

“Of Men and Nations” 2

Daniel 11:2-9

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. Thousands are tuning in each week to receive spiritual nourishment and blessing. Like this listener from Ethiopia who sent this email message in response to our Oromo language broadcasts.

Dear Heralds of Hope producers; thank you for your encouraging messages and the teachings on the book of Genesis. In our place, due to political reasons, a lot of people are killed, abused physically and sexually. We cannot do anything to help these people because we are afraid for our own lives. There is no church, a place where we got relief, we only have you. Please shout for us, pray for us, and encourage us through your radio programs. We can tell only of you, our grief and deep sorrow! Thank you for listening and allowing us to express our feelings.

Our gracious, loving, Heavenly Father we cry out to you right now on behalf of this listener. Thank you so much for the privilege of encouraging them each week through your life-giving Word. Father make your presence very real to them, comfort them, provide for them as they struggle with the violence that is occurring in Ethiopia right now. We pray you will bring an end to that strife. And Father, strengthen their faith and trust in you we ask, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Last week on *Hope for Today* we began studying from Daniel chapter eleven. Our study is titled “Of Men and Nations.” We barely got past the introduction of the text, so we’ll be returning to that study today, and, for the next several programs.

One of the things we noted last time is that this chapter presents more detailed prophecy than any other single portion of Scripture! In verses 2 through 35 there are 135 prophetic statements that have ALL been historically fulfilled.

As we resume our study for today, I will read the text, **Daniel 11:2 to 9**.

The time period in these opening verses is later than Nebuchadnezzar’s dream but corresponds with chapter eight’s prophecy on the ram and the goat. Since the Babylonian empire has passed off the scene, the question arises about the length and scope of the Persian empire. The angel informs Daniel that he will tell him the truth. The angel mentions three kings that will arise,

and then a fourth king who will be greater in power and richer than his predecessors. He will use his wealth, power, and influence to stir up resentment against Grecia, or Greece.

The angel is showing Daniel what will be in the future. Remember, chapter 10 informs us that Daniel was having this vision in the 3rd year of Cyrus. So, we can most likely exclude Darius (the past) and Cyrus (the present). That leaves Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius I Hystaspes (*high-stasps*), and Xerxes I.

This takes the kingdoms in order, and, it was the 4th king, Xerxes I who presided over the Persian kingdom at its zenith. History tells us he was the one who led a great expedition against Greece. He took 4 years to raise an army of hundreds of thousands and attacked Greece in 480 BC. His expedition was a disaster from which he never recovered. The Ahasuerus I in the book of Esther and Xerxes I may actually be the same person. More details of the Persian empire are recorded in Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

So, now, in verse 3, the revelation turns to the third empire after Babylon and Medo-Persia, Greece. Here we learn numerous details that are given nowhere else in the Scriptures but are supported by secular history.

The Kingdom of Greece

Alexander the Great was the “mighty king” who was stirred up by Xerxes’ attacks on Greece. Again, the Authorized Version uses the military terminology, “stand up.” This “stirring up” took approximately 150 years! It aroused an undying hatred between the Greeks and the Persians. Alexander defeated Darius III near Issus, Turkey in 333 BC, and then again, 2 years later at Gaugamela. Following that battle, Darius’ own cousin assassinated him and brought his head to Alexander. That marked the end of the Persian Empire.

If Alexander had not been victorious, the world we live in today could look very different. It was Greek civilization that gave the wider world the concepts of individual rights, private property, and representative government. The Persian model of government was a dictatorship.

These facts agree with the details of Alexander’s reign that we looked at in chapters 7 and 8, so Daniel doesn’t spend much time on them here. Alexander conquered the then known world with lightning speed and ferocity.

The text reaffirms that Alexander died while his power was still increasing. This prophecy was made in approximately 539 BC and Alexander died in 323 BC while returning from a military

campaign in India. The overwhelming power of the Greek kingdom quickly dissipated. Alexander's kingdom was divided into 4 regions, not among his sons, but among his generals. Only 2 of these regions proved to be significant in the ancient world (Egypt and Syria).

The Kings of the North and South

Verse five introduces a section that outlines the ongoing struggle for dominance between the kings of the south (the Ptolemies of Egypt) and the kings of the north (the Seleucids of Syria). Syria isn't mentioned by name, because no such nation existed when Daniel was writing this prophecy. Daniel's prophecy traces the struggles of these opposing regions over a period of about 150 years, to the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes. This particular leader is given more coverage in chapter 11 than any other single leader. We'll learn why as we move through the text.

The king of the south is understood to be Egypt and is identified specifically as such in verse 8. Interestingly, the Septuagint, the Greek language version of the Old Testament, translates the *south* as *Egypt* throughout this passage. Notice, this king of the south will be strong **and** one of his princes. The king of the south is probably Ptolemy I Soter. *The prince who shall be strong above him* is likely, Seleuceus I Nicator, king of Syria. Being "above" can mean either geographically north or greater in power. Nicator's kingdom eventually controlled the area from Asia Minor to India! The Ptolemies and the Seleucids became lines of rival kings in each empire.

Being rivals or enemies doesn't rule out all cooperation. Notice that after several years, these kings formed an alliance through marriage. That was common in that time. The king of the south sent his daughter to be the wife of the king of the north. The names aren't important to us, but these are important historical facts. However, the plans didn't work out the way the king of the south had hoped. They were derailed by divorce, palace intrigue, and eventually, murder.

From the relatives of this daughter from Egypt, would come a military leader who would prevail over the king of the north. He was Ptolemy III and was actually the brother of this southern bride turned assassin.

Notice the taking of captives, gods, princes (most likely a reference to molten images), and material wealth. Jerome tells us that Ptolemy III took 40,000 talents of silver from the king of the north. That equals 3 million pounds or 48 million ounces. In today's value that's about one and a quarter billion dollars! This indicates the total subjugation of the king of the north.

Ptolemy III's people gave him the nickname of *Euergetes* (ewergee`tees), which means *Benefactor* because he brought back some images of gods that were originally Egyptian but had been in the north for many years. Jerome, in his commentary on Daniel, spells out the historical details of these verses. His commentary underscores the historical accuracy of Daniel's prophecy, which was written 300 years before it actually happened!

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.

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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.