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The Un-Manifestation of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Daniel 11:1-22

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Introduction

Seventh-day Adventists derive our understanding of the pre-Advent judgment and its timing primarily from Daniel 7-9. However, we cannot afford to ignore Daniel 11, which largely parallels chapters 7-9 in historical scope, because chapter 11 carries crucial implications for preterist versus historicist identifications of the “little horn” power in chapters 7 and 8.

Preterists and historicists identify the “little horn” by reading Daniel from opposite directions. Preterist critical scholars begin with Daniel 11, where they explain the despicable king of the North in verses 21 and following as the second century B.C. Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.), who took the epithet Epiphanes, which refers to “manifest” divinity. Since this king removes regular worship and sets up a desolating abomination (v. 31), preterists then go back to chapters 7 and 8 and assume that Antiochus must be the “little horn,” who commits those very crimes. Historicists agree that the same ruler does these things in chapters 7-8 and 11, but they read Daniel forward so that the earlier chapters (2, 7-9) unfold a framework within which to interpret

chapter 11. The result is that the “little horn” = despicable king of the North is a Roman power.¹

The present paper critiques the preterist and historicist positions by examining Daniel 11:1-22 to determine whether the person in verse 21 is Antiochus (preterists) or a Roman (historicists). I have no *a priori* objection to seeing Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Daniel 11. However, what I have found from exegesis of this chapter is a line of Seleucid monarchs up through Antiochus III “the Great,” the father of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, whereupon the prophecy skips over all the remaining Seleucid kings, including Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and goes directly to Roman rulers. Therefore, the preterists are wrong in claiming that verses 21 and following deal with Antiochus IV.

My interpretation of Daniel 11:1-22 presents two interlinked contributions. First, whereas Seventh-day Adventist historicists have tended to avoid continuation of the Seleucid line up through Antiochus III, avoiding getting this close to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, I agree with scholars who see striking historical correspondence with the text all the way up to the death of Antiochus III in verse 19 (see below). Second, I have discovered a crucial parallel between the transition from Medo-Persia to Greece/Macedonia and the transition from Greece/Macedonia to Rome. When the transitions occur at the reigns of Persian Xerxes “the Great” and Greek Antiochus III “the Great,” who suffered catastrophic defeats with long term consequences at the hands of Greece and Rome, respectively, the prophecy skips the remaining rulers of the formerly prevailing dynasty (including Antiochus IV Epiphanes) and moves directly to the kings of the new prevailing power.

¹ William H. Shea, *Daniel: A Reader's Guide* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2005), 94-95.

Getting our Bearings in Daniel 11

Since Daniel 11 is complex, to say the least, we must first get our bearings. At the outset it helps to recognize that this chapter, like 9:24-27, is strictly verbal communication, with no symbolic vision (contrast chaps. 7 and 8). Since 9:24-27 is an extension of the interpretation of the vision in chap. 8, it would make sense that chap. 11 is also interpretive in nature. In other words, chap. 11 does not introduce any new kingdoms/powers; rather, it further explains what has already been revealed.

As in 9:24-27, the non-symbolic nature of chap. 11 makes it possible to express more specific information regarding persons and events than could be conveyed through a symbolic vision. Although the persons in 9:24-27 and chap. 11 are anonymous, it should be possible to identify them from the way in which they are described, especially in terms of what they do.

There is an important difference between 9:24-27 and chap. 11. Whereas 9:24-27 focuses on the Jewish nation, ending with events close to the sacrifice of the Messiah, the scope of chap. 11, continuing with chap. 12, is much broader. Chaps. 11-12 parallel chaps. 2, 7 and 8, which culminate in eschatological salvation. Chap. 11 is closest to chap. 8, which begins from the time of Medo-Persia after the fall of Babylon.

Unlike earlier revelations in Daniel, chap. 11 presents a succession of anonymous kings within dynasties, rather than simply a succession of kingdoms/dynasties in which individual kings are only occasionally mentioned as distinct personalities because of their overwhelming prominence (Nebuchadnezzar in 2:38; Alexander in 8:21). In terms of genre, Daniel 11 is strikingly similar to the Akkadian “Dynastic Prophecy” (c. 330 B.C.) in three respects:

1. There is a succession, not unbroken, of anonymous kings in a concise annalistic historical account.
2. The scheme of historical events associated with the reigns of these kings is selective.
3. The unnamed rulers arise within a named succession of world empires.²

It is easy to get lost in the mass of details presented in Daniel 11. However, we find a clear historical beginning point. Verse 2 explicitly commences with four Achaemenid kings of Persia, the fourth of whom must be Xerxes I the Great (= Ahasuerus; 486-465 B.C.), who attacked Greece with a mighty invasion force and was driven back after the Greeks defeated him in the naval battle of Salamis in 480 B.C.³

The “mighty king” in vs. 3 must be Alexander the Great, due to the fact that his kingdom is divided to the four winds of heaven, just as 8:21-22 describes division of the empire of the “first king” of Grecia into four parts (cf. 8:8—“toward the four winds of heaven”).

Without saying that our interpretation must follow a particular trajectory according to whether we have decided to be preterists or historicists, we can simply derive our starting hermeneutical framework from the biblical text itself in terms of what we have learned from the first few verses.

² Roy Gane, “Akkadian *Ex Eventu* Prophecies and the Genre ‘Apocalypse,’” paper presented at Society of Biblical Literature, national meeting, Anaheim, 1989, referring to A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 24-37.

³ For the history of the Persian period, see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC* (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), 2:647-701. After Cyrus (Dan 10:1), the first three Achaemenid kings were Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius I. Following Jewish tradition, Jacques Doukhan adopts an alternate interpretation. Leaving out the False Smerdis (522 B.C.), a usurper, he interprets the three kings after Cyrus (11:2) as Cambyses, Darius I, and Ahasuerus (= Xerxes), and the fourth as Artaxerxes I, who used his Persian wealth to stir up wars between the Greek city-states in order to weaken them (*Daniel: The Vision of the End* [revised ed.; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987], 76-77; idem, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000], 167). However, Daniel 11:2 predicts: “he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece,” which indicates a multi-national army to fight against Greece. It was Xerxes who did this, not Artaxerxes. Nevertheless, this difference does not greatly affect the overall exegesis of the chapter.

1. Daniel 11 refers to a succession of real historical rulers (e.g., Xerxes and Alexander) without giving their names, but identifying them by brief references to salient features of their careers, especially events of military aggression.
2. There are gaps in the succession of kings (as in the Akkadian “Dynastic Prophecy”). Most significantly for us, Persian history includes a number of kings after Xerxes, but once Grecia is mentioned, the focus of attention goes to that power. Shea points out “a basic principle for interpreting Daniel’s apocalyptic prophecy. That principle is this: it is only necessary to continue with one kingdom, or line of kings, until the new one of importance is introduced on the scene of action.”⁴
3. In Daniel 11 there are clear links to preceding visions and interpretations, which help us to know where we are in the relative scheme of things. For example, verse 4 speaks of the Grecian empire breaking up “toward the four winds of heaven,” the same expression found in 8:8. In chap. 11 it is not necessary to explain this as division of the Hellenistic empire because we already know this from 8:8, 22 (cf. v. 21—explicitly “Greece”).

The first two of these hermeneutical points result in two of the biggest problems we face in attempting to interpret Daniel 11. First, descriptions of royal activities are cryptic, and in some cases more than one ruler can be found from extrabiblical records to fit a given description. Second, it is not always immediately apparent where gaps between kings are located.

Our greatest aid for dealing with these problems comes from the third hermeneutical point listed above: linkage with previous visions. Shea points out crucial

⁴ William Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Daniel and Revelation Committee 1; ed. F. Holbrook; Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 41.

anchor points in Daniel 11, which can be established on the basis of comparison with the earlier prophecies in chaps. 7, 8, and 9:

11:22—Prince of covenant broken (cf. 9:25-27).

11:31—Daily removed; Abomination of desolation set up (cf. 8:11-13).

11:32-34; 12:7—Persecution of saints (cf. 7:25; 12:7).⁵

Shea shows that the presentation in chap. 11 is in correct chronological order, reversing the (chronologically reverse) order of presentation in chaps. 7-9.⁶

Ptolemaic and Seleucid Dynasties in Daniel 11:5-13

Following the division of Alexander's Greek/Macedonian empire in Daniel 11:4, almost all scholars, both preterist and historicist, agree that verses 5-13 outline the Hellenistic kings of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria. These reigned to the South and North, respectively, of the land of Israel.⁷ During the Hellenistic period, as in much earlier times, control of Palestine was disputed by nations to the North and South, so that the land of God's chosen people passed back and forth between them, depending upon which kingdom was stronger.⁸

Here is a brief summary of what is going on in verses 5-13.⁹

Verse 5. "...the king of the south shall be strong." This king is Ptolemy I Soter (322-285 B.C.). "One of his princes shall be stronger than he." This prince is Seleucus I Nicator (312-280), the general who had won the northeastern part of Alexander's empire (to the

⁵ William Shea, "Unity of Daniel," *Symposium on Daniel* (ed. F. Holbrook; Daniel and Revelation Committee 2; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 245-247; cf. *Selected Studies*, 63.

⁶ Shea, "Unity of Daniel," 247.

⁷ It is true that Macedonia and Pergamum were also to the North, but they were to the West and further removed from Israel. Cf. Dan 8:4-5, 9, where Palestine is the reference point for directions.

⁸ Regarding Jacques Doukhan's radically divergent view, according to which the transition to Rome already occurs by Dan 11:5, see Appendix.

⁹ A clear and concise summary of this Hellenistic history is found in C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 1: *The Message of Daniel for You and Your Family* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1981), 284-292.

North of Israel), but was driven out, fled to Egypt, was helped by Ptolemy, and made a comeback by regaining his former dominion.

Verse 6. "...they shall make an alliance." Antiochus II Theos (261-246) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246) made an alliance, sealed through the marriage of Antiochus to Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II. "...but she shall not retain the strength of her arm." When Ptolemy II died, Antiochus took back Laodice, the wife he had divorced in order to marry Berenice, but Laodice got revenge by having Antiochus, Berenice, and Berenice's baby and attendants killed.

Verses 7-8. "...a branch from her roots...enter the fortress of the king of the north...He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods." Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221), brother of Berenice, avenged her death by invading Syria. His navy occupied Seleucia, the port for Antioch, the Seleucid capitol. During his campaign, Ptolemy captured about 2500 images, many of which were of Egyptian gods and had been stolen by conquerors of Egypt.

Verse 9. "...the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south." In 242 B.C., Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226) tried but failed to get revenge for the invasion of Ptolemy III.

Verses 10-12. "His sons shall wage war." The sons of Seleucus II, i.e., Seleucus III (226-223) and Antiochus III the Great (223-187) waged war against Egypt. It was Ptolemy IV (221-203) who opposed Antiochus III. In a terrible battle at Raphia on June 22, 217 B.C., Ptolemy gained a temporary advantage when his army killed approximately 10,000 and took prisoner 4,000 of Antiochus's army.

Verse 13. "...the king of the north shall again raise a multitude." Antiochus III recovered and prepared to again attack Egypt, which was now under the control of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181), a boy only six years old.

Continuation of Ptolemaic and Seleucid Dynasties in Daniel 11:14-19

Identification of historical events in Daniel 11:14-19 is more challenging than in verses 4-13. However, since verse 22 refers to the breaking of the Prince of the covenant, which we can interpret in light of 9:24-27 as the death of Christ during the Roman period, 11:14-21 leads up to that event.¹⁰ So no later than verse 22, there must be a transition from the Hellenistic kingdoms to Rome. I find that transition in verses 20-21 (see below), after considerable detail is given in verses 15-19 concerning the long and important reign of the Seleucid king ("king of the North"), Antiochus III "the Great" (223-187 B.C.).

Antiochus III is significant because he brought Rome into the picture by unsuccessfully attempting to invade Greece (in Europe, to the Northwest), just as Xerxes of Persia had earlier brought Greece into the picture by unsuccessfully attempting to invade Greece (see verse 2). This correspondence carries a major implication: Since at the beginning of the chapter attention turns to Greece (v. 3) following Xerxes (v. 2), so that subsequent Persian rulers are passed over, it appears that the attention of Daniel 11 will similarly turn to Rome (skipping later Seleucid kings) following Antiochus III.

¹⁰ For identification of Christ as the "prince of the covenant" in verse 22 as a chronological anchor point for interpretation of Daniel 11, see Shea, *Selected Studies*, 57-59; Frank Hardy, "An Historicist Perspective on Daniel 11" (M.A. thesis; Andrews University, 1983), 85-91. Some medieval Jewish commentators understood the latter part of v. 14 ("the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down") as alluding to Jesus (Hersh Goldwurm, *Daniel: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources* [New York: Mesorah, 1979], 292).

William Shea recognizes the parallel between Xerxes and Antiochus III.¹¹ However, he also sees a parallel transition during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, whom the Romans forced to leave Egypt.¹² The question is whether Daniel 11 describes the entire reign of Antiochus III or only part of his reign, or also part of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, with the Romans appearing in v. 14 or v. 16. I find that the textual allusions match the profile of Antiochus III to his death in v. 19, but do not include Antiochus IV at all.

Verse 14. “...many shall rise against the king of the south.” During the reign of the young Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181 B.C. B.C.), many Egyptians rebelled against their Greek overlords. The Rosetta Stone “records concessions made to the restless Egyptian people by the regents” of Ptolemy V.¹³ The remainder of this verse is problematic. My literal rendering is: “...and the sons of violent/lawless ones of your people shall be lifted up in order to establish a vision, but they shall stumble.”¹⁴ This may be talking about a short-lived attempt of a pro-Seleucid Jewish faction in Jerusalem to exploit the situation in Egypt in order to break out from under Ptolemaic rule of Palestine.¹⁵

¹¹ Shea, *Selected Studies*, 56; cf. Jerome, justifying his view that Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a type of antichrist: “And since to this there might seem to be opposed the fact that the prophetic word leaves such things in the middle, from Seleucus [Seleucus IV] to the end of the world, it may be replied that in earlier history where it was speaking about the kings of Persia, it put only four kings after Cyrus the Persian, and, passing over many intervening events, suddenly came to Alexander the Macedonian king. This is the custom of the Sacred Scripture, not to relate everything but to explain those things which seem to be most important” (Jerome, cited by Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949], 306-307).

¹² Shea, *Daniel*, 243, 246.

¹³ See, e.g., Maxwell, 1:288.

¹⁴ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner render עֲקָרֵי עַמִּי as “the lawless among your people” (*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 2:968).

¹⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities* 12.3-4 §§138-146; cf. Louis Hartman and Alexander Di Lella. *The Book of Daniel* (Anchor Bible 23; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978), 291; John Goldingay, *Daniel* (Word Biblical Commentary 30; Waco: TX: Nelson, 1989), 297; C. L. Seow, *Daniel* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 173-174. For discussion of various interpretations of this verse, cf. James Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (The International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979 [1st ed. 1927]), 438-439, and John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 379-380, who points out that the

Uriah Smith, followed by *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* and Mervyn Maxwell, understood the Hebrew construct in “the violent ones of your people” as an objective genitive—“the violent ones *against* your people”—that signals the beginning of transition to the Romans, whose emergence as a superpower overlapped with the decline of the Hellenistic kingdoms. It was the Romans who fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy by their violence against God’s people, although Rome would eventually fall, as the end of v. 14 said it would (cf. Dan 7-8).¹⁶ However, in the Hebrew text itself, there is no contextual/syntactic indication that the genitive should be taken as objective, so in “violent/lawless ones of your people,” “of” is most naturally understood in the sense of “among” the Jews rather than “against” them.

Shea, like the commentators just mentioned, takes “the violent ones of your people” as oppressors (“the breakers of your people”). However, he identifies these as the Egyptians, who were taken out of the way (taking נִשְׁבְּרִים here as passive Niph., as in v. 12, rather than reflexive Hithp., which the pointing indicates), as far as Judea was concerned, through their defeat by the Syrians at the battle of Paneas (198 B.C.). This fulfilled the vision of Daniel 8 in that it signified the end of the Egyptian (Ptolemaic) horn of the four Greek horns (8:7) with regard to Judea. However, the end of 11:14 (“but they will fall down”) indicates that the Syrians under Antiochus IV Epiphanes would fail.¹⁷ While Shea remains within the Hellenistic context, it is not clear from the Hebrew that the violent ones are against the Jews, and there is no shift in the syntactic subject to

Old Greek of Dan 11:14 differs from the Hebrew Massoretic text, reading: “And in those times plots shall rise up against the king of Egypt, and he shall rebuild the ruins of your people, and he shall stand up in order to realize the prophecy, and they shall stumble” (380).

¹⁶ Smith, Uriah. *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (revised ed; Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1944), 243-244; *The Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (ed. F. Nichol; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald) 4:869; Maxwell, 1:290-291; cf. Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1978), 263-264.

¹⁷ Shea, *Daniel*, 244-245.

indicate that those who defeat the “violent ones” are the ones who fail. Furthermore, it would be strange for the text to relate this event, but not other more important aspects of fulfillment, to the vision in Daniel 8.

Frank Hardy identifies the “vision” in Daniel 11:14 with the “vision” in chap. 8 and takes 11:14 to describe the attempt of the Maccabees to prematurely fulfill the vision of the cleansing of the sanctuary/temple during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.¹⁸ However, the Maccabees were successful, rather than falling (as v. 14 indicates), and this verse seems to be speaking of Jewish antagonism against the king of the South, which does not fit Antiochus because he was a king of the North.

Verse 15. “The king of the north shall come.” Remember that in verse 13, Antiochus III was preparing for a second attack against Egypt (see above). Verse 14 describes conditions during this time, and verse 15 continues with the aggression of Antiochus III, who defeated a well-trained Egyptian army and besieged the remaining Egyptian forces at Tyre. Following his unnatural reading of the end of v. 14, Shea links v. 15 to the campaign of Antiochus IV against Egypt in 169 B.C., during which he took the city of Pelusium, which guarded the entrance to the eastern delta.¹⁹

¹⁸ Hardy, 117 n. 3; C. F. Keil comments on the “vision,” but goes in another direction: “Almost all interpreters since Jerome have referred this to Daniel’s vision of the oppression under Antiochus Epiphanes, ch. viii. 9-14, ver. 23. This is so far right, as the apostasy of one party among the Jews from the law of their fathers, and their adoption of heathen customs, contributed to bring about that oppression with which the theocracy was visited by Antiochus Epiphanes; but the limiting of the וַיִּבֶן to those definite prophecies is too narrow. וַיִּבֶן without the article is prophecy in undefined generality, and is to be extended to all the prophecies which threatened the people of Israel with severe chastisements and sufferings on account of their falling away from the law and their apostasy from their God” (*Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* [transl. M. Easton; Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, repr. 1968], 440). Goldingay suggests: “But the reference to a vision is one of the passage’s points of contact with Ezek 7 . . . where it refers to people in Jerusalem seeking some vision to encourage them. More likely, then, the vision is this passage in Ezek 7, which the violators unconsciously fulfill, and fall because God brings judgment on them as he warned there” (298).

¹⁹ Shea, *Daniel*, 245.

Verse 16. “But he who comes against him...and he shall stand in the glorious land.” Who comes against whom? Because the “arms/forces” of the king of the South were just mentioned in verse 15, and the Hebrew verb aspect (*waw* consecutive) at the beginning of verse 16 simply continues the story without a break, verse 16 most naturally describes the conquest of Palestine (“the land of beauty”) by Antiochus III. A number of Seventh-day Adventist commentators want to interpret this takeover of Palestine as the conquest for Rome by Pompey in 63 B.C.²⁰ However, this would require a break in the chronological flow of the text. Although Shea places v. 15 (and the end of v. 14) in the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, he jumps to Rome in v. 16, which “has no conceivable application to Antiochus IV because Judea was already part of his kingdom when he inherited it from his father.”²¹ I agree that this does not fit Antiochus IV, but the solution is not Pompey but Antiochus III, which invalidates the idea that Antiochus IV is present in vv. 14-15, the only place where Shea sees him in Daniel 11.²²

Verse 17. “He shall set his face...He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom.” Encouraged by his success, Antiochus III seized more territory: In 197 B.C. he took Cilicia, Lycia, and Caria on the southern coast of Asia Minor (= Anatolia, modern Turkey). Then he sealed a peace treaty with Ptolemy V by giving his daughter, Cleopatra, in marriage to Ptolemy.²³ Cleopatra turned out to be loyal to Ptolemy and Egypt, so Antiochus III gained no advantage over Ptolemy through this liason.²⁴

²⁰ Smith, 246; *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:869; Maxwell, 1:293; Hardy, 133-134; Shea, *Daniel*, 246.

²¹ Shea, *Daniel*, 246; cf. 245.

²² *Ibid.*, 243.

²³ This Cleopatra was earlier than the famous queen who became mistress to Julius Caesar.

²⁴ See Hartman and Di Lella, 292.

Verse 18. "...he shall turn his face to the coastlands...a commander shall put an end to his insolence." After taking coastal towns of Asia Minor that belonged to Egypt, Antiochus III made his fatal mistake: He invaded Greece in 192 B.C., ignoring warnings from the Romans. The Romans defeated him at Thermopylae in 191 B.C. and then crushed his forces in 190 B.C. at Magnesia, near Smyrna, driving him out of Asia Minor. The commander (not king) in verse 18 apparently refers to Lucius Cornelius Scipio, the general who defeated Antiochus at Magnesia. From this point on the Romans had the upper hand: They forced the Seleucids to give up all possessions in Europe and a large territory of Asia and pay heavy tribute as war reparation. After the defeat at Magnesia the younger son of Antiochus III, who later became Antiochus IV Epiphanes, "was taken as hostage to Rome where he lived for fourteen years..."²⁵

Verse 19. "...but he shall stumble and fall." Having lost his western territory, Antiochus had no choice but to turn back. In 187 B.C. at Elymais "he was assassinated while attempting to sack the treasure of Bel, one of his own gods, in order to meet his payments of tribute to Rome."²⁶

Transition to Rome in Daniel 11:20-22

Scholars hold a variety of interpretations regarding Daniel 11:20-22, which are a crucial transition. For example:

1. Preterists identify the king in verse 20, who sends an "exactor of tribute" and has a short reign, with Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 B.C.), a son of Antiochus III. Because Seleucus inherited an enormous financial burden of tribute from his father's defeat at the hands of the Romans, he was forced to devote a lot of energy to fund-raising, including

²⁵ Ibid., 294.

²⁶ Ibid., 293.

taxation.²⁷ “The oppressor he sent round in this connection was his finance minister Heliodorus, whose acts included attempting to pillage the treasury of the temple at Jerusalem.”²⁸ Then preterists, in agreement with the pagan anti-Christian Porphyry (A.D. 233-c. 304), identify the “contemptible person” in verse 21 with Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), the younger brother of Seleucus who succeeded him, and believe that the rest of Daniel 11 describes his notorious reign.²⁹

2. Smith and the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* have already introduced (pagan) Rome in verse 14 (see above) and continue with Rome in verses 16-19. They identify people and events in these verses as Pompey’s conquest of Palestine in 63 B.C. and the career of Julius Caesar, including his affair with the famous Cleopatra, the daughter of Ptolemy XI, and Caesar’s assassination. Then they associate the king who sends an “exactor of tribute” (v. 20) with Caesar Augustus (cf. Lk 2:1—decree that all the world should be taxed) and the “contemptible person” in verse 21 with Tiberius, the successor of Caesar, during whose reign Christ was crucified. (v. 22).³⁰ Although Shea leaves verses 14 and 15 in the Hellenistic context, he transitions to Rome at the beginning

²⁷ E.g., *ibid.*, 293; Goldingay, 298-299; Collins, 381-382.

²⁸ Goldingay, 298; cf. Ford, 265. This attempt of Heliodorus is described in 2 Macc 3.

²⁹ E.g., Montgomery, 446-470; Hartman and Di Lella, 294-305; Goldingay, 299-305; Collins, 382-390; Seow, 175-186. At the beginning of v. 40, modern preterist scholars find a “transition from *ex eventu* prophecy [“prophecy” after the event, i.e., history presented as if it is prediction] to real (and erroneous) prediction. Jerome, in contrast, referred all the passage about Epiphanes, from v 21, to the Antichrist, whereas Porphyry read the entire prophecy as historical” (Collins, 388). Similarly to Jerome’s typological approach, Ford takes vv. 21-35 as describing Antiochus IV Epiphanes as a type of antichrist, but also revealing Rome, and vv. 36-45 as transcending “Antiochus and pagan Rome, though including reminiscences of them” (266-277). Tremper Longman accepts the idea that vv. 21ff have to do with Antiochus IV Epiphanes (*Daniel* [NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999], 278-282), but “in Daniel 11:36-45 we see references to Antiochus Epiphanes taking on larger than life characteristics, which we, living in the light of the New Testament, might describe as anticipatory of a figure called the Antichrist” (282).

³⁰ Smith, 243-256; *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:869-870.

of v. 16 (“But he who comes to/against him”) and continues in agreement with Smith and the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*.³¹

3. Mervyn Maxwell parallels Smith and the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* through verse 20, referring to Augustus. However, in verse 21 Maxwell sees a major break and identifies the “contemptible person” with the papacy.³²

These three interpretations have their advantages and disadvantages:

1. Hartman and Di Lella continue with the natural flow of the Hebrew text by seeing Antiochus III in verses 16-19. However, the description in verses 22 and following goes far beyond what Antiochus IV Epiphanes did,³³ and parallels with other parts of Daniel (especially chap. 8 and 9:24-27) indicate a time later than Antiochus IV.

2. Smith and the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* see parallels between Daniel 11:20 and Luke 2:1, where Augustus orders taxation, and between Daniel 9:25-27 and 11:22, which both predict that the “Prince of the covenant” would be broken. However, interpretation of 11:16-19 in terms of Rome rather than Antiochus III seems forced. For example, the Smith and the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* identify Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy XI, as the “daughter of women” in verse 17, but this Cleopatra was not given in marriage by the king of the north to the king of the south in order to destroy the latter, as the verse suggests.

3. Maxwell has the same advantages and disadvantages as the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, plus some. The idea that the “contemptible person” in verses 21 and following is the papacy has the advantage that the rest of the chapter seems to deal with this power. However, Maxwell does not adequately account for the parallel between the

³¹ Shea, *Daniel*, 245-249.

³² Maxwell, 1:293.

³³ Cf. Longman, 281-283.

breaking of the “Prince of the covenant” in verse 22 and 9:26-27, which clearly occurs in the time of imperial rather than papal Rome. Contradicting his own comments, his chart on p. 295 places Daniel 11:22 under pagan Rome.

So what is the solution? Consider the following exegetical factors:

1. The expression “Then there shall stand up in his place” occurs at the beginning of verse 20 and again at the beginning of verse 21 (cf. vv. 7, 38). What does this mean? The Hebrew word יָרַשׁ , translated “place,” can refer to “position, office,” such as the job/function of Pharaoh’s chief butler (Gen 40:13; 41:13).³⁴

Brown, Driver and Briggs’ *Hebrew-English Lexicon* interprets the word יָרַשׁ in Daniel 11 as simply “successor,”³⁵ but this appears inadequate because the word is not needed elsewhere in the chapter to indicate simple succession from one king in a dynasty to the next. It is true that in verse 7, the word is part of a description of a successor, i.e., Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221), brother of Berenice, who avenged her death by invading Syria. However, the information that seems to be added by the word is that he takes over the struggle with the King of the North.

The emphasis of יָרַשׁ appears to be on functional equivalence with reference to the dynamics between the North and the South, rather than upon mere acquisition of a throne formerly occupied by someone else. Comparison with יָרַשׁ in verse 38 supports the idea of functional equivalence: Here, the King of the North makes a false god the functional equivalent of other gods.

The idea of functional equivalence in verses 20, 21 suggests the possibility that there can be breaks between verses 19 and 20 and between verses 20 and 21. If so, verse

³⁴ Cf. Koehler and Baumgartner, 1:483.

³⁵ F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 1979), 487.

20 is not necessarily the next Seleucid king after Antiochus III, whose story ends in verse 19. In fact, it is possible that the ruler in verse 20 is not Seleucid at all, but takes over the function of the Seleucids, who had fought with Egypt and conquered Palestine in the course of that struggle.

2. Verse 20 reads: “And there shall stand up in his function one who makes an oppressor pass through/over *to/in* the splendor of the kingdom...” The word translated “splendor” occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible, but “splendor of the kingdom” seems to parallel “land of beauty” in verse 16, which refers to the land of Israel (cf. Dan 8:9). Thus 11:20 predicts a king/power who would take over the function of Antiochus III, the conqueror of Palestine. The new ruler sends a high official of some kind to oppress the Jews.

Translations and commentaries interpret this oppression as collection of taxes or tribute, in accordance with the usage in 2 Kings 23:35, where Jehoiakim taxed Judah to raise money to give to Pharaoh Neco. However, the Hebrew word (participle of נגשׁ in Dan 11:20) refers to various kinds of oppressive coercion, including forcing people (especially slaves) to work (also participle in Exod 3:7; 5:6, 10, 13, 14, etc.) and exacting payment of debt (Deut 15:2).³⁶ The question in Daniel 11:20 is: Who sent an oppressor against Israel, and who is this oppressor?

Possible oppressors of Israel are Pompey, who took over the land of Israel for Rome in 63 B.C., and Herod the Great, to whom Rome gave control of Palestine. The problem with interpretations like these, which view the Roman senate or Augustus as the power giving orders to the oppressor, is that neither of these had short periods of rule, as the end of verse 20 indicates (“within a few days”). Alternatively, the one who is broken

³⁶ Cf. Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner, 1:670.

after a short time could be the oppressor. This may fit Pompey, but not Herod, who ruled for a long time.³⁷

The shortness of time in verse 20 is also problematic for the preterist identification with Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175), whose reign was actually longer than that of his infamous brother and successor, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164).³⁸ At least as serious is the difficulty that Seleucus IV was assassinated, so it could hardly be said that he was “broken, but not in anger” (verse 20).

3. The next ruler in verse 21 is “despised” or “despicable” (Niphal participle of *bzh*; cf., e.g., Ps 15:4; Jer 22:28).³⁹ He does not have the honor of the kingdom granted to him, but takes power in devious ways. So he is clearly a usurper. Compare Akkadian historical outlines, such as the “Dynastic Prophecy,” in which the “usurper” motif is prominent. In these texts, usurpers take advantage of times of political instability and are associated with violence and oppression.⁴⁰ Who was this usurper?

The preterist view is that the usurper is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who assumed power in 175 B.C. after the assassination of his elder brother, Seleucus IV. “For five years he [Antiochus IV] had a coregent, also named Antiochus, who was probably a young son of Seleucus IV... The arrangement was ultimately deceitful, since the young coregent was murdered in 170.”⁴¹ According to Collins, “Antiochus usurped the throne,

³⁷ During civil war with Julius Caesar, Pompey was killed in Egypt as a political move by order of the Egyptian government, which was dominated by Rome. So it could be said that he was “broken, but not in anger or in battle” (Dan 11:20).

³⁸ Keil admits that the prophecy that this king would be destroyed within a few days “does not harmonize with the fact of his [Seleucus’s] twelve years’ reign” (449).

³⁹ Cf. Koehler and Baumgartner, 1:117.

⁴⁰ See Gane, “Akkadian *Ex Eventu* Prophecies.”

⁴¹ Collins, 382.

to which the sons of Seleucus were the rightful heirs, although his action was probably in the best interest of Syria in the circumstances.”⁴²

Several factors seriously weaken the preterist identification of Antiochus IV as the usurper at this crucial point. The real usurpers were those who assassinated Seleucus IV, and whatever Antiochus did was to “nullify the conspiracy”⁴³ and take away their authority in order to continue the power of the Seleucid dynasty as formerly constituted. It is true that Demetrius, the elder son of Seleucus IV, was that king’s legitimate heir, but this son had replaced Antiochus as hostage in Rome⁴⁴ and so was not available to take the throne. It is true that the young Antiochus was murdered in 170 B.C., but there is no surviving evidence that Antiochus IV Epiphanes murdered him.⁴⁵ Antiochus “rose to power through an improbable series of apparent coincidences.”⁴⁶ So we simply have no real evidence that he should be regarded as a usurper. Unlike the description in v. 21, the honor of kingship was conferred on Antiochus IV. Moreover, as we have seen, Daniel 11:20 does not fit well with the reign of Seleucus IV (see above). Additionally, the actions of the usurper in verses 22 and following, including the breaking of “the Prince of the covenant,” go beyond what Antiochus IV did and ignore the strong parallel with 9:26, 27, which refers to the death of Christ and the destruction of the second temple during the Roman period (see above).

⁴² Ibid. Hartman and Di Lella regard the young nephew as a puppet king used by the conspirators who assassinated Seleucus IV (294). “According to Appian, *Wars* 11.8 [45], he [Seleucus] was assassinated in a plot engineered by Heliodorus” (Goldingay, 299).

⁴³ Hartman and Di Lella, 294.

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Seow, 176. According to Goldwurm, “Antiochus son of Seleucus IV, the young heir to the throne, was killed while Antiochus IV was away putting down an insurgency. Upon his return, he had the murderers put to death” (298).

⁴⁶ Seow, 176.

William Shea has pointed out a number of reasons why Antiochus IV Epiphanes cannot be the “little horn” in Daniel 8 or the same dominant power (a king of the North) in Daniel 11.⁴⁷ For one thing, whereas the “little horn” and the “king of the North” grow to become exceedingly powerful, the trajectory of Antiochus’s strength went in the opposite direction. His reign was characterized by failure rather than success. Most notably for potential relevance to Daniel, Antiochus IV lost Palestine to the Maccabees/Hasmoneans, and no subsequent Seleucid ruler recaptured this territory.

Uriah Smith, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, and Shea hold that the “vile person” in 11:21 is the Roman emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37), during whose reign Jesus was crucified (v. 22).⁴⁸ However, there are several problems with this view:

1. The commentary takes the predecessor of Tiberius to be Augustus,⁴⁹ but Augustus had a long reign and died a natural death, unlike the description in v. 20—“yet within a few days he will be shattered” (NAS95).
2. It is true that Tiberius was not originally in line for succession to the throne, but the throne was given to him, unlike the usurper in v. 21—“on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred.”
3. “Flood” (root פָּלַח) imagery in v. 22 to describe the usurper (“The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him”; NAS95) is linguistically linked to 9:26, which refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple: “And its end [will come] with a flood [פָּלַח]” (NAS95). This destruction occurred in 70 A.D., decades after the death of Tiberius.

⁴⁷ Shea, *Selected Studies*, 31-66; cf. Hardy, 92-94.

⁴⁸ Smith, 255-256; *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870; Shea, *Daniel*, 248-249.

⁴⁹ *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870.

An attractive solution is to understand the usurper of Daniel 11:21 as Julius Caesar and the office of the Roman emperors who succeeded him, whichever individual may be in that position, just as the “king of the north” earlier in the chapter refers to the office of Seleucid king.⁵⁰ The concept that rule by a Roman emperor usurped the power of the Roman Senate was the reason for the assassination of Julius Caesar. This interpretation would not rule out the possible appearance of Pompey as the short-lived oppressor of Palestine in verse 20 because he was operating for the power of Rome that was superseded by the rule of the emperors.⁵¹ It was Pompey who regained Palestine for the “king of the North,” now Rome, after Antiochus IV Epiphanes had lost it.

Conclusion

In agreement with many interpreters, I have found a tight correlation between Daniel 11:1-19 and reigns of Persian and Hellenistic rulers up to the death of Antiochus III “the Great.” At that point the correlation breaks down: Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV, the sons of Antiochus III who succeeded him, do not match the descriptions in verses 20 and 21ff, respectively. Not coincidentally, it is precisely Antiochus III who loses to Rome, the next emerging power, just as the Persian Xerxes had lost to Greece, the power that would succeed Medo-Persia.

Just as Daniel 11 skips the remaining Medo-Persian rulers after Xerxes and goes immediately to Hellenistic Alexander the Great and his successors, so the chapter skips the remaining Seleucid kings after Antiochus III and goes immediately to Rome in verses 20 and following. Since Rome takes the place of Antiochus III, it becomes successor to

⁵⁰ The medieval Jewish commentator Rashi identifies the power in v. 21 as the Romans. For a commentary on Dan 11 anthologized from Jewish sources with different interpretations, see Goldwurm, 281-319.

⁵¹ If we adopt this solution, the next question is: How far does the description of imperial/pagan Rome extend in Daniel 11? But attempting to answer this would be to go far beyond the scope of the present paper.

the role of “king of the North” in the following verses of Daniel 11.⁵² This explains why the chapter emphasizes the career of Antiochus III: to solidly identify Rome, the “little horn” of Daniel 8, as the next great power.

If my interpretation is correct, Antiochus IV Epiphanes does not appear in Daniel 11 at all. The chapter simply passes over his reign, rather than focusing the bulk of the chapter upon him and his misdeeds, as the preterists claim. This conclusion, at which I have arrived from exegesis of Daniel 11 itself, where the preterists claim to have their greatest support for identification of Antiochus as the villain in Daniel, greatly weakens the possibility that this ruler is likely to show up in the earlier apocalyptic prophecies of the book of Daniel.

⁵² So I agree with Doukhan that “the power of the North and the little horn are one and the same” (*Daniel*, 81), but for me this identification begins in v. 20 rather than v. 5.

Daniel 11:1-22 (NASB '95)	Historical Referent
<p>Dan. 11:1 ¶ “In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.</p> <p>Dan. 11:2 “And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all [of them]; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole [empire] against the realm of Greece.</p>	<p><i>PERSIAN EMPIRE</i></p> <p>Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.), Bardiya/Smerdis (522), Darius I (522-486) Xerxes I (486-465; loses to Greece in 480 B.C.)</p>
<p><i>(skips to Greece)</i></p>	
<p>Dan. 11:3 “And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.</p> <p>Dan. 11:4 “But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his [own] descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and [given] to others besides them.</p>	<p><i>ALEXANDER'S GREEK EMPIRE</i></p> <p>Alexander the Great (330-323)</p>
<p>Dan. 11:5 ¶ “Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with one of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain [will be] a great dominion [indeed].</p> <p>Dan. 11:6 “After some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful arrangement. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who sired her as well as he who supported her in [those] times.</p> <p>Dan. 11:7 “But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against [their] army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display [great] strength.</p> <p>Dan. 11:8 “Also their gods with their metal images [and] their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from [attacking] the king of the North for [some] years.</p> <p>Dan. 11:9 “Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his [own] land.</p> <p>Dan. 11:10 ¶ “His sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that</p>	<p><i>GREEK KINGDOMS</i></p> <p>Ptolemy I Soter (322-285) Seleucus I Nicator (312-280)</p> <p>Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246), married to Antiochus II Theos (261-246)</p> <p>Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221), brother of Berenice</p> <p>Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226)</p> <p>Seleucus III (226-223) and Antiochus III the Great (223-187)</p>

<p>he may again wage war up to his [very] fortress. Dan. 11:11 “The king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but [that] multitude will be given into the hand of the [former]. Dan. 11:12 “When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail. Dan. 11:13 “For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment. Dan. 11:14 ¶ “Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down. Dan. 11:15 “Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand [their ground], not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. Dan. 11:16 “But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will [be able to] withstand him; he will also stay [for a time] in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand. Dan. 11:17 “He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand [for him] or be on his side. Dan. 11:18 “Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. Dan. 11:19 “So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>GREEK KINGDOMS, cont.</i></p> <p>Ptolemy IV (221-203) Antiochus III (223-187), cont.</p> <p>Antiochus III</p> <p>Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181) Jews</p> <p>Antiochus III</p> <p>Antiochus III</p> <p>Palestine Antiochus III</p> <p>Ptolemy V, married to Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus III</p> <p>Antiochus III Lucius Cornelius Scipio (Roman general; defeated Antiochus III in 190 B.C.)</p> <p>Antiochus III (<i>having lost to Rome in 190 B.C.</i>) <i>(skips to Rome; no Antiochus IV [175-164 B.C.]</i></p>
<p>Dan. 11:20 ¶ “Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of [his] kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle. Dan. 11:21 “In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. Dan. 11:22 “The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>ROME</i></p> <p>Rome Pompey Palestine (taken in 63 B.C.) Pompey (died 48 B.C.)</p> <p>Julius Caesar (died 44 B.C.)→Roman emperors</p> <p>Christ (died c. 31 A.D.)</p>

Appendix: Critique of Doukhan's Interpretation of Daniel 11

Jacques Doukhan agrees that Daniel 11:3-4 refer to Alexander and the division of the Hellenistic empire.⁵³ But then he interprets the words at the end of v. 4—"his kingdom shall be plucked up and [go/given] to others besides these" as "given to Rome":

What does "these" mean? The plural form of the demonstrative pronoun (*'ēlleh*) indicates that "these" points back to the four kingdoms just mentioned above. By saying that the dominion will be given "to others than these" the text implies that the dominion will be given to a power coming *after* the four divisions which stand for the hellenistic period. This new power is therefore to be identified as Rome...The only plural word which the *'ēlleh* can refer to is "four winds of heaven" in the same language as in Daniel 8:8 (cf. 7:6)... "Others than these," then, can only refer to something coming *after* the four kingdoms, since "these" receive the whole succession. In addition to that, the Hebrew word translated here by "posterity" (*'ah^a rîṭ*) is always used in the book of Daniel in a temporal sense (Dan 8:1, 9, 23; 10:14; 12:8). Rather than implying the mere posterity, i.e. generated children, *'ah^a rîṭ* points to something coming after, chronologically speaking. The idea is that the dominion will be handed over to a power coming next after the kingdom of Greece. Since what comes after the kingdom of Greece is the Hellenistic period, the dominion is given to what comes after it, which is Rome."⁵⁴

Since Doukhan places pagan Rome at the end of v. 4 and regards v. 5 as indicating "a new step in both form and substance,"⁵⁵ he interprets vv. 5-39 in a spiritual, rather than literal, sense as paralleling 8:23-25 to cover the period of papal Rome = the "little horn."⁵⁶ For him, "allusions to the north and south become abstract and metaphorical... On the one hand, we have the north representing religious power striving to usurp God, while on the other, we have the south standing for human endeavors that reject God and have faith in humanity alone."⁵⁷

⁵³ Doukhan, *Daniel*, 77-78.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 78-79; cf. *idem*, *Secrets of Daniel*, 168

⁵⁵ Doukhan, *Daniel*, 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 79-80, 87-89; *idem*, *Secrets of Daniel*, 169-175.

⁵⁷ Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 172, 173.

Doukhan’s interpretation has a couple of advantages. First, he sees a close parallel between Daniel 8 and 11, in which the Seleucids and pagan Rome play only a minor role. Second, through completely bypassing the details of the Hellenistic dynasties, Doukhan avoids the problem of identifying specific rulers and events during this period. For him, the effect of the biblical text is much more spiritual and impressionistic than political and concrete, and it is true that there is a strong religious element in Daniel 11, especially in vv. 28 and following.

Doukhan’s interpretation also has some serious disadvantages:

1. In the syntactic structure of v. 4, it is the preposition ל + plural expression לְאַחֵרִים, “to others,” which is equivalent to the preposition ל + plural expression לְאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם, “to the four winds of heaven.” These expressions say where Alexander’s empire goes. A contrasting set of expressions say where his empire does not go: לֹא לְאַחֲרָיו, “not to his posterity” and מִלְּבַד־אֵלֶּה, “besides these,” i.e., not to “these.” So the logical antecedent of אֵלֶּה, plural “these,” is אַחֲרָיו, singular “his posterity,” which raises a syntactic problem because a pronoun normally agrees with its antecedent in number. This difficulty vanishes, however, when we realize that in this context אַחֲרָיו has a collective meaning—posterity = “descendants” (cf. Jer 31:17 and Ps 109:13).⁵⁸ “A collective can be recognised when an adjective, a pronoun or a verb referring to it is in the plural.”⁵⁹ The point of the verse is that Alexander’s successors would not be his descendants, nor would they rule a

⁵⁸ Cf. Koehler and Baumgartner, 1:37.

⁵⁹ Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia Biblica 14; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1996), §135b, 2:497

united empire as he did. This is speaking of the Hellenistic dynasties, including those of the Ptolemys and Seleucids.

2. Doukhan does not explain the parallel between 11:22 (breaking of the Prince of the covenant) and 9:25-27, clearly in the time of pagan rather than papal Rome.

3. Daniel 11 does not provide adequate justification for a transition from literal meaning in 11:1-4 to spiritual meaning in vv. 5 and following.⁶⁰ In the text of 11:5-19, a variety of detailed political and military expressions correspond too closely to historical events during the northern and southern dynasties of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria, respectively, to be dismissed. To me, this shows in a marvelous way the detail to which God's prophecies to Daniel have been fulfilled, giving us confidence that (1) Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, "the Prince of the covenant" (v. 22), because he appeared in precisely the predicted historical context near the beginning of Roman imperial rule, and (2) that the remainder of God's promises will also be fulfilled. It is true that we do not understand everything in Daniel 11, but there is enough here to give us confidence that "the Most High rules" (cf. Dan 4:17, 25; 5:21).

⁶⁰ Against Doukhan, *Daniel*, 84-89. Doukhan wants Dan 11:5-39 to be consistent with interpretation of vv. 40-45, where he and other commentators maintain a spiritual interpretation (87-92). But for me, the more literal nature of vv. 5-39 argues for a more literal interpretation of vv. 40-45, without excluding a spiritual dimension.