

On page 70 (the first four paragraphs), there are wrong letters in brackets for the different text blocks.

On page 146 (lines 20–21), “sixth century A.D.” should read “first century B.C.”

On page 237 (note 8), “Darmstedt” should read “Damsteegt.”

On pages 25–27, just one table for the structure on Daniel 10 and 11 would have been sufficient and clearer, particularly since there is no indication of the beginning of the second table.

Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen

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Doukhan, Jacques. *Daniel 11 Decoded: An Exegetical, Historical, and Theological Study*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2019. xv + 341 pp. Softcover. USD 29.99.

Daniel 11 Decoded is the first book-length verse-by-verse commentary on Daniel 11 by any well-known Seventh-day Adventist scholar. It fleshes out Doukhan’s innovative reading, the most radical historicist interpretation of this biblical chapter, which he earlier sketched in his *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987; revised ed. 1989). Doukhan interprets “North” and “South” throughout Daniel 11, beginning with verse 5, as referring to “symbolic entities,” rather than geographical directions. He identifies them as “a religious and spiritual power, represented by Babylon (the King of the North), that replaces God, and a human, self-reliable, secular, political power, represented by Egypt (the King of the South), that ignores and denies God” (60).

Following a brief introduction, the first five chapters outline thus: Problems and Methods, Parallels of Structures, Significance of Daniel 8, North-South Symbolism, and The Literary Structure of Daniel 11. Chapter six, the bulk of the book, consists of verse-by-verse commentary. Chapter seven addresses the Theology of Daniel 11 and chapter eight is an Excursus on Daniel 11 and Islam.

The book has several positive features. It is well written with clear language, logically organized, exposes key issues, interacts with scholarly literature, and offers some helpful critiques of prior interpretations. Chapters two and five present detailed discussion and outlines of literary structures. The textual commentary elucidates meanings of many Hebrew words and expressions. Doukhan’s stated approach of analyzing the biblical text before identifying historical fulfillments is manifestly correct. He convincingly shows that the King of the North represents the papacy in the latter half of Daniel 11.

However, *Daniel 11 Decoded* contains numerous exegetical flaws, of which there is space here to identify only a few of the most prominent (see a

longer review article of this book from which the present review is abridged: http://www.daniel11prophecy.com/uploads/1/1/3/7/113721993/gane_review_of_doukhanan_daniel_11_decoded_book.pdf). First, as reflected by the title of his book, Doukhan claims that Daniel 11 is “coded,” using “a symbolic language” (1). However, the discourse unit consisting of 11:2–12:3 does not need decoding in this sense because it does not record a symbolic vision or allegory; rather, it is the third angelic explanation (with elaboration) of the symbolic vision in Daniel 8:3–14, following the explanations in 8:17, 19–26 and 9:24–27. The language of these explanations is basically literal, containing some non-literal language.

One of Doukhan’s preferred methodological tools to support his spiritual readings is a form of what James Barr termed “illegitimate totality transfer”: “The error that arises, when the ‘meaning’ of a word (understood as the total series of relations in which it is used in the literature) is read into a particular case as its sense and implication there” (James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961; repr. London: SCM, 1983], 218; cf. 222). For example, Doukhan imports/eisegetes the contextually conditioned messianic usage of the expression “a branch of his roots” in Isaiah 11:1 into Daniel 11:7 (“a branch of her roots”), where there is no hint of a messianic figure (89).

Doukhan attempts to skip the Ptolemies and Seleucids by jumping from the division of Alexander’s empire in Daniel 11:4 to the rise of papal Rome at the beginning of verse 5. He does this by interpreting “others than these” at the end of verse 4 as pagan Rome (79–80, 233). Doukhan introduced this view in his *Daniel: The Vision of the End*, but it has gained no noticeable traction among scholars. In *Daniel 11 Decoded*, Doukhan argues that “The demonstrative ‘these’ refers to the kingdoms implied in the word ‘*akharito*, which are the kingdoms succeeding Alexander.” Thus, “others than these” refers to the power following these Hellenistic kingdoms, that is, pagan Rome (80). However, in Daniel 11:4, the possessive pronominal suffix on ‘*ah^aritô*, “his end,” indicates that the ‘*ah^arit* belongs to Alexander, so this expression refers to his posterity, i.e., his direct descendants (cf. Jer 31:17; Ps 109:13). Therefore, ‘*ah^aritô* in 11:4 does not refer to the Hellenistic kingdoms succeeding Alexander, and consequently, “others than these” are those dynastic kingdoms, not the Romans.

Doukhan misses the key indicator regarding the relationship between Daniel 11:4 and 11:5: Alexander’s Greek empire is divided “toward the four winds of heaven” (v. 4), which represent the four directions—North, South, East, West (cf. Zech 6:5–8), and “Then the king of the south shall become strong” (Dan 11:5). Obviously, the King of the South is the ruler of the Greek kingdom that is located in the South, which is Ptolemaic Egypt, as recognized by all scholars (to my knowledge) other than Doukhan. Then, the King of the North introduced in the next verse (v. 6) must be the ruler

of another Greek kingdom. It was Seleucid Syria that occupied the territory to the north of the land of Israel and that engaged in ongoing rivalry with Ptolemaic Egypt, finally taking Palestine from Egypt, matching the contours of the text description in 11:6–16.

Antiochus III the Great—the same Seleucid who took Palestine in 198 BC (v. 16) and gave his daughter (Cleopatra I) to Ptolemy V in a marriage alliance in 193 BC (v. 17)—attempted to expand his kingdom through military campaigns into Asia Minor and Greece, but was defeated by a Roman commander in 190 BC (v. 18), returned to his homeland of Syria, and subsequently met his demise in 187 BC (v. 19). The correspondence between the text profile and the combination of distinctive historical events in the same order during the career of Antiochus III is too close to ignore, as scholars recognize.

In light of the factors identified above, Doukhan's text commentary on Daniel 11:5–19 (81–132) is unpersuasive. Therefore, the historical accounts regarding "The Paganizing Church-Rise of Christianity," "The Rise of Papal Supremacy: Church and State," and the "Catholic Counter-Reformation" that he proposes as fulfillments of these verses are off target.

Doukhan's interpretation raises a problem with 11:22b, which predicts the death of the "prince of the covenant," i.e., the Messiah (cf. 9:25–27). Jesus died under pagan Rome, not papal Rome, which Doukhan already introduces in 11:5. To solve this anachronism, Doukhan interprets verse 22 as referring to Christian victims of persecution by the papacy: "Jesus Christ is, again, being crucified in the martyrdom of His people" (140). However, those that are swept away and broken by the King of the North in 22a are not Christian martyrs, but "armies" (171), referring to military forces, as in verse 15. It would be strange for Daniel 11 to only indirectly mention the death of Christ in verse 22 (at the center of Doukhan's chiasmic structure of the chapter [68]) when this event features in the previous much shorter explanation in 9:26.

Doukhan opposes the "Islamist" view that sees 11:25–30 as fulfilled by the papal (King of the North) initiated Crusades against Islamic powers (King of the South) that had taken over the southern portion of what had been the Roman empire (152–153). Nevertheless, he sees the Crusades in verse 10b (102–103), before the prediction of Christ's death in verse 22. If the Crusades can be in Daniel 11, why would they not be where they belong—after verse 22? Why couldn't the ongoing King of the South nemesis of the religious-political papacy (including in v[s]. 40–43) be the religious-political Islamic power, which fought the Crusades against the armies of Christendom?

Doukhan views the attack by the King of the South against the King of the North in 11:40 as referring "historically to the mortal blow against the Church by Napoleon in A.D. 1798, followed by the Church-State treaty (Concordat) he signed with the pope" and "to the political attack against

the Church, when, in A.D. 1870, the emerging nation of Italy took away the Papal States” (202). Then the response by the King of the North to this attack in the same verse (11:40) “applies historically to the Church’s recovery after the blow it had received from the French Revolution and Napoleon, which John identifies as the healing of the wound of the beast (Rev. 13:3)” (203). This recovery occurred on the political level when Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty (1929) and on the spiritual level when the “doctrinal position of the Church was strengthened and the Catholic hierarchies were reestablished throughout Europe” and at the first Vatican Council (1869–1870), when “the dogma of the infallibility of the pope was declared (203).

The language of Daniel 11:40 rules out such an interpretation. Here the King of the South provokes and initiates mutual combat (reciprocal *hithpael* of the root *n-g-h* + preposition ‘*im*, “with”), as in the NJPS translation: “the king of the south will lock horns with him” (cf. *HALOT* 2:667: “hitp: impf. נִגְּחֵם: to join in combat with (נֶגַח), to wage war Da 11₄₀”). Retaliation by the King of the North is swift and overwhelming, so that he quickly conquers territories of the King of the South (v[s]. 40–43). Nothing like this has happened in the history of the papacy since the beginning of the “time of the end” in 1798–1844, so we have not seen the fulfillment of the end-time events predicted in Daniel 11:40–43.

To conclude, Doukhan’s *Daniel 11 Decoded* has some strong points and is thought provoking. However, informed readers will find serious problems with his exegetical methodology and with various levels of his interpretation of Daniel 11. This remarkably detailed and relevant prophetic chapter calls for further research in pursuit of solid understanding.

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