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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 8

**The shutting of the vision (v26) meant
that it would not be understood for
“many days” (i.e., until the time of the
end)**

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1. The Purpose of the Assumption

This assumption and Assumption 9 are more remote from the line of thought of the other assumptions examined in this paper. The reason for this is that they are dependent on separate set of assumptions surrounding another issue in SDA prophetic interpretation – the definition of the “time of the end.”

1A. The true explanation of Daniel only after 1798.

Assumption 8 and 9 are relevant in the sense that these two assumptions are invoked to locate historically the beginning of the “true” explanation of the 2300 days. They are part of the argument which provides, in the SDA view, a “future barrier” as it were, by indicating that the end of the 2300-day prophecy could only come after that time. The 1260 days are seen by SDA historicist's as meaning 1260 years, a period which concluded in 1798 A.D. They argue that after this time, a true explanation of the “last day” sections of the book of Daniel would be discovered and proclaimed. It is asserted that since the “shutting” of the vision in ch8, and the “shutting” and “sealing” of the items that pertain to the last days in ch12 would continue until “the time of the end,” it is logical to conclude that prior to the fulfilment of this period, key sections of the prophecies would not be understood.¹ In

¹ Ford (1978) says on this:” Thus, if these indeed are the last days, *we have every right to expect light on this eighth chapter beyond all that other generations have received.* Evidently, then we must not expect to find all that God has for us on this chapter in the commentaries of former times. Indeed, if knowledge is now to be increased on this prophecy, previous expositions will be exposed as falling apart. Only in “the time of the end’ would the book be unsealed.” (p.161)

this sense, the meaning of the command to “shut” the vision conveys the idea of precluding its contents from being understood. The argument flows as follows: the section of the vision pertaining to the last days was “shut” until the “time of the end,” therefore we can only look for a correct explanation after 1798 AD since that is when the “time of the end” began. Since the Advent Movement’s explanation did occur after that time, it fits the criteria.

Notice the following extract from *The Great Controversy*,

The message [of Rev14:6-FB] itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the “everlasting gospel;” and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment *had* come. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.” Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,” Daniel 12:4

The apostle Paul warned the church not to look for the coming of Christ in his day. “That day shall not come,” he says, “except there comes a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed.” 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Not until after the great apostasy, and the long period of the reign of the “man of sin,” which is also styled “the mystery of iniquity,” “the son of perdition,” and “that wicked,” represents the papacy, which, as foretold by prophecy, was to maintain its supremacy for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798. The coming of Christ could not take place before that time. Paul covers with his caution the whole of the Christian dispensation down to the year 1798. It is this side of that time that the message of Christ’s second coming is to be proclaimed.

No such message has ever been given in past ages. Paul, as we have seen, did not preach it; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future for the coming of the Lord. The Reformers did not proclaim it. Martin Luther placed the judgment about three hundred years in the future from his day. But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near. (White, E., 1888, p.356)²

² James White says a similar thing in his book on Bible Adventism: “It is true that some of the early church received the idea that Christ would come in their day. And it is evident that the Thessalonian Church this believed from the fact that the apostle in his second epistle to them, corrects this error. He says, “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God.” 2 Thess. 2: 1-4. From this testimony, we conclude that there were those who had taught the Thessalonians to expect the second advent in their day. But the apostle exhorts them not to be troubled with this idea, and warns them against being deceived by it. He then states that the day of Christ would not come, except there came a falling away first, and that Man of Sin (the Papacy) be revealed. He points the church of Christ down over the period of the apostasy, and the twelve hundred and sixty years of Papal supremacy, to near our time, and guards all the way with a warning against being deceived with the idea that Christ might come during that period. And why did this warning cease

1B. The Advent Movement mentioned in the Book of Daniel

Daniel 12:3-10

Knowledge shall be increased and people will run to and fro over the prophecies of Daniel

The SDAs use the concepts in these verses to indicate that Gabriel is referring to a worldwide revival of study in the book of Daniel after the end of the 1260 years in 1798 AD. They then point out the occurrence of the Advent movement at this time and the conclusion is obvious that these statements of Gabriel clearly refer to this Advent Movement! Typical of this is a quote from the authoritative SDA manual called *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*³

...the remnant ...[are] a people of prophecy who proclaim a prophetic message. They will understand prophecy and teach it...

The Bible indicates that the remnant appears on the world's stage after the time of the great persecution (Rev. 12: 14-17). The earthshaking events of the French Revolution, which led to the captivity of the pope at the end of the 1260-year period (A.D. 1798), and the fulfilment of the three great cosmic signs – in which earth, sun, moon and stars testified of the nearness of Christ's return...-led to a major revival of the study of prophecy.⁴ A widespread expectation of the imminent coming of Jesus arose. Throughout the world, many Christians recognized that "the time of the end" had arrived (Dan, 12:4).

The fulfilment of Bible prophecies during the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century brought about a powerful interconfessional movement centered on the Second Advent hope. In every church believers in the imminent return of Christ could be found, all praying, working, and anticipating the climax of the ages.

there? Answer: At that point the time of the end commenced, when the prophecy of Daniel was to be unsealed, knowledge on the subject of Christ's coming was to be increased, and many run to and fro. What a wonderful harmony in the testimonies of the angel and Paul. The angel says to Daniel, "The Words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Paul says to his brethren, "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed." The apostle's warning reaches down to the time of the end, where the words were to be unsealed. This plainly shows that the last half century [White is referring here to the first half of the 19th Century –FB] has been the period for the subject of the second advent to be brought out, and this is the only time that the church of Christ could scripturally look for the coming of the Lord.' (1870a, p. 76)

³ In this book there is a section on "The Doctrine of the Church," which contains two chapters; one simply called "The Church," and the second chapter entitled, "The Remnant and Its Mission." In this chapter, it discusses the "remnancy" of the SDA church as the one and only church that has avoided the apostasy present in every other Christian church. As it says at one point, "God has His children in all churches, but through the remnant church He proclaims a message that is to restore His true worshippers by calling His people out of the apostasy and ...join them [i.e., the SDA church-FB]..." (p.168)

⁴ A few pages previous, the book says, "the overthrow of the papacy was the culmination of a long series of events associated with its progressive decline. That event marks the end of the prophetic period of 1260 years. Many Protestants interpreted this event as a fulfilment of prophecy." (p. 157)

The Advent hope brought a deep spirit of unity among its adherents, and many joined together to warn the world about Christ's soon return. The Advent movement was a truly Biblical interconfessional movement centered in the word of God and the Advent hope. The more they studied the Bible, the more convinced they became that God was calling a remnant to continue the stagnated Reformation of the Christian church. ([Ministerial Association, 1988](#), p.162-163)

In this statement we see a clear connection between the text of Dn12:4, that talks of people studying the book of Daniel, the revival of the Advent movement and the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church ("the remnant"). From the book's perspective, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the child of this movement. Thus, the Advent movement was, in their view, a fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy in Dn12:4.

Even more explicit in naming the SDA church as the meaning of Dn12:4 is this statement from the *SDABC*:

Knowledge shall be increased. This clause may be considered the logical sequel to the immediately preceding clause: When the sealed book is opened at the time of the end, knowledge concerning the truths contained in these prophecies will be increased (PK 547; cf. Rev. 10:1, 2) At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century a new interest in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation was awakened in widely separated places of the earth. The study of these prophecies led to a widespread belief that the second advent of Christ was near. Numerous expositors in England, Joseph Wolff in the Middle East, Manual Lacunza in South America, and William Miller in the United States, together with a host of other students of the prophecies, declared, on the basis of their study of the prophecies of Daniel, that the second advent was at hand. Today, this conviction has become a driving force of a worldwide movement. ([Nichol, 1976](#), p. 879)

The reader is thus led by this statement to the unmistakable conclusion that *the SDA church* is this "worldwide movement."⁵ Furthermore, Seventh-day Adventist literature, church magazines, devotional and prayer week manuals are replete with the reference to themselves as "the remnant." Thus, from their viewpoint, the SDA church was foreseen in the statements in Dn12:4.

The wise shall understand and turn many to righteousness.

These verses have been used as well to indicate that Gabriel was referring to the Advent Movement and by extension, the SDA church. Notice this statement from *Prophets and Kings* which links "the wise" in these verses to those who study the prophecies of Daniel:⁶

⁵ Notice Schuler's statement again: "It is absolutely certain that in giving to men this message, as outlined above, Seventh-day Adventists are giving the *right message at the right time. It is the very truth of God for our day.* [Italics his] (1923, p.94)"

⁶ That is, to study, presumably from a SDA perspective, in order to believe the SDA explanation of the 2300 days – the key that, in the SDA view, unlocks those prophecies. This would be the only view of Daniel that Ellen White would endorse.

His [Daniel's] wonderful prophecies, as recorded by him in chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood even by the prophet himself; but before his labours closed, he was given the blessed assurance that "at the end of the days" – in the closing period of this world's history – he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place. It was not given him to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. "Shut up the words, and seal the book," he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; they were to be sealed "even to the time of the end." "Go thy way, Daniel," the angel once more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah; "for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end...Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of days." Daniel 12:4, 9, 13.

As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we live... "The wise shall understand" (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days... (1917, p.547)

James White is more explicit than his wife on this point:

"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Here are two classes, the wicked and the wise. The wise are those who are being purified and made white. They are wise in reference to the things of God, and the kingdom of Heaven. They understand by the opening prophecies the events which terminate the wonders shown to the prophet. They see these things clearly, believe, prepare, and rejoice in the blessed hope. Here we should be impressed with the practical bearing of the Second Advent faith and hope. The truly wise, those who are being purified, and made white, and tried, understand." (1870a, p.74)

And from Andreason:

Will the time ever come when the subject of the sanctuary will again be given its rightful place, when God will vindicate His truth, and error and error machination will be uncovered? Yes, answers prophecy, the time will come. An evil power shall arise that will persecute God's people, obscure the sanctuary question, cast truth to the ground, and prosper in doing it; it shall set up its own system in competition with God's attempt to change the law, and by its crafty policy deceive many; but it shall be unmasked. At the end of the twenty three hundred days a people shall arise who will have light on the sanctuary question, who follow Christ by faith into the Most Holy, who have the solution to break the mystery of iniquity, and who go forth to battle for God's truth. Such a people is invincible. It will proclaim the truth fearlessly. It will make the supreme contribution to religion in its advocacy of the sanctuary truth. It will "build the old waste places"; it will "raise up the foundations of many generations;" it shall "be called The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Isa. 58:12. (1969, pp. 297 f.)

Thus, we get a clear indication that the wise referred to by Gabriel in Dn12 are those who study the prophecies in the time of the end and presumably follow what they read. Further, we would expect them, in line with Dn12:3, not only to join the

“remnant” but also, in turn, to “turn others to righteousness” so that they too can join the remnant church.⁷

1C. The Advent Movement mentioned in the Book of Revelation.

In many ways, this assumption has a very similar purpose to the SDA interpretation of the visions in Rev 10, 11 and 14. In these chapters, SDAs see themselves written in Scripture⁸. The thrust of their argument here is that these prophecies foretell the rise of the Advent Movement and the Seventh-day Adventist church some 2,000 years ago. The upshot is that not only is the Advent movement predicted in Scripture, but that Scripture thereby endorses the teachings of Miller and by extension, the SDA church.

1D. Heaven-sent message at the right time in history.

In the SDA view only when the 1260 years of prophecy was completed in 1798 AD could there be a message given to the world based on the fulfilment of the time prophecies of Daniel. “Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies.” (White, 1888, p. 356)

A similar argument from Ford using a different time prophecy draws the same conclusion:

This verse [Dn12:4], coupled with 8: 14-19, makes it clear that “the time of the end” begins with the unsealing of the closed portions of Daniel. When the

⁷ Maxwell’s comments on the significance of the chiasm in these verses highlight this logical sequence: “Daniel 12:3 is Hebrew poetry. The ‘wise’ in the first line, therefore, are the same as ‘those who turn many to righteousness’ in the third line. Daniel 12:10 also speaks of the wise. It defines them as those who ‘understand,’ that is, as the people who understand the practical meaning of the prophecies of the book of Daniel. In a reverse parallelism known as a chiasm...the same verse identifies the ‘wise’ as those who ‘purify themselves’ and ‘make themselves white’ and become ‘refined.’ So the wise of Daniel 12 – those who will shine like the stars forever and ever – are the people who study the prophecies of Daniel till they *understand* them, who *share* their understanding with others, and who become pure.” [Italics is-FB] (1981, p.306)

⁸ Cf. Schuler’s statement: “The tenth and the fourteenth chapters of Revelation contain a clear forecast of the work and outcome of this Advent Movement...A complete system of doctrine, connected and harmonious, making known their present duty, was revealed to them by the Scriptures. In 1860 these people became known as Seventh-day Adventists” (1923, p.87, 89). In regard to Rev 14, Schuler says: “According to Rev.14:14, the giving of the threefold message is immediately followed by the coming of Christ. It is evident then that the proclamation of this message will be God’s last warning to a dying world. It will be preached to the last generation just before the return of the Saviour. Let us point out five distinguishing features of this message: 1. Announcement of the Judgment in Session...[1844-FB]; 2.The Sign of the True God...[the Sabbath-FB]; 3.The call out of Babylon...[join the “true church” (p.92)...the SDA church FB]; 4. Warning Against the Mark of Apostasy... [Sunday worship -FB]; 5. Obedience to God. These five features distinguish this true message for the last days from every other religious movement. The mission of Seventh-day Adventists is to proclaim this message to all the world. In the light of this prophecy, of Revelation 14:6-14, it is absolutely certain that in giving to men this message, as outlined above, Seventh-day Adventists are giving the *right message at the right time. It is the very truth of God for our day.* [Italics his] (Ibid, pp.90-94)

prophecy of the 2300 years was illuminated by the Spirit of God in the 1840's, then it could be said that the seal was being removed from the book, and with the end of that period (1844) the time of the end commenced (cf. Rev 10:6 with 14:6,7).⁹ (1978, p. 281)

And since those time periods have been fulfilled, history has providentially witnessed a proclamation of a divine message to the world in the form of the 1840s Advent movement. Thus, the movement that proclaims that message is heaven-ordained. In the words of Schuler,

“These ... features distinguish this true message for the last days from every other religious movement. The mission of Seventh-day Adventists is to proclaim this message to all the world. In the light of this prophecy, of Revelation 14:6-14, it is absolutely certain that in giving to men this message, as outlined above, Seventh-day Adventists are giving the *right message at the right time. It is the very truth of God for our day.* [Italics his] (1923, p.94)

And again from Schuler:

...this 1844 movement bore the credentials of Heaven in that it fulfilled divine prophecy and was marked by the mighty movings of the Spirit of God.” (1923, p.87)

⁹ Ford does not clarify in this statement here what sections of Daniel are “unsealed” at the time of the end, although from the context we must assume it has to do with the 2300 years. However, in looking at his preface to Chapter 8, we get a more explicit statement: “...for the first time in Daniel, the chapter closes with the statement that neither Daniel nor anyone else could understand the revelation just given him. But 12:4, 9, 10, assures us that in the last days “knowledge shall increase” and the visions that have been “shut up” (8:26 KJV) will be unsealed, so that “the wise shall understand.” Thus, if these indeed are the last days, *we have every right to expect light on this eighth chapter beyond all that other generations have received.* Evidently, then we must not expect to find all that God has for us on this chapter in the commentaries of former times. Indeed, if knowledge is now to be increased on this prophecy, previous expositions will be exposed as falling apart. Only in “the time of the end” would the book be unsealed.

Part of the “how” of this further light is hinted at in the chapter itself, though most have failed to recognize the significance of the divine clue. Christ admonished Gabriel, “Make this man understand the vision,” which commission the angel began immediately to fulfil. But his task was not complete at the time Daniel fainted, as verse 27 clearly shows: “I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.” Therefore we are to look upon the rest of the book (which consists chiefly of the words of Gabriel – another fact rarely observed) as commentary upon this chapter and as fulfilling the commission of Christ to Gabriel. [Ford inserts a footnote here saying: “8:17-26; 9:22-27; 10:11-14, 19-21; 11; 12: 1-4; and possibly 12:9-13 are Gabriel’s words.”-FB]

It is this truth which explains how it is that the “time of the end” brings the unsealing of the book. It was not until the nineteenth century that scholars in many parts of the world simultaneously came to the conclusion that 9:24-27 was a continuing explanation of chapter 8. Even slower for many has been the awareness that chapters 10 –12 are but the completion of that explanation.

After Gabriel’s expansion of the meaning of the vision of chapter 8, there were still some matters that Daniel did not understand (12:8). But even these are to be unveiled to “those who are wise” in the “time of the end” in order that they might be able to “turn many to righteousness” (12:10, 3, 4). (1978, p.161)

2. Method of Establishing the Assumption

In this section, I explain the logic and thinking used by SDAs to establish this assumption. I state things in this section as a Seventh-day Adventist would see them, not necessarily, how I would see them. The wording then expresses the thought map of a SDA. The major points associated with their attempts to establish this assumption include:

- The meaning of the command “to shut” and “to seal” as taught by SDAs;
- Their use of Dn8:26 and Dn 12:4 to establish the SDA position;
- The assertion that only part of the vision is “shut;”
- The assertion that a true explanation can only be found after 1798 AD.

2A. What is the meaning of “shut.”

(i) Did Daniel fail to understand (Dn8:27) because he could not work it out, or because it was not explained?

Reading through the literature, their full view is that this lack of understanding on Daniel’s part is due to the fact that the full explanation /interpretation was not given by Gabriel. It is not the view of SDA writers that even though Gabriel explains something, Daniel does not understand it¹⁰. Their view is that Daniel is highly skilled

¹⁰ Some SDA writers take a different view from the expected view. Typical of these is Keough’s novel comments in the first quarter Adult Sabbath School Lesson on Daniel in 1987. He bunches Dn 12:4 with v.8 and asks the question, “**What important emphasis do we discover as we read the last few verses of the book of Daniel? Dan. 12: 4-13.** Some suggestions: 1. The book is to be shut up and sealed till the time of the end. Why? For one thing, prophecy is best understood when it is fulfilled. Daniel’s prophecies reach down to the end of time, some 2500 years since his day. If Daniel could not understand what was being revealed to him (see verse 8) how could anyone else? Certainly, the wicked would not understand. But the wise, those who receive enlightenment from God, would understand after the passage of time had brought fulfilment. At the time of the end of the end the book would be opened and there would be an upsurge of the study of prophecy (Rev. 10:2). (Keough, 1987, p.96).

Here Keough indicates that Daniel did not understand his prophecies, which in turn contradicts what Keough says some pages earlier in the lesson study in Week 11 on Daniel 10. Keough calls Daniel 10, “The Introduction to Daniel’s Last Vision,” and proceeds to comment on the question, “**What three things did Daniel want his readers to be aware of about this vision? Dan 10:1,**” by saying, “The fact that Daniel claimed he understood it [Dn11-12-FB] shows that understanding is possible.” (p.79) Clearly, his comment here on “Daniel’s last vision” makes a mockery of his later statements on Dn12:4-13. The very fact that he does not separate the issue in Dn12:4 to that in verse 8 is unfortunate both for him and those who studied the lesson.

in interpreting dreams and visions and that when the angel Gabriel explains the vision to Daniel, he understands it. If he does not understand, it is because something has not been explained by the angel.

A typical example of this is the Questions on Doctrine:

The prophetic symbols of Daniel 8: 2-14...had all been explained by Gabriel, the celestial messenger, in verses 15 to 26. That is, *all except the symbolic time element involved in the 2300 days, with the events marking their close and the time of their beginning...* because of Daniel's sudden illness as the vision of chapter 8 was being explained to him, Gabriel had been unable to explain this remaining time feature – the 2300 days of verses 13,14, and 26. [Italics theirs –FB] ([Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p. 269)

And from the pen of Ellen White:

. There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time – the period of the 2300 days; therefore the angel, in resuming his explanation, dwells chiefly upon the subject of time...The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time – “unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” ([1888](#), pp.325ff)

Clearly from these statements, we can see the concept that Daniel did not understand because it was not explained to him.

(ii) Are the visions opened at the time of the end because they are explained?

The next issue is the relation of this concept to the SDA view of “shutting” the vision. They see that the “shutting” of the vision is related to the time of the end (Dn12:4). Dn 8:27 does not state this as clearly as Dn12:4, so this text is invariably used instead of Dn8:27. Dn12:4 says that the words are sealed *to the time of the end*. This is a more definitive statement than Dn 8:27.

Their point is that it is only after the beginning of the time of the end that the closed portion of the vision (the start of the 2300 days) in Dn8 is open. Notice Ellen White's statement:

The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. ([White, E.,1898](#), p.234)

And again from Questions on Doctrine, where the “words of the angel relating to the last days” is specified as *the symbolic time element involved in the 2300 days, with the events marking their close and the time of their beginning...* (1957, p. 269)

But we can see in Keough's lesson comments the concept that “shut” and “seal” relates to not being able to be understood. And conversely, “at the time of the end the book would be opened and there would be an upsurge of the study of prophecy” we see the connection between understanding and the opening or unsealing of the book.

It is shut until the time of the end because only then would it be explained correctly: As the above statement from *Desire of Ages* indicates in the time of the end, the words of the angel were to be understood. Therefore, it is only after 1798 that we could expect a correct explanation of the starting and closing events for the 2300 days. In the words of Ford:

This verse [Dn12:4], coupled with 8: 14-19, makes it clear that “the time of the end” begins with the unsealing of the closed portions of Daniel. When the prophecy of the 2300 years was illuminated by the Spirit of God in the 1840’s, then it could be said that the seal was being removed from the book, and with the end of that period (1844) the time of the end commenced (cf. Rev 10:6 with 14:6,7). (1978, p. 281)

In conclusion, it was the illumination or the explanation of the 2300 days that involves the “opening” of the shut portions of the book of Daniel.

Conclusion on how SDAs present the relationship of “shut,” “understand” and “explain.”

Thus, the concept of “shut” means to keep from being understood by not having an explanation for it. Conversely, when the correct explanation is given, the vision is understood.

(iii) Relation between the “shutting” of the vision and the “sealing” of the book.

What is the SDA concept of “sealing”/ “unsealing” correlated to the concept of “shutting” / “opening”?

The SDA concept of “sealing” is identical to their concept of “shutting.” in that they see the sealing as relating to the closing of access to knowledge. Conversely, they see the “unsealing” identical to their concept of “opening;” that is, access to the knowledge essential to an understanding of those prophecies that were “sealed.”

Notice the following statements from various SDA writers. I have taken the liberty to **bold** the connection between “sealing/unsealing” and knowledge:

Siegfried Horn:

Daniel was instructed to “**seal** the book, even to the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4); this **apparently meant that it would not be understood until the time specified** (cf. Rev. 10:4). (1960, p.974)

Ellen White:

But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to **close up** and **seal** “to the time of the end.” Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, “many shall run to and fro, and **knowledge shall be increased**,” Daniel 12:4 (White, E., 1888, p.356)

“the book that was **sealed** is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days” (White, E., 1911, p. 585).

“The wise shall **understand**” (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be **unsealed** in the latter days... (1917, p.547)

Desmond Ford:

[Dn12:4 quoted] This verse, coupled with 8:14-19, makes it clear that “the time of the end” begins with the **unsealing** of the **closed** portions of Daniel. When the prophecy of the 2300 years was **illuminated by the Spirit of God** in the 1840’s, then it could be said that the **seal** was being removed from the book, and with the end of that period (1844) the time of the end commenced (cf. Rev.10:6 with 14:6, 7)¹¹. (1978, p. 281)

“Running to and fro” is a Hebrew idiom for “searching.” Thus the connection between the **unsealing** of the book and **the increase of knowledge about its prophecies** is explained ...” (1978, p.281)

for the first time in Daniel, the chapter closes with the statement that neither Daniel nor anyone else could **understand** the revelation just given him. But 12:4, 9, 10, assures us that in the last days “knowledge shall increase” and the visions that have been “**shut up**” (8:26 KJV) will be **unsealed**, so that “the wise shall **understand**.” Thus, if these indeed are the last days, *we have every right to expect light on this eighth chapter beyond all that other generations have received*. Evidently, then we must not expect to find all that God has for us on this chapter in the commentaries of former times. Indeed, **if knowledge is now to be increased on this prophecy**, previous expositions will be exposed as falling apart. Only in “the time of the end” would the book be **unsealed**. (1978, p.161)

U. Smith:

Book of Daniel sealed. – The “words” and “book” here spoken of doubtless refer to the things which had been revealed to Daniel in this prophecy. These things were to be **shut up** and **sealed** until the time of the end; that is, **they were not to be specially studied, or to any great extent understood, until that time**. The time of the end, as has already been shown, began in 1798. As the book was **closed up** and **sealed** to that time, the plain inference is that at that time, or from that point, the book would be **unsealed**. **People would be able to understand it**, and would have their attention specially called to this part of the inspired word. (p.313)

SDA Bible Commentary

Knowledge shall be increased. This clause may be considered the logical sequel to the immediately preceding clause: When the **sealed book is opened at the time of the end, knowledge concerning the truths contained in these prophecies will be increased...**” Nichol, 1976, p. 879)

¹¹ According to this concept, the time of the end began in the first year of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, because that is when Gabriel came back to “illuminate” the “closed portions of Daniel” by SDA’s own admissions.

James White:

At that point, the time of the end commenced, when the prophecy of Daniel was to be **unsealed, knowledge on the subject of Christ's coming was to be increased**, and many run to and fro. ([1870a](#). p.76)

Conclusion on how SDAs present the relationship between “shut” and “seal.”

As can be seen from the above samples, which are representative of the general consensus of SDA writers, the concept of “sealing” is synonymous with “shutting;” and the concept of “unsealing” is synonymous with “opening.”

2B. Use of Dn8:26 and Dn 12:4

Identical meaning of “shut” in both texts?

Both texts are examined simultaneously in the discussion on this point because SDA writers tend mostly to merge their comments for Dn8:26 and Dn12:4 and focus them on Dn 12:4¹². Apart from the fact there are a few more details on the topic at that verse, Dn12:4 says that the time period is not just for “many days,” as in Dn8, but it specifies “till the time of the end.” For SDAs, this is a more specific point in time to focus on than the indefinite “many days” in Dn8. In their view, to all intents and purposes, the intention and meaning of the command in both placed is identical.¹³ Dn8 only mentions the time of the end in verse 17 and is not closely linked with the command to shut the vision. In chapter 12, these ideas are more closely drawn together.

The initial step in the logic of this assumption is to quote Dn8:26 and Dn12:4 and indicate that Daniel was told on both occasions by Gabriel to “shut” the vision, because it related to the future, in fact, to the “time of the end.” The argument is then usually developed using mainly Dn12:4. Here are the relevant texts:

The text in Dn8:26 says this:

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days, afterward I rose up, and did the king's business and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

¹² Typical of this are also [Ford, 1978](#), p.161, 281; [White, E., 1888](#), p.356.

¹³ This assumption is debatable though when the texts are considered. In Dn8:26 Daniel is told to shut the book because it concerns things in the distant future. On the other hand, the prophet is told in Dn12:4 to shut the book and seal it because in heaven's view the revelation to Daniel was complete. Notice Dn12:9, “And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” My argument is that there are two different reasons here. The first was given because the vision did not apply to Daniel's own time; the second was given because Gabriel's mission to Daniel was complete – Gabriel had revealed all that was allowed.

Dn 12:4 says:

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Notice Nichol's statement linking Dn12:4 with Dn8:26 and the 2300 days:

Daniel had been instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end" (Dan.12:4). This admonition applies particularly to the part of Daniel's prophecies that deals with the last days (see on ch. 12:4), and doubtless especially to the time element of the 2300 days (ch.8:14) as it relates to the preaching of the first, second and third angel's messages (Rev. 14:6-12). Inasmuch as the message of the present angel [this quote is from the section in Rev.10 which sees an angel standing on the earth and the sea— FB] deals with time, and presumably with events at the time of the end, when the book of Daniel was to be unsealed (Dan.12:4), it seems reasonable to conclude that the little book open in the hand of the angel was the book of Daniel. With the presentation to John of the little book open, the sealed portions of Daniel's prophecy are revealed. The time element, pointing out the end of the 2300-day prophecy, is made clear. Consequently the present chapter focuses upon the time when the proclamation of vs. 6, 7 was made, that is, during the years 1840 to 1844"...([Nichol, 1957](#), p. 797)

Another example is from Ford:

This verse [Dn12:4], coupled with 8: 14-19, makes it clear that "the time of the end" begins with the unsealing of the closed portions of Daniel. When the prophecy of the 2300 years was illuminated by the Spirit of God in the 1840's, then it could be said that the seal was being removed from the book, and with the end of that period (1844) the time of the end commenced (cf. Rev 10:6 with 14:6,7). ([1978](#), p. 281)

Examples could be multiplied but the evidence is there for the assumption that Dn8: 26 and Dn12:4 are identical in their meaning and implication as far as SDAs are concerned.

Conclusion on how SDAs present the relationship of "shut" in Dn8:26 and Dn12:4.

SDAs develop their relationship between Dn8 and Dn12 and the 2300 days based on the belief that Dn8:26 and Dn12:4 mean the same thing.

2C. Only part of the vision is referred to in Dn8:26

The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, in examining Dn8:26, refers us to their comment on Dn12:4, presuming that the comment made there applies also to this text. What does the commentary say at Dn12:4?

Compare the similar admonition in regard to Daniel's earlier vision (ch. 8:26). This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel's prophecy that dealt with

the last days (AA 585¹⁴; DA 234¹⁵). Not until that time was reached could a message, based on the fulfilment of these prophecies, be proclaimed (see GC 356¹⁶). Compare the “little book open” in the hand of the angel of Rev. 10:1,2 (see TM 115). (Nichol, 1976, p.879)¹⁷

This is normative of most other SDA commentators on the topic. For example, notice this comment by C. Mervyn Maxwell:

[Dan.12:4 quoted] It is very likely that the visions could have ceased at this point; but Daniel appears to have been startled at being told to “shut up the words.” He wanted eagerly to “understand,” and in his visions he had frequently been encouraged to do so. Now he learns that something has to remain locked up until almost the end of the world.

Gabriel cannot have meant that all the information in the book of Daniel was to be “shut up” until the time of the end. The identity of the head of gold as Babylon and of the ram as “Media and Persia” and of the goat as Greece is stated explicitly within the book, beyond all doubt or mystery. But Babylon, Persia and Greece were empires which ruled in Daniel’s own day and in his immediate

¹⁴ AA:585 says: “In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of Daniel. One is a prophecy; the other is a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days.”

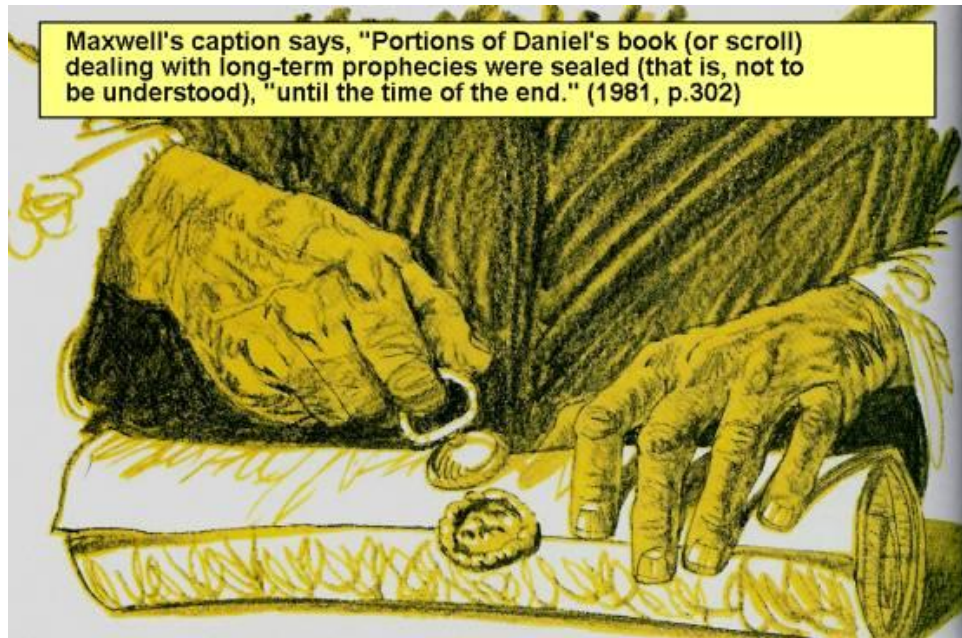
¹⁵ “As the message of Christ’s first advent announced the kingdom of His grace, so the message of His second coming announces the kingdom of His glory. And the second message, like the first, is based in the prophecies. The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. At that time, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” “The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.” Dan 12:4. 10... We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord’s coming in glory as near at hand.

¹⁶ “The message [of Rev14:6-FB] itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the “everlasting gospel;” and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment *had* come. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.” Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,” Daniel 12:4” (White, 1888, p. 356)

¹⁷ The commentary at Rev 10: 1,2 says: “Daniel had been instructed to “shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end” (Dan.12:4). This admonition applies particularly to the part of Daniel’s prophecies that deals with the last days (see on ch. 12:4), and doubtless especially to the time element of the 2300 days (ch.8:14) as it relates to the preaching of the first, second and third angel’s messages (Rev. 14:6-12). Inasmuch as the message of the present angel [this quote is from the section in Rev.10 which sees an angel standing on the earth and the sea– FB] deals with time, and presumably with events at the time of the end, when the book of Daniel was to be unsealed (Dan.12:4), it seems reasonable to conclude that the little book open in the hand of the angel was the book of Daniel. With the presentation to John of the little book open, the sealed portions of Daniel’s prophecy are revealed. The time element, pointing out the end of the 2300-day prophecy, is made clear. Consequently the present chapter focuses upon the time when the proclamation of vs. 6, 7 was made, that is, during the years 1840 to 1844”...”(Nichol, 1957, p. 797)

future. The events to be “shut up” were only those that would occur near the end.¹⁸ (1981, p.301)

And Maxwell goes one step further on this in his book, and gives us an illustration to see his meaning, together with the caption:



Conclusion on how SDAs present the command to “shut the vision.”

SDAs present the position that the command to shut the vision does not apply to the vision proper, but only that section of the vision that pertains to the last days, namely, the 2300 days.

2D. True Meaning of 2300 days only after 1798 A.D

A standard argument is that the 2300 days cannot be 2300 literal days since this time period is designated as being applicable at the “time of the end.” Through then proving that the time of the end began in 1798, it can be then argued that something longer than six and a half years is meant to reach as far as 1798 AD. Therefore by using the year-day principle the 2300 days can become 2300 years and will indeed reach to 1798 AD:

From Raymond Woolsey:

¹⁸ Does that mean then that the composition of the feet of the great image in Dn2 could be understood that some parts of the 4th kingdom would be strong and others weak and that there would be no strong bond between them? And how about the revelation in Dn7 concerning the 4th beast and its divisions? Is that information “shut up” too? Does this include the description of the Great Judgement and the activities of the “little horn” power in Dn7? These all relate to the “end.”

As a loyal and faithful Jew, Daniel was concerned for the integrity of the Lord's house and for His worship. "How long," he asked, "shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?" (verse 13). The answer came: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (verse 14). The word translated "cleansed" here is also translated "justified" or "set right." However, Gabriel immediately told Daniel that the vision was for the "time of the end" (verse 17), and so we are warned away from attempting to apply a literal translation of six years and four months from the time Rome came to power. There is more to it than that... Here is an important tie-in between the vision of Daniel 8 and that of chapter 7. In the earlier vision Daniel was given a view of the judgment scene in heaven, with books of record opened and God Himself sitting on the throne. The little horn is judged guilty, and the kingdom is given to the Son of man and to his people... So the "two thousand and three hundred days" is a time element to be applied to the same situation as described in the first vision [Daniel 7], namely, the judgment. That is why Gabriel told Daniel the vision was for "the time of the end." (2001, pp.44, 46)

And contextually, the "time of the end" is associated with the 1260-day or 3½ times period. Notice the following texts:

12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

12:5 Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

12:6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

12:8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

12:9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

The 3½ times in verse 7 are adjacent to the text on "closing" the book in verse 4. The similarity in the text which says "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end," with the phrases "end of these wonders," and "all these things shall be finished," are seen by SDAs to link the "opening" or "unsealing" of the book or "words" to the 3 ½ times.¹⁹

The term "the time of the end" is a crucial phrase in these verses and it provides a specific time frame for the SDA exegete to work with in presenting his

¹⁹ The section entitled, "[Use of the concept of only part of the vision is referred to in these verses](#)" supplies standard sample quotes to support this point.

apologetic for the church's position. It is only after the beginning of the time of the end that these time prophecies are opened. Before that time, there could not be a proper full proclamation of these matters.

The year-day principle is used in this context since the time period of 3½ "times" or 1260 prophetic days in the SDA view, means 1260 years and the "opening" or "unsealing" of the book is seen to be intimately connected with the completion of this period. Thus, the use of the year-day principle with the arguments for the significance of 1798 AD is an integral part of the argumentation for the "shutting" and the "opening" of the book.

Notice the following extract from *The Great Controversy*,

The message [of Rev14:6-FB] itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the "everlasting gospel;" and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment *had* come. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal "to the time of the end." Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," Daniel 12:4

The apostle Paul warned the church not to look for the coming of Christ in his day. "That day shall not come," he says, "except there comes a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Not until after the great apostasy, and the long period of the reign of the "man of sin," which is also styled "the mystery of iniquity," "the son of perdition," and "that wicked," represents the papacy, which, as foretold by prophecy, was to maintain its supremacy for 1260 years. This period ended in 1798. The coming of Christ could not take place before that time. Paul covers with his caution the whole of the Christian dispensation down to the year 1798. It is this side of that time that the message of Christ's second coming is to be proclaimed.

No such message has ever been given in past ages. Paul, as we have seen, did not preach it; he pointed his brethren into the then far-distant future for the coming of the Lord. The Reformers did not proclaim it. Martin Luther placed the judgment about three hundred years in the future from his day. But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near. (White, E., 1888, p.356).

From the authoritative SDA manual called *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...*

...the remnant ...[are] a people of prophecy who proclaim a prophetic message. They will understand prophecy and teach it...

The Bible indicates that the remnant appears on the world's stage after the time of the great persecution (Rev. 12: 14-17). The earthshaking events of the French Revolution, which led to the captivity of the pope at the end of the 1260-year period (A.D. 1798), and the fulfilment of the three great cosmic signs – in which earth, sun, moon and stars testified of the nearness of Christ's return...-led

to a major revival of the study of prophecy. A widespread expectation of the imminent coming of Jesus arose. Throughout the world, many Christians recognized that “the time of the end” had arrived (Dan, 12:4).

The fulfilment of Bible prophecies during the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century brought about a powerful interconfessional movement centered on the Second Advent hope. In every church believers in the imminent return of Christ could be found, all praying, working, and anticipating the climax of the ages.

The Advent hope brought a deep spirit of unity among its adherents, and many joined together to warn the world about Christ’s soon return. The Advent movement was a truly Biblical interconfessional movement centered in the word of God and the Advent hope. The more they studied the Bible, the more convinced they became that God was calling a remnant to continue the stagnated Reformation of the Christian church. ([Ministerial Association, 1988](#), p.162-163)

Here is another sample, this time from Haskell:

The one prophet, who, before Christ, gave the date of His first advent, and who also gave the time of His second coming and of the end, was Daniel. Daniel’s prophecy was pre-eminently a time message, and when he sought to understand the times, which had been revealed to him, he was told to “shut the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.” The message was not for Daniel to comprehend, but in the time of the end, many would “run to and fro” knowledge would increase, and the wise, instructed of the Lord, would understand what had for ages been sealed. The period of time which Daniel sought to understand, was the two thousand three hundred days, at the end of which time, the sanctuary would be cleansed. This is the only sealed message of the Word, and yet the last promise made to Daniel, was that he should stand in his lot “at the end of the days.” (1977, p.183f)

Conclusion on how SDAs present the relationship between “shut” and “seal” and the “time of the end.”

SDAs see a very important issue in this point in that it is only after the end of the 3½ “times” when the “time of the end” had begun, that a true understanding of the time prophecy of the 2300 days can be gained or proclaimed.

2E. Summary of Assumptions in this Method

- Dn8:26 and Dn 12:4. These two verses discussing the “shutting” the vision, are virtually identical in meaning with the exception that Dn12 is more specific in regard to the time when the book is opened;
- The meaning of “shutting” and “sealing” are virtually identical; as is the concept of “opening” and “unsealing.” To “seal” / “close” a vision is to make it unable to be understood by not providing an explanation and to “unseal” / “open” a vision is to make it able to be understood by providing an explanation.

- The meaning of “shut the vision” does not mean “shut the full vision,” but rather only “shut a part of it;”
- The part of the vision that is shut is the issues that deal with the starting point for the 2300 days;
- The date of 1798 AD is a crucial one for predicting after which the “opening” on the true understanding of the 2300-days would take place. This involved the use of the year-day principle to calculate the 1260 years.
- After 1798 AD, with the “unsealing” of the book of Daniel, there arose a movement which gave the true explanation of the unexplained part of the vision, that is, the 2300-day prophecy.
- Put differently, the Advent movement proclaimed the true explanation of the 2300-day prophecy, and this illumination “unsealed” the part of the prophecies of Daniel relating to the last days that had been previously “closed” from being understood.

3. Problems with the Method in this Assumption

In this section I look at the problems with the method used by SDAs explained above to support this assumption. This section takes a critical view of the following points:

- The meaning of the command “to shut” and “to seal” as taught by SDAs;
- Their use of Dn8:26 and Dn 12:4 to establish the SDA position;
- The assertion that only part of the vision is “shut;”
- The assertion that a true explanation can only be found after 1798 AD.

After looking at these points I consider a further complication and highlights the impossible position they have placed themselves in²⁰.

²⁰ The comments dealt with in the section entitled “[If That Wasn’t Bad Enough... Read this Problem.](#)” deal with the interface of the opposing argumentation used by SDAs in (1) Their justification of the links between Dn8 and Dn9 and; (2) their justification for the Seventh-days Adventist’s unique proclamation of the time prophecies of Daniel.

3A. The meaning of “Shutting” a vision.

In this section I look at the SDA meaning of “shut”, and highlight the following problems:

- Since they say the vision is not explained to Daniel, therefore it is shut up from his understanding. They say it is explained after 1798 by the Advent Movement. (I look at standard statements from Ellen White and Mervyn Maxwell which support this.) But the problem is that the Advent Movement says that Dn9 explains the 2300 days of Dn8. If that is the case, then the vision *was* explained to Daniel, and so the vision *was not shut* from his understanding. Therefore, it is their definition of “shut” which is wrong.
- This places them in a predicament. If they acknowledge the visions were *not* shut, in that they were explained to Daniel as the Advent movement said they were, then the vision “that pertains to the last days” has *never been shut*, since it was explained to Daniel just like all the earlier details of the visions which were also exempt from being shut in the SDA view.
- On the other hand, if they say the vision of Dn8 was shut by the end of Daniel’s prophetic work and remained shut until “knowledge increased” on it after 1798 AD, then Dn9 cannot be an explanation of the 2300 days of Dn8 and the Advent movement was incorrect to use this chapter to explain the 2300 days in the way they did. This is the case, because if Dn8 was understood, the 2300 days would no longer be shut; and it was Dn9, in the SDA view, which explained Dn8.
- A better meaning for the word “shut” is “to preserve” or even “to keep confidential.” There is a strong tradition among non – SDA writers of a variety of persuasions supporting the valid position that the “shutting” the vision was an action to preserve the record of the revelations to Daniel rather than to keep the message unknown, especially when copies of Daniel’s writings were in existence.

Use of concept of “not understood” for “shut” because it is not explained.”

One of the main problems of the SDA’s definition of the word “shut,” is their definition of not only what shut means, but also in relation to whom?

The first issue discussed in the “[Methods](#)” section above dealt with the SDA meaning of “shutting.” Their dilemma here is that, since they are committed to a definition of “shut” which means a preclusion from understanding due to a lack of an explanation, then the 2300 day prophecy cannot be “shut” until the time of the end because it was explained and understood in Dn9. Thus by their own definitions, they have confounded themselves. In the sections below, I look at the problem of saying

the vision is “shut” because Daniel didn’t understand it, and then saying that even at the end of the book the angel says that the vision will be shut until the time of the end.

What “shut” means for SDAs.

In the SDA view, any aspect of the vision is “shut” when it is not explained to Daniel (see the section [What is the meaning of “shut”?](#))

“Shut” in relation to whom?

In the SDA view, the material is “shut” from Daniel and then, by extension, to those who study the writings of Daniel. (See the section entitled, [Did Daniel fail to understand \(Dn8:27\) because he could not work it out, or because it was not explained?](#))

“Open” in relation to whom?

In the SDA view, the unexplained material on the start of the 2300 days is not “opened” to Daniel, but to those who study the writings of Daniel after the fulfilment of the 1260 years in 1798 with the special insights provided by God through the Advent Movement in America.

The text is opened, not to Daniel, but to those living after 1798 who study the Advent movement’s explanation of the 2300-days. Notice this statement from Ellen White:

His [Daniel’s] wonderful prophecies, as recorded by him in chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood even by the prophet himself;²¹ but before his labours closed, he was given the blessed assurance that “at the end of the days” – in the closing period of this world’s history – he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place. It was not given him to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose²². “Shut up the words, and seal the book,” he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; they were to be sealed “even to the time of the end.” “Go thy way, Daniel,” the angel once

²¹ This contradicts the plainest statements of Scripture. Dn7 is understood by Daniel. No SDA writer says the vision of ch. 7 is incomplete and that Daniel is left without understanding. Dn 8 is understood by Daniel, since SDAs say Gabriel came in Dn 9 to finish his explanation of the vision – an explanation which Gabriel completed. There is no statement in Dn9 to the effect that Daniel did not understand the explanation given by Gabriel. Dn 10-12 is definitely understood by Daniel and he explicitly says so in Dn10: 1,2. Daniel’s query in Dn12:11 dealt with material that was outside the scope of the material in his visions. But the prophecies he was given he understood. The fact that they disturbed him is no indication that he did not understand it. His disturbance over the contents of his prophecies is a greater indicator of his understanding of it because it shows he felt the implications of the revelation for the people of God. This argument is put up to say that it was the 2300 days that he did not understand. And in her view, it would not be understood until after 1798.

²² This statement regarding lack of understanding “all that God had revealed of the divine purpose” is specifically in relation to the information given in his prophecies. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.”(1888, p.356) It was this part, in the SDA view he did not understand, that is to be opened or explained in the time of the end by someone apart from Daniel.

more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah; “for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end...Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of days.” Daniel 12:4, 9, 13.

As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we live...“The wise shall understand” (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days... (1917, p.547).

This statement is nonsensical. It says it was not given to Daniel to understand the beginning of the 2300-day prophecy, but only to those who would live beyond 1798 AD. Yet those very people in their explanation of the 2300 days will say Daniel was given an explanation to the 2300 days some time after the vision of Dn8: That explanation, we are informed, is contained in Dn9. How does Daniel NOT know when in other places she says the angel makes him understand?

. There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time – the period of the 2300 days; therefore the angel, in resuming his explanation, dwells chiefly upon the subject of time...The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time – “unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (1888, pp.325ff)

Furthermore, the very revelation that Daniel is told to “shut” in Dn 12, is a revelation he understands and he says so in Dn10: 1,2.²³ Thus, the argument that Daniel did not understand the 2300 days does not hold water at all. Ellen White is wrong in this statement. She has contradicted herself, by saying that he understood Dn9 and that Dn9 was the explanation of the unexplained portion of Dn8. And remember that in her view to have it explained was to have it understood. Notice in her statement above, Daniel understood all save the unexplained part. Gabriel comes to give him the explanation of that. Therefore. Daniel then understands that too. The defenders of Ellen White cannot argue here that the explanation may have been given but Daniel did not understand the explanation. There is no statement at the end of Dn9

²³ Daniel’s statement in Dn10:1 is made *after* he experiences the revelation recorded in Dn10-12. He writes a summary of the whole event in a few phrases and says: “a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” Dn10:1 KJV In this thumbnail sketch given of the revelation about to be written by the prophet, he says he understood it. So we can see from this statement from Daniel, that his questioning over details in Dn12:8 is no indication that he did not understand what was shown him. He merely wanted to know answers to things that were *not* shown him. (For a discussion on the meaning of “end of these things” in 12:8, see [Keil and Delitzsch](#), on Dn12:8) The text does *not* mean that “Daniel’s understanding of the future is becoming progressively clearer, though some details connected with the last days, particularly the time elements, remain obscure to him (see 12:8; 1-4).” ([Ford, 1978](#), p.248). In ch10:1 he says he understood the revelation given to him. How much plainer could he have written such a clear statement? There are no shadows on his understanding *at all*. This is a statement by one who has “a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems.” Dn 5:12 (NIV) If Ford intended to say that the information conveyed to Daniel was a progressive unfolding of the purposes of God and man in this “great warfare” (Dn10:1) then he is correct. But that does not appear to be what he is saying here.

to the effect that he did not understand that revelation. SDA works argue that Dn9 is understood by Daniel.

1. Does it mean it is understood when it is explained to Daniel or when it is understood by the general religious public?

The consensus of SDA writers is that the item in a vision is understood when it is explained to Daniel. When an item is not understood by Daniel, it is because it is not explained. Furthermore, when a vision is shut, it is because the item is not understood by Daniel (cf. Dn8). Yet, when it is opened in 1798 A.D., it is not opened by Daniel, nor is he to understand the part that is opened because it does not occur until he is long dead. From this perspective then, Daniel's opened prophecies are therefore understood by the general public. The figurative use of Dn 12: 13 referring to Daniel standing in his lot at the end, is used, as an assurance of his personal resurrection, but to the use of the book of Daniel by the Advent movement to explain the "times" of God's purposes.

E. G. White - Prophet's message is for the "time of the end."

Ellen White's statement in *Prophets and Kings* concerning the messages given to Daniel and the command in Dn 12 to shut up the words indicate that she saw the meaning of "shut" to preclude from understanding:

His wonderful prophecies, as recorded by him in chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood even by the prophet himself; but before his labours closed, he was given the blessed assurance that "at the end of the days" – in the closing period of this world's history – he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place. It was not given him to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. "Shut up the words, and seal the book," he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; they were to be sealed "even to the time of the end." "Go thy way, Daniel," the angel once more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah; "for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end...Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of days." Daniel 12:4, 9, 13....

"The wise shall understand" (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days... (1917, p.547)

From the foregoing, it is clear Ellen White saw the section not understood by Daniel in Dn8 – the 2300 days – was to be opened *not* to Daniel, but to those people who would study Daniel's prophecies at the time of the end.

What is the problem with this position? It ignores the fact that even if we take the SDA position Dn9 is the explanation of Dn8, then an explanation *was* given to Daniel a little over a decade later than when he was given the vision in Dn8.

I have established earlier that the "shut" portion to be opened in the last days was the explanation of the 2300-day prophecy. (cf., the section entitled, [Are the visions opened at the time of the end because they are explained?](#)) So the problem is

that the explanation of the 2300 days is given to Daniel, yet, according to Ellen White, he understands it when she is arguing about the relationship between ch8 and ch9, but when it comes to discussing Dn8: 26 or Dn12:4, we get the reverse statement and Daniel does *not* understand it and it will not be properly understood until after 1798 AD.

To answer the issue as to whether she means it is understood when it is explained to Daniel or when it is understood by the general religious public, I would have to say that she says it is and it is not understood by Daniel and that it is and it is not understood by the general public,²⁴ depending on whether she is arguing about the relationship between Dn8 and Dn9 or whether she is discussing Dn8: 26 or Dn12:4.

The consensus of SDA writers is that the item in a vision is understood when it is explained to Daniel. When an item is not understood by Daniel, it is because it is not explained. Furthermore, when a vision is shut, it is because the item is not understood by Daniel (cf. Dn8). Yet, when it is opened in 1798 A.D., it is not opened by Daniel, nor is he to understand the part that is opened because it does not occur until he is long dead. From this perspective then, Daniel's opened prophecies are therefore understood by the general public. The figurative use of Dn 12: 13 referring to Daniel standing in his lot at the end, is used, as an assurance of his personal resurrection, but to the use of the book of Daniel by the Advent movement to explain the "times" of God's purposes.

2. Maxwell's attempt at explaining 'shut.'

In Daniel 12: 3 Gabriel promised that the wise shall shine like the stars... Then he said, "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." It is very likely that the visions could have ceased at this point; but Daniel appears to have been startled at being told to "shut up the words." He wanted eagerly to "understand," and in his visions he had frequently been encouraged to do so. Now he learns that something has to remain locked up until almost the end of the world. Gabriel cannot have meant that all the information in the book of Daniel was to be "shut up" until the time of the end. The identity of the head of gold as Babylon and of the ram as "Media and Persia" and of the goat as Greece is stated explicitly within the book, beyond all doubt or mystery. But Babylon, Persia and Greece were empires which ruled in Daniel's own day and in his immediate future. The events to be "shut up" were only those that would occur near the end." (1981, p. 301)

²⁴ The argument that the Advent movement people could not have understood the 2300 days follows because those people argued for the relationship of Dn8 and Dn9 based on the assumption that Dn9 was understood by Daniel. But if Ellen White says he did not understand the 2300 days and it was shut till the time of the end, then he did NOT understand Dn9 and those Advent movement folk were wrong.

Maxwell does not discuss the text of Dn8: 26 in his commentary on chapter 8. He only looks briefly at Dn12:4 in the commentary on chapter 12, and in doing so he merely assumes that the word “shut” means to preclude from understanding. He tries to justify the Ellen White position that only the last day part was included by asserting that all else was known. The basis of his argument is the statement “Gabriel cannot have meant that all the information in the book of Daniel was to be “shut up” until the time of the end.” He does not canvass any other options mentioned by commentators throughout the centuries.

Maxwell (1981) puts forward the novel idea that Gabriel spoke to Daniel in Hebrew and we must presume this is the reason we have the text in Hebrew.²⁵ It does raise the question whether the angelic beings in chapter 7 were speaking in Aramaic, thus the reason for Daniel writing it in Aramaic!!

3. What do non –SDA writers say on the meaning of “shut”?

1. Keil and Delitzsch

German scholar Keil has the best answer, and one that has been re-echoed by many scholars of all persuasions for a century and a half:

On Dn 8:26 Keil says:

But Daniel must close the prophecy, because it extends into a long time. [Heb “to shut”-FB] is not equivalent to [Heb “to seal”-FB], *to seal up*, but it means *to stop, to conclude, to hide* (cf. 2 Kings iii. 19, Ezek.xxviii.3), but not in the sense of keeping secret, or because it would be incomprehensible for the nearest times; for to seal up or to shut up has nothing in common with incomprehensibility, but it is used in the sense of *keeping*. “A document is sealed up in the original text, and laid up in archives (shut up), that it may remain preserved for remote times, but not that it may remain secret, while copies of it remain in public use” (Kliefoth). The meaning of the command, then, is simply this: “Preserve the revelation, not because it is not yet to be understood, also not for the purpose of keeping it secret, but that it may remain preserved for distant times” (Kliefoth). (Keil

, 1978
, p.319)

Notice however, Keil’s comments rebuffing the concept proffered by SDAs that to “shut” meant to keep it from being understood:

If Daniel had been required to keep the prophecy secret according to the command in ver.26, then the remark “no one understood it” would have been

²⁵ Referring to the use of *nitsdaq* in Dn8:14, he says, “the differences are occasioned in part by the fact that Gabriel spoke to Daniel in Hebrew, not English; and he said in Hebrew, “Then shall the sanctuary be *nitsdaq*” employing a word which occurs *only this one time* in the entire Hebrew part of the Bible.” (p.181). Thus Maxwell wants us to believe that it was the angel who chose the word *nitsdaq* and not Daniel. Does this mean all lexical studies on the use of *nitsdaq* and cognate words in related Semitic languages is a futile effort and that we should be praying for the angel Gabriel to deliver us a copy of *The Angellic Guide to the Use of the Hebrew Language*, Gabriel Publishing Association, New Jerusalem, so that we can understand how the angels interpret the word?

altogether superfluous. But if he was required only to preserve the prophecy, and it deeply moved him, then those around him must have had a knowledge of it, and the amazement of Daniel would become the greater when not only he but all others failed to understand it...The fulfilment of this vision can alone lead to its full understanding.” (Ibid, p.319)

2. Gleason Archer

For Gleason Archer the word “shut” relates to issues over preservation, and preservation of the document in Hebrew. Notice these comments:

The close of chapter 8 contains Gabriel’s command (v.26) for Daniel to keep confidential (“seal up”) the predictions just revealed to him because they are related to the “distant future.” Hence Daniel recorded them in Hebrew, rather than in the Aramaic of chapters 2-7. This may well have been the reason why the subsequent chapters of Daniel were also written in Hebrew. Certainly, 12:9 contains the same injunction or principle of secrecy: “The words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.” It is also significant that Gabriel states that the vision refers to “many days” ...i.e., to many years in the future. (1985, p.105)²⁶

²⁶ A good example of the “shutting” or “closing” of documents is those messages of Babylonian guards throughout the empire who sent messages to the king sealed in a closed clay envelope. Note this comment from the School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen’s University, Belfast, after they carried out their own creation of these clay enveloped messages:

“ D: The clay tablet may originally have been concealed in a clay envelope. How did this work?

Many of these tablets would have been used to send messages to the King and in order for them to stay confidential they were put inside clay envelopes. This theory was tested and it worked quite well, the envelopes held the tablet and when they were cracked opened and the tablet survived unharmed.”

It will be noticed that though the king’s messages were “shut” and “sealed” within the envelope so that no one could read them. The principle was one of confidentiality so that the message may get to the person to whom it was intended. It did involve secrecy. This all applies very specifically to the instructions to Daniel at Dn8:26.

Notice these statements from literature referring to the use of messages between the outposts and the king:

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"Around the time of Sargon (2334-2279 BCE) envelopes were invented; they were slips of clay formed around the cuneiform tablet. Envelopes protected the contents from damage and even fraud; that is, the envelopes safeguarded against someone moistening the clay and changing the numbers. Sometimes the text was repeated on the envelope and also sealed. In the case of a dispute, the enveloped could be opened and the contents examined and compared. Sometimes envelopes opened in modern times have been found with information written on them different from that of the tablets inside."

pages 241-241

And especially notice his comments at ch.12:4:

Here Daniel is told to “close up”...the scroll containing the text of this prophecy and to “seal”...it till the end time, when all these predictions and promises will be fulfilled. In the Ancient Near East, important documents such as contracts, promissory notes, and deeds of conveyance were written out in duplicate. The original document was kept in a secure repository, safe (“closed up”) from later tampering, in order to conserve the interests and rights of all parties to the transaction. Though copies might be made from it, the original was to remain secure so that it might be consulted if any future challenge of its terms were made.

The practice of “sealing” was likewise derived from Near Eastern usage. In Mesopotamian cultures, it was usual to write out the terms of contractual promises in a clay tablet and then run the cylinder seals of the attesting scribes over the bottom section. First of all came the seal of the recording scribe himself who in this case was Daniel, and then the seals of the various witnesses who heard the exact words as they were dictated to the scribe. Once the document was thus sealed, it became the official and unchangeable text. It was usual to have the second tablet, the official copy, likewise witnessed by seal. Daniel, then, was to certify by his personal seal, as it were, to the faithfulness of the foregoing text as an exact transcript of what God had communicated to him through his angel. Thus this record would be preserved unaltered down to the day when all the predictions would be fulfilled. (*Ibid*, pp. 153f.)

"From the second millennium BCE onwards, rulers frequently corresponded by mail. Major archives have been discovered at Mari on the middle Euphrates and at El-Amarna in Egypt. More than three hundred letters were found at El-Amarna from Hittite, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Mitannian kings and from Egyptian vassals in Syria and Palestine. The language commonly used was Akkadian, the language of diplomacy."

pages 273-274

"The Neo-Assyrian Empire (ninth-seventh centuries BCE) did little to improve the roads it inherited in conquered territories. A few roads were even abandoned. But the Assyrian empire made one major change: the central government took over the management of the roads. Government maintenance brought about speedy messenger service to and from the capital and the rapid movement of troops against enemies within and without. The roads were kept in good repair, and exact information as to the terrain and distances was essential. The principal roads were called 'royal roads.'

"Official letters and legal documents referred to stations built along the royal roads, used as resting places for troops and civilian travellers and as way stations in delivering royal mail. A royal correspondent wrote: 'People at the road stations pass my letters to each other and bring them to the king, my lord.' A regular postal service was provided by mounted couriers, with relays at each road station. The roads were measured with great precision, not only in 'double hours' but in smaller measures from 360 meters down to 6 meters. That is, the distances on the royal roads were based on actual measurements using surveyor's cords of standard lengths.

"Highways were well defined and sufficiently permanent to be named as boundaries of fields in documents of land sales. ... These were clearly recognized as permanent highways, maintained by the state. (...) Kings Sargon II and Sennacherib had those segments of royal roads closest to their respective capitals, Dar-Shurukkin and Nineveh, paved with stone slabs and supplied with roadside stellae as milestones. The roads were paved for a short distance outside the cities and then quickly degenerated into a track and finally disappeared completely. This practice was subsequently discontinued until the Romans applied it, on a far greater scale, to their own imperial road network."

And here is his comment on ch. 12:9:

The more immediate answer of the angel relates to the faithful completion and custody of the prophetic scroll itself. The words are “closed up” (...the plural of the word in v.4, where it means “keep close” or “preserve in a safe place”), as an official, validated document. The words are also to be “sealed”...by the recording scribe, Daniel himself, as a faithful transcript of God’s revealed truth.” (*Ibid*, p. 156)

3. E.J Young

On Dn8:26 Young says:

Since the prophecy was for a long time (many days) Dan. was to shut up the prophecy. This does not mean that he was necessarily to keep it secret, but that he should preserve it. “Preserve the revelation, not because it is not yet to be understood, also not for the purpose of keeping it secret, but that it may remain preserved for distant times” (Kliefoth).” (1949, p.181)

On Dn 12:4 he says:

To Dan. is given the injunction to shut up (i.e., guard, preserve, protect, as in 8:26) the words which have just been revealed to him (i.e., 10:2-12:3) and to seal (for the sake of preserving) the book (the book in which these words are found). Kliefoth has well brought out the force of the words “A document is sealed up in the original text, and laid up in the archives (shut up), that it may remain preserved for remote times, but not that it may remain secret, while copies of it remain in public use.” The words, therefore, are the words which have just been revealed and which Dan. has just written down, but the “book” evidently includes more than these words. Else, why should this designation have been chosen? This last revelation formed a conclusion, and the entire body, i.e., the book was now to be sealed. *Until the time*] – Dan. is to seal the book until the time of the end. He himself has now completed his prophetic ministry and is, as one of his last acts, to lay away the book that it may be preserved. The time of the end is the consummation, when the Lord shall return from heaven. The “words” which Dan. was to shut up contained revelations which extend to the “end.”

On Dn 12:9 he says:

It is not necessary that Dan. himself should understand the answer to his question, for it does not have immediate application to him. There will come a time, however, when the words are needed and then they will be understood. Therefore, they are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

4. H. C. Leupold

26 “But the vision of the evenings and the mornings which was told is truth. But do thou preserve the vision, for it pertains to a time far in the future.”...

The verb that follows has received various interpretations. It is *sethom*, which basically does mean to “shut up.” But it cannot here mean “keep it a secret” or “hide” or the like. To “hide or conceal” is a different verb – *sathar*. The shutting up is here done with the purpose of keeping the vision intact, and

we have therefore translated “preserve.” For a similar New Testament thought see Rev. 22:10. The reason advanced agrees with this: “for it pertains to a time far in the future.” From the setting that had been given at the beginning of the chapter, Daniel was able to discern that the vision pertained to a not very remote future. But he was unable to note that this more immediate future was typical of the remote future of which the angel now also tells him. As far as the more immediate future was concerned, Daniel might have transmitted the truth heard to faithful men by word of mouth; and it might have lived on by sound tradition until the times for which it was intended. But in that case it would have been completely lost for the “time *far* in the future.” So Daniel was to take such precautions about the preservation and manifolding of the manuscript as might be necessary so that the document could be preserved for a long time to come. Nothing about it was intended to be kept secret. God’s revelation is never of a such a sort in any case. God reveals so that what He has given may be revealed. There would be no good sense in revealing for the purpose of keeping secret. But the critics give this meaning to this harmless word to make it appear that when men of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes discovered this pseudo –Daniel they might have an explanation as to why this book was seemingly kept secret so long, and so they might be kept from inquiring into the origin of this apocryphal book. This feature of the book was to help to gain it a place in the Old Testament church. Here would be the basis for the *pia fraus*²⁷ that is supposed to have helped the book of Daniel, though not written by Daniel, to be accepted as though it had been. (1949, pp. 369-71).

On ch..12:4 Leupold says:

“And thou, Daniel, preserve the vision and seal the book till the time of the end; many shall diligently peruse it, and knowledge shall be increased.

This is the last statement of this last vision. If Daniel had any misgivings as to whether this vision was intended for him personally or was to be offered of the general use of God’s people for times to come, he here receives orders from on high to satisfy his mind on this point; and these orders bid him to preserve the book and to make it available for those who in years to come shall need just such a writing as this.

In connection with our interpretation of 8:26 we discussed the correct meaning of the verb *sethom*, which we there and here translate “preserve.” The sealing of the book is to serve the same purpose. “The vision” and “the book,” of course, refer to the same thing, namely, the vision that began with 11:2. Such a smaller document may in the Hebrew also be called a “book,” for *sepher* may mean any document, long or short. When the article is used with “end,” that word apparently gets to mean the end of all things. It is then that this part of Daniel’s book will come into its own in a special sense.” (Ibid, p. 534)

On Dn 12:9 Leupold says:

And he said, “Go thy way, Daniel, for preserved and sealed are the words until the time of the end.”

The spirit of the answer is: “There is no use trying to get any farther in the understanding of these matters; they simply will not be fully understood until these things come to pass.”...As for these difficult words, they are “preserved and sealed.” These verbs are the same as those used in v.4, and the latter of the

²⁷ *Pia fraus*: a *fraus pia* is Latin for “a pious fraud.” I think this is the intention of the writer.

two is found in 8:26. The supposition is that, even as Daniel himself was to take precautions to have these revelations safeguarded for future times, so the providence of God would work on the same direction, and as a result these good disclosures would be made available of the time when they would meet a felt want. Then men will no longer ask in vain what the words mean, for the developing situation itself would apparently throw the needed light on them, and so men should be guided by this light. So the answer means: "You cannot know them now, but men shall know them hereafter." The time however, when these words will be understood is designated as "the time of the end," meaning, without a doubt, the final end of all things. (*Ibid*, pp.543f.)

5. Norman Porteous:

Norman Porteous has a different view from those above but is supported by some Bible translations that use the concept of "secret."

The assurance given to Daniel that the vision is true is intended for the readers of the book, whose faith in a desperate time the writer wishes to confirm. The fiction that the vision was prophetic and experienced by Daniel centuries before is kept up by the injunction to keep it secret, since, though given to him, its reference is to a distant time and it has no relevance for Daniel's contemporaries. It is quite probable that the original readers were not deceived but understood that this was the writer's way of saying that the events of history are under the control of God. (1979, pp. 129f.)

And on ch. 12:4, Porteous says:

In accordance with the fiction Daniel is bidden seal the book, since its contents are to be kept secret until the time of final crisis to which it refers draws near, i.e., till the time when the book was actually written. Montgomery (p. 473) helpfully compares Rev. 22.10 where the command is given not to seal the book since the time of fulfilment was near at hand when it was written. Sealing and concealing are necessary parts of the fiction of attributing a prophecy pseudonymously to some figure of the past." (*Ibid*, p. 171)

6. Walvoord

In concluding the interpretation, Gabriel makes plain that the vision will not become immediately understandable to Daniel and that its fulfilment will occupy many days...It is obvious that the intent of the vision was to record the prophecy for the benefit of future generations rather than for Daniel himself. Unlike the previous instances where Daniel was the interpreter of divine revelation, here Daniel becomes the recorder of it without understanding all that he wrote or experienced. (1971, p.199)

And on Dn12:4 'Walvoord says:

...Daniel is now instructed to "shut up the words and seal the book." In this statement, it is made that the revelation, although enlightening and reassuring even to Daniel, was not intended primarily to interpret these events to him alone. The prophecies thus revealed were to have primary application to those living in "the time of the end." In fact, the entire revelation, even the portions already fulfilled through Daniel 11:35 are designed to help those seeking to trust in the Lord in their affliction at the climax of the age. ...In verse 9, Daniel is once again informed that the revelation given to him will not be completely understood until the time of the end. Daniel is not rebuked for his curiosity, as it

is only natural to ask the questions which he raised. The primary purpose of the revelation, however, was to inform those who would live in the time of the end. The confirming interpretation of history and prophecy fulfilled would be necessary before the final prophecies could be understood. b

7. Conclusion

Thus, there is a strong tradition (Porteous' and Walvoord's view notwithstanding) among non – SDA writers of a variety of persuasions supporting the valid position that the “shutting” the vision was an action to preserve the record of the revelations to Daniel rather than to keep the message unknown. The concept of sealing (as an ancient system for *locking* a document) could support the concept advanced by SDAs of something being kept secret, *if* there were no copies of the original made. We have no original but we have copies of his works so one can assume that in the sealing of his document for posterity, a copy or copies of it were made for general use. So then, the locking of the original work would have the sense of preservation of the original against which contentions over the contents of the copies could be verified at a future time.

Gleason Archer's information on the method of “shutting” and “sealing” a document is incontrovertible and stands far in advance of Porteous' and Walvoord's view. Information about this system of archiving in Persian, Babylonian, and even Assyrian times has been established for in excess of a century.²⁸ Keil, Kliefoth, Leupold and Young are typical of many others who see the relationship of the words (“shut” and “seal”) to the contemporary archiving customs of the scribes in Daniel's day.

The position of Porteous, Walvoord and those translators that use the concept of “secret” with *s^ethom* ignore the valid point made by Keil when he says

, “If Daniel had been required to keep the prophecy secret according to the command in ver.26, then the remark “no one understood it” would have been altogether superfluous. But if he was required only to preserve the prophecy, and it deeply moved him, then those around him must have had a knowledge of it, and the amazement of Daniel would become the greater when not only he but all others failed to understand it...The fulfilment of this vision can alone lead to its full understanding.” (*Ibid*, p.319)

Furthermore, the actions of Daniel in Dn8:27 of sharing it with others AFTER he is told to “*s^ethom* the vision”, clearly shows that he did not understand the command “*s^ethom*” to mean to “keep it secret.” If he discussed the revelation with his peers after he had the vision and recovered, then from his statement in v27, they too were baffled by the revelation. If Walvoord and Porteous are correct, then Daniel did the wrong thing in discussing the revelation with his colleagues. His obligation would have been to *keep it from his colleagues*.

²⁸ Rawlinson's work began in 1835; Austin Layard in 1840; George Smith in 1857 ([Baumann, 1968](#), [Adkins, 2003](#)); University of Pennsylvania in 1889 discovering the tablets of Murashu (Thompson, 1962, p.215) See also [Olmstead, 1921](#), pp.542-554; [Roux, 1980](#), pp.328 –333;

A second point to consider is that if the command means to keep it secret, then the action of writing down the visions is a direct violation of the command, because Daniel is making the vision known by committing it to writing²⁹. But Daniel seemingly does the opposite to what Porteous and Walvoord indicate the command means. Not only does he commit his visions to writing, he writes half of the book in Aramaic – the language fast becoming the language of choice in business and diplomacy. It is as if he wants people to understand it and read it. Why did he not choose Old Babylonian, the nostalgic archaic language of yesteryear even in Daniel's time? This was the language chosen by Nebuchadnezzar to compose inscriptions into while Daniel was head of state affairs. (Keller, 1956, p.296). Old Babylonian would have been the perfect language to write them in because very few understood it. He would just have to trust God to be able to teach the people of God at the time of the end to understand it.

The actual command to “*seal* the vision” is impossible if it means to keep it secret, for how could this be accomplished? How could he on the one hand keep it a secret from the present and future generations and yet make it understandable for the generation for which it was intended at the time of the end? How could he write it, store it, etc so that it could be kept secret until the right time?

- He could write in English, which though no one then knew, God could have taught him the language of those who would live in 1798 A.D. quite easily. God could have just spelt out the words to him.
- He could bury it in a sealed jar trusting that God would send someone there to dig it up around 1798 A.D.
- How else could he do it? If he wrote it in Aramaic, everyone would be able to read it? If he wrote it in Hebrew, the Jews would be able to read it and it would not be secret anymore.
- Perhaps if he put curses on the book for anyone who opened it before 1798 A.D.; that might keep it secret, but then again, it may entice some irreverent souls to read it just out of curiosity. That would cause the book to be known so that would be a useless tactic.

Clearly, *this* definition of the meaning of the command (“secret”) does not do justice to the sense of the text nor does Daniel's actions after the command indicate that he understood secrecy to be involved in the meaning. Another factor to consider is that copies were usually made of the original document and these copies were kept at hand by the owners, whilst the original was sealed away for preservation and authentication of the copies, if there ever there were questions. So, while in one

²⁹ Notice a similar command in Rev 10:4: And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, “Seal up what the seven thunders have said and write them not!” (NIV) Since SDAs use “seal” and “shut” interchangeably, the concept here is that the command to seal up means keep them to yourself –thus, “do not write them, keep them confidential – just between you and Me.”

sense, the actual text of the original is kept closed from being seen, it is always known because there are copies of it to guide the seeker to an understanding of the contents. And now, with the autographs³⁰ long disappeared, the task is the preservation of the text based on the oldest reliable copies.

3B. Use of Dn8: 26 and Dn 12:4

In this section, I examine the SDA usage of these two texts. I conclude that

- There has to be a dependence on a whole range of assumptions to endorse the SDA view that it was due to a lack of knowledge that Daniel did not understand.
- There is an unsupported assumption between the concept that the vision was to be shut and Daniel's statement on the lack of knowledge in v27.
- Daniel's statement fits correctly with the concept of "preservation" both from the concept that the vision and the explanation were complete, and the observation that the chapter with the first command to "shut" is written in Hebrew.
- The SDA position that only "part" of the vision is to be shut is fallacious since there is no scriptural evidence to support such a position. The text says to shut the vision. No qualification here. The full vision is intended. If "shut" means "to preclude from understanding," they have a problem because most of the vision is understood, in the SDA view. But if "shut" means preserve, then it fits the text naturally.

(i) The problem for the SDA explanation here

In the section with the same title in the [Method](#) above, I asserted that SDA writers merged their comments on these two texts at Dn 12:4 because that text offered them the association of the shutting with the 1260 day period. This enabled them to make the link to the validity of the explanation of the 2300 days after 1798 more easily than can be done at Dn8:26.³¹

1. The "shutting" in Dn8 is due to the angel not supplying information

As quoted [elsewhere](#), SDA writers assert that an essential detail in the explanation of Dn8 is missing – the starting date for the 2300 days. The vision was

³⁰ That is, the original that Daniel or his scribes wrote.

³¹ This accords with Keil's statement that the phrase "to many days" in v26 "is not to be identified with [Heb "time of the end"] in ver.17, but designates only a *long time*; and this indefinite expression is here used because it was not intended to give exactly again the termination according to vers. 17 and 19, but only to say that the time of the end was not near." ([Ibid](#), p.319)

“shut” for “many days” i.e., until “the time of the end” (Dn12: 4) when it will be opened and that which is shut will be explained.

The problem with this assertion is that it assumes every other assumption in by [assumption list](#) so far including:

Assumption 6: Daniel’s statement in Dn 8:27 that he did not understand the mar’ê meant that he did not understand the 2300 days.

Assumption 5: Daniel was sick *before* the instruction of Daniel was finished

Assumption 4: The instruction of Gabriel to Daniel in ch8 is *incomplete*.

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

Assumption 2: The meaning of “vision” in Dn 8:13, where it asks “How long shall be the vision...?” refers specifically to vs2-12 and not to vs9-11.

Assumption 1: The two Hebrew words in Dn 8-12 translated by the English word “vision” have specialised meanings that support the SDA argument linking the 70 weeks of Dn 9 with the 2300 days of Dn 8.

.

And so, the endless, mindless circle of assumptions goes around again. The reader is referred to the information at those sections for a rebuttal of each assumption. It can be said however, that none of these assumptions are valid.

The real reason Daniel is told to shut the vision is because it is to be preserved for the later generations of posterity who will need it and use it. I refer to [other writers](#) who confirm this position.

The command is given to “shut the vision” in Dn8:26, not because it has information about the chronology of the end times, but because the information in the vision is pertinent for those who will live in the distant future. In the words of the *SDABC*: “The fulfilment of the various details of the vision of this chapter would extend into the distant future.” ([Nichol, 1976](#), p.847); The vision was going to take a *very* long time to complete. The command has nothing to do with the issue over the starting date of the 2300 days.

Dn8:26 states that it was the *whole* vision that was “shut,” not just the section of the vision relating to the last days. There is no evidence that the concept of “shutting” can be limited to those last day predictions. Both SDAs and Ellen White try to slip “a part” into the text to justify their theories. It does not fit the text. Daniel is commanded to “shut the (whole) vision.” I challenge any SDA to prove that the words “the vision” lexically really only means “part of the vision.” It applies to “*the vision*.” Hence, any definition of the meaning of “shut” had to incorporate the whole vision.

It cannot be argued that the statement in Dn8:26: “And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days” means that the explanation of the (2300) evening and morning vision shall be shut up for many days, viz., after the time of the end (1798 A.D.). That is twisting the text to say something that is not intended. The grammar of the verse demands that the “it” which shall be for many days, is the “vision.” It will continue for a long time – past many generations of people; past even empires.

The most natural meaning of the word “shut” relates to the issues of preservation for prosperity. The issue is about ensuring the survival of the text so that those who would live in that distant future when the horrors would begin (Dn8:9-1) would be assured of having access to the revelations given to Daniel.

It is my proposal that Daniel answered this command in two ways. First, he wrote the document in Hebrew rather than the new language the Persians had popularised – Aramaic. Presumably, he did this because this was the language of God’s people, and if they could read the Torah, they could read Daniel. He may have felt that if a long time were going to elapse between his present and the time of the end, the language of Persia would disappear. His prophecies spoke of the Greeks and then another power, the Romans (unnamed to him), so how could he know whether the languages he knew would be understood in the end time after two other empires had foistered their language on the conquered. I suppose he made the assumption that if the temple survived to the end, as his prophecy said it would, and the daily sacrifices would also be still in operation, then hopefully, the Torah would still be read. This would lead him to the conclusion that the safest choice for longevity would be to write the visions in Hebrew.

My second proposal for Daniel’s method of obeying this command was to “shut” the book in the archival facilities that presumably had for the past 140 years prior to Ezra taking the Torah (and presumably the other writings) back to Jerusalem. There were already stored the writings of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah (and perhaps Deutero Isaiah), the writings of Moses and the other writings that had survived and recovered since the exile had begun³². These would have been brought back to Jerusalem from Babylon along with the Torah.³³ They would have been associated with a synagogue in Babylon, and a system would have been in place to ensure their protection and preservation. There would be no better place for Daniel to place his writings than to place them there. (See [appendix](#) for further comments),

2. The “shutting” in Dn12 of “the words” is due to the fact that information will not be given till 1798 AD.

This sub-assumption is likewise dependent upon [Assumption 9](#). This assumption is incorrect because the information *is* given – in Dn 9 – a little over a

³² That is a longer period than the life of the present Ellen G White Estate archives. And look at the archival system they have created in their time!

³³ For Ellen White’s comments on this read this [footnote](#).

decade later than the vision of Dn8. The Advent movement in the 19th century also argued that the explanation to the 2300 days lie, not in any unique inspiration given to Miller or any one else, but in chapter 9 of the book of Daniel. Thus, the

command in Dn12 to “shut the words” is an indication that the revelation has been completed. What Gabriel came to convey to Daniel is now accomplished. As Maxwell has said, “It is very likely that the visions could have ceased at this point...” (1981, p.301)

There is no evidence in the text that Daniel is told to shut the words because they had not been explained. As Ford points out, the entire vision is an explanation and amplification of the earlier vision in Dn8. (1978, p.239) If, according to SDA theories, everything in the vision in Dn8 had been explained except the 2300 days (which in itself was explained in Dn9), then further explanation would only *deepen* understanding, not *reduce* it. Thus, if Ford is correct, and there is every reason to believe he is, then Daniel was truly correct in saying that he understood the revelation. His quest for information beyond the horizon (Dn12:8) does not mitigate this claim.

3. How do these two different concepts fit the text?

Even if we do not highlight the fact that the unexplained portion of Dn8 is explained a little over a decade later, not 2,500 years later;

Even if we do not highlight the fact that the “shut” words of the revelation in Dn10-12 were understood by Daniel;

There is an inconsistency in their own logic here. They have changed the meaning of “shut” from ch 8 to ch12.

(ii) Meaning of Dn8;26

1. How is material “not shut”?

In the view of SDAs, the material in the vision that is explained is not shut. Examples of this include:

SDABC:

12:4 Shut up the words... This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel’s prophecy that dealt with the last days. (Nichol, 1976, p.879)

Maxwell

In Daniel 12: 3 Gabriel promised that the wise shall shine like the stars... Then he said, “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” It is very likely that the visions could have ceased at this point; but Daniel appears to have been startled at being told to “shut up the words.” He wanted eagerly to “understand,” and in his visions he had frequently been encouraged to do so.

Now he learns that something has to remain locked up until almost the end of the world. **Gabriel cannot have meant that all the information in the book of Daniel was to be “shut up” until the time of the end.** The identity of the head of gold as Babylon and of the ram as “Media and Persia” and of the goat as Greece is stated explicitly within the book, beyond all doubt or mystery. But Babylon, Persia and Greece were empires which ruled in Daniel’s own day and in his immediate future. The events to be “shut up” were only those that would occur near the end.” (1981, p. 301)[Emphasis mine –FB]

Ford

This verse [Dn12:4], coupled with 8: 14-19, makes it clear that “the time of the end” begins with the unsealing of the closed portions of Daniel. When the prophecy of the 2300 years was illuminated by the Spirit of God in the 1840’s, then it could be said that the seal was being removed from the book, and with the end of that period (1844) the time of the end commenced (cf. Rev 10:6 with 14:6,7). (1978, p. 281)

2. How is material shut?

In the view of SDAs, the material that is **not** explained is shut. Examples of this include:

Ellen White:

There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time – the period of the 2300 days. (1888, p.325)

But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal “to the time of the end.”(1888, p.356)

The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. (White, E., 1898, p.234)

SDABC:

The commentary at Rev 10: 1,2 says: “Daniel had been instructed to “shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end” (Dan.12:4). This admonition applies particularly to the part of Daniel’s prophecies that deals with the last days (see on ch. 12:4), and doubtless especially to the time element of the 2300 days (ch.8:14) as it relates to the preaching of the first, second and third angel’s messages (Rev. 14:6-12). Inasmuch as the message of the present angel [this quote is from the section in Rev.10 which sees an angel standing on the earth and the sea– FB] deals with time, and presumably with events at the time of the end, when the book of Daniel was to be unsealed (Dan.12:4), it seems reasonable to conclude that the little book open in the hand of the angel was the book of Daniel. With the presentation to John of the little book open, the sealed portions of Daniel’s prophecy are revealed. The time element, pointing out the end of the 2300-day prophecy, is made clear. Consequently the present chapter focuses upon the time when the proclamation of vs. 6, 7 was made, that is, during the years 1840 to 1844”...”(Nichol, 1957, p. 797)

Maxwell

The events to be “shut up” were only those that would occur near the end.” (1981, p. 301)

We need to remember that not everything in the book of Daniel was sealed. The head of gold was identified at once as symbolizing Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom of Babylon. “You are the head of gold,” Daniel told the king. “After you shall arise another kingdom.” Daniel 2: 38, 39. In chapter 8 the second and third prophetic animals were quickly identified as Media-Persia and Greece. See verses 20, 21.

The one aspect of the visions that baffled even Daniel himself was the long time prophecies. After seeing the ram and a goat and hearing about the 2300 days (or 2300 “*evenings and mornings*”) in chapter 8, he heard someone explain what the animals meant; but he also heard someone say, “The vision of *the evening and the mornings* which has been told is true; but *seal up* the vision, for it pertains to *many days* hence.” “I was appalled by the vision,” Daniel commented, “and did *not understand* it.” Daniel 8: 26, 27. (1985, p.276)

Maxwell continues to make a link between the sealing of the 2300 days and the unlocking of it around 1798 AD.

It is a matter of record that Daniel’s long-time prophecies have come to be better and better understood as time has gone along. (Ibid)

To show how the understanding of the 2300 days developed, he first shows how the understanding of the 70 weeks developed. Then he shows how the historicist’s interpretation of the 1260 days developed. Thirdly, he shows how the historicist’s understanding of the 1260 days encouraged them to apply the same principles to the 2300 days:

The fulfilment of the 1260 days as 1260 years confirmed the understanding of the 2300 days as 2300 years and this became a key to the further understanding of the sanctuary prophecy of Daniel 8: 14: “For [or rather, *until*] two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the *sanctuary* shall be restored to its rightful state.” (Ibid, p.278)

Ford:

for the first time in Daniel, the chapter closes with the statement that neither Daniel nor anyone else could understand the revelation just given him. But 12:4, 9, 10, assures us that in the last days “knowledge shall increase” and the visions that have been “shut up” (8:26 KJV) will be unsealed, so that “the wise shall understand.” Thus, if these indeed are the last days, *we have every right to expect light on this eighth chapter beyond all that other generations have received.* Evidently, then we must not expect to find all that God has for us on this chapter in the commentaries of former times. Indeed, if knowledge is now to be increased on this prophecy, previous expositions will be exposed as falling apart. Only in “the time of the end” would the book be unsealed. (1978, p.161)

Ministerial Association:

Gabriel had to delay his explanation of the time period – the only aspect of the vision he had not yet explained. Daniel 9 describes his return to complete this responsibility. Daniel 8 and 9, then, are connected, the latter being the key to unlocking the mystery of the 2300 days.” (Ministerial Association, 1988, p.323)

In this quote, though they say the explanation of Dn8 is in Dn9, yet the conceptual link is here between the concept of something that was “not yet explained” being “locked” like a “mystery,” and the explaining it as the “unlocking” of “the mystery.”

3. How Dn 9 confounds this concept?

The problem this definition raises for SDAs is this: **if an item is explained to Daniel, it is considered understood, and thereby not included in the “shut” items of the vision.** This reasoning is important so that SDAs can show how the Advent movement, which came after 1798, opened the explanation of the “shut” items. But the next point they have failed to either consider or evaluate. **The starting date for the 2300 days was given only a little over a decade after the vision of Dn8. This is surely the “opening” of the vision, since if it is explained to Daniel, it is considered understood.** The implications of this point include:

1. Does this mean the time of the end began in the first year of Ahasuerus, King of Persia, King of the Chaldeans?
2. If they admit that Dn9 is the correct explanation of the 2300 days, but do *not* admit that the end of the 1260 years occurred before the explanation of Dn9, then they have a dilemma:
 - a. Either their definition of “shut” is incorrect since the understanding of the 2300 days would have been available even before the SDA prediction for the expiry of the 1260 days, or;
 - b. Or their definition of “shut” is correct and their definition of the expiry of the 1260 days is incorrect; or,
 - c. Both their definition of the meaning of “shut” and their definition of the expiry of the 1260 days is also incorrect, or,
 - d. They could argue that Dn9 is *not* the correct explanation of the 2300 days. But that would create greater problems than they are trying to avoid since they would have to use Dn9 to justify their explanation of the 2300 days.
3. If the revelation of Dn9 is considered the proper explanation of the unexplained portion of the vision of Dn8, then the starting date of the time period has never been hidden from the world.
4. If the SDA version of the 2300 days is correct, then Daniel would have understood the very things SDAs now explained as revealed for the first time by the Advent movement, because their assertion is that their explanation of this date is just the way it is in the Scripture.
5. Therefore, since the time prophecy has been open since the explanation given in Dn9, it has always been open for the general understanding of

those who could read the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Greek (when it was translated into that language) or any other language.

(iii) Meaning of Dn12:4

1. Meaning of “the words” and “the book.”

The meaning of “the words” in Dn12:4 refer to the revelation just given by Gabriel in Dn10-12 or it can refer to all the revelation given to Daniel. Taking the first option first, that is, that “the words” and “the book” could mean the vision of Dn10 –12.. That is the position of U. Smith:

The “words” and “book” here spoken of doubtless refer to the things which had been revealed to Daniel in this prophecy. These things were to be shut up and sealed until the time of the end;...(1944, p.313)

Keil acknowledges that this position is possible too:

As in the former case [Heb. héhazôn, the vision –FB] denotes the vision interpreted to him by the angel, so here [hadd^obarîm, “the words”-FB] can only be the announcements of the angel, ch.xi. 2-xii. 3, along with the preceding appearance, ch.x.2-xi. 1, thus only the revelation designated as [Heb. dâbâr –FB], ch. X.1. (1978,484)

- The meaning of the “book” refers to the whole book of Daniel, just as we have it today. Keil takes this position:

It is disputed whether [Heb. hassépher, the book –FB] is only the last revelation, chx.-xii. (Hävernicks, v.Leng., Maurer, Kran.) or the whole book (Bertholdt, Hitzig, Auberlen, Kliefoth). That [Heb. sépher, book-FB] might designate a short connected portion, a single prophecy, is placed beyond a doubt by Nah. 1.1, Jer, li.63. The parallelism of the members of the passage also appears to favour the opinion that [Heb. hassépher, the book –FB] stands in the same meaning as [Heb. hadd^odarîm, the words –FB]. But this appearance amounts to a valid argument only under the supposition that the last revelation stands unconnected with the revelations going before. But since this is not the case, much rather the revelation of these chapters is not the only point of time the last which Daniel received, but also forms the essential conclusion of all earlier revelations, then the expression used of the sealing of this last revelation refers plainly to the sealing of the whole book. That the writing down of the prophecy is here and in ch. viii.26 presupposed as a matter of course, for the receiving of a revelation without committing it to writing is not practicable, so we may without hesitation suppose that Daniel wrote down all the earlier visions and revelations as soon as he received them, so that with the writing down of the last of them the whole book was completed. For these reasons we understand by [Heb. hassépher-the book-FB] the whole book. For, as Kliefoth rightly remarks, the angel will close, ver.4, the last revelation, and along with it the whole prophetic work of Daniel, and dismiss him from his prophetic office, as he afterwards, ver. 13, does, after he has given him, vers, 5-12, disclosures regarding the periods of these wonderful things that were announced. He must seal the book, i.e., guard it securely from disfigurement, “till the time of the end,” because its contents stretch out to the time of the end. (Ibid, p.485)

I favour the second view although as seen from the above statements, the former view is permissible.

2. Meaning of Dn10:1,2

Daniel understood the revelation given to him, in spite of his efforts to pull back the curtain of the future further than Gabriel was commissioned to allow. This text in Dn10 does not refer to Dn9, as the SDA pioneers use to argue. It does not say that Daniel now understood the 2300 days, because Gabriel returned with the revelation about the 70 weeks. The text in Dn10:1,2 refers to the impending material the reader is about to encounter. Daniel has prefixed his writing of the account of the revelation with the reassurance that he understood the revelation, a statement made for the first time in the last section of revelations made to Daniel. When Gabriel's mission was accomplished in Dn12, Daniel could summarise the whole experience of receiving revelations from Gabriel by saying that he understood what Gabriel had shown him. And because Daniel understood it, we can trust that when we read his writings of those revelations, the understanding is there, in the print. Contrary to the unjustified assertions of the SDA church, there is nothing of the visions of Daniel that is not needing an explanation at any later date. Everything given in the book of Daniel, had been explained. Of course, there were the bigger questions. There were many implications in the revelations that people have been debating for centuries. But the mechanics of explaining the essential material had been done.

In my paper on Assumption No.1 I show in Dn8, there is a significant amount of detail in the vision that is never explained in the entire book. Conversely, there are a significant number of items in the explanation of Dn8:15-26 not occurring in the vision. The point is, that one cannot expect Gabriel to take every jot and tittle of the visions and explain it mechanically. We must remember that Gabriel was talking to a man considered by his peers to be an expert in the mysteries. It is a dynamic revelation, and the level of revelation and explanation is directly related to the expertise of Daniel.

3. Meaning of "is shut" and "is sealed" in v11.

My understanding of this statement to Daniel by Gabriel is that the information Daniel wants to know is beyond what Gabriel has been either shown or given. It *is* known and there *is* information about what Daniel asks, but it is *not available* to either Daniel or Gabriel. Saying that it is "shut up and sealed" is the same as our saying, "It is under lock and key," or "it is under wraps." The effect of the statement is that Daniel is unauthorised to have access to that information at the time Daniel asked for it. But there will come a time when people will ask that question again, and at the right time the information will be given.

This statement in v11 does not refer to the things that Daniel is told to shut up and seal. These are different matters. These are matters that have not be opened and *will* not be opened until the time of the end.³⁴ The statement is not talking about the

³⁴ Keil defines the question of v8: "the question, What is the end of these things? Contains not the meaningless thought, that yet something must follow after the absolute consummation, but the altogether reasonable thought, Which shall be the last of the [Heb *p'laôth*- "wonders" -FB] prophesied of... Thus, Hitzig, who is altogether correct in thus stating the question: "What, i.e., which event is the uttermost, the last of the [Heb *p'laôth*- "wonders" -FB], which stands before the end?" (1978, p.494) If Keil's definition of this question is correct then these things have been opened in the things Jesus

contents of the book of Daniel or the contents of the revelation in Dn10-12. There is a significant difference between the imperative command to Daniel in v4 to “shut” and to “seal”, and the passive participles in v11. In v4 Daniel has a vital part in executing; in v11, Daniel has no part to play in them at all; they are beyond him; they are outside his realm.

Jesus had a similar question put to him by his disciples when he was leaving on a jet plane for heaven, and his answer to the question was “don’t know when I’ll be back again” but he reminded them that His Father in heaven did, and Him alone.³⁵ In that discussion Jesus makes the statement “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.” Acts 1:7. NIV. This is an echo of the very thing Gabriel said to Daniel. As Maxwell has aptly said,

Michael declined to answer the second question and this is surely significant. ...Daniel wasn’t living in the time of the end; so he didn’t need to understand all the details of end-of-time developments. Michael’s answer teaches us that prophecy is provided for practical purposes. It is not given to arouse speculation or to satisfy needless curiosity, no matter how spiritual and Christ-centred our curiosity may be. Although Michael didn’t answer the second question, He did answer his first one...” (1981, p.301f)

Gabriel is using a familiar figure of speech here to Daniel, and it is not the information given to Gabriel that is shut and sealed, but the information that has not yet been given to Gabriel, which is shut and sealed. The information concerning the 2300 days had been given to Daniel in Dn9, and there are no loose threads in the revelations to Daniel at the end of ch12. It is completed, as in the words of Keil, quoted above, “so that with the writing down of the last of them the whole book was completed.” *Loc cit*)

3C. Only part of the vision is referred to in Dn8:26

In this section I look at the problems of the SDA position that argues only a part of the vision was to be shut. I examine how a various SDA writers attempt to justify such a sloppy argument. My argument is that scripture does not support the concept of only a part of the vision to be shut. It says “shut the vision” and it means just that. It is because that are adamant that the word “shut” means to preclude from understanding that they do violence to Dn8:27, rather than letting let the context give them the understanding of the meaning of the word “shut.”

taught, and in the teachings of the apostles and finally in the book of Revelation. These things have be opened (cf the title “Apocalyse” or unveiling) and unsealed (cf Rev 22:10 “Seal them not for the time is at hand.”).

³⁵ Acts ch. 1 with apologies to Peter, Paul and Mary.

Various Attempts at the Meaning

1. Ellen White's Attempt at the Meaning

She describes the development of Miller's views on Dn8:14 in *The Great Controversy* in a way that endorses his position. She says.

In the eighth chapter of Daniel, he [Miller] could find no clue to the starting point of the 2300 days; the angel Gabriel, though commanded to make Daniel understand the vision, gave him only a partial explanation. 1888, p. 325.

Notice these statements from Ellen White:

The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. (White, E., 1898, p.234)

But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal "to the time of the end." (1888, p.356)

"the book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days" (White, E., 1911, p. 585).

The reason given here for the closing of the prophecy was because it "related" to the "time of the end.." In what way did it "relate"?

But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal "to the time of the end." Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," Daniel 12:4 (White, E., 1888, p.356)

Problems with the Attempt of E.G. White.

Clearly she is using Dn12:4 here. She says the text says that he was "bidden to "close up and seal"... "that part of his prophecy which related to the last days." This is a direct contradiction to the plain statement of Dn12:4, where Daniel is told to "close up the words" and "seal the book." The phrase "the words" apply to the present revelation (Dn10 –12) and the phrase "the book" refers to the whole book of Daniel. She has mishandled the text and given no weight to what it says. It says to shut the present revelation (a revelation Daniel said he understood (Dn10:1,2)), and seal the whole book until the time of the end. She has not let the text say what it should because its meaning does not fit with her concept of the significance of the SDA movement in "unlocking" the meaning of the 2300 days.

There is no text she quotes that refers to *part of the vision relating to the last days*. Daniel 8 refers to "the vision," and Dn12 refers to "the words" and "the book."

2. SDA Bible Commentary

Note the following quote from the SDA Commentary that quotes the above references to support their point:

This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel's prophecy that dealt with the last days (AA 585³⁶; DA 234³⁷). Not until that time was reached could a message, based on the fulfilment of these prophecies, be proclaimed (see GC 356³⁸). (Nichol, 1976, p.879)

Problem with the Attempt of the *SDABC*

The commentary does not consider the issues of Dn8:26 as separate from the statement in Dn 12:4.

Notwithstanding the denial of the *SDABC* concerning the reference in Dn1:4 applying to the whole book of Daniel, that *is* what the text says: "seal the book."

The obvious answer to their problem, seeing they acknowledge "a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries," would be to examine their meaning of the word "to shut" and "to seal." But this is never considered. They merely deny that the statement to "seal the book" and "to shut the vision" means to "seal the book" or "to shut the vision." They have not been prepared to give the statement serious consideration. They have merely skirted the issue with a false denial that what it says is what it means.

3. Questions on Doctrine's Attempt

Questions on Doctrine is a little more specific on the detail involved in this understanding:

³⁶ AA:585 says: "In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of Daniel. One is a prophecy; the other is a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days."

³⁷ DA:234 says: " As the message of Christ's first advent announced the kingdom of His grace, so the message of His second coming announces the kingdom of His glory. And the second message, like the first, is based in the prophecies. The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. At that time, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Dan 12:4. 10...We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord's coming in glory as near at hand.

³⁸ GC: 356 says: "The message [of Rev14:6-FB] itself sheds light as to the time when this movement is to take place. It is declared to be a part of the "everlasting gospel;" and it announces the opening of the judgment. The message of salvation has been preached in all ages; but this message is a part of the gospel which could be proclaimed only in the last days, for only then would it be true that the hour of judgment *had* come. The prophecies present a succession of events leading down to the opening of the judgment. This is especially true of the book of Daniel. But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal "to the time of the end." Not till we reach this time could a message concerning the judgment be proclaimed, based on a fulfilment of these prophecies. But at the time of the end, says the prophet, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," Daniel 12:4" (White, 1888, p. 356)

The prophetic symbols of Daniel 8: 2-14...had all been explained by Gabriel, the celestial messenger, in verses 15 to 26. That is, *all except the symbolic time element involved in the 2300 days, with the events marking their close and the time of their beginning.* [Italics theirs –FB] ([Seventh-day Adventists, 1957](#), p. 269)

In their view then, it is the time associated with the **beginning** of the 2300 day prophecy – the dating with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem – and the events associated with the **close** of the 2300 days – the preaching of the events associated with the Advent movement and then the SDA church – that constitute the unknown parts of the prophecy to be unsealed at the time of the end.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

Problems with the Attempt by QOD.

The problem with QOD's view is identical to that of the others quoted – there is no reference in Dn8:26 to *part of the vision*. It plainly says to “shut the vision.”

4. Branson's Attempt at the Meaning of Dn8:26.

Branson takes the same tack as White.

Gabriel had said: “The vision of the evening and the morning [the part that pertaineth to time – days] ... is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.” Daniel 8:26.

When told that this part of his vision was to be “shut up” and that no interpretation of it was to be given, it was more than the prophet could stand, Of this experience he says: “I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the kings business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.” Verse 27. ([1950](#), p.289)

His logic goes something like this: Gabriel called the vision by the time element in the vision – the evening and the morning. In the next clause, when Gabriel says to shut the vision, he was referring to the time part of that vision. Presumably, from Branson's standpoint, we could include the ellided title in the command to produce this: “wherefore shut thou the vision [of the evening and the morning], for it shall be for many days” Verse 27. There fore, in Branson's thinking, Gabriel was not referring to the whole vision, but only the part referring to time. “When told that this part of the vision was to be “shut up” and that no interpretation of it was to be given, it was more than the old prophet could stand...” This is confirmed on the following page of his book when he discusses the vision of Daniel 9.

Every feature of Daniel's previous vision had been fully explained by the angel except that part about the cleansing of the sanctuary – the part pertaining to the 2300 day period. The entire vision is recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel: and it deals with the rise and fall of world empires, the persecution which God's people must endure through the coming ages, and the appearance of the antichrist. See Daniel 8: 3-12. As was stated, part of the vision was made clear. But the startling announcement concerning the 2300 days and the cleansing of the sanctuary was still a dark, deep mystery. This was the part that had been

“shut up,” because, said the angel, “it shall be for many days.” It pertained to the distant future. But now Daniel is to be shown even this mystery. “I am now come forth,” declared Gabriel, “to give thee skill and understanding... Therefore understand the matter, and consider the [vision](#).” (p. 291)

Thus for Branson the part of the vision to be shut at the end of Dn8 is the time element in the vision.

Problem with Branson's Attempt

In the section quoted from page 291, we see Branson's logic finally tie him in a knot from which he could not extract himself. He argues on p. 289 that the part “closed” in the vision was the time element – the 2300 days. When he gets to p. 291, he argues that the time element is *NO LONGER CLOSED* because Gabriel has come to explain it!!! Notice the statement again:

But the startling announcement concerning the 2300 days and the cleansing of the sanctuary was still a dark, deep mystery. This was the part that had been “shut up,” because, said the angel, “it shall be for many days.” It pertained to the distant future. But now Daniel is to be shown even this mystery. “I am now come forth,” declared Gabriel, “to give thee skill and understanding... Therefore understand the matter, and consider the [vision](#).” (p. 291)

So if the “closing” of the 2300 days was because “no interpretation of it was to be given” (p. 289), then the “opening” of the 2300 days was when “Daniel is to be shown even this mystery” (p.291). I'm not sure whether he saw the glaring error (at least in the SDA view) by saying this, but in effect Branson is saying that the 2300 day vision was only shut until Gabriel returned a decade or so later with the explanation. That is to say, the “time of the end” began “in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, king of the Chaldeans” (Dn9:1), when the vision is opened by Gabriel giving to Daniel the interpretation of Dn8. The second alternative is that the vision was only closed till Gabriel gave the interpretation in ch9 and it has been open ever since. This would have to be the logical conclusion of his argument because he has defined “shut” as not receiving an interpretation, but as soon as a prophecy is interpreted, it is “open,” as is the early section of Dn8 and now, after the visitation of Dn9 so also is the understanding of the 2300 days.

In any case, in trying to harmonise his exposition of Scripture with the statement of E.G. White, where she uses the concept of “that part of his prophecy which related to the last days” (1888, p. 356), he has fallen foul of the SDA position of the 2300 day period not being able to be understood until after 1798.

Since Branson only sees the 2300 days as “shut” until Dn9, we are left to conclude that it is not “shut” after Dn9. This means of course, that for all practical purposes, the SDA explanation of 1844 has either always been around, or always able to be understood.

5. U. Smith's Attempt at the Meaning of Dn8:26

In the 1944 edition of Smith's book on Daniel and the Revelation, he has this to say about Dn12:4

Book of Daniel sealed. – The “words” and “book” here spoken of doubtless refer to the things which had been revealed to Daniel in this prophecy. These things were to be shut up and sealed until the time of the end; that is, they were not to be specially studied, or to any great extent understood, until that time. The time of the end, as has already been shown, began in 1798. As the book was closed up and sealed *to* that time, the plain inference is that at that time, or from that point, the book would be unsealed. People would be able to understand it, and would have their attention specially called to this part of the inspired word. (p.313)

Though Smith sees “closing” as inferring precluding from being understood, he does better justice to the meaning of the “words” and “book” as applying to the immediate revelation given to Daniel by Gabriel (“to the things which had been revealed to Daniel in this prophecy”), than what we have seen by White.

Furthermore, he sees that it is the “book” would be opened or unsealed from 1798 on. He gets around the problem of parts of the book being understood before 1798, by defining being shut or sealed as meaning, the prophecies of Daniel “were not to be specially studied, or to any great extent understood, until that time.” Of course, anyone can see that this definition of sealing is not biblical. There is no evidence in Scripture that to “seal” means that the things sealed were “not to be specially studied, or to any great extent understood.” It is only inferred from his knowledge on the history of those aspects of the interpretation of the book of Daniel that suited the SDA position. But notice there is a direct conflict between the two following statement of the *SDABC* and Smith on what has been shut and what has been open:

This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. (Nichol, 1976, p.879)

These things were to be shut up and sealed until the time of the end; that is, they were not to be specially studied, or to any great extent understood, until that time. (Smith, 1944, p.313)

The *SDABC* says that a portion of Daniel has always been open and has been a blessing for thousands. This, for them, augurs against the definition of including the whole book in the statement “seal the book.” Smith, however, takes the view that it did mean the whole book but he evades the obvious by saying, the book was not to be *specially* studied or understood. How on the one hand the portion of the book of Daniel “has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries,” and yet at the same time, “were not to be specially studied, or to any great extent understood, until that time” is a dilemma that defies definition. And further, how someone would put up evidence to justify an answer to these conflicting generalisations would pose an even greater dilemma.

6. Assertion is used as a basis for SDA position on this text

The following example illustrates the blatant way SDA scholars ignore the plain facts of Scripture in order to force an interpretation to suit the arcane ideas of the SDA model on this point:

. Gabriel cannot have meant that all the information in the book of Daniel was to be “shut up” until the time of the end. The identity of the head of gold as Babylon and of the ram as “Media and Persia” and of the goat as Greece is stated explicitly within the book, beyond all doubt or mystery. But Babylon, Persia and Greece were empires which ruled in Daniel’s own day and in his immediate future. The events to be “shut up” were only those that would occur near the end.” (Maxwell, 1981, p. 301)

Instead of Maxwell admitting that the text here provides no immediate textual support to his notion that only a portion is referred to, he boldly puts up his denial of scripture meaning what it says. He offers a few examples such as the symbols of Dn2 and Dn8 that had been explained, as reason for his position. But Daniel would understand that the angel knew that the symbols were explained. So the concept does not mean “lock these visions up so that no-one can know them.” Gabriel’s command means something more than that. What Maxwell has not considered is the possibility that his definition of “shut” is incorrect. He merely asserts “Gabriel *cannot have meant that all of the information in the book was to be shut up until the time of the end.*” [Emphasis mine] Yet, the text forces us to acknowledge that this *was* the intention of Gabriel. That much is as plain as day because that is exactly what he said. Notice Dn12:4:

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

What Gabriel says is clear and unambiguous: Shut up the words (not a part of them) and seal the book (not a part of it) even to the time of the end.

There is no support for the concept of only a portion being “shut,” but there is support for the concept of “shut” as preservation.³⁹

The directive of the implications of this verse is obvious: if the church’s understanding does not fit the plain statement of the text, then they need to adjust their understanding so that it fits with the text, instead of using mere denials and assertions to try and make the text fit the church’s understanding.

7. Conclusion of these Attempts to say only “part” of vision is “shut.”

To accommodate the SDA view that only the end-time details are “shut,” they have wrested the Scriptures to accommodate their purpose in misleading rather than adjusting their ideas to suit the text.

“Words” and “book” do not have any lexical additions in the sentence to indicate that they are to be qualified by any phrase or word at all. The text does not lead us to believe that Gabriel was referring to a *part* of the “words,” or a *part* of the “book.” He speaks specifically about the “words” and about the “book.” He refers to them as full units, not part units.

³⁹ See the section entitled, “[What do non –SDA writers say on the meaning of “shut”?](#)” for the concept of preservation addressed by many writers.

If the concept of “closing” does not fit with the matter to be closed, then the proper conclusion to draw is that there is an error with their definition of “to close.” In this case, the knowledge in the “words” to be closed is, in the SDA view, partly known, partly unknown. If all the contents are “closed,” then the known parts of the “words” cannot be said to be “closed” if they are already known. Therefore, they have to qualify the contents to suit their definition of “closed” rather than agreeing the text specifies all the “words” to be closed, and then asking what can it mean that it is closed if it still can be understood.

3D. True Meaning of 2300 days only after 1798 A.D

This section looks at the argument that only after 1798 AD could a message explaining the true meaning of 2300 day prophecy be given to the world. I show this to be fallacious since:

- If Dn9 is the explanation to Dn8, then an understanding of Dn8 could have been gained by anyone at anytime in history after the information was given to Daniel as recorded in ch.9.
- Ellen White and all other SDA writers surveyed say that Dn9 was understood by Daniel and that, in their view, he knew it was the explanation to the 2300 days of Dn8;
- They cannot have Daniel both having the 2300 days explained to him, yet at the same time, *not* having the 2300 days explained to him. Yet, this is their present position, and the position of Ellen White.

(i) The “Time of the End” began in 1798 AD

It is obvious this assumption is being used here because by using the year-day principle for the 1260 days, we get the conclusion that the “time of the end” began in 1798 AD. Refer to [Assumption 9](#) for a discussion on this.

(ii) The Last Days Portion of Book of Daniel opened after 1798

Many writers indicate that only after 1798 was a true and complete interpretation of the 2300 days possible. Refer to the section entitled, [True Meaning of 2300 days only after 1798 A.D](#). What is the problem with this position? The most obvious one is that they seem to have forgotten that in their own view, the explanation of the unexplained portion of Dn8, is given only a bit more than a decade later, and is recorded in Dn9.

SDAs have forgotten that Dn9 is the explanation of the “shut” item in Dn8

In the SDA view, the ninth chapter of Daniel is the explanation of the unexplained portion of Dn8. Says Ellen White:

In the eighth chapter of Daniel, he [Miller} could find no clue to the starting point of the 2300 days; the angel Gabriel, though commanded to make Daniel understand the vision, gave him only a partial explanation...yet God had bidden

His messenger: "Make this man to understand the vision." That commission must be fulfilled. In obedience to it, the angel, some time afterward, returned to Daniel saying: "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding;" "therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." Daniel 8:27,16; 9:22, 23, 25-27. There was one important point in the vision of chapter 8 which had been left unexplained, namely, that relating to time – the period of the 2300 days; therefore the angel, in resuming his explanation, dwells chiefly upon the subject of time... The angel had been sent to Daniel for the express purpose of explaining to him the point which he had failed to understand in the vision of the eighth chapter, the statement relative to time – "unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." (1888, pp.325ff)

In her own words, the angel was sent to explain to Daniel the very point that was omitted in Dn8 – the starting point of the 2300 days. This was done, not after 1798, but in Dn9. "Yet God had bidden His messenger: "Make this man to understand the vision." That commission must be fulfilled." That commission was fulfilled, according to White, in Dn9. It is safe to assume that Daniel understood Dn9 since there is no comment at the end of the chapter to the effect that he did not understand it. So, if it is answered in Dn9, there is therefore nothing remaining in the vision of Dn8 that is "shut" (in the SDA meaning of "not explained.").

Therefore, the conclusion is obvious that this assumption is incorrect as long as the SDA church wants to argue elsewhere that Dn9 is the explanation of Dn8 and Dn9 was understood by Daniel. The true meaning of the 2300 days has always been available to the readers of Daniel.

3E. Vision being "shut" vs Explanation being "open"

(i) How are the sections of the vision excluded from being "shut"?

This question is answered by SDA authors who indicate that those parts of the vision that were explained by the angel Gabriel are the ones not included in the action of "shutting" the vision.

Notice the SDA Commentary again:

This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. (Nichol, 1976, p.879)

Nichol states that it was the exposition of the 2300-day time prophecy that broke the seal on that time period in the 19th century:

And historically it was not until "the time of the end" had actually been entered, in the early 19th century, that there occurred the simultaneous breaking forth of numerous expositions of the longest time prophecy, that of the 2300 days, The preparatory steps however, covered centuries. (Ibid, p.40)

Ford says a similar thing:

for the first time in Daniel, the chapter closes with the statement that neither Daniel nor anyone else could understand the revelation just given him. But 12:4, 9, 10, assures us that in the last days "knowledge shall increase" and the visions

that have been “shut up” (8:26 KJV) will be unsealed, so that “the wise shall understand.” Thus, if these indeed are the last days, *we have every right to expect light on this eighth chapter beyond all that other generations have received.* Evidently, then we must not expect to find all that God has for us on this chapter in the commentaries of former times. Indeed, if knowledge is now to be increased on this prophecy, previous expositions will be exposed as falling apart. Only in “the time of the end” would the book be unsealed. (1978, p.161)

Maxwell espouses the same sentiment when expressing his view concerning the inadequacy of the Antiochus Epiphanes’ interpretation of the horn power:

At the close of the vision the angel told Daniel to “shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end.” Then another angel commented, “The wise will understand.” In other words, old interpretations are bound to be inadequate. Only interpretations made in relatively recent years have any chance of getting the issues straight. The vision was sealed until the time of the end.” (1981, p. 279)

The conclusion is obvious, that the “shutting” of the vision was because there was no interpretation or explanation of the 2300-day time period. **The other parts are not included in the “shutting” because they were explained.** What these writers have seemed to forgotten is that they also say Dn9 is the explanation of the unknown part of Dn8.

So there is a problem of logic at this nexus. And for the SDA view, it is the nemesis of their argument.

(ii) SDAs differentiate between “vision” and “explanation” in Dn

. The SDA church has developed a contrived view of “vision” in the latter half of the book of Daniel. In Daniel 8 they argue that vs. 2-12 (some say vs. 2-14) are “vision,” whereas vs.15-26 are “explanation.” The two are mutually exclusive. Typical of this are these comments from Shea:

The pattern of the contents of Dan 8 differs somewhat from the pattern of the contents in Dan 7. In Dan8 we have a lengthy vision (vs 2-12) followed by a short intravisional⁴⁰ explanation (vs 13,14), which was followed in turn, for the first time recorded in the book, by a lengthy extravisional explanation (vs 17-26). This extravisional⁴¹ explanation was given to Daniel personally by the heaven-sent interpreter and messenger, Gabriel, i.e., an angelophany. The return of Gabriel with more information for Daniel, as recorded in 9: 21-27, continues the *third* element found in Dan 8 – the extravisional explanation. (Shea, 1981, p. 221)

In Daniel 9 to 12, they argue that none of it is “vision,” but rather, is all “explanation.” Typical of this is Ford:

⁴⁰ For Shea, “intravisional” means *within* the vision, *not outside* of a vision, *a part* of a vision.

⁴¹ For Shea, “extravisional” means *extra to the* vision; *not within* a vision, *not a part* of a vision.

Daniel's final prophecy is a fitting capstone to all that has preceded it, and it is the continued literal explanation of the previous symbolic portrayals. To be specific in explaining the earlier outlines and hazy on this one is to reverse the intention of the Divine Author. Furthermore, all earlier interpretations can be tested by the plain statements here to be found. Particularly those portions of the earlier prophecies concerning the latter days are now enlarged. That is to say, the earlier climaxes – the smiting of the image by the stone, the judgment scene and the coming of the Son of man in the clouds, the “cleansing” of the sanctuary, the pouring out of “the decreed end” upon the abominable desolator, and the establishment of “everlasting righteousness” – all these are now elaborated in plain language. (1978, p. 239)

And from Questions on Doctrine

What follows in chapter 9 is therefore not a new and independent vision, but is a continuing literal explanation of the “symbolic” vision of chapter 8. (Seventh-day Adventists, 1957, p. 271)

And from Shea:

The prophecy covering the last three chapters of Daniel (10-12) begins with the visions of God (10:5-9). This vision is followed by the most lengthy extravisional explanation of the book 10:10 – 12:13).... Thus, what we have in Dan 11-12, where the more apocalyptic materials are presented, is – in essence – a lengthy extravisional explanation. (Ibid., pp.229f.)

Therefore, when Daniel is told to shut the “vision,” the SDA definition correspondingly means the first half of Dn8 is to be “shut.” This does NOT mean that the explanation is “shut.” Rather, the explanation is not shut at all and the SDA rationale here allows for the addition of extra material to the explanation at a later date as detailed in Dn9.

(iii) For Ellen White, the prophecies of Dn9, and thus Dan8, were open for the Jews to understand.

In discussing the statement of Jesus “the time is fulfilled,” Ellen White refers to the prophecy of Dn9. She asserts that it was on the basis of this prophecy that he made this statement. It was the Jew's privilege to know it as well. She then quotes Matthew 24:15 intimating that they should have known about the things in Daniel. Here is the passage:

The time of Christ's coming, His anointing by the Holy Spirit, His death, and the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles, were definitely pointed out. It was the privilege of the Jewish people to understand these prophecies, and to recognize their fulfilment in the mission of Jesus. Christ urged upon His disciples the importance of prophetic study. Referring to the prophecy given to Daniel in regard to their time, He said, “Whoso readeth, let him understand.” Matt 24:15. After His resurrection, He explained to his disciples in “all the prophets” “the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27. The Saviour had spoken through all the prophets. “The Spirit of Christ which was in them,” “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:11. (White, E., 1898, p.234)

She specifically identifies it by saying, “the prophecy given to Daniel in regard to their time.” She also quotes Matt 24:15 which, in turn quotes from Dn9:27. Thus for her, Daniel 9 should have been thoroughly understood in the time of Christ. But since, in her view, Daniel 9 is the explanation of Dn8, she thereby intimates that they should also have had a thorough knowledge of the 2300 days.

This belief that Dn9 was open for the understanding of the seeker after truth, is confirmed again in her statements in *The Desire of Ages* on the visit of Gabriel to Zacharias concerning the conception of John the Baptist:

From among the faithful in Israel, who had long waited for the coming of the Messiah, the forerunner of Christ arose....For many years he [Zacharias –FB] had prayed for the coming of the Redeemer; now heaven had sent its messenger to announce that these prayers were about to be answered; but the mercy of God seemed too great for him to credit. He was filled with fear and self-condemnation. “...And Zacharias said unto the angel, “Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.”

...To the question of Zacharias, the angel said, “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.” Five hundred years before, Gabriel had made known to Daniel the prophetic period which was to extend to the coming of Christ. The knowledge that the end of this period was near had moved Zacharias to pray for the Messiah’s advent. Now the very messenger through whom the prophecy was given had come to announce its fulfillment (1898, p.97f.).

Clearly, from this statement, Dn9 was closely studied by Zacharias, indicating that a working knowledge of the chapter was possible during his lifetime, if not before.

The result of this assertion by Ellen White is that if Daniel 8 and 9 were open for the Jewish nation to study *and understand in their day*, in what sense is it closed? To be open for them to understand implies that it was also open before their time, since there was no special event identified by her to indicate that they were open from a set time.⁴² The SDA argument is that it was only the starting point of the 2300 days that was “shut,” yet even that is explained in Dn9. So to all intents and purposes, so surely as the other parts of Daniel 8 that were explained are not shut, so surely is the starting point of the 2300 days not shut either, since, in their view, it is explained in Dn9. It *was* the privilege of the Jewish nation to know the fullness of the book of Daniel in their day, the incorrect statements of the “shutting” of the vision by SDAs and Ellen White notwithstanding.

⁴² Unless she wants to say that the book of Daniel was opened then, not after 1798 and that the time of the end began sometime around the time of Christ. Perhaps the visit by Jesus to the temple when he was twelve and stirred up in the minds of the thought leaders their understanding of the scriptures meant that when his ministry began many years later, they would have been ready and would have understood in relation to Dn9 when he announced, “The time is fulfilled and The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Mk1:15.

Thus, if the explanation of a “shut” vision is open and Dn9 is open, then so too is the explanation in Dn 11-12. This is confirmed by Daniel’s statement in Dn10:1,2 indicating that he understood the revelation of Dn 11-12.

(iv) How can Dn8:3-14 be “shut” if Dn8:16-26 and Dn9:24-27 are not “shut”?

SDA’s say that Dn9:24-27 explains the starting point for the 2300 days, and that Gabriel’s command to “understand the matter and consider the vision” specifically refers to the 2300 days of Dn8. By Daniel’s inclusion of ch9 in his book, he is doing all in his power to disobey Gabriel’s command to “shut” the book (if the meaning of “shut” is to preclude from understanding), since he deliberately includes Gabriel’s explanation to him personally concerning the starting point for the 2300 days in the book, thus giving to the world the “understanding” that even Daniel had concerning the vision.⁴³

To complicate the matter, it is the “vision” Daniel is told to “shut.” SDAs argue that the “explanation” (that is, Dn8: 16-26 and Dn9:24-27) is not a part of a “vision, and as such, is not “shut.” This begs the question as to the logic of saying a vision is “shut” from being understood, but its explanation is not shut from the scrutiny of interested thinkers.

This is a question worth putting to the apologists of the traditional defence of the SDA position. I cannot see how that can remain so, if Dn9 is called the explanation of the “shut” sections of Dn8.

⁴³ One of the arguments of old SDA texts on this topic uses Dn10:1 where it says: “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” They reason that the vision referred to here is the vision of Dn8 and since he says he now understands it, the explanation of Dn9 must have fulfilled all the requirements of the command to Gabriel in Dn8:16 to make Daniel understand the vision. Notice this statement from James White: “But the angel did not explain the time in chap.8 And, at the very close of the chapter, the prophet says, “I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.” It was the time alone that he did not understand, as all else had been explained in that chapter. But Gabriel did explain the time in chap.9, so that in the first verse of chap.10 he says that “he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.” This understanding, therefore, he did receive in chap.9.” (White, J., 1870b). This argument clearly shows that in the SDA view, there was nothing that needed to be “shut” after the time of Dn9, because according to James White, all was now understood by Daniel on the relationship between the 70 weeks and the 2300 days in exactly the same manner as the Seventh-day Adventist church teach it. Not only that, but the vision was not just explained; Daniel had understanding of it. That is to say, Daniel could calculate the 1844 AD date because he was explained things exactly as the SDAs see it, and all he had to do was work out when the official commandment to restore and build Jerusalem would be issued and bingo!! He was able to pass on to his colleagues the calculation reaching to 1844 AD. The big question is whether there are any ancient Jewish writings from the post-exilic period that indicate they knew about 1844 when they came back from exile? Perhaps there are some calculations on gold plates hidden still in a cave somewhere, just waiting to be discovered. Ellen White says that the Jews should have known these calculations. (White, E, 1898., p. 234)

(v) Vision “Shut” in Dn8 and “open” in Dn9?

Therefore, rather than redefine their definition of ‘to shut,’ they assume the “shutting” only applies to the unexplained sections of the visions. But even with this qualification there is a problem. The SDA explanation of Dn8 is that everything about the vision is explained except the starting point for the 2300-days. Therefore, the only thing that is “shut” according to this definition is the starting date for the 2300-days. But that too is explained in Dn9 according to the SDA explanation. Therefore, since it is explained in Dn9, it is no longer “shut.”⁴⁴ Therefore, since, in the SDA view, Gabriel acquitted himself in Dn9 of the task given him in Dn8:16, everything is known of Dn8 by the end of Dn9.⁴⁵ And since further, those things that are known are not “shut,” by the end of Dn9 there is nothing shut in the vision of Dn8.

As has been illustrated in the earlier discussion, the standard explanation of the text in Dn8:26 and Dn12:4 is that was not the entire “vision” in Dn8 nor the “words” in Dn10-12 that were “shut” but rather only a section of them. To be more specific, it was only the section of them that related to the “time of the end” that were “shut.” This is absolute nonsense. There is nothing in the text of either Dn8:26 or 12:4 which has the slightest hint of this qualification. Notice Dn12:4:

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

The angel Gabriel clearly says here to Daniel that the length of time his words were to be “shut up” and the book “sealed” was to extend to “the time of the end.” As simple as that.

Another attempt to produce an outcome in support of the SDA position is to say that the words to be “shut up” and- the book to be “sealed” are those matters concerning “the time of the end.” This is another example of twisting the text. The angel does *NOT* say that the words to be “shut up” and- the book to be “sealed” are those matters concerning “the time of the end.” That is a gross perversion of the plain statement of the text. The text says the words are to be shut and the book sealed *till* the time of the end.

⁴⁴ Cf., [Branson’s Attempt at the Meaning of Dn8:26](#). His argument agrees with this position.

⁴⁵ In the book, [Seventh-day Adventists Believe...](#) we read, “God commissioned the angel Gabriel to make Daniel understand ‘the vision.’ (Dan. 8:16). But its impact was so shocking that Daniel became ill and Gabriel had to discontinue his explanation. At the close of the chapter Daniel remarked: ‘I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it’ (Dan. 8:27, RSV). Because of this interruption, Gabriel had to delay his explanation of the time period – the only aspect of the vision he had not yet explained. Daniel 9 describes his return to complete this responsibility. Daniel 8 and 9, then, are connected, the latter being the key to unlocking the mystery of the 2300 days.” ([Ministerial Association, 1988, p.323](#))

3F. How was Daniel to “shut” it? How was it to be “opened”?

(i) In the SDA view, how was the vision to be opened?

This is the easier one for SDAs to answer, so I’ll address this first. The obvious answer from Dn12:4 is that in the SDA view, at the “time of the end” people will run “to and fro” and they will increase their knowledge of the “words” of Daniel. As a result of this, those that understand – the “wise” ones – will turn many others to righteousness and presumably also to the writings of Daniel so that they can do their own “to-ing” and “fro-ing” and in their turn, to show others how to “to and fro” as well. Ford takes this position. It was the illumination of the 2300 that unsealed or opened the book. (1978, p.281)

(ii) It is the fulfilment of these events that open the book?”

Furthermore, they see the “opening” of the book as the work of God. The question is how can Daniel keep the information shut until the early 1800s and yet, without any alterations to his writings in the 19th Century, suddenly it becomes “open”? How can something that Daniel did to his book stop millions of people from correctly understanding its contents where it relates to the “time of the end,” but only until a specific time in history? And after that time without any change to the text, it now is understandable?

Notice this comment from Nichol:

Compare the similar admonition in regard to Daniel’s earlier vision (ch. 8:26). This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel’s prophecy that dealt with the last days (AA 585; DA 234). Not until that time was reached could a message, based on the fulfilment of these prophecies, be proclaimed (see GC 356). Compare the “little book open” in the hand of the angel of Rev. 10:1,2 (see TM 115). (Nichol, 1976, p.879)

The message to be proclaimed after the ending of the 1260-day prophecy, according to Nichol, would be based on the fulfilment of the 1260-day prophecy and the 2300-day prophecy (and presumably all the other time periods used in the Advent movement’s chronology).

Maxwell says the vision should be understood.

Notice this statement from Mervyn Maxwell:

Inasmuch as he [Daniel] had been told to “make this man understand the vision,” the conclusion is unmistakable that sufficient general information must be available in the Bible as whole so that the term can be understood without additional specific interpretation.” (1981, p.181)

Taking a lead from Maxwell then, there is no reason why the whole book cannot be understood, at least as far as its literary meaning is concerned, in the times

when it was given. There is internal consistency within the book so that the latter parts amplify earlier parts. There is the dovetailing of the time periods as more revelation is given. Daniel, as a literary work, was well enough composed and organised to enable any reader of Hebrew to understand its import. There was no need to wait 2400 years to be able to gain a proper understanding. As Maxwell says, “Sufficient general information must be available in the Bible as a whole so that the *term* [referring to “*nitsdaq*.” –FB] can be understood without additional specific interpretation.” The book of Daniel can be understood without any additional interpretation from Gabriel. In fact, neither William Miller, Joseph Wolff, a Tartar Priest who predicted close to 1844, Mourant Brock in U.K., Lacunza, Gaussen, nor Bengel document any divine visitation to guide their understanding.⁴⁶

True, according to the record of their experience they felt guided and illumined. But there is no additional information given by heaven to these people in the Advent movement; there are no “gold plates” of communications from heaven; no parchments with recorded visits from Gabriel, no stones with letters burning from the finger of God. They gained their knowledge from studying the very documents available to the believers of old.

The open book in the hand of the angel of Rev10.

(iii) How does Daniel “shut” the book?

1. Shutting the document literally

Shutting the original of the vision / book itself

Although no one can determine what type of medium Daniel would have used to write on, the most likely answer would have been either papyrus or parchment.

In the case of either of these two, the book was literally shut when it was rolled tightly closed. See the [appendix](#) section on parchment and papyrus for more information on this.

Shut and seal it in the archive.

Following on from the conclusions above, to seal a scroll, was to secure a clay seal around the scroll, so only when the seal is broken can the scroll be opened. See the section on sealing parchment and papyrus in [the appendix](#).

Another concept associated with these words is the action of archiving the documents in the archival room. The act of shutting the document was so that it may be then sealed, that is, locked up. But the locking up in itself would be of little value if you wanted the document preserved. The document could be stolen, lost, or destroyed if it was left around the person’s place of dwelling. The place for sealed private documents like Daniel’s was the “house of documents” which was overseer by the

⁴⁶ The chapter in the [Great Controversy](#) on this topic called “A Great Religious Awakening” give a thumbnail sketch of these workers of God.

chief secretary, a high officer of state, or in the Persian times he was called “a keeper of the documents” (Driver, 1948, pp. 74, 76).

Driver says, “ even private documents were generally preserved in archives attached to a temple or a palace where they might thought to be safe.” (Ibid, p.75) As I discuss elsewhere in this paper, there would be long term problems with Daniel seeing archiving in a Persian “document house” as the solution to his execution of the command to shut and seal his writings. His visions told him that the kingdom of Persian was to fall before the Greeks. How could he trust that the Persian archives would be respected by the Greeks? He needed a solution that transcended the empire game play. My argument is that his solution was to deposit the document with the keeper of the documents at the Jewish synagogue. This would provide the solution to his execution of the command to preserve his experiences.

2. Writing it in Hebrew

First, it can be stated that Dn 8 is fully explained and understood, Dn9 is fully explained and understood, as is Dn10-12. So it is NOT any information kept back by either Daniel or Gabriel that can be used to “shut” the book. And it does NOT mean keeping the information away from other people that can be used to mean “shut” the book. Dn8:27 clearly shows us Daniel talking immediately with his companions about the issue. One can imply fairly plausibly from this that it would not be the last time Daniel would be talking about it either. Nor would it be the last time his companions would be talking about it. It would be a fairly valid assumption to say that his companions would want a copy of the vision so that they could think about the matter and discuss it with *their* sagacious friends. And so the ripples of knowledge would widen, but only in Hebrew circles. The vision, probably written by itself in Hebrew initially and circulated would be immediately sensed as being different from the other documents from Daniel circulating around the Diaspora. Whereas the others could be read by the children, this one was in Hebrew and this immediately it limited the scope of its readership, since we can see that by the time of Ezra, the use of Hebrew was not as universal amongst the Jews as before..

Daniel would have had to ask himself the question, “What language should I write it in so that the people in the far off future would be able to read it?” His visions indicated that the Greeks would rule after the Persians. After the Greeks would come another empire not identified by ethnicity.

His answer to this question was possibly to assume that the people of Israel would be still using Hebrew at that time. Thus, he wrote the sections that were to be “shut” in Hebrew. It was a leap in the dark by writing it thus. How would he know that the exiles, when they return, would use Hebrew again? The least he could do would be to put it in the language used by all the other sacred writers. If Daniel’s visions were to become a dead letter – indecipherable – then so would the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. There would be no guarantee that Israel would keep a fluency in Hebrew current in the nation, but at least Daniel was siding with the best of the national traditions by choosing to lock his revelations in the same language as the sacred writings. .

Notice this comment on Dn 2:4 from the Zondervan Bible Study Notes on the New Testament:

"Since the astrologers were of various racial backgrounds, they communicated in Aramaic, the language everyone understood. From here to the end of chapter 7 the entire narrative is in Aramaic. These six chapters deal with matters of importance to the Gentile nations of the Near East and were written in a language understandable to all. But the last five chapters (8-12) revert to Hebrew, since they deal with special concerns of the chosen people." -- NIV Study Bible Notes, Zondervan, Daniel 2:4.

Clearly, in their view, there was a definite purpose for Daniel having the first section of Daniel in Aramaic and the second half in Hebrew.

Was it because he wanted the Aramaic-speaking world to learn of the evidences of the God of the Hebrew's support of Daniel in his experience in Babylon? Did he have an evangelical purpose? Did he wish to bring his message of the sovereignty of God to other foreign kings and rulers who knew of the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar, and the other rulers Daniel had the privilege to serve under?

Perhaps the form we have the book in – of part in widely known Aramaic and the other part in the largely unknown biblical Hebrew helped achieve that end. Definitely, the sections in Aramaic would strike at the heart of any pagan reader, and could be an effective tool to bring a knowledge of the Hebrew's God to their attention and reverence, but the Hebrew section of the book would be forever locked from the curiosity of the pagan reader because of their inability to read such an obscure language and a strange script.

Consider another reason for a bilingual book. Daniel probably documented his early events and visions as they occurred ([Keil, 1978](#), p. 485). These stories would probably have been copied and circulated during the 50 years to the various Jewish communities throughout the empire. Jewish youths, who were using Aramaic as their spoken tongue and less and less of Hebrew, might have contemporary evidences to believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob even though they be in a far land. God had not forsaken them. He was with His people, as evidenced by the experiences not only of Babylon's prime minister, but also the three leading officials over the local province of Babylon- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The stories of this book were perhaps the only glimmer of God's activity during the long period of the exile. And they were written in the language that was fast becoming the language for all to use.

Writing stories in Latin today would not be as effective for encouraging and guiding Catholic youths as it would be to write it in the common language they use, even though Latin might be the preferred language of the Catholic church. The language of the synagogue in the times of the exile would have been that of the Scriptures, and undoubtedly, most of the Jewish families were bilingual. But by the time of Ezra this seemed to be less so, especially with some boys choosing local

brides, who were not so conversant with Hebrew, and probably used it with their children even less (cf, Nehemiah 8-10).⁴⁷

3. Cryptography in Daniel's Day

Cryptography is the art of “hiding” the real meaning of what is written so that it cannot be understood. But it is not hiding it from all. It is only hiding it from the uninitiated. Cryptography was commonly used in Egypt and Mesopotamia. According to Assyriologist Georges Contenau, the premise on which a lot of cryptography was used was that “to say a thing was immediately equivalent to doing or creating it.” (1966, p.187)

This was especially applied to funerary cryptography with its lists of offerings the dead wished to give to the gods inscribed on the walls outside their sepulchre. The mere reading of the list by a passer-by, without even understanding their significance as they were reading it aloud was enough “to produce the desired result.” (Loc cit) This concept was shared in both Mesopotamia and Egypt. Cryptography was employed in many aspects of Assyrian and Babylonian work and culture. But Contenau continues,

“the most common was for writing something to be read only by the initiated...Every type of work which required particular qualifications and knowledge of some formula became, in virtue of that fact, to some extent secret, and precautions were necessary to ensure that it should not be accessible to all and sundry. ...Babylonian and Assyrian writing is full, not only of these deliberate attempts to mislead, but also of cases where a hurried and careless scribe (as it were) has mistaken one sign for another.” (Ibid, pp.187f)

In addition to the ubiquitous vocational cryptography, the writing on the wall during Belshazzar's feast is an interesting example of cryptography. Cryptography was a daily activity for those at the feast and Contenau believes mystic societies among the Babylonians were common, and so, it was not an unusual thing for them to encounter a cryptographic message throughout the course of a day, whether it be a prayer to the gods, a offering list to the gods on a burial site or some piece of information passing between a tradesman and his apprentice. In the case of the

⁴⁷ James Barr's comments on this issue are worth considering. Speaking of the death of Hebrew generally he says: “it seems rather too obvious and simple to ascribe the disuse of Hebrew to the Babylonian exile. It is true that some scriptural passages in Aramaic appear from the time of the Return, and the Jews of the Elephantine used only Aramaic. It does not follow that this can be generalized completely and made to mean that Hebrew was universally in decline. If Aramaic had been generally accepted in Nehemiah's time, that statesman could not well have been shocked by the existence of children (obviously a minority of children) who could not speak Hebrew. Moreover, the wrath of Nehemiah may have had some success in reviving Hebrew, or may have been part of a wider reaction in favour of Hebrew than is indicated in the one saying of Neh. 13.24 f...Thus a widespread loss or disuse of Hebrew cannot be simply ascribed to the exilic period. It would appear that the disuse of Hebrew proceeded very gradually, or, indeed, that some initial decline of Hebrew in the exilic period was later compensated for by a certain revival, so that Hebrew actually increased in influence before it later began to decrease again.” (1968, pp. 39f.) He then goes on to discuss a resurgence in Hebrew usage for a time in the second century A.D., which later waned, until Hebrew fell into disuse until recent times.

cryptography at the feast, the suspense of the king while finding someone to decrypt it gave the king time to listen to his conscience and feel the condemnation of the burning letters. It is interesting, when viewed from this perspective, how God used a style totally familiar to the king. One could look through chapters 2, 4 and 7 and see the cryptography replete in those dreams and visions. They are not just symbolic revelations. It is God using Babylonian techniques in a message for the world.⁴⁸

Applying this to the command to “shut” the book in Daniel, in “cryptifying” the visions and the latter part of the book into Hebrew, Daniel was using a familiar Babylonian technique, and one that he too would have used on a regular basis. Cryptifying a work for the initiated was the work of the master, whether it be the glassmaker with his formulas (Contenau, [Loc cit](#)), or Daniel with his visions.

Some cryptography in Babylon was taken to the extreme by “employing abstruse ingenuity in a deliberate attempt to discourage those very persons who are really intended to read it.” (Contenau, 1966, p.187)

An interesting contemporary use of the concept of seal as applied to cryptic language and also to material being used in a specialised area of work is this comment by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph (1984) when discussing the inclusion of the Masora in the BHS:

As early as the 16th century Elias Levita wrote in the second rhymed introduction to his *Massoreh Hamassoreth* (Venice, 1538) that the language of the Masora was unintelligible, the very conciseness of its style making it as secret as the words of a sealed book. (p. xiii).

This endorses the view that the sealing is only for the uninitiated. Those who understood the cryptic comments in the Masora were perfectly at home in consulting the references indicated, and using them as a valuable tool in their teaching methods with their students. But to all others, even Hebrew readers, it was all but locked up from being understood.

(iv) Daniel, not God is commanded to “shut” the vision.

SDAs correctly see the command to shut the book as an instruction given to Daniel rather than it being an activity that only God could achieve. That is to say, it is an action that Daniel can perform and indeed presumably does perform, since he does not get a reminder about it past chapter 12 and no other post-exilic prophet is told to “shut” Daniel’s books. So, we can presume to believe that Daniel somehow obeyed that command.

If, as the SDAs say, the book is “shut” in the sense that the information that pertains to the last days –the starting date of the 2300 days – is not conveyed by God until the time of the end, then it is *not Daniel* who shuts and seals the book but *God*. Daniel has not held back any information on the 2300 days given by the angel to him.

⁴⁸ How apt is the statement, “Mystery, Babylon the Great..” Its whole culture was enmeshed with cryptography.

He does *not* say anywhere, “The angel said, “Write not what I have shown you. I will reveal it in the time of the end.” Thus, the reason, in SDA thinking, that those parts of the vision that pertains to the last days are shut and sealed is because of a choice on God’s part not to reveal them until the latter time. This is beyond the control of Daniel. Therefore, the command to Daniel to shut the words and seal the book is really superfluous and irrelevant if God has already done it by withholding vital information.

A question that needs to be directed to SDA historicist's is: Does not Daniel disobey the command to “shut the words and seal the book”? If the lack of understanding in regard to the vision of ch8 has to do with the lack of the starting date for the 2300 day period, does the “shutting” of the vision have to do with the non-understanding of the starting point of this vision until the time of the end? If this is the case, in what sense then does Daniel fulfil this command? If the vision is shut and sealed by the concealment of the starting point for the 2300 days, then surely Daniel does not obey the command of his mentor? He has given all the detail necessary to understand “that part of his prophecy that pertains to the last days” when he wrote down the revelation of Dn9.

To say in reply that God had kept a proper understanding of the relationship between Dn8 and 9 from his people is to misunderstand the command in v26. The command to “shut” the vision was given to Daniel, not God. If it was God’s prerogative to stop people from understanding Dn8 and 9, in what sense then does Daniel stop people from understanding the proper relationship between Dn8 and 9? Daniel commits to writing everything that is revealed to him, and according to SDA theoreticians, he even selects technical words to make sure this relationship between the two chapters is understood. It seems that God is working against himself by giving to Daniel the information that provides understanding, not concealment.

(v) Ellen White refers to the Bible “locked up” in foreign language

Ellen White refers to the policy of the Catholic church of having the Bible in Latin, Hebrew and Greek as “locking up”:

Except among the Waldenses, the word of God had for ages been locked up in languages known only to the learned; but the time had come for the Scriptures to be translated and given to the people of different lands in their native tongue. (1888, p. 79)

In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. ...therefore, its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. (*Ibid*, p. 51)

Thus without knowing it, she supports the concept of “locking up” a document by writing it in an obscure language – an action performed by Daniel in writing his book in Hebrew.

This experience gives clear indication that the decision to shut the visions specified by the angel in Hebrew was a sure way of rendering them totally

uncontroversial. And being completely indecipherable to those not reading Hebrew, there was more chance of their long-term survival.

(vi) A Rock and a Hard Place for the SDA view.

A difficult position for SDAs. Whichever way one chooses to respond to these two options on the meaning of “shut,” the outcome is unfavourable for the validity of this assumption. Why?

- If the word “shut” means to preclude from understanding, in what sense does Daniel “shut” the vision if he supplies the explanations of the visions?
- If the word “shut” means to “preserve” or to “keep confidential,” then a true understanding of the 2300 days has always been available to any Hebrew reader. When the Old Testament was translated into other languages like Greek and Latin, a true knowledge of the prophecies was then available to readers of those languages.
- Neither of these options endorse the self aggrandising attitude evident in the SDA argument asserting in essence they have a monopoly on the true explanation of the time prophecies in Dn8 and 9.

The vision of Daniel 7, though considerably more politically sensitive at the time with the mention of the kingdoms of Persia and Greece, could have been seen to complement the vision of Dn2. The dream of Daniel’s would seem to be parallel to that of Nebuchadnezzar’s, albeit with much more menacing imagery. If a person could not have access to understand Dn8-12, then the correlation between Dn2 and Dn7 would be quite natural. They would be able to see the similarity of the dream given to a Babylonian king and a dream given to Daniel on the same topic. The only real issues to consider is the correlation of the last items in the visions– the stone that destroys the image, the activities of the little horn, and the judgment of God.

Meaning of “none was there understanding. (Dn8:27) Another point worth considering on this point while we are dealing with the issue of understanding, or the lack of it, as recorded in Dn8:27 is the comment by Keil that “indicates that no one understood it. He points out quite rightly that there is no “I” in the phrase. It is not saying that Daniel himself did not understand it, even though it may imply it.

But even though the construction of the words should admit of this supplement, for which a valid proof is not adduced, yet it would be here unsuitable, and is derived merely from giving to [Heb-*s^ethom-sht-FB*] (verse 26) the false interpretation of *to conceal*. If Daniel had been required to keep the prophecy secret according to the command in ver.26, then the remark “no one understood it” would have been superfluous. But if he was required only to preserve the prophecy, and it deeply moved him, then those around him must have had knowledge of it, and the amazement of Daniel would become the greater when not only he but all others failed to understand it. To refer [Heb “not is there understanding”- FB] only to Daniel is forbidden by the comparison with [Heb “and I did not understand” –FB] in ch. xii.8. The fulfillment of this vision can alone lead to its full understanding.(1978, p.319)

As Keil clearly points out, the statement in Dn8:27 applies to more than Daniel. It applied to his confidants too.

Keeping the revelation “confidential.” This is an excellent rendition by Gleason Archer of the concept behind the meaning of “shut.” The following translations that endorse the concept of keeping the vision “secret.” I believe that this translation does not clash with to “preserve” since, as explained before, if the original was to be kept secret until the events occurred, then there was no reason for the copies of the original to be kept secret. And the fact that Daniel found that “there was not understanding” on his vision, clearly shows that he had tested all other sources of understanding apart from his own before he made that conclusion. This would have meant his peers and colleagues in his synagogue community. The very act of doing this then displays that Daniel did not understand the command to have the connotation of keeping it from other people.

NASB	But keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future;
AB	But seal up the vision, for it has to do with <i>and</i> belongs to the <i>now</i> distant future;
JB	but you must keep the vision secret, for there are still many days to go;
Lamsa	...and as for you, Daniel, keep this vision a secret, for it shall not be for many days;
LB	But none of these things will happen for a long time, so don't tell anyone about them yet.
GNB	But keep it secret now because it will be a long time before it does become true;
Moffat	But keep the vision a secret, for it relates to the far future.
NEB	...but you must keep the vision secret, for it points to days far ahead;

Daniel writes Dn9 in Hebrew. An interesting point to note here is that Daniel is explicitly told in Dn8 and Dn 10-12 to “shut” the revelations given to him. He responds by writing them in Hebrew. Dn9 is written in Hebrew but he records no command to “shut” that revelation. Does he understand that the specific detail in it relating to the history of God's people should be kept confidential and so this is done by shielding it in Hebrew? Or is it the case that the command in Dn8: 27 concerning details for the time of the end to be shut should be *from that revelation* “shut” by writing them in the tongue of those who will suffer – Hebrew? This would mean that the rest of the book would be written in Hebrew, which it happens to be.

1. Shut and Open Items in Daniel 8

The only shut item is the start of the 2300 days and the event at the end of the 2300 days (QOD)

2. Shut and Open Items in Daniel 9

- If the “book” is closed, how come EGW says that the Jews could have understood Dn9?
- In the SDA view, all of the information in Dn9 is understood by Daniel, since it is the fulfilment of the commission in Dn8:26 to make Daniel “understand the vision.”
- Therefore, since it is understood by him, none of it is shut.
- Daniel did not say at the end of the chapter there was anything he *did not* understand; thus leaving us with the conclusion that he did understand the information conveyed to him.
- Ellen White says that this chapter should have been understood by the Jews at the time of Christ’s first advent. This gives clear indication that the whole chapter was not closed up to the fulfilment of the events foretold.⁴⁹
- On the other hand, if Dn12:4 says that the proper explanation of the 2300 days is shut until the time of the end, that is, 1798 AD, then Dn9, which SDAs say is the explanation of Dn9, was also “shut” from a proper understanding until 1798 AD. Therefore, Dn9 could never be properly understood by anyone until 1798 had passed. And this position is a contradiction of another position Ellen White had taken on the Jews being able to understand Dn9.
- This position also contradicts the clear reference to Dn9:27 in Matthew 24:15 where Jesus tells his disciples to understand the impending desolation of Jerusalem. If the explanation to the 2300 days was closed until 1798 AD, then Jesus was misleading his disciples, since they could not get a proper understanding of Dn9 until after 1798, if they lived that long!!

⁴⁹ At the time of Christ’s first advent the priests and scribes of the Holy City, to whom were entrusted the oracles of God, might have discerned the signs of the times and proclaimed the coming of the Promised One. The prophet Micah designated His birthplace; Daniel specified the time of His advent. Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:25. God committed these prophecies to the Jewish leaders; they were without excuse if they did not know and declare to the people that the Messiah’s coming was at hand. Their ignorance was the result of sinful neglect... With profound and reverent interest the elders of Israel should have been studying the place, the time, the circumstances, of the greatest event in the world’s history – the coming of the son of God to accomplish the redemption of man. (1888, p.313.)

3. Shut and Open Items in Daniel 10-12

Daniel is told in Dn12: 4 to seal the full book –including all the known parts and Dn2-7 etc

There are no unexplained items here to fit the concept of “shut”

Daniel understood the full revelation – Dan10:1

Shut therefore does not relate to unable to understand

Daniel understood this whole vision and he said so.

Since he understood it, in SDA terms none of it is shut.

Yet, according to their own definition of “shut” all of it is not understood, since he is told to shut the whole revelation.

4. The vision is “Shut” in Dn8:26 because it dealt with matters concerning the “time of the end.”

The SDA reason for “shutting” the vision.

Its contents related to “the time of the end.”

The vision is “shut” because, in their view, the starting date of the 2300 days is unknown.

The next point is that God has given the world an understanding of the true starting date of the 2300 days. He gave it to the Advent movement to give to the world.

The SDA church has light on this topic that no other group on the planet can lay a claim to.

By accepting the light promulgated by the SDA church, (and the rest of the baggage that goes with it) you may be counted among those who have “cutting-edge” knowledge of the last day events.

The Real Reason the vision is “shut” - Its Contents does not apply to Daniel’s day

“Shut” the book *not* because it pertains to the time of the end, but because the issues are *distant* in the future. Another point worth noting is that Daniel is *not* told to “shut” the vision because it refers to things that pertain to the time of the end. Rather, he is told to “shut” the vision because it refers to things which shall not occur for a long time. The phrase “many days” in 8:26 is translated variously as “the distant future,” (NIV) “many days in the future,” (NASB) “many days to come,” (ASV, RSV) “days far ahead,” (NEB) and “far future.” (Moffat)

Thus, the reason for the “shutting” of the vision is because a long time must pass before Daniel’s time and when the events portrayed in the vision would be completed. Thus, since the passage of time between the giving of the vision and its completion is so long, the vision is “shut.” The question then is raised: why is the vision “shut?” What relationship does the “shutting” of the vision have with the long passage of time before the vision is completed? The shutting is an act of completion and at the same time and act of preservation.

The issues are too far in the distant future. Interestingly in many of the translations, there is the concept that the vision is to be kept secret not in the sense of not knowing its message, but in the sense that its message deals with an issue too far in the future for Daniel’s contemporaries to be concerned. The translations also have implicit in them the fact that Daniel has knowledge about them. SDA commentators have argued this using Dn10:1.

The whole vision is “shut” because it is for those who shall live in the distant future.

3G. If That Wasn’t Bad Enough... Read this Problem

If SDAs say that it is the start of the 2300 days that Daniel did not know and that was the part that was “shut” until the time of the end, then that means it was not explained to Daniel. But at the time of the end, when Daniel “stands in his lot and place,”⁵⁰ that explanation will be given by others, but not to Daniel, because he will be dead. Using “lot and place” seems to be used to mean they will use the book of Daniel to establish the explanation.

With this argument comes an embarrassing fact they have overlooked. They admit Gabriel’s job to enlighten Daniel after Dn8 is completed in Dn9. And he understands it. But they say that at Dn12 Daniel is not permitted to understand the start of the 2300 days. Only those who live after the time of the end can understand that.

This leads to the conclusion that Dn9 is therefore NOT an explanation of the starting date for the 2300 days. If it were an explanation of the start of the 2300 days then it would not be still “shut” to Daniel some years later when he wrote Dn 10-12. If Daniel is still in the dark on this point at the end of his prophetic experience, then he has not had it explained to him. If he has not had it explained to him, then Dn9 is not the explanation.

The corollary is of course that the Advent movement’s explanation of Dn9 being an explanation of the starting date of the 2300 days is also incorrect, since by saying Daniel did not have the start of the 2300 days explained to him in his lifetime, then that rules out using Dn9 as the way to explain the 2300 days.

⁵⁰ [White, E., 1917, 547.](#)

The next corollary is that since that cannot be done and the Advent movement's argumentation is incorrect, then we are still waiting for God to raise up a people who can explain the 2300 days without using the time details in Dn9.

Therefore, we cannot view the Advent movement as an illumination of the prophecies for the last days. They used an explanation that the SDAs say did not explain the perplexity to Daniel. And if it did not provide it to Daniel, it will not provide it for us.

3H. Summary of the Problems with Assumption 8

(i) Review of SDA arguments on this assumption.

1. "Shutting" means to keep minds from understanding;
2. The shutting of the vision was an act to render it not able to be correctly understood until it was "opened;"
3. Daniel is told to "shut" the vision because it refers to things that pertain to the time of the end.
4. The time of the end began in 1798 AD
5. It is only after 1798 AD that we can expect a true explanation of the sections of Daniel that relate to the "time of the end"
6. The SDA explanation occurred after that time
7. The SDA explanation of the parts of Daniel relating to the "time of the end" are not only correct, they are also a fulfilment of prophecy, both of (a) Dan12: 4: "Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased;" (b) of Dn 12:13: "you shall stand in your lot at the end of days;" (c) of Rev 10 with the angel holding a little book "open;" and (d) of Rev14:6 with the first angel [the Millerite revival up to 1843] having the everlasting gospel and announcing the hour of God's judgment is come.

(ii) Conclusions on Scriptures used to Support Assumption

This section summarises the problems that were highlighted above and the conclusions I reached after examining the rationale of each.

1. The Meaning of Shut."

- The reason Daniel was told to "shut" the vision was not because it contained unexplained details about the time of the end but because it dealt with matters in the far-distant future.
- "Shut" means to "preserve" and/or "keep confidential" and definitely not "to be kept secret" or to "preclude from understanding." This

definition is endorsed by the evidence that copies of the writing have survived, even though the original might have been shut and then lost in time, and also by the evidence that Daniel was prepared to consult with others to see if “there was understanding” on the vision, thereby signalling he did not understand the “shutting” to imply any secrecy.

- Daniel’s deliberate action to write the latter section of his revelations in Hebrew is his response to the command “to shut;”
- The concept of preserving the revelations means a full understanding of these prophecies has always been available;

2. Use of Dn8:26 and Dn12:4

1. Daniel 8:26, 27

Dn8:26. Dn8:26 has been the major basis for this assumption. The evidence supporting SDAs ideas for Dn8:26 is clearly lacking. The arguments I proposed support the following conclusions:

- Dn8:26 says that the vision was to be shut because the time of the contents is a far way off in the future, not because it concerns “the time of the end.” In the words of the *SDABC*: “The fulfilment of the various details of the vision of this chapter would extend into the distant future.” (Nichol, 1976, p.847);
- Dn8:26 states that it was the *whole* vision that was “shut,” not just the section of the vision relating to the last days. There is no evidence that the concept of “shutting” can be limited to a section of the vision. It applies to “*the vision*.” Hence, any definition of the meaning of “shut” had to incorporate the whole vision.
- The most natural meaning of the word “shut” relates to the issues of preservation for posterity. The issue is about ensuring the survival of the text so that those who would live in that distant future would be assured of having access to the revelations given to Daniel.
- Daniel answered the command to shut the vision firstly, by preserving these prophecies in Hebrew, a language so obscure even the wise men of Babylon could not read it when God wrote it on a wall. This obscurity would reduce the readership of the material to the Israelites, thus ensuring its survival, until the time when it would be needed the most –at the time of the end.
- The second way Daniel would have answered the command to shut it up would have been, in keeping with the documentary processes of his times, to place it in an archival service (specifically, the local synagogue archive), where it would have been preserved. The fact that it was a part of the sacred Writings by the second century B.C.,

indicates that either the original or copies of the original had been recovered or discovered and given its place in the writings.

- Dn8:26 says to shut the vision, which in the SDA definition of the word for “vision” only includes verses 3-14. They do not include verses 15-26 in the word for vision. This is quite an anomaly – to have a “vision” shut from being understood, but to have the explanation for that vision open to be understood. In anyone’s language, this is nonsense. My definition of the word “vision” includes the whole chapter, and it is this that is “shut.” The fact that the whole chapter is written in Hebrew, instead of only vs3-14 in Hebrew, and vs 15-25 in Aramaic supports this argument.

2. Daniel 12:4-11

Dn12:4-11 is the major text on the topic because SDAs can link many concepts together from close proximity to this text much better than they can at Dn8:26. These concepts used at Dn12:4 include the idea of prophecy being closed until the time of the end; the concept of people studying the book; those who understand it being the “wise;” the time frame of the 3 ½ times, the statement of Daniel “standing in his lot at the end of days, just to name a few.

Nevertheless, this text is mistreated by SDAs because although the matter Daniel is told to close is the “words,” SDAs only admit **some** of the “words” to be “closed.” This they do, without any precedence from the text.

The “words” are “shut” until the time of the end. This cannot mean that they are shut up from Daniel understanding them, because Dn10:1,2 says that Daniel understood this very revelation. So then, they are shut in another sense. What can that meaning be? What are the other options?

The “book” is “sealed” until the time of the end. This statement does not limit itself to the explanation of the 2300 days, as do the SDAs, but it is all inclusive. It is the entire prophetic work of Daniel –from chapter 1. This is indicative of the completion of Daniel’s prophetic ministry. He had been the vehicle of visions that were to be preserved for the original intended recipients – those who endured the things described in the visions. It is to be locked away until that time. In Daniel 8 he is told just to “shut” the vision. In Dn12, he is told not only to shut the current revelation, but also to seal the book. A book can be “shut” but not locked. But if a book is locked, each section is also shut. The sealing of the original for Daniel meant closure to that part of his life permanently. There would be no more to add. This locking of the original would only keep the document secret if there were no other copies of the writings extant. Apparently, that was *not* the case as his writings have survived even though the locked autograph eventually perished somewhere.

3. Only “part” of the vision is to be “shut.”

- Daniel was told to “shut” *the vision*-including matters both known and unknown. This does not fit with the SDA concept of precluding from

knowing. It does fit, however, with the concept of shutting the document in the archive for preservation.

4. True meaning of 2300 days only after 1798 A.D.

- The SDA exposition of Dn8 and Dn9 declares that Dn9 is the interpretation of that “unknown item.” This renders the entire vision “known” in the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus, king of the Chaldeans. Thus, the assertion that it could not be understood until after 1798 AD is without foundation.

In reference to the use of other assumptions invoked in Assumption 8, they include:

- The year-day principle
- The “time of the end” began in 1798 AD.

Their fallacies are discussed separately in [Assumption 9](#).

5. Vision is “shut” but the explanation is “open.”

- The SDA idea of “shutting those sections of the vision “not known” of Dn8 due to the lack of an interpretation, is nonsensical. It is a denial of logic to have a vision “secret” or “unknown” when it is admitted the explanation of that vision (Dn9) is open for understanding.
- The now-antiquated and incorrect SDA usage of Dn10:1 to assert that Daniel understood the matter in Dn9 and thus Dn8, clearly shows that Dn8 was not unknown to Daniel and therefore to any Hebrew reader. Since it was known to him and explained, the vision was not “shut.”
- Ellen White says that Daniel 9 was open for the Jews to understand in Jesus’ day.⁵¹ If the book Daniel was told to “shut” in Dn12 was the sections of the book of Daniel that pertain to the last days, then Ellen White contradicts herself. If Dn9 was able to be known in Jesus’ day, then Dn8 was able to be known in Jesus’ day, since, in the SDA view, Dn9 explains Dn8.
- And further, there is no allowance in Dn12 for the concept of only “part” of the book being “shut.” This is wresting Scripture – yet again.

⁵¹ [1898](#), p.234

6. The insuperable dilemma for SDAs

SDA's are in the unenviable position of holding to opposite positions of the same argument. They argue that the 2300 days (a) *is not*, and (b), *is* explained by the time Daniel finishes his prophetic ministry.

1. Daniel *not* having the 2300 explained by Dn12:4 and not until the time of the end.

- The evidence cited in this paper indicates that an item or vision was deemed by SDAs to be understood by Daniel when the angel gave the explanation.
- SDAs say that the explanation on the start of the 2300 days was not to be given until after 1798.
- This means that when Daniel was told to “shut” his vision, book or words, it means that it was not going to be explained to him in his lifetime, but at the time of the end, he would “stand in his lot and place” in the sense that the people of that age would correctly explain his prophecies for him, including the part that he did not understand.
- No-one else would come to a correct understanding of the “shut” portion of the 2300 days until after 1798 AD.

2. Daniel *having* the 2300 days explained by Dn9 as expounded by the Advent movement after 1798 AD

- Daniel was not explained the start of the 2300 days in Dn8.
- Gabriel returned in Dn9 to finish his commission and explain the 2300 starting point.
- There is no statement to the contrary at the end to the effect that Daniel was still without understanding. And there were no later attempts by Gabriel to clarify this matter further. So we can safely assume that Gabriel had fulfilled his commission and Daniel understood the starting date of the 2300 days as explained in Dn9.
- This explanation of Dn9 being the source of the explanation of the starting date for the 2300 days was the foundation of the explanation of the Advent movement in the 19th century that unsealed the prophecies of Daniel.

3. Choose one or the other. SDAs have chosen both positions.

Either Daniel understood Dn9 at the end of Ch12 or he did not.

- **If he did understand it**, then “the portions that related to the last days” in his prophecies have always been open to a proper understanding. Since it he understood it, they had been explained;
- **If he did understand it**, then the statement to “shut the words and seal the book” does not mean what SDAs say it means – to preclude anyone from understanding the designated portions of Daniel.
- **If he did understand it**, then there was no special “unlocking” of the 2300 days by the Advent movement since it was never “shut” from being understood.
- **If he did understand it**, then the SDAs are incorrect in saying that a correct understanding of it was not possible until after 1798 AD. If Daniel understood it, then not only could his contemporaries understand it to and pass it on to later generations of Jews about the significance of that future date 1844 AD which would be two and a half thousand years in the future, but since it was explained to Daniel, then it was available to anyone, anytime, anywhere.
- **If he did NOT understand it**, then the angel Gabriel did not fulfil his commission in Dn8:16 to make Daniel understand the starting date of the 2300 days, even by the end of Dn12.
- **If he did NOT understand it**, then the starting date for the 2300 days was NOT fully explained and understood in the 19th century, since the advent movement said he did understand it through the revelation given in Dn9.
- **If he did NOT understand it**, then the 19th century Advent movement was NOT justified in using Dn9 as the explanation of the starting date of the 2300 days, since Daniel did not understand it to be an explanation of it.
- **If he did NOT understand it**, then Dn9 is NOT the explanation for the starting date of the 2300 days. This is the case, because if it was the explanation, then Daniel would have understood it.
- **If he did NOT understand it**, then the Advent movement was NOT a divinely sent movement to explain the prophecies of Daniel since they are using incorrect methods to explain the 2300 days. Had Dn9 been the explanation of Dn8, Daniel would have known about it, and he would not

have still been in the dark about it at Ch 12:4. He would have understood it at the end of Dn9. Since this position says he did not understand it, the Advent Movement was incorrect and definitely not inspired.

- **If he did NOT understand it**, the Advent movement's argumentation is incorrect, and we are still waiting for God to raise up a people who can explain the 2300 days without using the time details in Dn9.
- **If he did NOT understand it**, we cannot view the Advent movement as an illumination of the prophecies for the last days. They used an explanation that the SDAs themselves (by their counter argument) say did not explain the perplexity to Daniel. And if it did not provide an understanding to Daniel, it will not provide it for us.

Whichever option the SDA church selects, it thereby rules out the other. They have endorsed the views both that *he understood* the start of the 2300 days and also that *he did not understand* the starting date for the 2300 days. They will of necessity have to say that Ellen White is correct on one point and incorrect on another. Both positions cannot be simultaneously endorsed without needing to resort to a great deal of "gobbledegook" to hide the crooked thinking in their arguments.

(iii) Summary of the Conclusion

In summary, this assumption has relied on two general assumptions including

1. The year –day principle (see [Assumption 9](#))
2. The "time of the end" began in 1798 AD (see [Assumption 9](#))

It has also relied on:

1. The mistreatment of both Dn8:26 and Dn12:4;
2. An incorrect definition of the word "shut" and "seal";
3. An incorrect definition of the reason to "shut the vision."
4. Insurmountable problems with saying the vision is "shut" and the explanation "open;"

4. Further Study

1. One of the issues arising out of this study is to ascertain how this spurious argument using Dn12:4 first crept in to the writings of the SDA church.
 - How early was it?
 - Was it used the same way as it is now?
 - If William Miller never used this argument, was it used by the Seventh-Month Movement?
 - Or was it formed much later than 1844?
2. Look at the decrease in the use of tablets after the Persians were conquered, and the increase of papyrus and parchment / leather.
3. Look at more detail on sealing off the jars so that they were totally closed.
4. Look more into Contenau's concept of cryptography
5. Compare this with the style of the book of Revelation –written to the churches in Asia, where the mysteries of Babylon had been exported to Pergamos? They would be familiar with many of the ideas common to Babylonian culture etc. Check this up. Compare with Contenau's description of Babylonian thinking – mystic styles, numbers of names, etc sexagesimal system of numbering –666 etc?

5. William Miller has the last say.

As a parting word, I would like to quote William Miller who offers a succinct rebuttal to the SDA position that to “shut” means to preclude from understanding:

“And he said, go thy way Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” That is, my mission is closed, the words are finished, and registered in the roll of God's word, they are sealed, that is, made sure, unalterable, will stand until every word has its fulfilment, which in the end shall be accomplished; not as some suppose, that Daniel's prophecy is sealed, closed up, out of sight, and cannot be understood. This is not the way of God's dealings with us; for if this had been the Angel's meaning he would have said to Daniel as he did to John in similar circumstances, Rev.x. 4, “Seal up those things, and write them not.” But it is the reverse; for he says in the next verse, 10, “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand.” None of the wicked shall understand, what? Why the things before spoken of, Daniel's vision and instruction. Very well, then the wicked do right for once. Certainly, if your exposition of the former text is correct, that it is hid, and cannot be known, they are obeying the command of the Angel, close up and seal the words, and surely they will not be condemned for obedience. “But the wise shall understand,” says the Angel. What

shall the wise understand? They shall understand the *vision*; or the words before spoken by the Angel at least. But say you, Daniel was commanded to seal up and close the words, so that they may never know them till the end, and the wise shall understand them? How can these things be? I answer, these texts explain each other. There is a close connection in the word of God which must always be kept in view, and if our exposition of one contradicts another of the same connection or of like import we may know there is a wrong in us. ...

Now Daniel had all he could ask for, now he could understand the time and the length, and part of every division which the Angel had given him in his instruction, so far as to fill up his vision of 2300 years (as we shall call them...). Do you not, kind hearer, see by this mode, and by these last numbers given him, Daniel could learn every part and division of the whole history down to the time when he should stand in his lot? ([1836](#), pp.77-79)

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For Appendix on Assumption 8, click here: [“What Medium would Daniel have written on?”](#)