

Revisiting the Identities of the King of the South and the King of the North in Daniel 11

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Abstract

It is clearly evident that the final three chapters of the book of Daniel, especially Chapter 11, contain unique problems. For a long time, scholars have had interpretive difficulties with this part of the book. Chapter 11 introduces two new kings, the king of the South and the king of the North. Most interpreters, almost unanimously, identify the king of the South as the king of Egypt or a coalition of Southern kingdoms in which Egypt is prominent. The identification of the king of the North is, however, surrounded with ambivalence. This research article suggests that the kingdom of the South is the Kingdom, or Caliphate, of Islam. And, as stated in Daniel 11:5-6, the king of the North was one of the commanders of the king of the South, but rebelled against him, creating two kingdoms, the Sunni, to the North and the Shi'ite, to the South. Verse- by- verse, this article demonstrates how both history and theology of Islam align with the events of Daniel 11 and the descriptions of its two kings.

Keywords: World kingdoms, Sunni and Shi'ite Islam, Islamic Caliphate, Daniel Prophecies

1. Introduction

Daniel 2& 7 reveal four world kingdoms. Babylon, Persia and Greece are explicitly named as the first three kingdoms. This research paper presents a historical and theological argument that the fourth kingdom is that of Islam rather than the Romans, as thought by the majority of Biblical scholars. The two kings in Daniel 11 could be identified with Islam's two main sects, the Sunni to the North and the Shi'ite to the South.

The presentation of the kingdoms of Daniel 7 is recognised to be in duals; Assyrian-Babylonian, Media-Persia, and Greek-Roman. There are strong reasons to suggest that the fourth kingdom is the kingdom of Islam rather than the Roman Empire. Some of those reasons are:-

1. The fourth beast is described as one that “devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the residue, i.e. the lion, the bear and the leopard with the feet of it” (Daniel 7:7). Romans didn't stamp Babylonians or Persians, the lion and the bear. On the other hand, it was Islam that overtook them all, as well as Greece, the leopard. Greece fell under Ottoman invasion in AD 1380, till it won its independence back in AD 1832 (Sedlar, 1994). Constantinople, captured by Muslim Turks in AD 1453 and renamed Islambul or Istanbul, capital of the Ottoman Caliphate, is no more than Byzantium, the capital of the Greek Empire.
2. Daniel 7:7, 23 state that the fourth beast “was different from all the beasts that were before him” This description is hardly applicable to the Roman Empire, but is certainly applicable to Islamic Kingdom as, in contrast to all empires before it, Islam is a politico-religious system. It speaks against the Most High, and has set opposition to God's people and his tabernacle, i.e. his Church, and them that dwell in heaven (Revelation 13: 5-7).
3. The third kingdom is described as a leopard that has four heads and four wings. As for the heads, they refer to the four Greek leaders among whom the Greek empire was divided. In fact, the four wings represent Romans who came up with the concept of Tetrarchy in ruling (Barnes, 1984).

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Old Roman shields usually had a symbol of four wings. The Roman Empire, in fact, is an extension to the Greek empire as they both came from the west and are given the title Greco-Roman.

4. Daniel 11 has no resemblance with history of Seleucids and Ptolemies. Daniel 11:5, for example, mentions that the king of the North was one of the commanders of the king of the South before he rebelled against him to take his power. Seleucus Nicator has never been a follower of Ptolemy of Lagus. In addition, Daniel 11:36-45 can hardly apply to Antiochus Epiphanes, a fact that forced historians to apply it to the Anti-Christ of last days.
5. Both Persians and Greeks are clearly named in Daniel. Why Romans is not mentioned, if they were really meant by the fourth beast?. As for Islam, however, it is reasonable to have its name omitted as it is a politico-religious kingdom, different in nature from all the others.
6. Since the first three kingdoms came from the North, east and west, respectively, it was only reasonable for the fourth kingdom, Islam, to come from the South in order to complete the vision of the "four winds of heaven" mentioned in Daniel 7:2.

2. Literature Survey

Literature has offered many interpretations to identify the two kings of Daniel 11. According to Leatherman (Leatherman, 1996), the king of the South refers to the nation of Egypt, while the king of the North refers to the power that controlled the area North of Palestine, which, by end of Daniel 11, was understood to be the Ottoman Empire. Smith (Smith, 1945) added that prophecy of verse 45, centres in that power known as the king of the North. After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Smith's interpretation seemed, however, dubious. Similar views were held by Haskell (Haskell, 1901), Lamson (Lamson, 1909), Hill (Hill, 1915), and Johnson (Johnson, 1919). Doukhan (Doukhan, 1989) remarks that the king of the North has the same character as the "little horn" mentioned earlier in Daniel 7:8, 7:20 and 8:9, thus linking the king of the North with the Roman papacy. He identifies the king of the North with false claims of divinity, and the king of the South with "humanity without God." According to Harton (Harton, 1983), little problem exists in identifying the king of the South as most identify him as the king of Egypt. The Ptolemies ruled from Egypt during the fractured period of the Hellenistic Empire. This identification, Harton claims, is sealed by the specific reference to Egypt in 11:42-43. Robinson and Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown proposed that Turkey best fits this king of the North (Robinson et al., 1961). Those proposing Turkey as the origin of the king of the North do so in order to find a historical fulfilment for that king. The eschatological setting of the passage, however, forbids a historical fulfilment. Baughman anticipated that Syria will fit this rule (Baughman, 1972). According to Blaiklock (Blaiklock, 1976), however, Syria is extremely unlikely as a candidate for the role of the king of the North. On the other hand, there are those scholars who identify Russia as the king of the North (Herman, 1969; Pentecost, 1958 and Strauss, 1969).

Who are the two kings?

The king of the North was one of the commanders of the king of the South (Daniel 11:5-6), but rebelled against him creating two kingdoms, the Sunni and the Shi'ite. They have been in conflict since the birth of Islam. The king of the South refers to the descendants of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, such as children of Ali bin Abi-Taleb and his wife Fatima, Muhammad's daughter, who represent the Shi'ite Islam. The king of the North, however, refers to the Caliphates who are not descendants of Muhammad, representing, therefore, the Sunni Islam that ended with its capital in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Rise of the Caliphate, or Kingdom, of Islam

In contrast to the three kingdoms before it, Islam is a politico-religious kingdom. Muhammad sent letters to leaders of Byzantine, Persian and Ethiopian empires, governors of Egypt, Syria and Bahrain. He wrote: "I invite you to Islam. if you become Muslims you will be safe". He also said, "Khosrau, the Persian leader, will be ruined, and there will be no Khosrau after him, and Caesar, the Roman leader, will surely be ruined and there will be no Caesar after him" (Bukhari, 1987, 4:267, 349, 350, 815, 816; 8:625, 626).

Explaining his mission, Muhammad said "I have been commanded to fight people till they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his Messenger" (Muslim, 1955, 1:30; Bukhari, 1987, 2:24).

All Arabian Peninsula was subjected to Islam by time of Muhammad's death in 632. Encouraging Muslims to expand their territory, Muhammad stated "He who dies without participating in invasion or wishing for it will be in the same state as a hypocrite" (Muslim, 1955, 1910).

After the death of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, the Caliphate went to Omar bin Al-Khattab. In 644, Omar was assassinated. Ottoman, who doesn't belong to the house of the Prophet, became a Caliph. Following the murder of Ottoman, the Caliphate was restored to the legitimate Caliph, Ali bin abi-Taleb, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. But the Umayyads in Damascus, under the leadership of Muawiyah, rebelled against Ali. So, he moved his seat to Al-Kufa, Iraq and went after the Umayyads. Since that time wars have been waging between the two camps. The Shi'ite gathered to the South and the Sunnis to the North. Aisha, Muhammad's wife, fought against Ali and his wife Fatima, who had a long-standing feud with her. This war was called the 'Battle of the Camel'.

3. Verse-by-Verse Analysis of Daniel 11 in the Light of Islamic History

11:1-2 *"In the first year of Darius the Mede I arose to be an encouragement and protection for him. 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"*

The first Kingdom was that of Babylon, and has been overpowered by Darius the Mede, with angelic help. Three Persian kings then arose: Cyrus, Cambyses II and Darius. The fourth was Xerxes II.

11:3-4 *"And mighty king will arise and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parcelled 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"*

The mighty king was Alexander the Great. After his death, his kingdom was divided into four parts. Gradually in 2nd century BC, the Greek empire was overpowered by Romans. Some prefer to express it as "Eventual Roman absorption of the Greek world" (Gruen, 1992). In fact, this supports the proposal that the Romans couldn't represent the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2.

3.1 The Beginning of Islamic History

11:5 *"The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power"*

The king of the South refers to the kingdom of Islam which began in Mecca in the South direction. In battle of Badr 624, Prophet Muhammad achieved a great victory, which marked the beginning of a strong kingdom that was soon to rule a large part of the known world.

According to sources of Sunni Islam, Muhammad died of poisoning that was injected in his food by a Jewish woman (Ibn Sa'ad, 2001). From the Shi'ite view, however, the story is different. Shi'ite scholars believe that Muhammad was killed by poison at the hands of his two wives, Aisha and Hafsa, incited by their respective fathers, Abu-Bakr and Omar, the first two Caliphs. Of these, Al-Imam Al-Sadeq stated "they are the worst of the creatures of Allah" (Al-Majlisi, 1983; Al-A'ashy, 2013; Al-Qumi, 2013). Both Fatima, Muhammad's daughter and Ali's wife, and her household were forced to pay allegiance to Abu-Bakr (Al-Amili, 2002). These Shi'ite views are also supported by some Sunni Muslim Scholars (Al-Shahrastani, 1992, Al-Moutazali, 2007). Similar accounts are also found in other trusted sources (Hanbal, 1969; Al-Tabarani, 1994). In addition, the account that Aisha and Hafsa poisoned the Prophet finds a strong resonance in the Qur'an 66, considering that the Prophet threatened to divorce both Aisha and Hafsa, and indeed he divorced Hafsa (Bukhari, 1479). In addition, there is a clear reference in Sunni sources that Aisha administered some "medicines" to the Prophet during his last illness, an action that was against his will (Bukhari, 5712; Muslim, 2213).

Abu-Bakr, ruled 632-634, a period of time in which he killed between 50,000 to 70,000 of Muslims who refused to pay their annual zakat, in a war that Abu-Bakr insisted on fighting despite the opposition from other companions, including Omar, the second Caliph (Bukhari, 3:308). It could be concluded from this analysis that "One of his commanders will become stronger than he; and will rule his own kingdom with great power", which is referred to in 11: 5, is a reference to the first Caliph, Abu Bakr.

Indeed, the Caliphate has been usurped by force from its only legitimate Caliph, Ali bin Abi-Taleb, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, and the power by which Abu Bakr ruled indeed exceeded that of Prophet Muhammad himself, just as described in 11:5.

11:6 *“After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days she will be betrayed, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her.”*

In an attempt to restore reconciliation, Um-Kulthum, Ali's daughter, married Omar in 639, despite her young age. Omar was her grandfather's father-in-law (Al-Zahabi, 1996). This was politically motivated because a male child born to Omar from Um-Kulthum would be a grand-grand-child of the Prophet, a fact that would usher restoration of the Caliphate to the house of the Prophet. As a result of this marriage, Zaid bin Omar was born. Um-Kulthum remained Omar's wife till he was assassinated in 644. The hope of restoring the Caliphate to the Prophet's house, however, was lost when Omar was assassinated. Caliphate was usurped by Ottoman bin Affan, but he was also assassinated in year 656.

3.2 The Rise of the Umayyads Dynasty and Fatima taken captive in 680

The Umayyads took the Caliphate after they slaughtered Al-Hussien, Ali's son, and carried his head to Damascus (Bin-Tawoos, 1993). Just as recorded in Daniel 11:6, Um-Kulthum, Ali's daughter, along with her siblings, was also taken as a captive to the Umayyads in Damascus

3.3 The Downfall of the Umayyads and the Rise of the Abbasids Caliphate in 750

11:7 *“One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the North and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious”*

The year 750 witnessed the downfall of the Umayyads dynasty and the rise of the Abbasid dynasty under leadership of Abi al-Abbas, a descendant of the family line of Um-Kulthum, just as 11:7 states. Al-Abbas was a son of Abdal-Muttalib and an uncle of Prophet Muhammad. He moved secretly to Kufa, Iraq and remained there till 750, when the people of Kufa pledged allegiance to him to become the first Caliph of Muslims in the Abbasids era. The Abbasids supported the Shi'ite in their uprising against the Umayyads in Damascus. Consequently, the Umayyads went to war against them, but were defeated in the battle of Al-zab, North of Iraq, in 750 (Ibn Kathir, 1990). Marawan bin Muhammad, the last Umayyad Caliph was killed. His death ushered the end of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate.

11:8a *“He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt”*

After his defeat in AD 750, Caliph Marawan bin Muhammad fled to Egypt accompanied by his followers, carrying with him the Prophet's cloak and silver ring. The Abbasid, however, pursued him and killed him. They took these belongings and kept them in Cairo in a suburb named “Athr Al-Nabi”, or the belongings of the Prophet, before they were carried to Istanbul, Turkey in 1517 (Al-Moutazali, 2007)

11:8b *“For some years he will leave the king of the North alone”*

After Abbasid Caliphate was established in Baghdad AD 750, there was a period of peace. Umayyads fled to Andalus. Seljuks, however, were not subjects of the Abbasids.

11:9 *“Then he will come to the realm of the king of the South and return to his own country”*

The Shi'ite of the South welcomed the Abbasids as they saved them from the Umayyads. The Abbasids returned to their land in Iraq, where they made Baghdad a capital of their Caliphate.

3.4 The Rise of the Fatimids Caliphate

11:10a *“His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army”*

The expression ‘his sons’ in 11:10 is a reference to the lineage of Fatima's descendants and their blood relationship to al-Abbas. In 909, Ubaid Allah Al-Mahdi founded the Fatimids, an Islamic empire that was initiated in Morocco, but was soon extended to Egypt. The Fatimids are a sect of Shi'ite that could be traced back to Fatima, daughter of Prophet Muhammad. In 959, the Fatimids mobilized strong military forces, and marched from Morocco to Egypt. The conquests carried out by the Fatimids took them from Morocco, on the western edge of the African continent, to Egypt on its eastern edge (Hajj, 2006). Egypt, itself, was conquered in 969. They established Cairo as the capital of their Caliphate; with Egypt becoming the political and religious centre of their empire. In 974, the Fatimids added Hejaz and the Levant to their territory.

3.5 The Beginning of the Crusades in 1096

11:10b *“And one shall certainly come and overflow and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress”*

In 1098, the Crusades arrived with massive and sweeping armies and regained Edessa and Antioch from the hands of the Seljuk, king of the North. Then in 1099, they returned to capture Jerusalem from the hands of the Fatimids, king of the South, after a siege that lasted 41 days. With the fall of Jerusalem, the Crusades also gained control of Bethlehem, Al-Khalil, Al-Ramla, Jaffa, and Tabaria. Only Ascalon and some other villages remained under Muslims' control. This was the first crusade, 1095 to 1099.

11:11 *“And the king of the South shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the North: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand”*

The capture of Jerusalem by the Crusades on 15th July, 1099 certainly stirred the anger of the Fatimids, the king of the South. The Fatimids assembled a great army that marched out of Cairo, Egypt, under the leadership of al-Afdal Shahanshah. On August 12th, 1099, the Crusaders, under Godfrey of Bouillon, surprised al-Afdal at the battle of Ascalon and completely defeated him. It is quite interesting that the Fatimids, who were strong allies to the Crusades against the Sunni Turkish Seljuk at the beginning of war, changed their position to have the Crusades as their common enemy.

11:12 *“And capturing the host, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail”*

The second stage of Ramla battle was carried out in 1102, resulting, again, in the defeat of the Fatimids at the hands of the crusaders. The third, and bloodiest stage, however, occurred on August, 27th, 1105. The crusaders killed seventy thousands of the Fatimid Muslims under leadership of Al-Afdal Shahanshah. And, thus, they were so filled with pride (Dupuy and Dupuy, 1977).

Daniel 11:13 *“For the king of the North shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall come after certain years with a great army and with much riches”*

Emad al-Din Zengi, a Seljuki leader (Runciman, 1952) came with a strong army and formed a siege around Edessa, till it fell in his hands in 1144. The Seljuki army killed all who were unable to escape to the castles, many also died as they were run over by the crowds.

11:14a *“in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the South”*

The 11th and 12th centuries have witnessed rapid deterioration of the Fatimids Caliphate in Egypt, thus made it vulnerable to attacks by external forces, from both the Seljuk and the crusaders (Goha, et al, 1778). Some Egyptians were calling for help from Nur al-Din Zengi, the Seljuki leader. Others were calling for help from the crusaders. A number of Syrian attacks on Egypt were halted shortly after the victory of the campaigns launched by Amalrik I of Jerusalem on March 18th, 1167 in what came to be known as the Battle of the Two Doors. The battle resulted in a tactical withdrawal of the two forces (Smail, 1995).

11:14b *“also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall”*

There was, however, a Biblical and prophetic incentive to the crusaders' attacks on Egypt. In carrying out their attacks, crusaders thought they were fulfilling the vision of Zechariah 12:9 *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem”*. The defeat of crusaders in battle has, however, shown that they misunderstood the prophetic dimensions of Zechariah 12:9.

11:15 *“So the king of the North shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the South shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength”*

In 1171, Salah al-Din Ayyubi, a Kurdish Sunni, brought the Shi'ite Fatimids Caliphate to an end with recognition of the Sunni Caliphate of Baghdad. In 1175, Salah al-Din was declared the Sultan of Egypt and Syria by the Abbasid Caliph, thus bringing the Fatimid dynasty to an end. The Fatimids had no strength to stand against the might of Salah al-Din, just as is foretold in 11:15. The Muslim forces, under leadership of Salah al-Din, defeated the crusaders' army in July 4th, 1187 in Hattin. As a result, Jerusalem fell once again into the hands of Sunni Muslims. Those who participated in the Crusades were either killed, ransomed or sold on the local slave market.

11:16 *“he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed”*

Jerusalem, however, didn't remain under Sunni Muslims for long. Shortly after his coronation in 1189, Richard, the Lion's heart, having already taken the crusader's vow, set out to recapture the Holy Land from Salah al-Din. A battle took place at Arsuf, on September 7th, 1191 that resulted in the defeat of the Ayyubid forces. The coastal area of central Palestine, including port of Jaffa, returned to Christian control. Richard wanted to continue his wars to restore Jerusalem. But, unfortunately, he heard that his brother, John, seized the throne of England.

11:17 *"He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him."*

After hearing that his brother, John, seized the throne, Richard was forced to return back to England. Before returning, however, he signed a peace treaty with Salah al-Din at al-Ramla in 1192. He offered to give his sister Juana to king al-Adel, Salah al-Din's brother, with Jerusalem being their wedding gift, sharing its control together (Abu-Shama, 1992). The Pope, however, refused to bless this marriage despite Salah al-Din agreeing to it. Salah al-Din insisted that Muslims should take over Jerusalem, in exchange of granting coastal cities to the Byzantines. So, they gained control of Tire, Haifa, Jaffa, Antioch, Tripoli, al-Lid and al-Ramla.

3.6 The Rise of the Mamluk Dynasty and the Coming to an end of the Crusaders

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"*

The crusaders occupied Acre in 1191. In 1291, the Mamluk leader, Al-Ashraf bin-Qalaou'n marched his forces from Egypt towards Acre, and was able to defeat the crusaders in a decisive win. By defeating the crusaders, Al-Ashraf also removed the scorn caused by the crusaders when they killed his representatives sent to them (Crawford, 2003).

11:19 *"After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more"*

That was the last defeat of the crusaders at the hands of Muslims, after which they retracted to their land and never returned to attack Muslims anymore.

11:20 *"His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendour. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle"*

Following the assassination of the Sultan Mamluk, Al-Ashraf, Al-Naser Muhammad was crowned the Sultan of Egypt. He was 9 years of age when he became Sultan of Egypt.

The Burji Mamluks became more powerful during the reign of Al-Naser Muhammad. They imposed heavy taxes on people (Levanoni, 1995). In 1294, Sultan Al-Naser was peacefully removed from throne, as foretold in Daniel 11:20. That was a little more than a year after he was crowned. He was, however, instilled for a second reign in 1299.

3.7 The Rise of the Ottomans Caliphate (1299 to 1922)

11:21 *"He will be succeeded by a contemptible who has not been given the honour of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue"*

The year 1299 witnessed the birth of a new empire, an empire that was to rule the world of Sunni Islam for over six centuries till the end of World War I. That was the Ottoman Empire founded by Ottoman Gazi, the son of Ertughrul. The expression "a contemptible person" in 11:21 is, indeed, a very precise description of who Ottoman bin Ertughrul actually was. Ottoman descended from some Turkish tribes that were recent converts to Islam. He was not a Qureshi, i.e. from Quraysh, the Arabian tribe from which Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, descended. About Quraysh, Muhammad said it is superior to all other tribes, and that he himself is superior among the people of Quraysh (Ahmad, 1788). In fact, Muhammad said that Muslim Caliphates must come out of Quraysh, (Ahmad, 12307). Truly, Ottoman Ertughrul, has not been given the honour of royalty, just as 11:21 states. The Ottomans, however, succeeded in gaining control over the countries surrounding Turkey. He invaded the Christian Byzantine Empire and was powerful enough to subdue it. In 1453, eventually, Constantinople, the great seat of Christianity at that time, and the eastern capital of the Roman Empire, fell into the hands of Muslim Ottomans who changed its name to become Islambul, or the City of Islam, currently Istanbul.

11:22 *"Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed"*

Following the death of Ottoman, Sultan Orhan Gazi, his son, gained control of the empire. During 35 years of Orhan reign, he doubled the area of the land he inherited from his father, and succeeded, with sweeping forces, in defeating the Byzantine centre of power in Asia Minor. So, in June 1st, 1329, Ottoman forces, led by Orhan Gazi, defeated the Byzantines forces led by Andronicus III in the Battle of Pelekanon. That defeat was final with no further attempt made at regaining the cities in Anatolia under Ottomans siege (Benoit, 2011).

11:23 *“After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people”*

In exchange of Orhan’s political and military support, Byzantine Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos gave his daughter, Princess Theodora, in marriage to Sultan Orhan in 1346. That was not the first or last settling of Ottoman Muslims in Eastern Europe, as Orhan also made other political covenants through marriages. So, he married three more daughters of Byzantine statesmen, namely, Asporsha in 1316, Nilufer Hatun in 1359, and Maria Hatun (Peirce, 1993). Through these marriage covenants, the Ottomans were able to capture large Byzantine cities after their great victory in the battle of Bafeus in 1302, and that of Dembs in 1303 (Kazhdan, 1991). So, Orhan captured Bursa in 1326. Nicaea in 1331, Nicomedia in 1333, Gallipoli in 1354, Adana in 1360. As a result, the Byzantine Empire began to disintegrate.

11:24 *“He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time”*

After sweeping success in capturing some of the main cities in the Byzantine Empire, it was time to conquer the largest and most fortified Christian city of that empire, its capital, Constantinople. So, in 1394, the Turkish Sultan Bayezid I, laid siege to Constantinople (Mango, 2002). On the urgings of the Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Palaeologus, a new crusade was organized to defeat him. This, however, proved to be unsuccessful, after the defeat of the Byzantines in the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396 (Bozhilov and Vasilev, 1999). This resulted in the rout of an allied Crusaders army, where men who couldn’t manage to escape were slaughtered, and for those with high status captured for a ransom. There was indeed plunder, spoils and riches. Thus the siege of Constantinople continued until 1402 (Bisaha, 2004). The beleaguered Byzantines had their reprieve when Bayezid I had to forsake his siege when the news reached him that the Mongols, under the leadership of Timur Link, were attacking his territories. So, and exactly as it is stated in Daniel 11: 24, the siege was halted, but only for a time, since Constantinople fell in the hands of the Ottomans later in 1453.

11:25-26 *“He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain”*

In 1514, Sultan Selim I came with a great army to fight against the Shi’ite leader Shah Ismail the Safavid in what came to be known as the Battle of Chaldiran.

The Turkish Sultan made a secret agreement with the Kurdish soldiers in the Safavids army to rebel against Shah Ismail during the battle (Sticker, 2000). The battle ended with a decisive victory for the Ottoman Empire over the Safavid Empire with disastrous losses for the latter (McGregor, 2006).

11:27 *“As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil and they speak lies to each other at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time”*

The Abbasid Caliphs resided in Egypt as nominal rulers since Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258. When, in 1517, the Ottomans occupied Jerusalem and Egypt. Caliph Al-Mutawakkil III, in order to secure his position, sought the Ottomans favour, so he welcomed them into Egypt. The Ottomans claimed that he surrendered to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I the title of Caliph as well as its outward emblems (Drews, 2011). Istanbul was declared the center for the Ottoman Caliphate, a Caliphate that ended exactly 400 years later, at the appointed time.

11:28 *“Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he will take action and then return to his own land”*

Following the conquest of the Mamluk Empire by the Ottomans, the Ottoman Sultan, Selim I, returned to his land with a great plunder i.e., the title of Caliphate, the leadership of the Muslim community. They, then, put their hearts on affirming the Islamic identity of Jerusalem by turning its Churches into mosques.

They also began a persecution of Christians, that led to their number diminishing to a minority after being the majority there (Gaunt, 2006).

11:29 *“At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before”*

In 1570, the Ottoman fleet was set to sail south towards Cyprus to capture it. In 1571, however, the fleet of the European Catholic states led by John of Austria, inflicted a major defeat on the Ottoman fleet in the Gulf of Patras in what came to be known as the battle of Lepanto (Davis, 1999). This battle was the most decisive naval battle since BC 31. The outcome of this battle was not like the ones before it, as the Ottomans for the first time, suffered a disastrous defeat.

11:30 *“For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant”*

Chittim is the name of a branch of the descendants of Javan, the son of Japheth (Genesis 10). The name denotes Greece. The defeat of the Ottomans has brought anger and humiliation upon them. So, the Ottomans quickly rebuilt their naval forces, and sailed towards Cyprus. The capital Nicosia and several other cities fell quickly. The Christian fleet, which sailed from Crete late August 1571, returned to its place when it received the news of the fall of Nicosia. Moreover, the Ottomans encouraged the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem to convert to Islam, thus forsaking the holy covenant as 11:30 foretold (Smith, 2015).

11:31 *“And arms shall stand on his part, and shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the permanent (foundations) and shall place the abomination that makes desolate”*

The Ottomans were keen to Islamise Jerusalem. In 1524, they took possession of the Church of the Last Supper and converted it into a mosque. In 1550, the Franciscans were evicted from their buildings. In addition, the Ottomans renewed the Dome of the Rock and built other domes on the Temple Mount, one of which was the Dome of the Tablets, built in the second half of the 16th century, to the North of the dome of the Rock. It was thought to be on the same place of the Holy of Holies (Wikipedia, “Ceracle”).

3.8 Centuries of Persecution for Christians

11:32 *“By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action”*

Because of flattery, many Christians converted to Islam in order to gain the Ottoman Sultan's favour. Christians were considered second class citizens that had to pay a special tax, called jizya. In addition, Christians were not allowed to dress like Muslims, ride horses or have their court testimony recognised as equal to that of a Muslim (Yazbic, 1993). True Christian believers, however, remained faithful to their Christian faith and were a source of encouragement and strength to their brothers in faith.

11:33 *“Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days”*

Persecution of Christians under the Ottoman rule continued to the time of its demise in 1917, for 400 years. Historian Robert Irwin points out that Christians living under Muslim rule suffered during the crusading period (Irwin, 1997). According to Coptic chronicles, Salah al-Din had many Christians in Egypt crucified in revenge against his crusaders' enemies.

11:34-35 *“Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy”*

Despite the fact that many Christians, in an attempt to gain some benefits and to avoid payment of jizya, converted to Islam, many remained faithful to the Lord. God indeed used this persecution in order to purify the faith of many, just as fire purifies gold.

11:36-39 *“Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. ³⁷ He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. ³⁸ But instead he will honour a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honour him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. ³⁹ He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honour to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price”.*

For the Ottomans, the fall of Constantinople in 1453, was considered their greatest victory over Christianity. They converted Christian Churches into mosques. Hagia Sophia, a former Eastern Orthodox Cathedral, was their first target (Magdalino, 2010). In addition, thousands of Christians were murdered and adults were taken into captivity. Many women were raped. British historian Philip Mansel estimated that around 30,000 Christians were either killed, enslaved or forced into exile (Mansel, 1995). The Ottomans' strong interest was to build military castles and forts. They were artistic in decorating their palaces with gold, silver and precious stones (Arsiya, 2105). They divided the land they acquired into provinces, and appointed a governor over each province. By the mid-16th century, all governors came under the direct rule of the Sultan, and he could remove or transfer them at will. This practice has led to an increase in flattery to the Sultan as governors strived to gain his favour (Imber, 2002).

3.9 The First World War and the Downfall of the Ottoman Empire starting 1914

11:40 *“At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through”*

In 1914, 3 years short of the 400th anniversary of the occupation of Jerusalem by the Ottomans, the First World War broke out. Hussein bin Ali, Prince, of Mecca, contemplated rebellion against the Ottoman Sultan. The aim of the revolt was the creation of a single unified and independent Arab state stretching from Aleppo in Syria to Aden in Yemen. This movement has followed correspondence between the British and Hussein, acting in contact with Arab nationalist groups, in which the British had encouraged Arab hopes of independence (Hourani, 1991). The revolt, led by Hussein bin Ali and his allies, with the military backing of the British Empire, successfully battled and repelled the Ottoman military presence from much of the Hejaz and Transjordan. The Ottomans' response to Hussein's revolt was overwhelming. Ottoman troops in the Hejaz numbered 20,000 men by 1917. The Ottoman troops enjoyed an advantage over the Hashemite troops, belonging to Hussein bin Ali (Murphy, 2008).

11:41 *“He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon”*

Verse 41 mentions the rescue of Edom, Moab and the sons of Ammon from the grip of the Ottomans. In 1916, Edom, currently north of Hejaz (Wikipedia, “Yathrib”);

Moab and the sons of Ammon, currently Jordan, fell into the hands of Hussein bin Ali, who was supported by the British forces. Consequently, three Ottoman armies surrendered (Fromkin, 2010). On 27th June the same year, Hussein bin Ali proclaimed himself a king over the Hejazi Hashemite kingdom, and appointed his son Abdullah a prince over the province of Eastern Jordan, a province that became the modern state of Jordan (Charles, 1923)

11:42, 43 *“Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels”*

The Turkish forces indeed stretched out to have their grip on Iraq in two battles that have been described by some historians as the most heinous and humiliating in the history of the British military (Morris, 2010). They won the two battles, the Battle of Kut and the Battle of Ctesiphon. Towards Egypt, the Ottomans fought two battles for Gaza on 26th March 1917, and 19th April 1917. In both battles, the Ottomans were victorious over the British army (Powles, 1922). The Ottomans also advanced towards the Sinai Peninsula till they reached Suez Canal in Egypt on 2nd February 1915, where the Ottomans, allied with the Germans, fought against Britain and its allies near the Egyptian town of Romani, between 3rd and 5th August 1916. The British Empire victory ensured the safety of the Suez Canal from ground attacks as well as securing the traffic through the canal (Battles Nomenclature Committee, 1922, p. 31).

Despite the British occupation of Egypt at that time, Egypt didn't escape dominion of the Turkish Empire as did Hejaz and Jordan. This is because the Egyptians considered Hussein bin Ali a traitor since he allied with the British, so they continued to be loyal to the Ottomans. The throne of Egypt, as a result, remained in the hands of the family of Turkish Muhammad Ali Pasha who had control over Egypt's palaces and all its riches (Ekinici, 2105). In addition, the Libyan leader, Omar Al-Mukhtar, came to the support of the Ottomans in Egypt accompanied by some Libyan Senussis (World Bulletin, 2014), as well as some Sunni groups from Darfur, Sudan under the leadership of Ali Dinar (Wikipedia, “Ali Dinar”), thus fulfilling the words of 11:43.

11:44 *“But rumours from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many”*

The Ottomans heard of the coming of the Russian army to attack them from the east and North directions. Fearing the alliance of the Assyrians and Armenians with Russians against them (Butt, 2017), the Ottomans so fiercely committed some of, probably, the most outrageous massacres history has ever known, the Armenian Holocaust. It was the systematic extermination of 1.5 million Armenians, mostly citizens of the Ottoman Empire (Robert, 2006). Other ethnic groups were similarly targeted for extermination in the Assyrian genocide (Schaller, et al, 2008). Genocide was carried out during and after World War I.

11:45 *“He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him”*

By the end of World War I, the Ottomans were defeated by the British in the battle of Jerusalem 1917 (Battles Nomenclature Committee, 1922, p. 32). In addition, both Germany and Austria, the Ottomans’ allies, were also defeated, thus leaving Turkey with no one to help it, just as verse 11:45 states (Tucker, 1999). After the final defeat of the Ottomans, the Sultanate was abolished on 1st November 1922, thus ushering the end of the Ottoman Empire, an Empire that lasted for over six centuries (Finkel, 2007). There was also an end to the Islamic Caliphate that lasted about 1290 years. On 3rd March 1924, Ataturk announced the establishment of secular Turkey.

3.10 The Ousting of the Ottomans from Palestine

12:1a *“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise”*

As the times of the Gentiles, spoken by Jesus in Luke 21:24, were drawing near, God intervened in the history of the Jews, for the first time since they were scattered, and provided them with a home. The United Kingdom made the Balfour Declaration on 1917, promising support for a Jewish "national home" in Palestine (Caplan, 2011). The gradual return of the Jews was a fulfilment of God’s promise to them. At last the dry bones spoken of in Ezekiel 37 began to come together.

3.11 The Second World War (1939-1945)

12:1 b *“And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time”*

The Second World War broke out in 1939, and was unlike any other war before it. Just as Daniel 12:1 states, it was the most disastrous calamity to come upon mankind with over 85 million casualties. The Nazi Hitler of Germany, was responsible for systematically murdering some six million European Jews, between 1941 and 1945 (Hayes, 2015). It is noteworthy that this time of great distress came to an end at about the same time the Lord pointed to in Matthew 24, the period that lasted 1260 years, from 689 to 1949, as indicated in Revelation 11:3.

3.12 The Restoration of Jerusalem in 1967 and the Rise of Messianic Jews Movements

12:1c *“at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued”*

The “rescuing of God’s people” mentioned at the end of Daniel 12:1 started when the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine paved the way for Israel to declare its independence in 1948. The Palestine Mandate formalized with the League of Nations in 1923 was activated and the Jews began to immigrate to Palestine legally and without restrictions. This period witnessed the conversion of, at least, 250000 Jews to Christianity according to existing records of various societies (Gundry, et al, 2003), and this number continues to rise. It was indeed the time when God sought the Jews (Luke 21:24), and many names were written in the Book of Life.

12:2-3 *“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever”*

The “dust of the ground” is a reference to the Jews as stated in Genesis 28:14 and Numbers 23:10. Many of them have awoken and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have shined like stars of heavens (Genesis 15:5). As for those who rejected faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and still hope and dream of a Jewish temple to be constructed in the future, theirs will be only shame, disgrace and everlasting contempt. The expression “Those who have insight” denotes those Jews who have believed in Jesus as the awaited Messiah. They are the ones that understood God’s word and have, therefore, been enlightened as heaven’s shining stars. Through the evangelism of those, many have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and to be clothed with his righteousness.

12:4 *“But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase”*

The word of God tells us that the Book of Daniel will be concealed till the time of the end, days in which we live now. It became an object of study, and knowledge has indeed increased.

12:5-6 *“Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, ‘How long will it be until the end of these wonders?’”*

The man who was above the waters of the river and was dressed in linen, recalls to the mind the clothing of the high priest (Exodus 39:27-29). In fact, this is Jesus Christ, our high priest.

The two standing with him are Prophet Daniel and Apostle John, who prophesied in both Testaments, respectively, of persecution of the beast on the people of God for a time, two times and half a time (Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:14). The word “wonders” here refers to God’s discipline of his people, a matter that is difficult to understand (Isaiah 29:14)

3.12 The Completion of Fourteen Centuries

12:7 *“I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed”*

“A time, two times and half a time” point to 14 centuries. This is because God waited for 400 years to save his people from Egypt (Genesis 15:13). The Hebrew word used here means “promise”. And it refers to 400 years in Acts 7:17. A time, two times and half a time is, then, equivalent to $400 + (400 \times 2.5) = 400 + 1000 = 1400$ years. As for the division of this period into a time, two times and half a time, it is attributed to the 400 years in which the Ottomans occupied Jerusalem from 1517 to 1917. “The holy people” is a reference to the Church of Christ. As the time of its shattering comes to an end, it will be united with the power of the Holy Spirit.

3.13 The Sealed Scroll is Finally Opened

12:8-10 *“As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, ‘My lord, what will be the outcome of these events? He said ‘Go your way Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand but those who have insight will understand”*

The word of God tells us that the prophecies of Daniel will be concealed till the time of the end. From Luke 21:24, we understand that this is the time of Jewish return to Jerusalem. Believers will understand Daniel’s prophecies at that time because the Holy Spirit will reveal it to them. As for the wicked, they will lack understanding in the absence of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

12:11 *“From the time that the permanent foundation is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days”*

The Dome of the Rock was built in Jerusalem, in the year 689, on the site of the Jewish Temple. Muslims believe that site to be the site from which Muhammad ascended to heaven (Braswell, 1996). Using the day-year principle, the addition of 1290 years to that date i.e. 689, brings us to the year 1979, the year of the Khomeini revolution in Iran, a revolution that resulted in the birth of a Shi’ite power. So, after the passage of almost thirteen centuries of Sunni Islam dominating the world with almost no competitors, Shi’ite Islam appeared as a power to be reckoned with. This brings us to the feet of the statue of Daniel 2:33, 42, the feet that is partly of iron and partly of clay, where iron is a representation of Sunni and Clay is a representation of Shi’ite Islam.

12:12 *“How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days”*

The addition of 1335 years to the date of constructing the Dome of the Rock will take us to 2024. Could the prophecy of Daniel be completed by that time? Could that year mark an end of the system of the fourth beast and challenge it presents? The authors of this article believe so.

4. Conclusion

This research paper proposes that the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's statue is the kingdom of Islam, rather than the Roman Empire, as thought by the majority of Biblical scholars. The kings of the South and of the North, introduced in Daniel 11, represent, indeed, the two main sects of Islam, the Shi'ite and Sunni, respectively. In order to support their proposal, the authors track the history of Islam over 14 centuries and make historical and theological connections with Daniel 11 and 12 verse-by-verse.

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