

Will the Prophetic King of the South Emerge from the Arab World?

Will an Arab leader or group of Arab nations come to represent a yet future prophetic king of the south simply because some Arab peoples and states are located south of Jerusalem?

With the death of Alexander of Macedon the dominion that was his empire became subject to internal conflicts that eventually divided the empire among his trusted guards, regional satrapies, and the leading generals who served Alexander the Great.

Consequently, within a comparatively few years the Greco-Macedonian Empire was suffering from a series of wars among the Successors (Diadochi) beginning with a coalition—Ptolemy, Antipater and Craterus—that formed an alliance against the first regent Perdiccas in 320-319 BCE. Then, following the death of Perdiccas there was a rearrangement of the satrapies and Antigonus (the One-Eyed) became general of Asia, and Antipater became the new regent who replaced Perdiccas, while Ptolemy took southern Syria.

Setting the stage for the Second War of the Successors.

In this second war the major contenders for the empire were Antigonus and Cassander who aligned themselves against Polyperchon and the scholar and military leader Eumenes. This conflict resulted in Cassander ruling Macedon, while Antigonus became the leading ruler of Asia and Asia Minor, which led to Seleucus (later called, Nicator) being expelled from Babylon.

Leading then to the Third War of the Successors where Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Cassander struggled against Antigonus, Demetrius and Polyperchon, which brought Seleucus back to the

throne of Babylon. The end of this conflict generally marks the beginning of the so-called "Peace of the Dynasts." (This Seleucus would later overthrow Antigonus and begin the Seleucid dynasty sometime after the Babylonian War of 311-309 BCE.)

Eventually we are brought to the Fourth War of the Successors.

In this confrontation we see that Antigonus and Demetrius are at war with Ptolemy and Cassander and eventually Lysimachus and Seleucus, which brings us then to the years 305-304 BCE when Ptolemy declares himself to be king of Egypt, and Seleucus becomes the ruler of Asia. Demetrius for a time controls Greece and Lysimachus and Cassander declare themselves kings in their respective dominions, which brings us to the fateful Battle of Ipsus in 301 BCE when the aging Antigonus the One-Eyed is killed in battle and Demetrius is expelled from Greece.

However, this was not the end of the struggles for those who contended for what remained of Alexander's empire.

What followed then was the Fifth and Sixth Wars of the Successors.

These wars, of course, ensured that there would never again be a consolidated Greco-Macedonian Empire, noting that the only ruler who ever really came close to reestablishing Alexander's realm was Seleucus I of Asia Minor. (Work on the Septuagint began in the brief period between the fifth and sixth wars of the Diadochi.)

Interestingly, the leading Successors who continued after the Battle of Ipsus all died within a few years of each other—Ptolemy in 283 BCE, Demetrius in 282 BCE and Lysimachus and Seleucus in 281 BCE.

Still, this was not the end of struggles for the once great Greco-Macedonian Empire founded by Alexander the Great.

Rome was now on the rise as a world-ruling empire in Eurasia.

By 167 BCE Macedon became divided into Roman republics, and within a few years the Greeks of Corinth came under Roman rule, while Roman expansion continued in Asia until the fall of the independent kingdoms of Bithynia, the Pontic Kingdom south of the Black Sea, and the Kingdom of the Cimmerian Bosphorus (Crimea). Then, finally, came the fall of the remnant Ptolemaic Kingdom in Egypt with the death of Cleopatra VII and her consort Mark Antony, which marked the end of what was the Greco-Macedonian Empire. (The northern kingdom ruled by Mithridates VI had earlier emerged from the dominion of Seleucus I, and this kingdom came to an end when the Bosphorus Kingdom of Crimea eventually fell to the Romans.)

So, what then is the relevancy of this history to the prophetic kings of the north and south as noted in the prophecies of Daniel?

By using this historical backdrop, we see that some biblical expositors assumed a literary method for interpreting Daniel's prophecy regarding the kings of the north and south, and by doing so many commentaries have placed this prophecy in the context of what happened to the Greco-Macedonian Empire sometime after the death of Alexander the Great.

Now, it is true that the prophecies of Daniel do speak about the rise of Macedon-Greece and the overthrow of the Persian Empire and its Achaemenid dynasty at Susa. But it is most difficult, however, to place Daniel's prophecy regarding the kings of the north and south into a strict historical context, simply because this prophecy contains many abbreviated statements that are nothing short of ambiguous respective to the historical period that followed the death of Alexander.

(Compare chapters 8 and 11 of the book of Daniel.)

Meaning then that some commentators were more speculative than expositive regarding their interpretations of this prophecy

and its relevance to the period of the Successors and the divided kingdoms of the Greco-Macedonian Empire.

This, of course, has allowed for various interpretations of Daniel's prophecies, which, in turn, have made abundant room for many errors in historical judgment regarding the successor kingdoms, which has also created errors in explaining how this prophecy ought to relate to those nation-states that currently occupy the lands that were once within the realm of Alexander.

Simply, many expositors and commentators have placed the events of Daniel's prophecy into an historical context, which is difficult at best given that many statements made in the prophecy of the kings of the north and south could be interpreted in different ways to make them relative to both the Seleucid Kingdom of Asia and the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt. But, more importantly, by placing Daniel's prophecy into such a context we see that commentators are stressed to interpret how this prophecy relates to end-time events, and the reason for this is that commentators have used a literary method and have typically placed the city of Jerusalem at the geographic center of their interpretations of this particular prophecy of Daniel.

Leading, in some cases, to the unfounded conclusion that a prophetic king of the south will someday emerge from the Arab world, only because there are numerous Arab populations that are currently living geographically south of Jerusalem.

How then did some people arrive at this conclusion?

The divisions of the Greco-Macedonian Empire were generally centered on the locations of the former capitals of previous empires, as well as on the chosen capitals of the Successors. Also, the fluctuating divisions of these kingdoms reflected a continuing change in the territorial gains achieved by each of the leading Successors to Alexander. Which is something that can be observed from the geography of the empire and the

locations of those capitals that already existed in Greece, Macedon, Babylon, Egypt, Phoenicia, Asia Minor and Persia.

Therefore, it was inevitable that the five distinguished successors would eventually define their respective territories by the many wars they fought while trying to obtain the sole rule of the Greco-Macedonian Empire. This, at times, would have allowed their territories to be generally partitioned east, west, north and south of each other respective to their capitals and their territorial gains, but not according to their locations relative to the city of Jerusalem.

Also, by examining the locations of the various capitals of the Diadochi it is no surprise to discover that the wars that they fought and the territories that they claimed were generally bounded by the unspecified borders of the Arab world. Even though it is reasonable to say that the wars of the Successors did indeed spill over into some Arab populations, as well as into some North African and Central Asian populations that existed in the time of the Successors.

Including the region of Palestine.

Bringing us to say that the Arab world was not historically a participant in the struggles of the Successors.

However, some have taken a different road in interpreting the history of the divided Greco-Macedonian Empire.

When some biblical expositors and commentators placed the city of Jerusalem at the geographic center of their interpretations, it created a revisionist history respective to the Greco-Macedonian Empire, and also the Roman Empire, and with the addition of some revisionist denominational views of history some have concluded that a future "king of the south" will emerge from the Arab world—perhaps from Egypt.

So, let's look at this issue a little more.

By assuming that the prophecy of the kings of the north and south was a geographic issue related to Jerusalem, we see that some commentators were selective in determining how this prophecy would relate to the later rulers of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Kingdoms. Supposedly proving then the validity of the Bible by showing that this prophecy was accurately fulfilled, but it was, however, at the expense of excluding the more significant events played out among the leading Successors of Alexander.

Also, by assuming that they had proved the validity of prophecy they also ignored the context of the "times of the gentiles" given to us by Jesus, which context was confirmed by the Apostles Paul and John.

Adding to this we have the denominational interpretations that further assumed that the Greek Seleucid kingdom was absorbed by the Western Roman Empire in such a way as to make it different from the other northern and southern Greek kingdoms that also became provinces of the Roman Empire. Then taking it one step further we see that this revisionist denominational view continued to distort the interpretations of Daniel's prophecy by assuming that the Seleucid Kingdom—supposed king of the north—was "translated" into Western Europe, even though it was a Greek kingdom located in Central Asia, which like the other Greek kingdoms also fell within the bounds of the Roman Empire.

Then, based on an interpretation of the four "great beasts" of Daniel's prophecies, the denominational revisionists imposed the idea of "revivals" onto the long expanse of mostly Western European history, and by this it was supposed that the Roman Empire would "regenerate" itself in various forms, with different governments and fluctuating and undefined territories until there would be a final revival of the Roman Empire represented by and led by the nation-state of Germany. (One wonders how the French under Napoleon, thought by some to be one of the lost ten tribes of Israel, could be considered a

“revival” of a long-line of gentile nations and empires that will in the future become the enemy of the now dispersed Commonwealth of Israel.)

However, a twist in this interpretation assumes that the Ptolemaic Kingdom was not absorbed by the Roman Empire in the same way as the Seleucid Kingdom—which it was—because as history shows the Ptolemaic Kingdom was eventually made a permanent republic of the Roman Empire with the demise of Cleopatra VII.

What this means is that by assuming the Seleucid Kingdom represented Daniel’s king of the north, and by interpreting this kingdom as being translated into Western Europe, it only served to prove that the Seleucid Kingdom was never really defined as a king of the north relative to the city of Jerusalem. Because a contradiction exists with the Ptolemaic Kingdom as denominational revisionists claim that it was not absorbed into Rome’s empire, even though it was considered to be the fulfillment of the prophetic “king of the south,” which left the door open to say that any future king of the south would be identified geographically with the city of Jerusalem, and not with Western Europe, as was the Seleucid Kingdom.

This represents a major historical contradiction to what we find in the history of the Greco-Macedonian Empire, the Roman Empire, and the succeeding empires and nation-states that would follow the collapse of the Eastern Roman Empire. (The Eastern Roman Empire was indeed the historical and legitimate sole successor to the Classical Roman Empire.)


Therefore, from these various and erroneous interpretations we see that some have concluded that a future prophetic “king of the south” would have to come from a region south of Jerusalem, and by the consequence of wars and migrations this would fall to the existing inhabitants of those lands south of Jerusalem.

Meaning the Arab world.

That is to say probably the nation-state of Egypt.

However, if such an interpretation of history were to hold true of the Ptolemaic Kingdom, then it should have held true for the Seleucid Kingdom, and in that way the prophetic king of the north would also be expected to come from those lands that are north of Jerusalem, and to the immediate north we again find the Arab world. Likewise, if it was true of the Seleucid Kingdom then the interpretation should have made it true of the Ptolemaic Kingdom.

Suffice it to say the Greco-Macedonian Empire was eventually divided to the “four winds,” but it was nonetheless a Mediterranean-based Eurasian empire, and the subsequent divisions that occurred later were marked by territorial claims relative to the ancient capitals that had existed in the times of previous ancient empires of Eurasia. Which allows us to conclude that the Ptolemaic Kingdom was not an African power, as was formerly Egypt, and it certainly did not represent the Arab world. The same, of course, was true of the Seleucid Kingdom, which was a Greek kingdom centered in Central Asia, and therefore it represented an extension of the Western European world, but not the Arab world.

Thus, the most we can say is that the former Greek kingdoms were all absorbed into the Roman Empire. They, along with many other ancient kingdoms, have passed into history, which means that we cannot geographically determine the identity of the prophetic “king of the south” based on a literary and historical interpretation of Daniel’s prophecy respective to Jerusalem.  (andrewburdettewrites.com)

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Also see: [Kings of the North and South: Another Look at Daniel’s Prophecy](#)