

MATTHEW 24: The Abomination of Desolation

There are so many questions concerning the end-times...but for our purposes, we are not trying to enter into a debate, but prepare our hearts to endure and be faithful to Jesus until He comes. There is more written about the final generation than any generation in the history of man. Prophets saw and recorded events from a great distance and trembled before God saying, "Who can endure the Great and Terrible day of the Lord." These were men of the faith...men who entered the lions den rather than show disloyalty to God. And these men trembled when God revealed the plan of His salvation. This should bring sobriety to our hearts.

I. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION*Matthew 24*

15 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

- A. Jesus validates the testimony of Daniel, and this is huge. He declares that Daniel saw ahead. This is our cue to study out Daniel as of utmost importance to our readiness for the days ahead. Jesus releases a warning. When you see the abomination of desolation...flee. Don't look back. Don't delay. Flee.
- B. There are a few key things to keep in mind when interpreting scripture...Primarily, that Jerusalem is the centerpiece of the story. We are looking to events unfolding in the Middle East.
- C. Secondly, that history always repeats itself. Every story is the same story. God loves man. God makes a covenant. Man forgets God. God raises up a witness, a reminder of the covenant. Man hardens his heart. God releases judgment/discipline. Man remembers God.
- D. The abomination of desolation in the holy place (the temple) is the absolute marking of the Great Tribulation. This is THE SIGN. This is the marker of the Great Tribulation...the greatest distress the earth has ever known. This is the death spiral of the world...
- E. This occurs when the Antichrist stands in the Jerusalem temple and declares himself to be God by setting up an idol in the temple and then seeking to force all who are on earth to worship him (Dan. 11:31-32; Mt. 24:15; 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-17). The Antichrist's statue or image will be the greatest abomination to God in history, because the Antichrist will demand to be worshiped as God and many will fully respond to this demand.

II. LET SCRIPTURE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE

Daniel 9

24 *“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”*

A. Daniel’s seventy weeks (Dan. 9:24-27):

The angel Gabriel revealed to Daniel that God’s purpose for Israel involved a prophetic period of seventy weeks. In the modern world a week speaks of a period of seven days. However, in the ancient world a week represented a period of seven years. Gabriel spoke to Daniel about a prophetic period in which God would deal with Israel’s salvation over seventy weeks or 490 years (70 x 7 years = 490 years). However, after the initial sixty-nine weeks (69 x 7 years = 483 years), a “pause” was put on the prophetic calendar when Jesus the Messiah was “cut off” or crucified. There is one week or seven years left in God’s prophetic calendar and plan in bringing Israel to salvation. The first sixty-nine weeks of the “seventy weeks” prophecy of Daniel 9:24-26 have been fulfilled beginning from Nehemiah’s command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem in 445 BC (Neh. 2:1) to the time of Jesus’ first triumphal entry into Jerusalem to be crucified (Dan. 9:25).

B. The first 49 years (7 weeks) are the time during which the city was being rebuilt. These were the “times of trouble” mentioned in Daniel 9:25 and recorded in Nehemiah 2-7 as consisting of constant efforts by Israel’s enemies to prevent them from completing the project. Nehemiah tells of workmen building with one hand while holding a sword in the other, and sleeping on site in their clothes, for fear of a surprise attack. The remaining 434 years (62 weeks) began when the city and its walls were complete and ran to the time of the first Palm Sunday when Jesus presented Himself to Israel as their Messiah.

Daniel 9

27 *And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.*

C. This man, the antichrist will make a 7 year peace treaty with Israel and the surrounding nations. What is called a ‘peace treaty,’ God calls a covenant with death. What looks like a peace treaty in the beginning, ends up being a treaty with death. In the middle of the week... at the 3.5 year mark, everything changes.

Isaiah 28

14 *Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem! 15 Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement, when the overwhelming whip passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter”; 16 therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid [3] as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’ 17 And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter.” 18 Then your covenant with death will*

be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through, you will be beaten down by it. 19 As often as it passes through it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass through, by day and by night; and it will be sheer terror to understand the message.

D. This “peace agreement” will be the very thing that beats the nation down.

Daniel 11

31 Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. 32 He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. 33 And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. 34 When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, 35 and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

36 “And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done.

E. So before the antichrist can appear the temple needs to be rebuilt. And then the offerings are established.

F. As part of its ongoing effort to prepare for a future rebuilt Temple, the Temple Institute has been preparing ritual objects suitable for Temple use. Many of the over ninety ritual items to be used in the Temple have been made by the Temple Institute.

G. As of June 2008, a major current project of the Temple Institute is the creation of the sacred uniform of the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, and the ordinary priests. This project, the culmination of years of study and research, has been underway for several years. The High Priest's Hoshen (breastplate) and Ephod have already been completed. The Tzitz, the golden crown of the High Priest, was completed in 2007. [1] The Temple Institute is designing the garments for the lay priests intended for purchase by Kohanim who can verify their lineage.

H. The temple will be rebuilt and the regular offerings will be reestablished. Animal sacrifices will again be offered. Since 70a.d., all sacrifices have ceased.

Daniel 12

11 And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.

I. When the antichrist sets himself up in the temple and demands to be worshiped...there are 3.5 years to go. There is a seven year peace treaty with many nations, the rebuilding of the temple, regular animal sacrifice is resumed, and then the antichrist defiles the Temple...the Great Tribulation begins...3.5 years pass and Jesus comes again.

J. Read Revelation 13. The words antichrist come from the root words meaning not only “against” and “opposite” but also “in place of.” He will be an end-time leader resembling the Christ with a false peace, but not finally able to deliver salvation.

III. ISRAEL AND THE REMNANT SAVED

Ezekiel 9

9:1 Then he cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, "Bring near the executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand." 2 And behold, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his waist. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

3 Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub on which it rested to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his waist. 4 And the Lord said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." 5 And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. 6 Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the house.

- A. God will place a divine seal upon those who mourn for the land. There is a mark of the beast, but there is also the seal of the Lord! He searches the earth. He looks for those who mourn for justice. And He marks these.

Revelation 7

7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

- B. There is a remnant of Israel that is protected. They have mourned the covenant with death. They have mourned injustice. They have grieved, although they do not recognize Jesus yet...they have languished over the land.

Ezekiel 12

15 And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them among the countries. 16 But I will let a few of them escape from the sword, from famine and pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the nations where they go, and may know that I am the Lord."

- C. Even in their sin, they are a witness to the nations. They declare to the nations that their transgression has brought judgment upon Israel. Even in the scattering they declare the greatness of God!

IV. THE GENTILES

2 Corinthians 1

21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

- A. We are standing firm. We are sealed. There is for sure trouble coming on the entire earth, but there is also Divine protection to withstand the day of trouble. We are already sealed with the person of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee [4] of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, [5] to the praise of his glory.

V. STANDING FIRM AND TAKING ACTION

Daniel 11

32 He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. 33 And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. 34 When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, 35 and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

- A. We are here making many understand the Word and the mystery of God unfolding. How? We are standing firm and taking action. This is the call to stand in the wall. This is the call to be loyal to Jesus. There is no more spectator Christianity. It's either ALL in or ALL out. Why? Because it will be costly to stand with the Lord in that final hour. Of course, it will be eternally costly to side against Him.

Hebrews 12

15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; 16 that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

- B. Esau sold his inheritance for a bowl of soup. There will be those who sell their soul for 3.5 years of false peace. We must value the Lord above temporary security.
- C. There are things that Daniel saw and was not allowed to record...and there are things thunders that John heard and was not allowed to write...these things have been reserved for the final generation.

Daniel 12

12:1 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." ...8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

- D. Daniel wrote for another generation. I believe he wrote for ours. The last generation is promised understanding. We are promised wisdom. We are promised to make many understand. Although Daniel saw it, he did not understand. This is our inheritance: to understand.

Revelation 10

10:1 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, 3 and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. 4 And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." 5 And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven 6 and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, 7 but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants [1] the prophets.

8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." 9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." 10 And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. 11 And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

- E. There are things that have been sealed up for us to search out. There is a call to eat the scroll. We are being called to participate with the realm of heaven. It wasn't enough to watch the events...the call was to come up "here" and take hold of the word and eat it.
- F. We have been called to take hold of something. To digest it. We have been called to come up into the glory of the thing. The angel doesn't stoop down to John...John is called to 'come up here.'

VI. WHAT GOD CONSIDERS AN ABOMINATION

Leviticus 18

21 You shall not give any of your children to offer them [2] to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. 22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. 23 And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.

Deuteronomy 7

25 The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. 26 And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction [3] like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.

Deuteronomy 17

17:1 "You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish, any defect whatever, for that is an abomination to the Lord your God.

2 Kings 23

24 Moreover, Josiah put away the mediums and the necromancers and the household gods and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law that were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord. 25 Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him.

Proverbs 6

16 There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

Isaiah 66

3 “He who slaughters an ox is like one who kills a man; he who sacrifices a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; he who presents a grain offering, like one who offers pig's blood; he who makes a memorial offering of frankincense, like one who blesses an idol. These have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations; 4 I also will choose harsh treatment for them and bring their fears upon them, because when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, they did not listen; but they did what was evil in my eyes and chose that in which I did not delight.”

Jeremiah 13

27 I have seen your abominations, your adulteries and neighings, your lewd whorings, on the hills in the field. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will it be before you are made clean?”

Jeremiah 32

34 They set up their abominations in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. 35 They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.