

“Of Men and Nations” 5

Daniel 11:2-35

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. And our Bible teaching programs in several languages are available 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!

For the past few weeks on *Hope for Today* we’ve been studying from Daniel chapter eleven. Our study is titled “Of Men and Nations.” I hope you’re enjoying our times together in this challenging and interesting book of the Bible.

Today, we will conclude our study, “Of Men and Nations.” Right now, I will read **Daniel 11:20 to 35**.

So far in the text, Antiochus has known very few military and political defeats, but that’s about to change. In one of his many forays into Egypt, he manages to capture the current Ptolemy (remember, that was the title of Egypt’s kings), but he fails to capture the city of Alexandria. Because of this he is forced to withdraw his forces.

In a subsequent invasion he is confronted by the forces of Rome at Alexandria. The Roman general gives him an ultimatum, “leave Egypt or be attacked by Rome.” This made Antiochus really angry, but he had enough sense to do as he was told, and he conceded Egypt to Rome’s authority. Like most men with anger issues, this wasn’t the end of the story. Antiochus’ anger was going to be vented on someone – someone with less power.

Notice who the recipients of that anger were. ...*he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage*. God’s people Israel were about to experience Antiochus’ wrath. Evidently, according to verse 30, some of the Jewish people, fearing Antiochus’ rage, will forsake the covenant in order to curry favor and protection from his administration. And he does favor them.

Verse 31 outlines Antiochus’ desecration of the Temple and the Altar. History tells us that Antiochus ordered his general, Apollonius, and 22,000 soldiers, into Jerusalem on what he claimed

was a peaceful mission. However, when they were inside the city, they attacked the Jews on a Sabbath, when the Jews were reluctant to exert themselves. Apollonius killed many Jews, he took many Jewish women and children captive as slaves, plundered the temple, and burned the city.

Antiochus' objective was to exterminate Judaism and to Hellenize Palestine (that is, to force the adoption of Greek religion and culture). Consequently, he prohibited the Jews from following the Mosaic Law, and did away with the Jewish sacrifices, festivals, and circumcision. He even burned copies of their law. As a culminating measure, he installed an image of Zeus, his Greek god, in the temple and erected an altar to Zeus on the altar of burnt offerings.

Then, Antiochus sacrificed a pig, an unclean animal to the Jews, on the altar, and ordered the Jews to sacrifice swine's flesh on the altar. This happened on December 16, 168 B.C. The Jews referred to this act as "the abomination that caused desolation," since it polluted their altar and made sacrifices to Yahweh on it impossible. Antiochus further ordered his Jewish subjects to celebrate his birthdays by offering a pig to Zeus on this altar. This is *the abomination that makes desolate* referred to by Jesus. The parallel prophecy is in Daniel 8:23-25.

Just a note here about the critics of Daniel. If Jesus quoted Daniel's prophecy in Matthew 24:15, isn't that in itself sufficient evidence for the reliability of Daniel's prophecy? I'll let you decide the answer to that question.

These actions by Antiochus brought about the Maccabean Revolt where thousands of Jewish people were slaughtered. While the events listed here were fulfilled historically in the reign of Antiochus, they are also prophetic of the future "time of Jacob's trouble," or the Great Tribulation. In Matt. 24:15, where Christ is describing the Great Tribulation, he links the desecration of the Temple as being similar in kind to the events of the end. Antiochus becomes a type of the future *man of sin*. His actions foreshadow the ultimate blasphemy of the Antichrist.¹

Note here Antiochus' ongoing attempts to subvert the Jewish people. By flatteries he corrupts those who were nominally committed to the covenant. But the committed ones were commended for their strength and their valiant deeds!

This was a time of separating the chaff from the wheat. Antiochus' attempt to destroy the Jewish people actually leads to a revival of genuine worship, as much as that was possible. Many were instructed by the righteous and urged to commitment by the example of the martyrs. It was

¹ Constable, Thomas, Commentary on Daniel, p. 133

during this time that the *Chassidim* group began to grow. They advocated for strict observance of the Mosaic law. They were the forerunners of the *Pharisees* of Jesus' day.

It's sad to realize how corrupt the Jewish religious leadership became during this time. They were engaging in the very sins for which their forefathers went into captivity in Babylon. I can only imagine the grief this must've been to Daniel as he received these prophecies.

But this revival came with a high price. Notice, the faithful fell by the sword, by the fire, by captivity, and by spoil for many days. Verse 35 says that this purging will continue until the time of the end, but the messenger specifically notes that what is prophesied *is yet for a time appointed*. The end referenced is not the end of Antiochus, but the end of the age.

Verse 36 jumps from the time of Antiochus to the final generation prior to God's judgment of Gentile power and authority. It begins unfolding prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled. We'll take up that study next time, here on *Hope for Today*.

Think about it, the God who controls human history, the God who orchestrates world events to fulfill His plans and purposes, that same God has your life and mine ordered too. It's true, He doesn't force us to follow His plans, but our lives will have far more meaning, and joy, and purpose if we're willing to let Him take control. Have you given Him that privilege?

I'm not asking if you went to an altar years ago and prayed "the sinner's prayer." I'm not asking if you raised your hand in a meeting and had a pastor pray for you. I'm not even asking if you've been baptized and have your name on the membership roll of a church.

What I am asking is this; have you given God control of your life? Is He the master and you the servant? Or do you just need Him when there are things you can't do for yourself? The Scriptures know nothing of claiming Jesus for salvation while rejecting Him as Lord. Make Him your Lord and Master today!

My friend, were you blessed by this teaching? If so, you can request an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, "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 turn our attention to the final verses of Daniel chapter eleven and the opening verses of chapter twelve. Our study next time is titled, "The Time of the End." And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.