

“Of Men and Nations”

Daniel 11:1-38

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry.

Each week the Bible teaching broadcasts of *Heralds of Hope* circle the globe in English and 16 other major languages. Thousands tune in to hear biblical teaching and practical instruction on what it means to be a follower of Jesus. We praise God that He’s using us as a channel to reach people with the Gospel in so many different parts of the world.

On this broadcast of *Hope for Today* we’re beginning a new study from Daniel chapter 11. I hope you can stay with me. Listen carefully now as I read **Daniel 11:1 to 8**.

In Second Timothy 3:16 and 17, Paul wrote, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*”

As you ponder those words, do you ever wonder why God included certain details in Scripture? What about details He didn’t include, ones you wish he had? Have you ever found yourself falling asleep while reading an Old Testament genealogy, or the minute details of Leviticus? Have you ever felt uncomfortable when a biblical writer talks about eating excrement and drinking urine or gives the gory details of an assassination (remember Ehud and Eglon)?

Part of our challenge in relating to these kinds of things is, we often think too small. We tend to isolate verses, chapters, or even books of the Bible instead of seeing them as part of the whole revelation of God to humanity. What’s the point of the book of Leviticus? It’s about the holiness of God and the care with which He must be approached by sinful man. It seems to be a subject neglected and ignored by much of what passes for Christianity today.

Why is the Assyrian official, Rabshakeh’s, crude, and arrogant speech recorded in Second Kings chapter 18? Perhaps it’s to show us how God deals with people who mistakenly think they’re in control. The one’s who make threats against the people of God and end up being humiliated. Another reason; to show us how to respond to such trash talk! In this situation, the people were instructed to remain silent.

And what about prophecy? What's God's purpose for it? To confuse and distract us? To give us something to debate and argue about? I know some people think about it that way. But again, I go back to Second Timothy 3:16 and 17. Prophecy is part of *all Scripture* that is God-breathed and -- useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. Part of our responsibility as Christ-followers is to diligently search out the meaning, value, and application of these prophetic portions of Scripture.

For the last few months on *The Voice of Hope* we've been studying the book of Daniel. The closing chapters of the book of Daniel, chapters 11 and 12, trace world history from the time of Darius the Mede through the last Gentile ruler at "the time of the end."

The incredible detail in these chapters has led some to suggest that this can't be prophecy! Porphyry was a Roman philosopher in the 3rd century AD. Based on his reading of chapter 11, he claimed the book was a forgery. He was convinced that no one could predict the future with such accuracy, it had to have been written after the events occurred. In response his skepticism, the early church father, Jerome, issued his own commentary which was considered the standard work on Daniel for over 1,000 years!

The reality is, there are only two options; either God is omniscient, or He isn't. The whole subject of Messianic prophecy, fulfilled in all its minute details about Jesus' birth, life, and death, answers the objections of the critics.

The text for today has many details that some will find boring. But is that statement even relevant when we're talking about Scripture? The vast majority of the characters in this drama of chapter 11 have been positively identified in history, but one is yet in the future. In just a few moments we will read the first part of Daniel chapter 11. First, I want to give you a brief overview of what we'll be seeing.

To begin, *no other portion of Scripture presents more detailed prophecy than Daniel 11:1 – 35*. There are 135 prophetic statements listed in this section, and all have been historically fulfilled!!!! These verses describe the major rulers of the Persian Empire, followed briefly by Alexander the Great. The third empire after Alexander is described in great detail and concludes with Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC). The time period from the death of Antiochus until the last Gentile ruler (the Church Age), is completely skipped over.

Verses 36 – 45 (which we'll cover at another time) deal with the last Gentile ruler who will be in power when Christ's Second Advent occurs. Chapter 12 is further prophecy of the final 1335

days, a period that includes the last half of the Great Tribulation, the second advent, and the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

Keep in mind, this revelation doesn't contain all the history of the period or name all the rulers. The prophecy is selective, but accurate. Why is Antiochus given more space than any other ruler in this chapter? Most likely, because of the impact his reign and his activities had on Israel.

I've titled our study "Of Men and Nations." Listen as I read the text, Daniel 11:1 to 35???

The Kingdom of Persia

The first verse of chapter 11 is actually the closing verse of chapter 10. The heavenly messenger who is speaking to Daniel at the end of chapter 10, continues his message. Remember, this angel was engaged in spiritual warfare against the prince of Persia.

In verse one, the angel is standing to strengthen someone. The word, stand, is a military term; there's a conflict going on here. Who is the angel strengthening? Remember chapter 10 is about the battle that's taking place in the spirit world. In this first year of Darius, the world power has shifted from Babylon to the Medo-Persian empire. Was God strengthening Michael in his battle to cultivate in Darius a heart favorable to the people of Israel? Or, was he strengthening Darius for this task?

The beginning of the 2nd great empire with the fall of Babylon in chapter 5 was, then, more than a military conquest. It was a new chapter in the divine drama of angelic warfare behind the scenes, and it was a change by divine appointment. ¹

Recall another incident in the first year of Darius, in Daniel chapter 6. There, the forces of spiritual darkness were working through Daniel's fellow officials, causing him to be thrown into the lion's den. What did God do? He sent His **angel**, His heavenly messenger, to perform a miracle by shutting the mouths of the lions. This is more than just a good story! It reveals more of this cosmic conflict between good and evil. That incident caused Darius to make policies in line with God's plan that favored Daniel and the captive Jewish people.

CLOSING

¹ Walvoord, John; Daniel, A Commentary, p. 255

My friend, I hate to interrupt, but we're almost out of time for today's broadcast. Lord willing, we'll be back in one week to continue this study. If you'd like an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, just request it by its title, "Of Men and Nations."

The quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. That e-mail address is mail@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, "Of Men and Nations." I'd be happy to send one to you.

Once again, the quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember; you can request a free copy of this teaching, "Of Men and Nations." It's available in print or on an audio CD.

And don't forget our Bible teaching programs are available to you all the time and any time at the website, twr360.org. That's twr360.org. Thousands are logging on to the site for spiritual nourishment and blessing. You can join them and be blessed too!

Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue our study, "Of Men and Nations" from Daniel chapter eleven. And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.