

“Of Men and Nations” 4

Daniel 11:20-35

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.

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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.” This chapter covers the major rulers of the Persian Empire, followed by a brief record Alexander the Great who led the Greek Empire. The third empire, the one following Alexander, is described in great detail and concludes with Antiochus Epiphanes.

Last week, right at the end of the program, we introduced Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Today, we will begin exploring the details of his life from Daniel chapter eleven. Right now, I will read **Daniel 11:20 to 35**.

The Kingdom of Antiochus IV

As I mentioned near the beginning of this study in chapter 11, there are more verses (21 to 35) that deal with this next ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, than any of the other rulers mentioned. It’s amazing that an historically obscure Syrian ruler would generate so much interest. He’s previously mentioned in Daniel 8 as *the little horn* and he ruled from 175 to 164 BC. During this time, Syrian power was decreasing, and the might of Rome was increasing. If Antiochus IV hadn’t died in 164 BC, he most likely would’ve been eventually humiliated by the armies of Rome.

Though he wasn’t a powerful leader, his desecration of the Jewish Temple and his violent persecution of the Jewish people, make him important in Daniel’s prophetic narrative. Remember, that beginning in chapter eight, the focus of Daniel is the Gentile domination of the world, especially as it relates to the progress or regression of the Jewish nation. He is also, very clearly, a type of the Antichrist who will arise at the end of the age.

Notice, the vision refers to Antiochus as a vile person, someone who is revolting and morally despicable, a reprobate. He thought of himself so highly that he took the name *Epiphanes* meaning, glorious. He saw himself as a god and wanted others to see him that way too. On the coins he minted during his reign, he linked *Epiphanes* (glorious one) with *Theos* (god). Combined, they promoted his claim to be *God manifest*. However, many of his people gave him the nickname, *Epimanes*, which means, madman. History tells us his life was characterized by intrigue, political expediency, and the lust for power.

We also know that Antiochus wasn't the natural successor to the throne, that is, he wasn't given the throne by the people or the royal family. Instead, he seized the throne through intrigue. He pretended to be the guardian of the rightful heir but is suspected of arranging for his murder. By deceit and treachery, he eliminated the rightful heirs of the throne and their officers. His obtaining the throne "peaceably" simply means that he didn't have to fight a war for it. Once he secured his position, he began a series of conquests against the two major powers opposing him, Egypt, and Rome. Against Egypt he won many victories.

Verse 22 mentions those successes against his enemies. It also mentions that *the prince of the covenant*, like his other enemies, would be swept away like a flood. This prince of the covenant is believed to be the Jewish High Priest, Onias III. History tells us that Onias had Egyptian sympathies, and this didn't sit well with the ruling religious class in Jerusalem. They were making too much money as Antiochus' puppets and they didn't want their plan interrupted or ended. So, Onias' murder was ordered by Antiochus in 172 BC.

Verse 23 describes Antiochus' various treaties with other nations, especially Egypt. True to his character, these agreements involved deception and intrigue. His only goal in his alliances was to increase his power. And he was quite successful.

As I mentioned before, Antiochus was always looking to expand his power and wealth. So, he plundered the richest parts of the surrounding country. He especially attacked places that were at peace, people who were unsuspecting. In one particular way he was different from his predecessors. Most kings kept captured wealth for themselves, but Antiochus took the captured wealth and spread it around. He used it to buy the favor and allegiance of possible rivals. He was cunning and ruthless.

His expeditions aren't named in the text, but they were against Egypt, and he swept his enemies before him like a flood. Egypt's allies (the ones who ate of the king's delicacies) deserted him in his time of need. This disloyalty allowed Antiochus to be victorious.

Verses 27 and 28 mention the various agreements that were made between Syria and Egypt. The common characteristic of these agreements is that *they did not stand*, because both kings were deceitful in making them. They are said to *speak lies at the same table*. Sounds like politics today! For obvious reasons, these treaties weren't successful, they didn't last. In all of this, God's timetable is moving forward right on schedule! Notice the last part of verse 27; *for the end will still be at the appointed time*. God is using this vile man, Antiochus Epiphanes, to fulfill His divine will and purpose.

Evidently, in one of his expeditions to Egypt, Antiochus returns in triumph with *great riches*. And the text mentions that at this specific time he begins to manifest his intense hatred for the Jewish people and his covetous lust for the treasures housed in the Temple. His atrocities against the Jewish people as he returns from Egypt are documented in Maccabees 1 and 2.

So far in the text, Antiochus has known very few military and political defeats, but that's about to change.

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. That email address again is, m-a-i-l@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.

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