

# CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF JACQUES DOUKHAN'S COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer

[www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com](http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com)

(November 2016)

[Jacques Doukhan, *Genesis* (Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary, Pacific Press, 2016)]

When I heard that some professors from Andrews University were planning to prepare a new Seventh-day Adventist Commentary, I was glad to discover that one of their expressed intentions was to offer a sound biblical documentation which would be backed by the Spirit of Prophecy. Knowing how far several “doctors” of the church have moved away from the foundation legated by our pioneers in a number of ecclesiastic and prophetic issues, that intention seemed to me promising. I even dreamed of seeing a commentary which would affirm the roots of our faith, definitely anchored in the Bible, which would serve especially for these critical times when confusion increases every day in religious matters around the world.

I believe that the commentary on Genesis written by Jacques B. Doukhan will be useful, in many respects, for the defense of the authenticity of the first book of the Bible and for its Mosaic authorship. However, his commentary grieved me deeply because I could see that in such a sensible subject as the creation and the fall, he follows the widely represented style of some of our theological centers, which consists of choosing isolated statements from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and fitting them into a literary or conceptual pattern that is foreign to the Bible text being considered. This is still worse when the Bible story is extrapolated toward an extrabiblical and later content, which is equivalent to importing ideas and concepts that are alien to the revelation.

Actually, the commentary on Genesis written by Jacques Doukhan lays aside the texts that do not fit the idea that he desires to be projected. If this first commentary is introduced already with such a unilateral and therefore distorted analysis of the creation and the fall, what could be expected of the other commentaries that will be published later in matters as important to our faith as Leviticus, Daniel, Hebrews, and Revelation? Will the new biblical commentary of Genesis written by Doukhan, the principal editor of the new *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*, be an exception? Hopefully!

What are the most serious problems to be found in the commentary of the book of Genesis by Jacques Doukhan, regarding the story of creation and the fall of our first fathers? There are many. For those who are not trained in modern theological trends which denaturalize the text of the Bible, we will try to simplify and illustrate the fallacy of those methodologies which, unfortunately, are found in this new Bible commentary which bears the name of our church.

## **Methodological problems**

Let us briefly consider the methodological problems found in the commentary of Doukhan on the book of Genesis. An initial overview will be useful to deal later and more carefully with his propositions.

**1. Adoption of modern methodologies which try to denaturalize the text of the Bible.** (We could call it biblical extrapolation). This Doukhan does when he tries to find in the story of creation, a history that took place about 3,000 years later. More definitely, our commentator tries to read the history of Eden under the magnifying glass of the history of the tabernacle, and even of the temple and the Promised Land.

If there ever was a time when conspiracy theories on political, social, and religious matters are multiplied, it is our time. Bible history has not been spared from these conspiracy theories. Modern theologians work to find hidden intentions in the text of the Bible, in order to fabricate for themselves a parallel and different history, often in open contradiction with the real history.

**Illustration:** I remember when a professor of Old Testament at the University of Strasbourg, France (in the Protestant Faculty of Theology), analyzed the story of Babel in Gen 11. According to him, that story would have been introduced by an Israelite at the time when the ten tribes of Northern Israel withdrew the kingdom of Judah and the centralized worship in the temple of Jerusalem. He said, thrilled: “Look at the wisdom of this Israelite writer to suggest that God didn’t want Israel united and tied to the sanctuary in the kingdom of Judah!” He was not evaluating whether the story was real or a fiction. This didn’t concern him. He simply analyzed the dispersion of Babel from a literary perspective, and supposed that it was brought into consideration in a historical context far away of the Bible story, more than one thousand years later, with a different purpose than what was portrayed in the book of Genesis, a purpose that the author would have tried to camouflage when he told what happened at Babel.

Jacques Doukhan does not deny the Mosaic authorship of Genesis, but he employs a similar method, so common today among modern theologians. Instead of reading a history as told in the Bible, Jacques tries to find a hidden intentionality in the text which reflects a later ideology or a different historical and literary pattern. Everything in the story of creation has to fit into that later historical pattern. This is the usual pattern of theologians steeped in liberal and critical milieus.

This method of extrapolating the text to make it to say something different and often contrary to its most plain statement, is seen again represented in an elegantly published homosexual version of the Bible. Homosexuals invented a literary and historically different pattern to argue that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality, but only a certain type of homosexuality (practiced in a supposedly different context).

Catholics do the same when they want to justify the sacrifice of the Mass and the Roman priesthood. They interpret in a literal way the statement of Jesus, “this is my body” in reference to bread; and “this is my blood” in reference to wine. They read this text in the light of the Catholic Mass which, centuries later, pretended to reproduce the sacrifice of Jesus, neglecting the fact that His sacrifice was unique and would not be repeated (Heb 9:28; 10:10,12). They also read in the statement of Jesus to His mother, “here is your son,” and to John, “here is your mother,” a second intentionality to represent Mary as mother of the church. This interpretation came centuries later when many Christians coming from paganism, began to see goddess Isis in Mary.

We see how this methodological style imposes a later history or ideology which has nothing to do with the original sense. Catholics resort to this method in an attempt to justify a priesthood and a sacrifice or a religious institution that contradicts the teaching of the Bible. Doukhan and several teachers at Andrews University resort to the same method to justify women's ordination

to pastoral ministry. They construe Eden to be a temple and consider Eve and Adam as priests because they were dwelling there.

**2. Imposition of a modern social hermeneutic to the Bible text.** With such an hermeneutic, Doukhan as well as other professors at Andrews contradict not only the story of the Bible regarding the creation and the fall, but also the teaching of the entire Bible on that subject. The game consists in imposing on the text of the Bible social concepts and patterns of the 21st Century which are foreign to the Bible. Instead of allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter, Doukhan as well as those who preceded him in his “egalitarian” approach to man and woman in creation, superimpose a modern social frame which has nothing to do with the Word of God.

**3. Partiality in the employment of biblical sources and of the Spirit of Prophecy.** This is used to more easily deceive the careless reader by causing him to believe that the interpretation is backed by both testimonies when it is not. In addition they practice a policy of ignoring any answer which exposes their fallacy. They will fall all together as a consequence of building upon themselves, when that policy will no longer serve them. They had a significant setback in the General Conference session in San Antonio in July 2015, because they couldn’t convince an overwhelming majority which rejected their propositions on women's ordination, in confirmation of what has been voted in two former congresses. No theory or hypothesis which is not supported by the Bible will prevail, no matter how many want to promote it.

**I. Eden as a temple to project Eve as priest together with supposed priest Adam** [justifying women's ordination to the government of a church] (pp. 78-79,83). Since Doukhan believes that Adam was not superior to Eve, we must deduce that he also believes Adam was not a high priest, but simply priest at the same level as Eve.

Richard Davidson, Jackes Doukhan, Jon Paulien, and Ranko Stefanovich, have accustomed us to this method of seeking an intentionality in the text that goes beyond what it really says. For example, these authors have fabricated the structure of the book of Revelation under the format of the Hebrew feasts and/or the *tamid* (regular ministry) of the Mishnah (a Jewish book codified about two centuries after the book of Revelation). But when we try to verify if such a literary structure is found in Revelation, we are frustrated because we find nothing, absolutely nothing of what these authors proposed. On the contrary, the literary reconstruction of Revelation offered by these friends, goes against the approach projected by John and confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy. See my webpage,

<http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Concernsdaibc.pdf>

Ángel M. Rodríguez concluded in a similar way that there is no temple in the New Jerusalem because, according to what he took from other interpreters of Revelation, the city would be the temple. But John says that God, who has His throne in the city, is the temple of the city (Rev 21:22; 22:3). In other words, God, who is in the city, is the temple of that city, but not the city.

Rodríguez also tried to see the tabernacle of Moses in Mount Sinai. According to Him, the Most Holy would have been placed where Moses was, on the top of the mountain; the Holy Place where the 70 elders were at the foot of the mountain; and the courtyard where the people stood before the mountain. At first glance nothing wrong could be seen in these homiletic comparisons. But as already seen, and we will see it more clearly again, that trend of blending two different

historical patterns ends often in a denaturalization of the Bible story. It is as wanting to dress history with the dress of another history as it is to dress David with the armor of Saul.

This is what we see again in Doukhan and Davidson when they want to make Eden a temple. The exposed argument in the commentary of Genesis is the following one. If God puts Adam and Eve in a Garden-temple to keep it, then not only Adam, but also Eve, must be considered priests. But, are there clear biblical confirmation allowing us to suppose that Eden was a temple? Absolutely not! Let us say it at once: according to Genesis, Eden was a garden, not a temple. This is the natural sense of the Bible story. God planted a garden called Eden, and put man there to keep it (Gen 2:15).

In the search for an intentionality which would be concealed in the text of the Bible, the reader is abandoned to a fantasy which distracts and moves away from the purpose of Bible history. This is the typical modern method called by many “idealist,” which imagines hidden intentions, different contexts, to affirm things that the text doesn’t say, and which contradicts what it really does say. Other Seventh-day Adventist authors have shown the fallacy of such a methodology applied to the pretention of making Adam and Eve priests in an imagined temple called Eden. This is, simply, an hermeneutic which has nothing to do with our heritage and the principles of interpretation that come from the Word of God (see Eugene Prewitt, *Women’s Ordination. A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective* (Amazing Facts, 2013)).

**1. Projections of the temple sought in Eden.** Starting with Wenham (an Evangelical theologian), followed by Davidson (an Andrews University theologian), Doukhan presumes that “the cherub, the menorah tree, the flowing water, the precious stones” (p. 78), are a kind of prelude or literary parallel of the future temple of Jerusalem which God would set in the Promised Land 2,500 years later, about 500 years after Moses.

a) But **the cherubim** appear after the fall, after our first parents were expelled. They were placed there to hinder the entrance to the Garden of Eden, not to hinder the entrance to a temple. The reason for such a protection is clearly indicated: “lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life” (Gen 3:22-24). We go to the new Eden, and find again that the tree of life is not within a temple, but “in the middle of the street of the city” (Rev 22:1-2).

b) Where is **the alleged menorah tree** in the Garden of Eden? No matter how many times you read the book of Genesis, you will not find it in either past or future Edens. Are these modern interpreters suffering hallucinations? In the new Eden (which has to do with the old Eden brought to heaven after the flood), the tree of life is in the city, not in a temple. If we speak of a “new Eden,” it is because a throne and a city were added, something absent in the book of Genesis.

c) Again, in the book of Genesis, **the waters** do not come from the temple, but from the springs of the Garden. If a temple is to be imagined in the original Garden, it should be spoken of as a temple in the Garden, but not inferred that the Garden is a temple. Of course, that hypothesis doesn’t work for them, because it could open the possibility that only Adam could enter within the temple. Actually, the fact that Eve was in Eden would not imply that she would enter a presumable temple in the midst of Eden.

The Word temple doesn't appear in the story of creation. Nothing is said about a temple where even the very devil marked his presence when God had left for a while (God appears again once Adam and Eve sinned: Gen 3).

d) **The precious stones** mentioned by Moses in the story of creation are only three, and seem to be outside of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:10-12). Since Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, the description of the rivers and the stones that are outside of Eden would have to do with the land where our first parents and the whole pre-flood generation were expelled (see Gen 3:23). But in the history of how God planted a Garden in Eden, Moses doesn't yet speak of an expulsion.

Again, the mention of these stones has nothing to do with a veiled anticipation of a new Eden obtained by redemption, because those stones seem not to have been in Eden, and there was no need of redemption yet.

In the new Eden revealed in the book of Revelation more than four thousand years later, twelve precious stones are mentioned which form the walls of the city (Rev 21).

e) **Adam and Eve as priests** in the presumable temple of Eden. Priests of whom? No sin had yet been introduced! Let us keep in mind that Jacques takes as motif the tabernacle or the temple of Jerusalem, and that "every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed... to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb 5:1). But, what kind of priesthood would be referred to in Eden if no sin had yet been committed and, therefore, no sacrifice was there to be offered! For this reason, the book of Genesis does not mention any priesthood in the story of creation.

It is clearly revealed that in the new Eden we will be priests of God and of Christ because we will proclaim with our testimony to the entire universe the value of the sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of a fallen world (see 1 Pet 2:9). But, let us insist, in the Garden of Eden no sin had been introduced yet. What sacrifice would Adam and Eve testify about?

If the description of the new Eden is supposedly based on the tabernacle of Moses or on the temple of the Promised Land, the only priesthood known there was that which offered the sacrifices. The priesthood of the people in the Old Testament consisted, as in the gospel, in proclaiming to the other nations of the world the value of the sacrifice which prefigured the sacrifice of Jesus (Exod 19:5; 1 Pet 2:9).

Doukhan includes in another paper, other priestly functions like teaching, judging, and prophesying, to affirm that women could do that work and, therefore, in the New Testament, women could become priests like men, in the new Israel priesthood. But in the Old Testament, women could fulfill those functions and, notwithstanding, they were not ordained as priestesses. The reason is that these roles were not exclusive of priesthood, so they were not a distinctive priestly function. In addition, people in the New Testament were not required to be pastors in order to fulfill the role of prophesying and teaching. The priesthood in both old and new Israel, was equivalent, without implying a leading role in women.

See *Divine Titles to Deny Complementary Roles in the Church. How to Answer Egalitarians on Ecclesiastical Structure*, in

<http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Divinetitlecstructure.pdf>

## 2. Terminological association

Where are the evidences found by Doukhan that Adam and Eve were priests in Eden? In the usage of some verbs and nouns like *'abodah* (“work”), *shamar* (“to keep”) in Gén 2:15 (p. 7979); *tsela* (“rib”), and *banah* (“to make”) in Gén 2:22; *labash* (“to dress”) and *ketonot* (tunics) in Gen 3:17. These associations are extremely ridiculous using this approach, because they defy the most elementary logic we could employ. Once more, we find associations, concepts, ideologies which denaturalize the text, because they cannot be placed in a coherent way within the historical story, neither within the concept of a presumable priesthood, supposedly implicated in the history of creation.

a) *'abodah*: “work”. This term is employed in the Bible in different contexts, as for instance, in connection with the work of a servant or slave (thence the term *'ebed*: “servant” or “slave”), or the construction of a house, etc. The fact that *'abodah* is employed also in connection with “worship” has nothing to do with the divine requirement to Abraham of cultivating the land, or with a service which could be associated to a presumable priesthood of Adam and Eve. Simply, that word doesn't imply per se a religious service as presumed by Doukhan.

[When I say that I had a heavy *work* in my Garden, and after that I add that my work is to be pastor, I don't imply that my pastoral *work* consists in cultivating the yard of my house].

b) *Shamar*: “to keep”. Adam must “keep,” in addition, the Garden created by God. Since that verb is also employed to speak about the office of the priest in the tabernacle, Doukhan concludes that this is “another example of the connection between the Garden of Eden and the Israelite sanctuary and an evidence of humankind's function as priests in the pre-fall Edenic sanctuary” (p.79). It is evident that these theologians don't know what more to invent to bring something new for consideration, a new light to fascinate the audience.

But the fact that this term is employed to refer to the office of the priesthood in the tabernacle doesn't mean that Adam (and by implication Eve), fulfilled a priestly role in the Garden of Eden! The verb *shamar* is employed in the Bible many times and in different contexts. The closest context of this term in Gen 2:15, is Gen 4:9 where Cain responds to God by telling Him that he was not “guardian” of his brother. Should we imply there also that Cain was priest of his brother Abel? (!!!).

c) *Tselah*: “rib.” Again, the word “rib” appears several times in the Bible in reference to bones. According to Doukhan, that word formed also part of a sacred architectonic language which would allow us to connect the temple with Eden. But if this was so, which would be the temple, Adam and Eve or the garden where they were? Do you see how a foreign pattern is imposed on a simple and definite story of creation, which in addition, doesn't fit the particular literary pattern fabricated by the interpreter?

d) *banah*: “to make,” also means “to build.” God would have “build” Eve from the rib of Adam. Since a half of occurrences are placed in the Bible in connection to the construction of the

tabernacle and the temple, Doukhan associates again the “construction” of Eve to concepts related to a temple. The questions raised in the former point are also pertinent here.

[If I say that a table has “four legs” and I say later that a lion has “four legs” (the same terminology), this doesn’t mean that in order to depict the four legs of the table I employ a “technical language” (as “exegetes” like to say), to allow me to see a lion in the table, or to affirm that a lion is hidden behind the table].

e) *labash*: “to dress.” The fact that God dressed Adam and Eve with garments of skin (Gen 3:21), doesn’t mean that he dressed them with priestly garments. The usage of the verb *labash* is employed many times in the Bible in common contexts (see Gen 41:42), not necessarily related to a priestly robe.

f) *ketonet*: “tunics.” The Bible employs this word in different contexts, not exclusively for sacred purposes. We have *ketonet* in Gen 37:3 in connection with the robes given by Jacob to his son Joseph. Furthermore, in the case of Adam and Eve, God dressed them with tunics of skins. We don’t know any priest who was dressed with skins.

Even more, the fact that the guilty offered sacrifices didn’t mean that they became priests. So, we cannot pretend that Adam and Eve were dressed by God with priestly garments because they sacrificed an animal whose skin were used like tunics. We could accept a priestly role in Adam because he was the first patriarch, and no woman became a patriarch to offer sacrifices. But the inference that Eve was dressed as priest is completely unjustified. Such an inference opposes what the Bible teaches in both testaments. See my web page:

<http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Typordinationchurchstructure.pdf>

Briefly, what was written in reference to the temple and the Promised Land has to do with a plan of redemption revealed "thousands of years later", not with a salvific implication already projected in a yet unfallen world. Any philological and descriptive attempt to identify the garden with a temple is frustrated for lack of definite evidences. Those who insist on this view fall into a literary confabulation or conspiracy theory which pretends to warn the reader about concealed meanings which may be unveiled only by an intelligent and suspicious expert called an “exegete.”

**3. The name of the rivers which come out from Eden.** Doukhan presumes that the names of the rivers flowing out of the Garden of Eden before the introduction of sin pointed out the borders of the land that God promised to Abraham more than two millenniums later. Thus, he identifies Eden with the Promised Land, to conclude that the Eden before the fall anticipated the new Eden.

Doukhan writes, literally: “The ultimate lesson that the Bible has retained is the prophetic promise that one day, we shall return to the Garden of Eden” (p. 78). But this lesson is not implied in the history of creation, because the rivers which had similar names after the flood didn’t come from the temple of Jerusalem, while in the history of creation, they come from Eden (supposedly transformed into a temple by Doukhan).

What can we say about the names of the rivers which came from Eden? Moses is depicting the pre-fall Eden, so he is not describing the Promised Land. Adam and Eve didn't need to dream yet of a Promised Land. They lived in the Paradise of Bliss.

What can we say about the names of the rivers mentioned in Gen 2:10-14? Some interpreters translate the verb "to be" or "to have" which is implicit in the original, in a continuous present. They do so because in the days of Moses there were rivers which bore those names, and therefore they try to localize the presumable place of Eden. But instead of "there is," it is more logical to translate the phrase with the verb in an indefinite pass, "there was." The explicit verbs may also be translated as a continuous past.

Doukhan seems to presume that in the story of creation, Moses anticipated the Promised Land. But he has to admit that after the flood, it is probably impossible to localize the original location of Eden. He suggests, therefore, that Moses would be projecting the names of the rivers of Eden through the names of the rivers existing in the post-flood lands. In that case, the Eden before the flood would be implicitly projecting the new Eden. He sees in the pre-fall Eden a veiled promise of a New Eden in the Promised Land.

History, however, witnesses several times today, that those who emigrate to a new land name the newly discovered regions with the names of the lands where they come from. Since I was born in Argentina, I lived an exactly opposite experience to those who colonized South America. Viewing the mountainous regions in southern Spain, I exclaimed: "Córdoba." But this happened first to the "conquistadores" from Spain when they saw the South American mountains in what is called today Córdoba in Argentina. Other regions and Argentinian names correspond also to Spanish names. I was in South Africa some months ago giving seminars for pastors and leaders in the church, and I visited New London. Also in the USA we find many names given by English people according to the names known to them in England, among them, New England.

The evidence from history allows us to affirm that the survivors of the flood who lived a hundred years longer, gave the names which came from Eden to the new rivers formed after the flood. It is also possible that some original names referred to by Moses suffered later anachronisms, as we may see in several biblical references to some renamed biblical regions and cities. Today, for instance, we speak about the foundation of the city of Buenos Aires by the name which it had later. If we say that the city of the Buen Ayre was founded, many would not know what city is being referred to.

Why was Doukhan not bringing out this principle witnessed so many times in the history of the world and in the Bible? Because he wants to weave into the pre-fall Eden account a history from after the fall and even after the flood, which will allow him to suggest that the garden of Eden was a temple, and that Adam and Eve shared an original priesthood without preeminence of man over Eve. Do you see how modern exegesis which pretends to have the key to interpret the Bible, is often impregnated with concepts and philosophies which are completely foreign to the divine revelation? Therefore, instead of searching for an historical explanation, Doukhan prefers to seek a literary or ideological motive which has nothing to do with the history as it is told.

## **II. Imposition of an egalitarian concept that contradicts the testimony of the Bible**

The agenda behind the "egalitarian" exegesis of the creation of our first parents is born in the modern social context which wants women to be equal to men. That egalitarian social context suffered a significant setback in the last American elections, which proved that the American

society is not yet ready to have a woman president. This is a noticeable contrast with Latin America, whose society was accused of being “machista” by those who promote women's ordination to pastoral ministry. As a matter of fact, Latin America has had several women as presidents.

As already seen, in order to impose a modern egalitarian agenda, Jacques Doukhan as well as his predecessor Richard Davidson, have had to imagine that the Eden was a temple. Since both Adam and Eve were in Eden, in this new approach, both are considered as priests on an equal level. How these colleagues explain that in the rest of the Bible God never called women to priesthood? (see Heb 5:1). They say it is a consequence of sin, as a curse (Gen 3:16). But in p. 111, Doukhan suggests that “both Adam and Eve were then instituted as priests.” Does this supposed nomination of Eve as priest in Gen 3:21 contradict the presumable curse of v. 16?

In another paper, Doukhan argues that if in Israel, women were not accepted as priests, it was as a reaction against paganism where sacred prostitution was practiced by priestesses. If this was so, why doesn't he oppose women's ordination today by the fact that many churches are ordaining lesbians? Would it not be a similar reaction to what the Bible determined, according to Doukhan's views?

Richard and Jacques are faced with the fact that after the fall, the priestly role was confined to the patriarchs and the sons of Aaron who served the tabernacle (not to a matriarchate or to the daughters of the priests. But in their thinking this should not deprive those of us living after the cross of an egalitarian form of government in the home and in the church, as Adam and Eve supposedly had before the fall.

**a) Idealism versus realism.** Pretension that redemption must lead us back to a supposed egalitarian role in Eden contradicts what the Bible teaches in both dispensations, and denies the human reality lived in the churches on this side of the cross. Actually, did women stop giving birth with pain? Did tensions and confrontations in families and churches cease so as to allow us to counteract the divine principle revealed in Gen 3:16? Must we require redemption to alleviate societal tensions? Did the apostle Paul not require women to submit to men's leadership in the churches, based in the divine order given in Eden, due to tensions produced in their midst? (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-15; see 1 Cor 11:18-19). Must redeemed women no longer be considered a “weaker vessel”? (1 Pet 3:7). Should both sexes change their functions? (Man to breed children, women to rule in the church...?)

Doukhan concludes that the ideal is to return to the supposed egalitarian blueprint of Eden “whenever possible” (p. 106). But what egalitarians are trying to do is to make possible women ordination at any cost (even at the expense of the unity of the church)! Let us reply: no! The ideal is to keep the order established by God in creation with Adam as head of the woman, but without a dictatorial submission of woman to man, or the contentious usurpation of women to male leadership. Machism and feminism are the two extremes that came after the fall, which Christianity must avoid to keep the ideal order of creation in a unity founded in love.

Actually, what God said in Gen 3:16 about male supremacy does not imply an equality in function of the first couple before the fall. It simply states that the required unity to keep families intact would often require an unwilling submission under suffering.

Before the fall there were no tensions or struggles for supremacy. Eve accepted the divine order of creation seen also in the animal pairs which were not in rebellion against Adam's authority. But now, the original perfect balance in conjugal relations would change. Man,

stronger than woman (1 Pet 3:7), would have the last word in issues that are not in conflict with the law of God (1 Pet 3:1-7). So also must that order be respected in the families and in the churches, without implying that women could not prophesize or preach within a headship leadership context (1 Cor 11:5,13; 14:3, etc).

**b) Subverting the creation order.** According to our friend Jacques, the fact that God first created Adam, and then took Eve from him, does not mean that Adam had a headship role over the woman. In his view, the fact that Eve was taken from the rib of Adam means that she would be at his side, and not under his head. He concludes, therefore, that nothing in the text suggests that Adam was the head of the woman or of the family before the fall. Adam would become head of his wife only after the fall.

Frankly, “la logique m’échape” (French expression which means, “I don’t see the logic”), in my effort to understand my French friend. I agree that Eve was taken from Adam’s side to be his equal in human nature, not to be oppressed by the head. But the fact that Eve was taken from the rib and not from the head of Adam, could imply also that the rib would continue depending on the original head or leadership of Adam. As a matter of fact, Adam reasoned with his head that Eve was his property because she had been taken and formed from his body (Gen 2:23), becoming “one flesh” (v. 24). And since Adam didn’t oppress his own rib under his head, he would not oppress his rib Eve either.

This principle of appurtenance is still kept in many languages today, where women are called, in Spanish, María de Pérez, and not the reverse. In English, ladies used to adopt the last name of their husbands. But this principle is changing today, as is everything related to the order of divine creation.

Curiously, Doukhan cannot avoid considering the fact that God said, before the fall, that man is to leave his father and mother to unite with his woman, and not the reverse (Gen 2:24). Since he is from Jewish-French descent and drinks from Jewish sources, Doukhan has to recognize that the Jewish tradition is unanimous in bringing out man’s primacy over woman in this verse, something that he attributes to a later patriarchal view.

On the one hand, he resorts to a later story to make Eden a temple; on the other hand, he tries to remove what he thinks belongs to a later history from Eden. Did Moses not have a patriarchal scope in mind when telling the story of creation? Why does Doukhan prefer to read what Moses wrote under a social pattern developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries?

From his modern social perspective, Doukhan deduces that the patriarchal mind coming supposedly after the fall, must be overcome by redemption. He is judging, of course, hierarchical patriarchal views from the perspective of egalitarian modern views (not from the Bible).

Our answer is, again, no. We must overcome abusive *machism* (masculinity), which pushes the patriarchal system to excesses that were never approved by God. Feminist revolt against a patriarchal criterion must be also overcome, because it is not impregnated with God’s love to achieve the original divine design. Consequently, the patriarchal system is not a problem per se.

Let us insist. The divine sentence that requires man to leave his father and mother to unite with his woman was issued before the fall, as a divine design, as an order of masculine preeminence, which should be perpetuated forever in the creation of the new world.

Our attention is called to the fact that in this context, our friend doesn’t bring into consideration that this *dignified* order of men over woman before the fall, appears several times in the story of creation. Just one verse earlier, Adam says that Eve is bone of his bones, and flesh

of his flesh, and not that Adam is bone and flesh of Eve. The text also says that Eve was made his “help meet” or “suitable helper” (Gen 2:20), as his complement, and not that Adam had been made the woman’s complement who came later from him.

Again, in chapter 3 now, the Lord came to the couple and addressed the words first to Adam, because he had been confided the woman. He didn’t call Eve, but Adam (Gen 3:9). Because he was the leader, the head of his wife.

After observing the animals in the garden, Adam could see that all formed couples with the male being stronger. But he was alone and needed an equal human partner. Thence the importance that the apostle Paul will put in the fact that Adam was first, as a proof of “authority” of man over the woman who came later in the pre-fall creation (1 Cor 11:8-10). Though Doukhan denies emphatically any notion of headship in Adam before the fall, we must keep in mind that the word *rosh* in Hebrews, means not only “head” but also “first” (Exod 12:2; 1 Chr 12:9-10; Eze 40:1, etc).

Noticeable in this context is the expression “head of their fathers”, so many times repeated, which was employed to speak about those who were the first-born of the families, clans, and tribes (Exod 6:15,25, etc), and which are often translated by “chief,” “leader,” etc. For this reason, this word was never employed to refer to a woman, but only to the fathers, princes, kings of Israel, and even to God Himself. See my study, *How Typology Affects Ecclesiastical Structure*,

<http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Typordinationchurchstructure.pdf>

### **c) Lack of interest in the statements of the Spirit of Prophecy**

For several decades we have increasingly seen the “scholars” of Andrews and of other Adventist theological centers showing apathy toward the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. When her statements and even those of the Bible itself don’t fit their principles of interpretation, they begin to elaborate theories regarding inspiration.

Why does our friend Jacques not quote the Spirit of Prophecy in places where she contradicts his theological conclusions? In order to take her out of context in the very few statements he brings into consideration on this subject. According to E. G. White, “the home is an institution of God. God designed that... the father is to act as priest in his own house. He is the ‘house-band’... The father is to stand at the *head* of his family” (10 MR 188). “He is the head of the family, and as priest of his household” (PH 123.45).

Let us beg a question: when did God institute home? After the fall? No, in Eden, before the fall! Is the position of man as head and priest of his home nullified after Christ’s redemption two thousand years ago? No, absolutely not! “The husband is *head* of the wife” (Eph 5:22). When did the apostle Paul write this? Several decades after the redemption performed by Christ on the cross. Is this principle in force today, in the last years of the world? Yes, of course yes!

“The husband is the head of the family... and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that *dignified, responsible position* is displeasing to God. It is *the duty of the wife* to yield her wishes and will to her husband. Both should be yielding, but *the Word of God gives preference to the judgment of the*

*husband*” (RH, April 22, 1862 par. 9). “We women must remember that *God has placed us subject to the husband. He is the head*, and our judgment and views and reasonings must agree with his, if possible. If not, the *preference in God’s Word is given to the husband* where it is not a matter of conscience. *We must yield to the head*” (Letter 5, 1861).

**d) “A helpmeet” or “suitable helper.”** Jacques also believes, like most Andrews theologians, that the expression “suitable helper” in reference to woman, does not imply complement in a context of submission in rank or function. He finds support for this by quoting several passages where God is considered in the Bible as our “Helper.” But on this point we differ again with many philologists who bring into consideration the usage of the term in other contexts to contradict the closer context. Adam was alone and God gave him a partner, a complement for his work. The Lord didn’t say this about Eve. And this truth is not to be overlooked or negated today. It is just as much in force as when it was promulgated at the beginning.

“The husband and wife can so blend in labor that the wife shall be *the complement of the husband*... Through her unselfish interest to advance the cause of God, the wife has made her husband’s work much more complete” (6 MR 43). “I am trying to help my husband bear his burdens... The work was not pleasant to me at first, but I have overcome my dislike for it... I had for a time to study hard and pray much to overcome my weakness of character, and become, in some degree, *what a woman should be, a true helpmeet*. I desire not to lead into sin, as did Eve [see 1 Tim 2:14]” (14 MR 305.3).

We don’t have to pass over the last statement. She implies that Eve was brought to sin when she sought independence, avoiding the fulfilling of her role of serving her husband as “a helpmeet.” She also infers that this is the sin which many modern Eves commit, something that they have to overcome and may overcome thanks to redemption.

**e) Eve sinned first.** Doukhan states that if Eve was submitted to man after the fall, it is because she sinned first and induced Adam to sin. Then he reasons that if Adam had sinned first, he would have submitted to Eve (p. 107). In the light of the story of creation which puts man first, and of the reality of life, I cannot avoid an exclamation: Ridiculous! To such ridiculous extremes some can go when exegesis is wrongly founded. It is not rare to find similar ridiculous things in “educated” people, in “scholars” and “professional” people, when they abstract themselves from reality to close themselves up in a theoretical, literary, and intellectual corral.

**III. An exegesis which contradicts the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.** We have already seen several contradictions of Doukhan with the Spirit of Prophecy, which shows us that this new *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* will not offer us (if we judge it by this first volume) an approach which seeks to be backed by all that the servant of the Lord wrote. Let us consider another example.

**1. Dignified position of Adam.** Doukhan quotes E. G. White when she says that Eve was equal in all things to Adam. Discussion on what superiority or inferiority means may lead us too

far. In other writings she spoke, as already seen, about the “*dignified position*” of man in the home. This dignified position was granted by God to Adam in Eden.

“Under God, Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family, to maintain the principles of the heavenly family. This would have brought peace and happiness... When Adam sinned, man broke away from the heaven-ordained center. A demon became the central power in the world” (6 T 236).

Consequently, headship is not a curse—as pretended by Doukhan—but a dignified position and, when the principles of the gospel are respected, it is a blessing. The curse had to do with a submission under contention and rivalry, not with a voluntary and happy submission in a Christian context, which brings any couple closer to the Edenic ideal.

**2. Submission is not limited to marital relations** (as presumed by Doukhan in p. 106). In the Old Testament, men and women were required to be subject to the leaders of their clans and tribes, in a headship context as specified by the word *rosh*, “head” (Exod 18:25; Judg 10:18; 11:8-9,11, etc.). Let us keep in mind that the word *rosh* (head), is employed in the OT in relation to *tsaqen* (elder), *nashi*’ (chief), *sar* (prince), *qasir* (ruler), and even with *qohen* (priest). Worthy of notice is the fact that many versions translate the word “head” in the Old Testament, by “chief,” “leader,” etc.

Of course, no one was expected to exert an imperial or abusive dominion over both men and women (1 Pet 5:2-3; see Matt 20:25-27). Keep in mind the fact that God was the supreme “head” of Israel, without implying that other men could not be heads of the people (2 Chr 13:12). If the elders of Israel were considered “heads” of the people, why could not the elders of the church be considered also “heads” of the congregation, with the sense of leaders in the government of the church?

Submission is also required of men and women to the pastors in the church who, as in the Old Testament, were always men (Heb 13:17; see 1 Tim 2:12). They had to submit also to civil authorities (Rom 13:5; 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Pet 2:13)]. The “authority” of men in any context, even in biblical slavery prescribed by God, had boundaries marked more definitely by the law of God. [See my book, *Jubilee and Globalization* (2000)].

Women had authority over women in both testaments, also required by God (Gén 17:7-10; Titus 2:3-4), and they served the apostle Paul as *helpers* on his missionary trips (Philip 4:2-3). Noticeable in this context is that E. G. White never claimed “the position of leader of the denomination” (8 T 236-7).

Why did Jacques B. Doukhan not take into account these facts in his *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* on the book of Genesis? All this was brought out more than one year before his book was published. In addition to my studies, a book was spread by the internet, Eugene Prewitt, *Women’s Ordination. A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective* (Amazing Facts, 2013)). See more on this topic in my web page, *Divine Titles Quoted to Deny Complementary Roles in the Church. How to answer egalitarians on ecclesiastical structure*, <http://adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Divinetitlecclestructure.pdf>

**3. The example of equality and difference in the Trinity.** The three persons of the Deity are equal in nature, but different in roles, the Father being over the Son and over the Holy Spirit. However, they are one like man and woman are one flesh. Even angelic hosts and the unfallen worlds have “principalities,” according to the apostle Paul (Eph 3:10; Col 1:16), quoted by the Spirit of Prophecy several times. What’s the problem, then, with Adam being created to become the head of humanity?

But Doukhan doesn’t quote the Spirit of Prophecy when she specified a different role in Adam, according to what we saw above. Therefore, the expression, “in all things she should be his equal” refers to their rights in their human condition. It is another thing to speak of roles or functions. Did God make Adam and Eve equals in giving birth or breast-feeding babies?

**4. Adam appointed monarch of the world.** More than once E. G. White wrote about the purpose of God in creating Adam. God appointed him “the monarch” of the world, and Satan boasted to have taken that dominion from him (Con 16 [Paradise Lost]; 2 SP 86; TA 58; BEcho, August 28; RH 1874, Redemption, No. 1; ST August 30: The Marriage in Cana of Galilee, etc.). This she never said of Eve. If the plan of God in creation was to make Adam king of the earth, this means that Adam was created as “head” of the woman, because the princes and the very king of Israel were considered *rosh*, “head” (Exod 18:25; Deut 1:15; 2 Chr 5:2; Mic 3:1, etc.). And this fact didn’t deny that the supreme “head” was God Himself (2 Chr 13:12). See a wider approach to the subject in my study, *How Typology Affects Ecclesiastical Structure*, in [www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com](http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com)

Where did E. G. White find in the Bible the view that Adam would become the monarch of this creation? In the Bible, in both testaments (see Gen 1:28). He was created first, before the woman and before his offspring. He was “the first Adam,” according to the apostle Paul, who possessed the “principality,” the primogeniture of this creation (see Col 1:16). This worthy privilege was snatched by the rebellious angel who became the “prince of this world.” Thence a “second Adam” had to come, not a second Eve, to recover this principality that the devil had usurped from the first Adam. That second Adam was to become the first-born of this creation, which would recover the inheritance, the first [in importance and category] in being raised up from the dead.

It is very meaningful in this context, the first hug between the two Adams in the New Eden, between the redeemed Adam and the second redeemer Adam (GC 647-8). Nothing is said by the Spirit of Prophecy about a future meeting between the first Eve and a second Eve. There is here no other option. The apostle Paul misinterpreted the history of Genesis, or Doukhan and the “exegetes” of Andrews misinterpreted not only the history of Eden, but also the apostle Paul.

## **Conclusion**

There are more things to say about the first book of the *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*, written by Jacques B. Doukhan. But “le temps me manque” (another French expression, the original language of Doukhan), which is equivalent to say, “I don’t have time to waste” on his particular deductions. I read only a sensitive matter for our faith and practice like Gen 2 and 3 and I thought it deserved my reaction. Hopefully his commentaries on the other chapters of Genesis will be enlightened and well documented. But my question is: will this new

*Seventh-day Adventist Commentary* really be backed by all the scholars who form part of the team which will supposedly review the particular commentaries of the books of the Bible?

God made man and woman equals in their human nature, in their duties and rights before God and His creation. But he made them “man and woman,” different in functions. The leadership of the home was granted to Adam in both common and religious matters (which would later include a priestly role to offer the sacrifice). The woman must be a positive complement for the work of her husband, and would be in charge in a special way, of breeding the children. Sin necessitated that the original ideal union required self-denial and sacrifice, which would produce pain. The restoration of the gospel consists in making pleasurable the headship of man in his home, as well as the complementation in the woman so that her husband and their home overcome in life. This principle in the little church of the home should be applied in the bigger church of the community.

Let us conclude by saying that exegesis without theology often steers us off course. A theology without a healthy exegesis is misleading. We need both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. God revealed to us the messages which He has prepared for this time in a systematic way (a “chain of truth”). Consequently, we have a great help in our study of the Bible, because we don’t need to launch ourselves into the void, without adequate guidance, and with a danger of being misled by modern foreign philosophies. Thanks be given to God for the gift of prophecy in our midst! I have never been disappointed with it. Let us give heed to this divine source in our study of the Bible. We believe in the Bible, and in the Bible alone. If we neglect the gift of prophecy which was announced by the Bible, we neglect the Bible which foretold it.

Those who want to obtain more information about this subject, may obtain it on my webpage, in the “articles ” section. [www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com](http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com)

## **ADDENDUM**

“Headship” can mean “virile leadership” without implying necessarily a dictatorial sovereignty or dominion or authority (see 1 Pet 5:3: without “exercising lordship”, that is, making notorious that lordship; the same term is employed by the LXX in Gen 1:28).

If by “headship” or “dominion” we must understand imposition of “lordship” or “domineering,” then this term doesn’t fix the position that God gave Adam before the fall. That “headship” or “dominion” Adam had it without needing to impress others with that position, because no one disputed it. Any misuse of his position on his part or the rivalry initiated by women would come as a consequence of the fall. We have probably become accustomed to look these two terms under this later negative view, after the fall. But in the context of Eden, this was not the case.

Actually, since “Adam was appointed monarch of the world” at creation, it is evident that he received a lordship or dominion over all that had been created, including his woman who would share with him that dominion over creation (Heb 2:7-8). But this doesn’t mean that God appointed him as a domineering or dictatorial lord over God’s creation, as someone who could abuse his prerogatives, because he would be under God’s lordship. The problem was introduced when Adam lost his dominion over creation, which was occupied in some way by “the prince of this world,” the rebellious angel.

In other words, if we understand by the term “headship” a role of leadership over the woman, without excessive or abusive connotations, it is obvious that this was the position God assigned to Adam when he created our first fathers. In some instances, it would be preferable to use the term “leader” in connection to the church. This is the term employed by E. G. White when she said that she never exerted or intended to perform the position of “leader” of the denomination.