the 2300 days, it is logical to conclude that the 70 weeks, or 490 years, were to be "cut off" from that longer period. Viewed in the light of these observations, the translation of chathak as "to cut off" seems singularly appropriate. ([Nichol, 1976](#), p851)

With this recognition of the significance of the use of "cut off," we might well inquire. Is the seventy-week period "cut off" from time in a general or in a specific sense? We need to remember that in the symbolic vision of Daniel 8, reference was made to the 2300-day period. This was left unexplained. If Daniel 9 is the explanation of this unexplained portion of the vision, the explanation would inevitably have to deal with time. But the only prophetic time mentioned in the vision of Daniel 9 is the seventy weeks. Could we not logically conclude, then, that when Gabriel deals with the seventy weeks, or 490 years, he is explaining the first part of the 2300-days prophecy? This period (490 years) was allotted to the Jews with their sanctuary on earth; the remainder of the period (2300 years) would then reach into the Christian church period, with the sanctuary in heaven.

The concept – that the 490 years are cut off from the 2,300 – year period – seems to be the only consistent conclusion. ([Seventh-day Adventists,1957](#), p275)

Notice the specific assumptions used to support Assumption no 15 :

- Dn 9 is an exposition of the unexplained portion of Dn 8, namely the 2300 days.
- 2,300 days is the *only* period in Dn 8, and *there is no other time period* that Dn 9 can refer to.\

These two points then comprise the major issues to be examined in this paper,. The first one can only be summarised, but the second point needs close attention.

Dn 9 is an exposition of the unexplained portion of Dn 8, namely the 2300 days.

This first premise invokes nearly all the assumptions addressed thus far in the previous papers and readers are referred to them for material dealing with this issue. My conclusion on this chain of assumptions is that if the correct syntax of the question in Dn8:13 is recognised, then the 2300 days are explained in Dn8. That is, the question of the 2300 days addresses the pollution of the sanctuary (i.e., verses 9-11), and that period begins when the pollution of the sanctuary begins, not when the vision begins. Readers are referred to my earlier papers to see the argumentation on this point.

The 2300 days is the ONLY period from which the 70 weeks

can be “cut off.”

The second assumption, that there is no other time period in Dn 8 or 9 apart from the 2,300 days, is the focus of this section and needs special attention. Many SDA historicists make the claim that there is no other time period from which the 70 weeks can be taken away. Here is a sample of a few:

Cut off from the 2300 Days. – But how does this language show any connection with the 2300 days, or throw any light upon that period? We answer: The language cannot be intelligently referred to anything else. The word here rendered “determined” signifies “cut off,” and no other period is given in the vision here referred to from which the seventy weeks could be cut off, except the 2300 days. How direct and natural, then, is the connection. “Seventy weeks are cut off.” Cut off from what? The 2300 days, most assuredly....Seventy weeks then, or 490 days of the 2300, were allotted to Jerusalem and the Jews. The events which were to be consummated within that period are briefly stated. ([Smith, 1944](#), pp.202f.)

....Seventy weeks are said to be cut off from something; but there is no period given from which they can be taken, but the 2300 days of chap. viii. The seventy weeks must therefore be the first part of the 2300 days, and the date of these weeks must determine the date of those days. To deny this is to lay the word of God open to the serious imputation of gravely telling us that a certain period of time is cut off, but giving nothing from which it can be taken, and also of informing us that momentous events are to transpire at the end of the 2300 days, but furnishing no conceivable point from which to date them.

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

Should it be inquired why a tropical sense has been attributed to it, such as ‘determining’ or ‘decreeing,’ it may be answered that the reference of the verse (in which it occurs to Dan. viii, 12), was unobserved. It was therefore supposed that there was no propriety in saying ‘seventy weeks are cut off,’ when there was no other period of which they could have formed a portion. But as the period of 2300 days is first given, and verses 21 and 23, compared with Dan. viii, 16, show that the ninth chapter furnishes an explanation of the vision in which Gabriel appeared to Daniel, and of the ‘matter’ (the commencement of the 2300 days)- the literal (or rather, to speak properly, the only) signification demanded by the subject matter, is that of ‘cut off.’” – Prof. Whiting. *Midnight Cry*, Vol. IV, No. 17. ([Andrews, 1852](#), p. 264)

What are the 70 weeks “cut off” from? From nothing? Or from indefinite space? As the great period of 2300 days had been given in the vision of chapter viii, is it not certain, when Gabriel comes to finish the explanation of that vision, and testifies that 70 weeks are *cut off*, that they are cut off from the only period which had been given, viz., the 2300 days? Is there then the least ground for a reasonable doubt that the 70 weeks are the first 490 days of the 2300? ([Andrews, 1853](#), p. 292)

Examples could be multiplied of statements asserting that there is no other time period present in Dn9 that the 70 weeks could be associated with. These assertions are naïve and assume too much. This paper will show that there is a more correct and contextual time period from which the 70 weeks are “cut off” than the 2300 days.

Israel's final Opportunity

SDA publications generally agree that Dn9 presents Israel's *final* opportunity to correct her responsibilities before God under the covenant. Notice the statement of Raymond Woolsey:

...the angel was actually saying that seventy seven-year period s, or 490 years, would be allotted to Daniel's people, the Jews. They had had many opportunities to realize God's purpose for them, but they had spurned them all, going after other gods of the nations around them. God had delivered them into exile. But he had returned them, and given them one more chance, 490 more years. ([1978](#), pp.42-44)

And this from Des Ford:

Daniel could not but have recognized that the new prophecy threatened bane as well as blessing. While the first words were those of glorious promise, the last were dire and depressing. They seemed to say that if the returning Jews failed again in this last time of probation and instead of preparing the world for the Messiah they so hardened in their self-righteousness as to turn both themselves and the Gentiles against the long-awaited Redeemer, then they and their city and temple would be destroyed once more, and this time forever. ([1978](#), p.203)

God had a plan for this world and at that time, Israel could remain a part of that plan as His special envoys if she so chose. But the 490 years and no more, were allotted for that opportunity. The following illustrate the points established in SDA publications concerning Dn9:

- That God was going to restore the privilege to Israel to be His covenant people again;
- That is privilege was conditional on their fulfillment of their responsibilities as defined in v 24 and;
- That God would initially give them a limited time of 490 years to display their loyalty under the covenant.

The following quotations from various SDA publications testify of this:

1. Hans K. La Rondelle

The seventy-weeks prophecy is basically a messianic prophecy announcing the consequences of Jerusalem's rejection of her Messiah. It is God's ultimatum to national Israel. "Seventy 'sevens'" were decreed, or determined, by God as final probationary period for Jerusalem and the Jewish people after the seventy years of the Babylonian exile had terminated (see Daniel 9:24) (([1983](#)):p. 171-172)

2. Questions on Doctrine

The seventy-week period was definitely "allotted," or "apportioned," to the Jewish people, during which time certain specific things were to be accomplished. And in God's plan this period was "decreed," or "determined", for this purpose. ([1957](#), p.274)

3. William H Shea

The introductory phrase of this prophecy indicates that its contents are concerned specifically with post-exilic Jewish community that settled and developed in Judah and Jerusalem. ((1986), p.77)

...the opening phrase of the prophecy delimits a period of probation during which God's people are called to manifest their loyalty and not their rebellion toward Him. As in Deuteronomy, two courses of action are set before them, and they were exhorted to follow the positive course. (p.78)

"To seal up sins"...This prophetic statement charges the residents of Judah to bring an end to the sinful state of their society... This statement, and the previous one, point out the responsibilities of the Jews, what they were to accomplish within the prophetic time period allotted. However, when the Messiah finally came at the time specified by the prophecy, they unfortunately had not fulfilled their responsibilities in developing that type of society (p.78-79)

This view harmonizes with a comment made by Seventh-day Adventists (1957) in discussing the "kingdom" prophecies of the post-exilic period:

-The "restoration" or "kingdom" prophecies -some full of poetic imagery, others in literal language - speak of long life and Edenic conditions of the earth, of Israel's righteousness and world leadership, drawing the nations to her, and spreading the knowledge of the Lord over the world. The house of David was to be restored, and finally the Messiah was to come- the Messiah, who was to be "cut off," who was to be the Lamb of God that would ratify the new covenant, and who was to rule the kingdom in righteousness and finally bring in eternal peace. However, the golden age was not to be altogether one of peace; apparently the jealousy of enemies was to bring war, which would end in final victory for God's people (Ezekiel 38;39) before the second coming of Christ, and the transition to the eternal state.

The restoration promises were connected with the return from exile. To what extent were these predictions fulfilled after the Babylonian captivity? Cyrus granted the privilege of return to "all his people" (Ezra 1:3), which would include any worshiper of Jehovah from the northern tribes also. And under that and subsequent edicts several groups of exiles did return. They rebuilt the Temple and reconstituted the Jewish state under their own law (Ezra 6:14,15; 7:11-26)-subject to Persia, of course. But the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi show how they fell short of the restoration envisioned under the new covenant.

Their zeal for the law found expression in legalism and exclusiveness rather than in seeking the Spirit of God. The promise of the return was fulfilled; but the return was limited. Even the Temple that they built was but a modest edifice in comparison with the former. The glorious kingdom was not realized in the semi-autonomous state under the Persian Empire and under the Macedonian rule, or in the brief interval of independence under the Maccabean rulers. Finally came the subjection to Rome.

Then came the Messiah. The Carpenter of Nazareth began to preach, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). What Jesus offered was the blessing of the new covenant, of the renewed heart, of the Spirit within. But this seemed a disappointment to most of the Jews. They had so long set their hearts on the material aspects of the kingdom prophecies that they had forgotten the spiritual. They wanted independence from Rome-even vengeance-but they did not want the law of love written in their hearts. They wanted the conquest of the Gentiles, but they were not interested in being a source of blessing to all

nations. They remembered the king who was to sit on the throne of David. But they had forgotten the Suffering Servant. Consequently they could not recognize their Messiah when He came, and had no desire for His kingdom when He offered it to them.

If the Jews had accepted the new covenant and the Messiah's proposed kingdom; if, instead out into the world to give His message, He might have had the whole nation, regenerated and dedicated, to use in evangelizing the world, what victories, what blessings, what rewards, might have been theirs under the leadership of the Son of God. The Lord was even yet ready to use His chosen peoples as instruments of blessing, as He had been in the days of the prophets of old. But they would not.

Jerusalem knew not the time of her visitation, and consequently her house was left to her "desolate" (Matt. 23:28), and the rejected Lord wept over her fate. Though the destruction was delayed forty years, there was no repentance to avert the nation's doom. There was no assurance, as before (Jer. 5:10, 18), that the destruction was to be only temporary. The servants who had repeatedly abused the prophets had finally crucified the Son of the Owner of the vineyard, and consequently were dispossessed. The Son Himself had pronounced sentence upon them: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Many were to come from the east and west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the place of the rejected children of the kingdom (Matt. 8:11,12). These were to come from among the Gentiles and would prove themselves "Abraham's children" more truly than the Jews because they "would do the works of Abraham" (John 9:39).

When the great body of the professed seed of Abraham-the official body-rejected their King, the Mediator of the new covenant, they inevitably cut themselves off from the Messianic kingdom and the covenant relationship. The only Jews who retained these relationships were the remnant (Rom 11.5), those who accepted their Messiah and became the nucleus of the Christian church; these were the true children of Israel. To them were added the Gentile converts, the "wild olive" branches who were grafted into the parent stock in place of the natural branches that had broken themselves off (Rom 11:16-24).

Thus the rejection of the nation of Israel did not invalidate the prophecies or cut off the line of God's chosen people. "Not as though the word of god hath taken none effect," but "the children of the flesh" were replaced by the children of the promise" (Rom. 9:6,8)-the spiritual seed of Abraham. (pp. 224-227)

Given then this widespread acknowledgement in SDA publications regarding the covenantal meaning of the 70-weeks prophecy, it is quite surprising that the meaning of the verb htk in Dn9:24, has not been considered in this light as yet.

Clifford Goldstein

...we've seen the undeniable link between the two time prophecies, the *mareh* of the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 and the appearance of Gabriel in Daniel 9, which introduces the seventy-week prophecy....

Gabriel comes to Daniel, calls his attention back to the 2,300 days, and then immediately points him to another time prophecy, one that is, at least on the surface, shorter than the *mareh* of Daniel (seventy weeks is certainly less than the 2,300 days). Thus, there's an immediate juxtaposition between these two numbers....

Now, again in Daniel 8 and 9. After making a direct reference to the 2,300 evenings and mornings, the angel immediately gives Daniel a shorter time prophecy, the seventy weeks, juxtaposing one against the other. What's the immediately implication? Of course, - that the seventy-week prophecy is part of, or should be taken from, the larger one of 2,300 days...

That the seventy weeks are cut off from, or taken out of, the 2,300 days is made even more apparent by the verb *chatchak* itself....scholars had already noted the link between *chatchak* in both languages [Hebrew and Ugaritic], giving more evidence that "cut off" is a valid meaning, if not *the* primary meaning, of the verb.

Look at the context, look at the analogies. We're given two time prophecies, the big one comes first, then the smaller one, which is introduced (in the context of the bigger) by a verb that has the basic meaning "to cut off." Is it, then an outrageous conclusion to assume that the smaller number, the seventy weeks, is cut off from the larger one, the 2,300 days? Hardly. It is, in fact, the only logical conclusion. ([2003](#), pp.78f).

Gerhard Pfandl

Daniel 9 therefore, is an integral part of Daniel 8. Gabriel in chapter 9 directs the prophet back to the unexplained part of chapter 8 – the time period of 2300 evenings and mornings, i.e., days. The link between these two chapters is underscored when Gabriel, after referring to the *mareh* vision (the 2300 days), tells Daniel that 70 weeks are "cut off" for the prophet's own people. Cut off from what? Obviously, from the 2300 days to which Gabriel had just been referring when he mentioned the *mareh* vision in Daniel 9:23. ([Pfandl, 2004b](#), p.99)

Daniel 9 Considered as the Restoration of the Everlasting Covenant.

Daniel's Prayer Considered in the Light of the Everlasting Covenant

One of the most striking features of the prayer of Daniel is that it is couched in highly covenantal language. The very first statement of his prayer refers to the covenant:

4 And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Maxwell says on this:

...Daniel knew from the Bible that God is a "covenant-keeping" deity – a God who keeps his promises. At the beginning of his prayer he addressed God as the One who "**keepst covenant and stedfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.**" Daniel 9:4. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple began with a reference to God as One who keeps covenant (1Kings 8:23), and Leviticus 26 also refers to God's covenant. Daniel was acquainted with these passages. He had also read about God's covenant in Jeremiah 31. ([1981](#), p. 203)

The major features of Israel's experience in disobeying God are highlighted in the prayer and Daniel's request for a reversal of this spiritual situation are also laid out in stark contrast. The upshot of this highlights that Daniel's prayer was presenting the covenantal relationship between Israel and God to God when he was praying. He was throwing out a sincere, humble challenge to God to see if God, in his faithful lovingkindness, would stand by His Word, as bound in the covenant and clarified in the statements in the Law and the Prophets, or whether He had moved on without Israel. According to what Daniel had read in the book of Jeremiah, there seemed to be cause for hope, and perhaps there was still a window of opportunity for Daniel's people yet again.

This prayer is as much a challenge to God to fulfill his responsibility as revealed in word of the law and the prophets as the answer is a challenge to Israel to fulfill their responsibility as revealed in the covenant, and specified in Dn9: 24. Seen in this light then, the question of a time period does arise and is an innate part of Daniel's prayer. Inasmuch as Daniel is praying for Israel's restoration to a position of covenantal privilege, it is natural that a period of privilege is included as well, since that had always been the case ever since the Exodus. They had fallen in and out of favour with God according to their obedience or disobedience and God had a time period with each period of grace, after which they would incur his wrath again. The Babylonian exile was just another one of those incidents, howbeit, more drastic. But the exile did have its effect in cleansing the nation of its tendency to idolatry. But Israel set up another barrier against God – legalism, and this became the new religion, which, in time, became the bane of the nation, and ultimately, the cause of its rejection at the crucifixion of Christ.

In Daniel 9:24, God spells out the time available for the people of Israel to accomplish God's agenda. In the return of Abraham's people from their 400-odd year exile in Egypt, they were given an *unprescribed* time to fulfill God's purpose. The revelations given to Israel through Moses never specified a time period in which to accomplish their high calling before the nations. There was *no time limit declared* for the fulfillment of His purposes. But *this time*, in their return from the 70-odd year exile in Babylon and other places of the Diaspora, their time to fulfill His purpose *was limited to just 490 years*.

The word "cut off" in this verse is a word of promise to Israel. SDA historicists are correct in arguing that the *literal* sense of the verb includes a "cutting off" of a smaller piece from a larger piece, whether it be a slice of meat from a fuller carcass, or whether it be a smaller piece of wood cut from a larger piece of stock. In the restoration of the covenant as Dn9 announces, the verb "cut off" conveys the sense that a "smaller" period of time (490 years) of grace and favour has been sliced off from a much "larger" period of grace and favour (eternity). During this "smaller" period of grace and favour they are to achieve certain tasks. Achieving this, the unspoken assumption within the framework of the covenant, is that they would then enter into the "longer" period of grace and favour which, in the words of the Law and the Prophets would be an eternal, unconditional favour in the kingdom of the world to come - the new world without sin, as explicitly stated in Dn7:27:

27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him

Thus the concept of “cut off” in referring to the initial period of grace and favour is a very natural word to choose in this context, but it in no way has any reference to the “cutting off” of the 70 weeks from the 2300 days. As explained, it fits more naturally within the time framework of the restoration of the covenant.

Verses 24 to 27 are written in a positive viewpoint, assuming Israel is faithful to God. That all of the events predicted did not occur within the period specified is not to render the prophecy useless, but rather, it highlights the conditional nature of the prophecy, and the necessity of Israel’s co-operation with God in order to successfully complete the tasks outlined therein. The unspoken, but understood contra-position of Dn9:24 is that a failure to accomplish these responsibilities would mean a permanent forfeiture of their privilege within their covenant with God, as enunciated by SDA writers above. Jesus himself spoke of this in so many ways, on so many occasions that it seems the burden of his message to point them to the climax of Israel’s history as outlined within Dn9:24 and urged them to repent and correct the impending irrevocable sentence of separation hanging over the nation. Many of his parables speak of the final and ultimate national rejection by God, and these must be seen in the light of the covenant, and consequently, in the light of Daniel 9.

What the Prophets say of the Post-Exilic Covenant.

In speaking concerning the post-exilic period the Lord says through the prophet Zechariah:

And it shall come to pass (that) as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, (but) let your hands be strong.

For thus saith the Lord of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts, and I repented not:

So again have I thought in these says to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. (8:13-15 K.J.V.)

This restoration of Israel to the privilege of God’s beneficence is a restoration to covenantal privileges. Daniel’s contemporary, Ezekiel, was used by the Lord to say concerning this post-exilic covenant:

Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. (16:60, K.J.V.)

Daniel was undoubtedly familiar with this because the very book that Daniel was studying concerning the 70-year exile, also spoke of a post-exilic covenant:

Behold I gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place and I will cause them to dwell safely:

And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

(32:37-42, K.J.V.)

God said that the length of the period during which faithful Israel was to be in covenantal relationship with God, both Ezekiel and Jeremiah, along with Moses, explicitly state that it would be “forever”. (Jer 32:39; Eze ;) The very name of the post-exilic covenant, the “everlasting” covenant, conveys this same thought: “that they may fear me forever” (Jer32:29). Yet, although this covenant would be for everlasting, Zechariah 6:15 clearly indicates, in harmony with Eze 16:60, that this covenant would be identical to the old covenant, which demanded the laws of God to be written on the heart and mind (Deut 6:6), thus showing that its privileges would be conditional upon obedience:

And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God. (Zech6:15)

This conditional aspect of the post-exilic covenant is clearly supported by Dn 9:24, and is acknowledged by the SDA quotes referred to above

God wanted the Israelites to enjoy the Land of Palestine, and He promised it to them to be carried into exile; but if they confessed their sins in the foreign land, He would forgive them and bring them home. Leviticus 26 specified that the exiles must confess the sins of their ancestors: “But if they [the exiles] confess their iniquity *and the iniquity of their fathers* in their treachery which they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me... and they make amends for their iniquity; then I will remember my covenant with Jacob... and I will remember the land.” Verses 40-42 ([C.M.Maxwell, 1981](#), pp.201-203)

Notice also this statement of [Hengstenberg \(1854\)](#) concerning the relationship between the probationary period of the 70-weeks and the time after it expired:

...and at the end of that period, not only will the mercy of God still be unexhausted, but then first will the people of God become partakers of that mercy in all its richest abundance. Then shall forgiveness of sins be fully imparted, eternal righteousness be brought in, the Most Holy be anointed, and the blessings of salvation, promised by the prophets, actually enjoyed. (p.805)

Shea makes comments along the same vein:

[Dan] 9:24-27 is a prophecy about both God and man. On the manward side of this prophecy, we see first that Daniel's prayer was to be answered. God's people would return to their land and rebuild their temple and city. The blessings of the covenant would return to them again. With a return to these more favorable circumstances there would come upon them a new responsibility, a responsibility to respond in obedience to the God who had kept His covenant with them. This idea is expressed elsewhere in the OT by the analogy that the return from exile would represent a new Exodus....At the beginning of this prophecy they were exhorted to prepare for His coming by putting away sin and the rebellious spirit that had led to their first exile. In short, they were to develop a righteous society that would be fit to welcome Him. Failure to develop a righteous society would result in dire consequences. The outcome of this prophecy is very Deuteronomic in character. The avenues through which God's people could avail themselves of either the blessing or the curse of the covenant were open to them. ([1986](#), pp.116f)

Putting these thoughts together, we have a post-exilic covenant between God and Israel which eventually, given Israel's obedience and compliance with the conditions of the covenant, would last "forever." But there was to be a probationary period initially during which Israel was to reform from its former bad practices and attitudes, and to adopt proper attitudes and practices. This probationary period is specified by Daniel as lasting for seventy-weeks.

If Israel was faithful to their covenantal responsibilities, then the post-exilic covenant would be "everlasting," and God would "bring upon them all the good" which he had "promised them." (Jer32:42)

Thus it is not very hard to see that the sense of the verb htk in Dn 9:24 indicates that the seventy-week period as a period of covenantal privilege could be cut off from the longer unspecified period of unending favour to be enjoyed in the time of the Lord's kingdom. Beyond the period of probation, and depending on Israel's response, there was to be everlasting acceptance or everlasting rejection, final and absolute.

Given the covenantal theme of Dn 9:2-19, and given the considerations of the post-exilic covenant time period, **it becomes apparent that it is contextual and in harmony with the other post-exilic kingdom prophecies as well, that the seventy-week period should be "cut off," not from the 2300 days, but from the initial period of the post-exilic covenant period.** Notice the statement of Raymond Woolsey:

...the angel was actually saying that seventy seven-year periods, or 490 years, would be allotted to Daniel's people, the Jews. They had had many opportunities to realize God's purpose for them, but they had spurned them all, going after other gods of the nations around them. God had delivered them into exile. But he had returned them, and given them one more chance, 490 more years. ([1978](#), pp.42-44)

An examination of the post-exilic prophecies in the major and minor prophets indicate that two fundamental factors are indicative of God's initial activity within the post-exilic covenant: the return of the exiles to their holy land; and the rebuilding of the sanctuary with the re-establishment of Yahweh worship, with all the implications that worship would mean in terms of personal devotion and obedience to God. This observation, together with the end of the seventy-year period of God's displeasure, and

the beginning of a new relationship of Israel with God is succinctly encapsulated in the first four verses of the book of Ezra:

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and (put it) also in writing, saying

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth: and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who (is there) among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God), which (is) in Jerusalem.

And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that (is) in Jerusalem. (Ezra 1:1-4)

The point that the starting point of the new covenantal period begins when these two factors begin, is made even more specific in Daniel 9 by indicating that this period begins from “the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem” (Dan 9:25, KJV.) Clearly, for a pagan king to allow the return of the Jews to their land and set up their independence again could only be initiated under the gracious intervention of Israel’s God. For this to happen, there would have to be a change in stance by God toward Israel. This change of necessity from an theme of retribution and disfavour to one of grace and favour. Thus Daniel 9:25 makes it clear that *the post-exilic covenant period and the seventy-week period were to begin together*, and also that *the “cutting off” of the seventy-week period was to take place from the initial part of this post-exilic covenant period*. In contrast with the standard SDA assumptions based on inference, the thesis proposed above has explicit support in Scripture.

The 70 Weeks Considered in Relation to the Everlasting Covenant.

Two texts in the Law of Moses are very pertinent to this topic. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30. In fact, they seem to be written with the Babylonian captivity in mind:

Leviticus 26

23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary to me;

24 Then I will walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters, shall ye eat.

30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours

32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

34 Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths.

35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your Sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

36 And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

37 And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

38 And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

39 And they are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

40 If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary to me

41 And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land.

43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while he lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes

44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God.

45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord.

46 These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

Deuteronomy 30

1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee,

2 And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

3 That then the Lord thy God will turn away thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.

4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence he will fetch thee;

5 And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

6 And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

7 And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.

9 And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers;

10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the Law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, that thou mayest do it.

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death, and evil;

16 In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

20 That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.¹

In Deuteronomy 30, we have all the elements that are related to the prayer and the subsequent vision of Daniel 9.

There is:

1. The reason of the banishment to a foreign land being disobedience;
2. The need to repent and return to the Lord in the heart;
3. The promise that the Lord will have compassion and gather them from exile;
4. The promise that He will bless them in their own homeland;

¹ Note as early as King Jeroboam's reign over the northern tribes and the break-up of the nation after the death of Solomon, the Lord said to Israel through the prophet Ahijah: "For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to his fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river [Euphrates], because they made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger. And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin." (1 Kings 14:15,16)

5. The warning that this blessing is dependent on their continued faithfulness to God;
6. The threat of perpetual disownership of Israel by God if they afterward fail of following his ways.

This chapter highlights the same conditions of the covenant that God has ever had with his people: that they love the Lord with all their heart and mind and follow his ways, and he would then bless them according to his steadfast purpose and faithful lovingkindness. And on the dark side, a stubborn refusal to follow his ways or to love him would lead to a disownership by Him and a withdrawal of His blessing. At its very basis, it is a choice for life or death. These are the same conditions set out in Dn9:24.

The book Questions on Doctrine speak eloquently on the restoration from the exile and the probationary nature of the post-exilic period:

The Babylonian captivity, however, was not the end of God's patience. Even in exile there was yet hope for repentance that might avert the fulfillment of the prophecy of national downfall. God assured them through Jeremiah that this captivity, though a punishment, was not a "full end" (Jer. 5: 10-18; 46:28). Beginning even before the exile, God had sent prophetic messages promising a return, and offering a full and glorious restoration under a new covenant. (Jer. 31:27, 28, 31).

Under the national covenant made with God at Sinai and repeatedly reaffirmed, all Israel had failed miserably, as was amply demonstrated throughout their whole national history. The apostate ten tribes, long separated from the sanctuary and the theocracy, had already been swept away; not the remnant of Israel – the kingdom of Judah – which had fallen into apostasy more slowly, but no less surely, was being carried into captivity, and the royal line of David was to lose the throne until the Messiah should come, "whose right it is to reign." At this dark hour God sent – through Jeremiah in beleaguered Judah and through Ezekiel among the earlier groups of exiles already in Babylonia – similar messages of a "new covenant," an "everlasting covenant," under which He would restore them as God's holy nation, as a living demonstration of His love and care, and thus as an instrument of blessing to the nations of the world (see Jer. 31: 31-34; 32: 36-41; Eze. 37: 19-28).

The people were evidently complaining that they were suffering for the sins of their fathers, for Jeremiah mentions their proverb, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:29). Then he continues with the announcement of the new covenant, in which God will deal, not with the fathers, but directly with human hearts. He would put His "law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," and every man individually, for the least to the greatest, was to know the Lord. He would forgive their sins and remember them no more (Jer. 31: 31-34). In the next chapter Jeremiah speaks of it as the "everlasting covenant" (Jer. 32:39, 40), which is the covenant made with Abraham (Gen. 17:7).

Under the "everlasting covenant" God promised to put His "fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jer 32:40). In this connection God would "give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever." (verse 39).

Ezekiel, the prophet to the exiles already in Babylon, spoke of God's giving them "one heart," and "a new spirit," exchanging "the stony heart" for "an heart of flesh" that they might "walk in my statutes," and promising that "they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Eze. 11: 19,20). Ezekiel elsewhere mentions the "everlasting covenant" made with the restored exiles of both Israel and Judah, and the rule of David over a people cleansed from their sins (Eze. 37:19-28). Isaiah also speaks of the everlasting covenant (Isa. 55: 3; 61:8).

Again Ezekiel uses almost the same words: “A new heart also will I give you...And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes” (Eze. 36: 26, 27). The *purpose* of the new covenant was to enable them to obey, “that they may fear me forever,” and “that they shall not depart from me”; “that they may walk in my statutes” (Jer. 32:39,40; Eze. 11: 19,20); and the *means* of enabling was, “I will put my spirit within you” (Eze. 36: 27). But in Old Testament times, as in the New, the natural heart “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). That is why the writing of the law of God in the heart involves giving man a new heart in place of his stony heart, a free and unmerited gift that can be received only by faith.

The new covenant, then, is nothing less than salvation by grace through faith, the reception of God’s Spirit, enabling one to walk in newness of life. This is the New Testament gospel in the heart of the Old Testament.

There is no incompatibility here between law and grace. Even in the time of Israel there was no incompatibility between grace and the “ceremonial” law, for until Jesus died the rites and sacrifices were God’s appointed way of directing the eye of faith to the coming Saviour. Not until the offering of the Lamb of God, once for all, was the ceremonial system abolished (Eph. 2:15). Thereafter, insistence upon the ceremonial observances became a denial of faith in the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ (Acts 15:1, 10; Gal. 5: 1,2). The new covenant, later ratified by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 8: 6-13; Matt. 26:28), and mediated by His heavenly ministry (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24) – the covenant promising the divine writing of the law in the life (Rom. 8:4) – is never at variance with the moral law of God, then or now.

These prophecies of the restoration of Israel offered the new covenant to all, for all should know the Lord “from the least of them unto the greatest” (Jer. 31: 34). God never offers forgiveness, cleansing from sin, and a new heart except on condition of *individual* repentance. The restoration connected with the new covenant could go into effect only in so far as the individual Israelite would accept the covenant. Those to whom God would give a new heart “shall be my people, and I will be their God.” The next verse excludes those who refuse to be cleansed: “But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord” (Eze. 11: 20, 21). The everlasting covenant was made with Abraham, who was called the father of the faithful (Gen. 17:1, 2, 7; compare Gen.26: 5), Isaiah introduces the everlasting covenant with the invitation, “Incline your ear,” “come,” “hear” (Isa. 55:3); and continues, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,” “return unto the Lord” (verses 6, 7). God pledges His word as to His faithfulness (Jer. 31: 35-37; 33: 20-26); but His covenant is offered not imposed. Therefore, the restoration promises under the new covenant are conditioned upon Israelite’ voluntary acceptance and their acting by faith upon that acceptance.

If all Israel, or even a large majority, had wholeheartedly entered into the new covenant and experienced the new heart through the indwelling of the Spirit of God, resulting in wholehearted obedience, what might have been the results! God still desired to use Israel as His special instrument to share the blessings of the new covenant with other nations.

The “restoration” or “kingdom” prophecies – some full of poetic imagery, others in literal language – speak of long life and Edenic conditions of the earth, of Israel’s righteousness and world leadership, drawing the nations to her, and spreading the knowledge of the Lord over the world. The house of David was to be restored, and finally the Messiah was to come – the Messiah, who was to be “cut off,” who was to be the Lamb of God that would ratify the new covenant, and who was to rule the kingdom in righteousness and finally bring in eternal peace. However, the golden age was not to be altogether one of peace; apparently the jealousy of

enemies was to bring war, which would end in final victory for God's people (Ezekiel 38:39) before the second coming of Christ, and the transition to the eternal state.

The restoration promises were connected with the return from exile...if the Jews had accepted the new covenant and the Messiah's proposed kingdom; if, instead of the little handful of followers that Jesus sent out into the world to give His message, He might have had the whole nation, regenerated and dedicated, to use in evangelizing the world, what victories, what blessings, what rewards, might have been theirs under the leadership of the Son of God. The Lord was even yet ready to use His chosen people as instruments of blessing, as He had been in the days of the prophets of old. But they would not. ([1957](#), pp.220-226)

The Conclusion

In conclusion, the assumption upon which the relationship between the seventy week period and the 2300 day period proposed by SDAs is shown to have been found wanting. There IS another time period in Daniel from which the 70 weeks can be "cut off," and that is the post-exilic period of grace and favour. **If Israel had been faithful during the lesser period (the 490 years), she would have been deemed worthy to become a steward of that which is greater (eternity).** The traditional SDA historicist position of having the 70 weeks "cut off" from the 2300 years is not "the only consistent position" with the text of Dn9: 23, 24 ([Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p 275), and the proposal that that the seventy-week period is "cut off" from an unlimited post-exilic covenant period of grace is firmly anchored in Scripture. The assumption that Dn 9 is an exposition of the "unexplained" portion of Dan 8 has been previously examined and also found without explicit Scriptural foundation, but rather it is dependant upon a chain of assumptions.

Assumptions Specific to this Assumption

The specific assumption used to support Assumption No 15 was found to be:

- 2,300 days is the *only* period in Dn 8, and there is *no other time period* that Dn 9 can be "cut off from;"

This assumption was examined and shown to be invalid. In fact, the alternative answer, that the seventy weeks are "cut off" from an unlimited post-exilic period of favour, and set as the initial probationary period before the ushering of the day of the Lord predicted by the Old Testament prophets, fits the overall sense of the text, the situation with the Jewish people, and the general tenor of both the Old Testament, the New Testament and has the unwitting support of the writings of a host of Seventh-day Adventist authors.

The Assumption Chain used in this Assumption

As is the case with so many of the Assumptions listed, Assumption No. 15 carries with it a load of baggage from other assumptions. Assumption 15 depends on the assumption that

- the Dn9 provides the starting point for the 2300 days (Assumptions 20, 22, 14, 13, 12);

- that the starting point for the 2300 days was not given in Dn8 (Assumptions 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3);
- And that the 2300 days covers the whole vision of Dn8: 3-12 (Assumptions 2, 1).

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