

# LESSON 6

## Introduction

By way of introduction to Dan. 9, “the final link in this amazing sequence of prophecy and history” through which he has been guiding us, our author invites us to be sure that we “understand the charts we’ve looked at the past few weeks.”

They form an immovable foundation for where we are going next. The crucial point that should be understood now is that the judgment scene in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 are the same event and that this event takes place sometime after the 1,260-year period that depicted a phase of papal persecution of the saints.

This time frame, “the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century,” evokes his query, [W]hat’s the only possible sanctuary that’s being cleansed here, the one on earth or the one in heaven (see *Matt. 24:2; Luke 21:6; Heb. 8:1, 2*)? The answer is obvious.

Likewise, he pauses for a moment to include this word of pastoral encouragement: The Lord isn’t asking us to base our faith on sketchy, shadowy things; instead, He’s framing these great truths around world history, as firm a foundation as possible. God... wants us to believe these truths; that’s why He makes it easy for us to do just that.

### Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> July

Our author continues by highlighting one salient distinction in the vision of Dan. 8:

Unlike the sister visions that preceded it, Daniel 8 ends with Daniel saying that he didn’t understand the “vision.” What vision? Obviously, it was the part of the vision that dealt with the 2,300 evenings and mornings of verse 14. After all, everything else was explained; in some cases some of the powers depicted in Daniel 8 were even named (*vss. 20, 21*). In none of the previous visions did Daniel come away saying that he didn’t understand something, even though in some cases the explanations weren’t as precise as in parts of Daniel 8. Only in Daniel 8 does he say there was something that he didn’t understand, and that’s obviously the “vision” of the 2,300 days, the only part of the chapter not specifically explained. Thus, we leave Daniel 8 and enter Daniel 9, with only one thing not clear to Daniel at this point: the vision of the 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14.

### Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> July

Turning to Dan. 9, our author takes a moment to set the tone of its opening prayer:

The fulfillment of those promises was still a few years off when the events of Daniel 9 happened. The 70 years, beginning in 605 B.C. with the conquest of Jerusalem and the exile of Daniel and of the other captives, almost were completed. Yet, nothing was happening. His people were still exiled, Jerusalem was still in ruins, and the temple was not even close to being rebuilt. Though Daniel witnessed the rise of the Medo-Persians, as predicted, more needed to happen, great events that from a human perspective would seem impossible. In this context, we can understand better the prayer that follows.

### Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> August

However, our author wishes to draw a single point from this prayer, negative at that:

If you read Daniel’s prayer, you’ll notice that one thing is not there... Daniel isn’t asking the Lord one simple question: *Why did all this happen to us?* And that’s because he knows why all this happened: The people disobeyed the Lord. Daniel asked no questions in his prayer. He is not seeking for light, wisdom, or understanding... [He] understands the issues: Israel sinned, was punished, and now he pleads for the promised restoration.

The point is that nowhere in this prayer is Daniel seeking for understanding. The last time... that Daniel needed understanding was in regard to the 2,300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14, what he specifically said he didn’t understand at the end of the last chapter (*Dan. 8:27*).

### Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Our author is now at pains to clarify precisely how our prophet’s problem is solved:

[I]n Daniel 8 Gabriel was commanded to make Daniel understand what he had seen in vision. And... he did just that, with the exception of the vision of the 2,300 days.

Now... Gabriel appears again to Daniel, who refers to him as the one he had seen “in the vision at the beginning” (*vs. 21*). Though he doesn’t say which specific vision that was, the only other time Gabriel appears in Daniel is in chapter 8, so it’s certainly logical to assume that’s the vision Daniel is referring to.

... The last time he needed understanding was about the 2,300 days. Now, the same angel interpreter appears and specifically says that he has come to give him “understanding.” Understanding about what? The 2,300 days obviously, the last time Daniel needed any understanding.

In fact, the Hebrew root verb (*bin*), translated “understood” (*Dan. 8:27*), is the same root word that appears in Daniel 9:22, wherein Gabriel says that he came to give him skill and “understanding” (from *bin*). Thus, Gabriel comes to Daniel and gives him the “understanding” (*bin*) that he didn’t have at the end of Daniel 8!

Also,... Daniel 8:14 was... a time prophecy. Right after Gabriel comes to Daniel and offers to give him understanding, what kind of prophecy does he give him (*see Dan. 9:24*)? Of course, a time prophecy. Clearly, the vision of Daniel 9 is linked to part of the vision in Daniel 8, the 2,300 days. While Daniel 2 and 7 had a vision and complete explanation, Daniel 8 had a vision and a partial explanation. In Daniel 9, there was no vision but only... an explanation of what wasn’t explained in Daniel 8.

## Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August

Our author now surveys “even more evidence” that Dan. 8:14 is linked with 9:24-27:

In Daniel 8:1, 2, Daniel three times makes reference to the “vision” of the chapter; each time it comes from the same Hebrew word, *hazon*...

Daniel then describes what he sees in the *hazon* [*sic*]: the ram, the goat, the little horn, and so forth. *Hazon* [*sic*], therefore, refers to the general vision of chapter 8.

In contrast, when he talks specifically about the 2,300 days, Daniel uses a different word for vision, *mareh*. “And the vision [*mareh*] of the evening and the morning which was told is true. . . . [*sic*] 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 [*mareh*], but none understood it [*sic*]” (*Dan. 8:26, 27*).

Thus, we have two words for “vision” in Daniel 8: *hazon* for the whole vision, *mareh* [*sic*] for Daniel 8:14, the vision about the 2,300 days and the sanctuary being cleansed, the part that Daniel didn’t understand (*Dan. 8:27*).

Now these two words appear again, in Daniel 9, when Gabriel appears to Daniel. “Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision [*hazon*] at the beginning . . . [*sic*] touched me. . . . [*sic*] At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision [*mareh*]” (*Dan. 9:21-23*).

Consider what *mareh*? There’s only one: the *mareh* of the 2,300 days that Daniel specifically said he didn’t understand. In fact, the word translated “consider” comes from *bin*, which also links this to the *mareh* of Daniel 8:26, which Daniel needed understanding (*bin*) about.

Clearly, the explanation of Daniel 9:24-27 is linked to the 2,300 days of the previous chapter. Gabriel came to give Daniel understanding about the *mareh* [*sic*] of the 2,300 days!

## Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> August

Finally, our supremely confident author employs this lexical evidence to summarise why “Adventists see a powerful link between the two chapters and two prophecies.”

Daniel 8 ends with the *mareh* [*sic*] of the 2,300 days not explained. Gabriel, the same angel interpreter in Daniel 8, appears in Daniel 9 and tells him to understand the *mareh*. The only *mareh* Daniel didn’t understand was the *mareh* of 8:14 and 8:26, which was a time prophecy. Then, immediately after telling him to understand the *mareh*, a time prophecy, what does Gabriel give Daniel? Another time prophecy.

## Evaluation

What an impressive polemic! This talented teacher steadily builds his very simple case – that the 70 “weeks” of Dan. 9 elucidate the 2,300 “evenings-mornings” of 8 – through a series of small, easily grasped steps which appear, *at first sight*, to be the product of conscientious, competent scholarship which is bolstered time and again by credible logic almost begging to be heard! We are not here, however, to be entranced by any display of well-practised, caution calming showmanship. We are here to check if our tutor really is a workman erecting no *jerry-built* structure, 2 Tim. 2:15, by scrupulously subjecting his polemic to the Berean Test, Acts 17:11. As he admonished his students himself back in Lesson 2, we should “let the Bible speak for itself on this important topic.” Adapting his own words this week, then, let’s proceed with full assurance that “God... makes it easy for us to do just that.”

Our author does not begin at all well in claiming that parallels between Daniel’s first three major forecasts “form an immovable foundation for where we are going next.” Above all, we have quite a long way to go before we are persuaded either that “the judgment scene in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 are the same event”, or that this tainted tabernacle awaits complete cleansing in heaven. Regardless, a decision on this week’s study requires no such pending research.

## Daniel's Major Motif of Understanding

The fact that *understanding* is one of Daniel's major motifs is manifest even from a brief lexical study. For example, the Hebrew verb *bîn* appears 170 times in the OT, fully 22 in his book. Its cognate noun *bînâ* appears 38 times in the Hebrew text of the OT and once in its Aramaic text, fully five times in his tome. This is *almost 13 percent* in both cases in a relatively small volume, only some 50 percent Hebrew!

Likewise, the Hebrew verb *śākal* occurs some 60 times in the OT, fully nine times, or *15 percent* of this total, in our book! Compare its Aramaic equivalent *śēkal*, 7:8, and its cognate noun *śokl<sup>e</sup>tānû*, used three times, both alone in the Book of Daniel. The list includes four or five additional, less frequent words that need not detain us.

This prime motif is well worth our close attention, therefore, beginning with its *overall* relevance to Daniel's book. However, believe me, dear readers, here *most of you will be confronted by new possibilities!* So my caveat about its literary structure, in reviewing Lesson 2, is equally apropos: "The surest safeguard... against excessive subjectivity is to '*forget*' what we ever knew... and approach [it] as if *afresh!*"

### Daniel's Lexis for *Vision* in 8

First, though, it will facilitate our survey of this motif if we preface it by evaluating our author's appeal to Daniel's use of two lexically distinct nouns for *vision* in 8. These are *hāzôn* and *mar'eh*. And it is a simple matter to demonstrate that *these Hebrew nouns are virtually equivalent*. That is, *hāzôn* does not include everything but the *mar'eh* of the evenings-mornings. For example, the relevant portions of 15f. read thus: "I... was watching the vision (*hāzôn*) and trying to understand (*bînâ*) it... 'Gabriel, tell this man the meaning (*bîn*) of the vision (*mar'eh*).'" This chiasm establishes that *hāzôn* and *mar'eh* are *interchangeable*, as perfectly clear when tabulated:



That is, Daniel, God's faithful prophet, *includes* the 2,300 evenings-mornings in his *hāzôn*, 15, while Gabriel, God's faithful interpreter, *excludes* them from his *mar'eh*, if our author really is correct that his instant explication, 20:25, stops short of them!

In manifest obedience to the directive, Gabriel tells Daniel, "understand (*bîn*) that the vision (*hāzôn*) concerns the time of the end", 17. Placing the directive and the response together, it is obvious again that here *hāzôn* and *mar'eh* are *interchangeable*:

directive: *bîn* → *mar'eh*  
response: *bîn* → *hāzôn*

In brief, Gabriel assists Daniel specifically to grasp the *mar'eh* by guiding him to discern the *hāzôn*! Regardless, Daniel's closing comment is, "I was appalled by the vision (*mar'eh*); it was beyond understanding (*bîn*)", 27. This forms an envelope – scholars call it an *inclusio* – with his opening remark, 15. Placing these side by side,

opening remark: *hāzôn* → *bînâ*  
closing remark: *mar'eh* → *bîn*

it is quite transparent yet again that these nouns *hāzôn* and *mar'eh* are altogether *interchangeable* behind *vision* in 8. It follows, furthermore, that *it was his complete vision, not just its detail, 2,300 evenings-mornings, which perplexed our prophet*. This gains solid support in that the *eschatological hāzôn*, 17b, 26b (compare 19:25), is in close focus in the crucial question, "How long...?", 13, whose specific answer is, "2,300 evenings and mornings", 12. Moreover, one must ask, Is it *only* the *mar'eh* which is true, 26a, especially in light of the sweeping vistas of 2:45 and 10:1? And, Why should the *hāzôn alone* be sealed, 8:26b – that is, *beyond mastery!* – especially when it was the *mar'eh*, according to our author, which Daniel did not grasp?

I respectfully insist, therefore, that any distinction in 8 between the Hebrew nouns *hāzôn* and *mar'eh* is entirely a figment of our author's apologetic mind. Regardless, he still appears to have a point in the use of the latter in 9:23b. So we will return.

## Overall Relevance of the Motif of Understanding

First, Daniel has great natural ability (*śākal*), 1:4. But prophetic insight (*bîn*) derives from Yahweh alone, 17 (compare 5:11, 12, 14 (*śokl<sup>e</sup>tānû*)). This is especially prominent in his own visions, for which he must seek enlightenment, as in 7:16 (compare 2:21b (*bî-nâ*); 8:15 (*bînâ*); 10:12 (*bîn*)). However, in his first personal vision, the tempting inference is that, despite heaven's *detailed* instruction, 7:17-27, Daniel does not comprehend completely. For his deep distress, which motivated his quest, 15, has not been resolved, 28. Granted, my deduction is far from conclusive. Yet it is merely minor. For, beyond all quibble, in his second personal vision, despite Gabriel's tuition, 8:19-25, in direct response to heaven's edict, 16, 17 (*bîn*), Daniel does not comprehend, 27 (*bîn*). In contrast, the record is completely silent alone about our prophet's understanding of those 70 "weeks" of 9. So only his final vision, 10-12, awaits attention.

Most importantly, despite seeking enlightenment, 10:12 (*bîn*), and the angel's specific endeavours, 14 (*bîn*), *our prophet must be satisfied with no more than broad understanding*, 1 (*bîn*); 12:8 (*bîn*). Observe very carefully that, via heaven's decree of 12:4, 9f., *his entire book is henceforth sealed*. The wicked can never comprehend it, 10b (*bîn*), while the righteous will only understand it, 10b (*bîn*), at "the time of the end", 9. *This includes Daniel*, God's highly esteemed prophet, 9:23; 10:19a, whose death would intervene, 12:13. Our author is irresponsible, then, to insist that our seer *must* plumb *every* last depth of 8, merely *one* of its major forecasts! Moreover, notice these three quite remarkable parallels with his closing vision: the ethereal question, "How long...?", 8:13; 12:6; the sealing, 8:26; 12:4, 9; his admission of ignorance, 8:27; 12:8.

### The Purported Nexus Between Dan. 8 and 9

Above all, of immense interest among such parallels is the striking fact that Gabriel directs Daniel, "[S]eal up the vision," 8:26. It follows, then, beyond cogent quibble, that *our strictly dutiful seer would never henceforth seek to plumb his second vision!* This alone suffices utterly to refute our author's crucial polemic that Gabriel revisits the vision of 8 in 9, whether or not he completed his explicative commission before the former was sealed! However, the question should be asked, Was *any* part of 8 left uninterpreted? And here an initial glance at 7 is instructive. The period of persecution, 25b, is not really part of this *vision* at all. It is mentioned only in the *explanation* as an additional detail. It therefore requires no explanation of its own; it simply adds salient, *self-evident* information about the trauma the saints will suffer.

Likewise, although the purpose of the 2,300 evenings-mornings, 8:14, is integral to Daniel's second vision, their meaning is equally as *self-evident* as the time, times and half a time. God's temple would be polluted; it would take time to rectify. Now really, what more could Daniel grasp here to avoid his profound distress, 27!? If it be objected that the outset of the former is not revealed, neither is that of the latter. Nor should it be protested that the vision of 9 reveals that there was a good deal more to explain about the evenings-mornings. *This could not possibly concern our seer!* For he would realise that there was any deficit in *retrospect* alone, not *prospect*.

Furthermore, our author flagrantly ignores the record of his dearly beloved history that Belshazzar's third regnal year, 8:1, preceded Darius' initial regnal year, 9:1, by *about one complete decade!* The details need not detain us. What possible credibility is there in the intimation, then, that *Gabriel ignored Daniel's anxiety*, 8:27, for *ten whole years!*? None whatever, especially in view of the former's extremely *rapid* response to the latter's prayer, 9:20-23! And that prayer bears its own tacit testimony.

Our author is quite correct in stressing that Daniel seeks no insight in his prayer, 9:4-19. For *he fully understood (bîn) the dire prophecy of Jer. 25:8-12*, Dan. 9:2. Yet, in passing, this is scarcely to come to terms with it. For its point is not simply that "he pleads for the promised restoration" of Jerusalem and its hallowed temple. *He is profoundly concerned*, 19, *lest Yahweh delays those 70 years of exile*. How, though, could he possibly have gathered this idea from 8? The sanctuary to be desecrated there sometime in the future was still desolate as he studied Jeremiah's prophecy.

In other words, *Daniel's forecast of the 70 "weeks" is completely self-contained*. For there is not the remotest hint in its *entire* preface either that he has *anything* relevant to his vision of 8 in mind, or that Gabriel is about to answer his prayer by revisiting *any* detail in 8 – unless our author is correct, at very least, in insisting that Yahweh's messenger's almost passing reference to the Hebrew noun *mar'eh*, 9:23b, really does link his explanation of the 70 "weeks" back to the 2,300 evenings-mornings. And to give credit where credit is due, *at first sight* this logic does appear sound, especially as reference here to *mar'eh* seems otherwise hard to explain. However, all is clear if we pause to absorb *everything* Daniel has to teach us on this point.

Before moving on, though, one major question about this forecast remains: Does Gabriel's message answer Daniel's concern? Yes indeed! Here alone in this entire book do we find reference to "the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem", 9:25.

## The Broad, Literary Structure of Major, Visionary Daniel

### Daniel's Final, Major Forecast

However surprising it may sound, the best perspective is gained in the preface of Daniel's *final* vision, 10:1-11:1, where Seventh-day Adventist apologists like our author seldom venture, if ever. And our initial concern is to garner its relevant, key words.

First, "a revelation (*dābār*) was given to Daniel... The understanding (*bînâ*) of the message (*dābār*) came to him in a vision (*mar'eh*)." The circumstances were that, for reasons which he did not divulge, our prophet had been mourning and fasting for three whole weeks, 2f., when he was approached by heaven's most resplendent ambassador, 4-6. Regardless, Daniel "was the only one who saw the vision (*mar'â*); the men with (him) did not see it (*mar'â*)," 7. So he "was left alone, gazing at this great vision (*mar'â*)", 8a, albeit in a condition of complete, terrified immobility, 8bf.

Secondly, as this unnamed herald gently restored his prophet, 10-19, he directed: "(C)onsider carefully (*bîn*) the words (*dābār*) I am about to speak to you," 11. Then he explained that he had been delayed during all of that mourning: "Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding (*bîn*) and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them... to explain (*bîn*) to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision (*hāzôn*) concerns a time yet to come", 12-14. Even at this late stage, however, our prophet responded, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision (*mar'â*)", 16b.

Before any analysis, the only new noun worth defining is *mar'â*, manifestly cognate with *mar'eh*. It is relatively rare, utilised just 11 times in the OT, fully four times by Daniel, all in 10. And it has the basic import *vision*, without specificity. In contrast, throughout the OT in general, beyond prophecy, the noun *mar'eh* often occurs with the specific nuance, *outward appearance*, as in Dan. 1:13, behind *appearance*. By simple extension, it can likewise denote the appearance of some visionary detail. A case in point is Daniel's instructor, 10:18, "the one who *looked* like a man". The relevance of this clarification to my current polemic should be obvious shortly.

Daniel's attentive reader will therefore enquire, Which *mar'eh* does our seer mean in 10:1? For in entirety, his final forecast, 11:2-12:3, is *devoid* of such symbols as punctuate those of 2, 7 and 8! Nor is this "dilemma" resolved by his employment of the nouns *mar'â* and *hāzôn* in 10. Regardless, the simple solution lies in the patent fact that these three Hebrew nouns are quite *interchangeable* in this prophecy. Furthermore, *the mar'â consists manifestly in his resplendent teacher*, 5-9. Therefore, *he is equally designated by both hāzôn and mar'eh*. Importantly, there is not the remotest hint in the *entire* preface to Daniel's final forecast either that he has *anything* relevant to his second vision in mind, or that his tutor answers his prayer by revisiting *any* detail of *any* former vision. In other words, *this forecast is fully self-contained*.

Please note, however, that by no means does this mean that there are no parallels between the final interpretation and those of previous visions. For example, the Little Horn appears again, defiling God's temple, in 11:31. I focus here on its preface.

## Daniel's Fourth, Major Forecast

Let us now subject Daniel's forecast of those 70 "weeks" to the *identical* analysis. Daniel had been praying towards the end of Jeremiah's 70 years of captivity, 9:4-19. Gabriel, "the man I had seen in the earlier vision (*hāzôn*) came to me", 21. In passing, with its specific reference to 8:13-18, here is additional evidence that *hāzôn* and *mar'eh* are quite *interchangeable* in his second vision! Back to 9, Gabriel "instructed (*bîn*) me... 'I have now come to give you insight (*śākal*) and understanding (*bînâ*)'", 22. For, as soon as Daniel began to pray, "an answer (*dābār*) was given... Therefore, consider (*bîn*) the message (*dābār*) and understand (*bîn*) the vision (*mar'eh*)", 23.

### Comparing Daniel's Fourth and Final, Major Forecasts

Remember how highly dependent our author is upon extremely close *parallels* between Daniel's first three, major visions, Lesson 5? This echoes, too, at the outset of his current lesson. Quite apart from the cogency of all his salient conclusions, the huge hurdle for his entire polemic is, *he should equally have gauged the striking fact that there are also very close parallels between both prophecies beyond 8:*

- *as in 10, so in 9, the circumstances were virtually identical in that Daniel was earnestly praying, and was answered as soon as possible by a lofty angel;*
- *as in 10, so in 9, the prime Hebrew nouns *hāzôn* and *mar'eh* are quite interchangeable in designating the appearance of that angelic envoy;*
- *as in 10, so in 9, God's message [*dābār*] is contained in his angel's *mar'eh*, so Daniel must consider [*bîn*] this *dābār* and understand [*bîn*] this *mar'eh*/*hāzôn*.*

Other details could be added to this brief list. For example, only in 9:23 and 10:19 is Daniel addressed as highly esteemed. However, these three prime parallels are surely quite sufficient to confirm that Daniel's vision in 9 is as completely **self-contained** as that of 10-12! **Neither** stems from our seer's lack of understanding back in 8.

### Conclusion

In brief, our author utterly fails to comprehend that, beyond the complete decade of silence after Daniel's second vision, *heaven returns with audition alone. Symbolism is quite passé.* There is no nexus between 8 and 9, therefore, since they lie on opposite sides of the visionary *watershed* of his book! Its 70 "weeks" forecast is as **self-contained** as its final vision. It owes **no** interpretive debt beyond its bounds.

### Summary

Although, at first sight, our author's polemic appears persuasive, the Berean Test quickly verifies that *he is extremely selective with his evidence.* Therefore, *his structure is jerry-built*, upon the perilous foundation of mere *human* wisdom and logic.

First, our author has no cogent reason in 8 to segregate the Hebrew nouns *hāzôn* and *mar'eh*. Various cohesive lines of evidence confirm that they are virtually *interchangeable*. Daniel remained perplexed by this *entire* vision, which was sealed *as soon as Gabriel finished his explanation*, against *all* further comprehension at that! Moreover, despite Daniel's debilitating deficiency, *Gabriel had left nothing unclarified.*

Secondly, our author fails to recognise that, among three striking parallels between 8 and Daniel's closing vision, *his quest for comprehension is denied as his entire tome is sealed against comprehension* – even by the saints – till the time of the End. This is strong confirmation that he would never seek to revisit 8 after it was sealed.

Thirdly, our author fails to recognise that there are several striking parallels between both of Daniel's forecasts beyond that in 8, including the prophet's *precise* circumstances and *every* key word in his relevant vocabulary of visionary communication. In company with the entire **decade** of delay between his prophecies of 8 and 9, these thoroughly refute our author's crucial claim that they are very closely linked through their common noun *mar'eh*. Rather, *Daniel's two final forecasts are entirely self-contained.* For that decade of delay marks the visionary *watershed* of his book!