

if all men followed God's commandments and showed true love to one another there might be no need of government except to handle those matters that require some system for coordinating the activities of individuals, as, for instance, making traffic laws. But ever since Adam sinned human beings have been selfish and violence has tended to occur. As a result there has been a tendency, in every group of people, for individuals to acquire positions of dominance. In the course of time these groups have tended to come into conflict with one another, and thus larger groups have been formed, speaking the same language and having the same general culture. These combinations have rarely come about as a result of voluntary union, but generally because a stronger group has conquered those that were weaker. Thus nations came into existence in ancient times, composed of people with similar language and culture, and usually controlled by an individual whom we today would call a king, though various names for this position have been used from time to time. A number of such national groups were formed before the beginning of written history, and others have come into existence since that time.

In present-day language such nations are not designated as empires, for this word has now come to be used for the control that a nation may exercise over groups that differ from it in language or in culture. When the book of Daniel speaks of great kingdoms it usually is referring to what would today be called empires.

The Egyptians were organized into one large kingdom at a fairly early period. Thereafter, from time to time, they conquered a few areas with people of other languages and cultures. However, this Egyptian empire varied in extent and was not really an empire for any long period. The same is true of the ancient Hittite empire.

The first empire that brought a large number of foreign peoples under its sway and continued to hold them in subjection for several centuries was that of the Assyrians, whose culture had largely been developed by the previous Sumerians or by the former hegemony that centered in Babylon. The Assyrians carried on campaigns year after