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## Abomination of Desolation Matthew 24:15

By Elder Keith Ellis

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"

Matthew 24:15

No doubt you are probably aware there are entire writings just on the subject of "*the abomination of desolation*." When this teaching is left in its proper context it does not require an entire book to explain. Only when it is futurized and lifted from its time context does it require much explanation.

One thing is certain about all of it. It was evidenced before the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Though it may be of some benefit to know what the abomination of desolation was, it may be more beneficial to place the main emphasis upon the fact it has already seen its fulfillment.

In Matthew twenty three verse thirty eight, Jesus proclaims the desolation of the temple upon His final departure from it. To remind you again as we discussed earlier, it was the glory of God absenting itself from the temple that made the temple desolate. Jesus is the *glory of God!*

Things really began to go downhill for those faithful to the Law of Moses from this time forward.

The abomination of desolation is mentioned in the New Testament in the book of Matthew chapter twenty-four verse fifteen, and in Mark chapter thirteen verse fourteen. In both places it states "*When ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet...*" Each book concludes the thought by stating; "*Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.* Luke chapter twenty one also tells the prophetic message of the destruction of Jerusalem. In verse twenty one it also states "*Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.*" Yet this particular verse is preceded by a curious statement.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

Luke 21:20

This is a most interesting statement which Luke makes here. Obviously he is consistent with Matthew and Mark in the subject context when he mentions fleeing into the mountains. He goes somewhat further than Matthew and Mark do. He makes a direct link for us and shows us the abomination of desolation has to do with the Roman armies surrounding

Jerusalem. **This should remove any speculation we may have about this being some event far off in the future.**

Since we have the light of the above statement to work with it should satisfy us to know the event has already seen its completion. Yet the student of history will usually not be content until he inquires into the details of what the actual event was. I have heard all sorts of answers as to what this could have been. Some think it was the Romans sacrificing of swine upon the altar. Some think it was the fact the invading soldiers paid homage to their "eagle" gods in the temple area. Some say it was the fact Gentiles entered into the holy of holies. And there are other ideas about what it could have been. However it needs to be noted this was a time when God had departed from the temple, and was no longer blessing its services as He had in times past. No doubt, in a situation like this, God would not regard the normal sacrifices and offerings. Especially since the anti-type was manifested in Christ. Remember Jesus had earlier pronounced desolation upon the temple. This does not sound like a blessing to me. It sounds more like a curse. So whatever the abomination was, it probably had to be something extraordinary. Probably something which was all together outside the law of sacrifices?

I am of the opinion that it was God who was offended in the abomination of desolation. Not man. And this act, whatever it may have been, was a result of man given over to himself after the glory of God departed from the temple. The rebellious Jews being given over to hardened hearts, and reprobate minds.

Daniel refers to this period several times in a few short chapters. In chapter eight verse thirteen Daniel's records what he sees in a vision:

"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?"

Daniel 8:13

This sounds like the language of Jesus in Luke twenty one verse twenty-four. And it is the destruction of Jerusalem which is under consideration.

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Luke 21:24

There is no doubt this event was foretold many places in the Old Testament. Jesus draws from these places and brings them to the minds of the people in a vivid manner. In Luke twenty one verse twenty two Jesus says "*these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*" This is in answer to His own statement about fleeing into the mountains. It is interesting to note how many preach this text as pertaining to the whole world and as future. The context is clearly set for us in verse twenty one. "*Then let them which be in*

*Judea, flee into the mountains.*” So this is speaking to the inhabitants of Judea, not all the world as we often here. Again, I will mention the exhortation to flee into the mountains was given unto those who believed in Christ. The mountains served as a hiding place from the Roman army. When God sets His mind to punish and execute His judgment there will be no place to hide from the face of the Father. Here the disciples are told where to find refuge. At the end of time there will be no place for anyone to hide. So why would Jesus tell them to flee to the mountains for refuge? If this were the end of the world as it is often taught, we have Jesus telling people to flee for refuge when He knows full well there would be no place to hide. Our Lord does not play such games. The answer is, this is not talking about the end of time, but the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jesus also mentions in Luke twenty one verse twenty two *“that all things which are written might be fulfilled.”* Not that they may or may not be fulfilled, but they would of a certainty come to pass. Jesus says of all the things which the Old Testament scriptures speak of concerning Jerusalem’s iniquity and certain destruction, the temple and its demise would come to pass upon those unbelieving Jews. They would witness the wrath and suffer the vengeance of God. *“Vengeance is mine saith The Lord, I will repay.”*

Again we look at Daniel:

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolation's are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the over spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

Daniel 9:25-27

A day was considered a year in these calculations. There are seven days in each week. Seven times seventy is four hundred ninety. Seventy weeks therefore would have been four hundred and ninety years. It is said the command to rebuild Jerusalem after its demise at the hand of the Babylonians came in the twentieth year of Artaxeres the king of Persia. This was the year 457 BC. The above text tells us sixty nine weeks or four hundred eighty three years would pass until Jesus would come on the scene. Subtracting four hundred eighty three years from 457 BC brings us to 26 AD This is the time which we now know Jesus began his ministry. Recall our discussion in a previous section of the four year error in the dating of the year of the birth of Jesus. It is said in the scripture Jesus began to be about thirty years of age when he was baptized. This was the legal age for a Levite to enter into the service of God. (Luke 3:23 & 1 Chronicles 23:3) If Jesus was born in 4 BC in A. D. 26 He would have been about thirty years old. This would bring us unto the end of the sixty ninth weeks spoken of by Daniel. The beginning of Jesus ministry began the seventieth week of Daniel. He ministered for three and one half years. This is one half of a week according to Daniel’s

prophecy. (Daniel 9:27) It also explains the ceasing of the oblation and sacrifice in the midst (middle) of the week by the sacrifice of Himself once for all. Once Jesus offered Himself unto God, He (God the Father) ceased to recognize the type and shadows which the animal sacrifices represented. Even though the Jews may have continued to offer them, God did not recognize them any longer. God no longer sanctioned the activities in the temple. (See Matthew 23 again) Though highly esteemed among the Jews, those activities in the temple were considered abominations by God. For these reasons Christ withdrew His presence. (See Luke 16:15-16) The seventy weeks once completed saw the kingdom of God fully manifested in the world. It was given unto the Gentile nations, to a people who would bring forth the fruits of it. This was the kingdom which Jesus came to setup. All this leaves us with proof positive that the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish law dispensation is under consideration in the above text. Not the end of time, or some future generation.

Yet it amazes me Mr. Hal Lindsey and untold others project the seventieth week of Daniel into the still distant future. This is a mystery to me. I can see no valid scriptural reason for doing so. In his book, "*The Rapture*," Mr. Lindsey starts out by explaining away why the seventieth week should not follow in succession with the other sixty-nine. He then begins to build the remainder of his theory on the false premise the seventieth week is yet future. After seeking to explain why he thinks the seventieth week is yet future, he begins to take other text of scripture and automatically futurize them without any attempt to justify the reason for doing so. I guess he thinks if you swallow his idea about the seventieth week of Daniel, you will not challenge him from then on. The whole rapture theory advocated by Mr. Lindsey rests upon the seventieth week being future.

Mr. Lindsey goes on to state the reason the temple will be rebuilt is so the sacrifices will cease. Yet he is not able (or willing) to see this is exactly what happened between during the middle of the week mentioned above.

This last week of the seventy weeks spoken of by Daniel has already seen its completion. And amazingly, the language sounds just like what we know happened in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. In fact the things which Mr. Lindsey advocates are so lame; I will not spend any more space rebutting his nonsense.

Daniel speaks extensively of this time. In chapter eleven he speaks concerning the monarchies of the earth and what would befall the people of Israel in the latter days. In particular verse thirty one speaks of a certain king. About this king it is said:

"And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

Daniel 11:31

Of course we now can see God had ordered the sacrifices to cease in the temple. The Levitical priesthood was responsible for these daily and special sacrifices which were once ordered by Moses. Just as the temple was foreshadowing the true temple of Jesus, the Levitical priesthood was also foreshadowing something better to come in the time of the

gospel of grace. Peter the apostle tells us *we* are a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:2-9) No more bloody sacrifices. Now we offer up the sacrifices of prayer. (Proverbs 15:8) The fruit of our lips is continually offering the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving unto God. (Hebrews 13:15-16) We offer the sacrifice of humility before our God. (Psalms 51:17) We present our bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God. (Romans 12:1) God is well pleased with the sacrifice of our material goods for the benefit of and furtherance of the gospel and for the sustainment of a brother or sister who lacks daily necessities. (Philippians 4:15-19) To serve Christ in the Holy Spirit and to be exercised in righteousness, peace and joy is acceptable unto God. (Romans 14:17-18 & Psalms 27:6) It is acceptable unto God when we are patient. (1 Peter 2:20) These and other sacrifices are offered by the royal priesthood of believers which God has chosen to serve him in the New Testament church. (1 Peter 2:9)

Now as we continue in Daniel we read of the activities of a certain king in the temple in detail. I want to quote a few of the verses. You will probably recognize the situation; it was later described by the apostle Paul in the New Testament:

"And this king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all."

Daniel 11:36-37

Now let's hear the apostle Paul concerning the man of sin, the son of perdition;

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

2 Thessalonians 2:4

Again it is necessary to note the timing of Paul's statement. In verse two of chapter two of the second letter to the Thessalonians Paul says the day of the Christ is at hand. He speaks to the members of the church in language which indicates they know who the son of perdition is.

In verse seven he says *the mystery of iniquity doth already work*. This refers to the generation which was then alive to whom Paul was then writing. This does not mean two thousand years later. This person was on the brink of being revealed to everyone when the second letter to the Thessalonians was written. Of course it is assumed this must be referring to the end of time because of the reference to the coming of The Lord in verse one. But it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem. In a later section we will discuss "*the coming of The Lord*" at length to show its many usage's.

There is much speculation as to who this man of sin could have been. It is possible it may have been Titus the son of Vespasian. Vespasian campaigned against Judea beginning in AD 66. It is said he greatly desired its perdition or destruction and was fully prepared to do just

that when he learned of the death of Nero. He put off his attack waiting to see if he would ascend to be emperor. Once he was promoted to emperor in AD 69 he left the war in Judea to his son, Titus. He was the commander of the Romans armies which destroyed Jerusalem. Is Titus the “*son of perdition?*” Titus is said to have entered into the temple area. Josephus speaks of this event.

“And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them, and there did they make Titus imperator, with greatest acclamations of joy.” **Flavius Josephus, The War of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 6, 1.(316)**

Here we see four things. The entering of Gentiles into the temple, the worship of the Roman “eagle gods,” the offering of sacrifices to these gods, and the great acclamations towards Titus in the temple of God. Any one of these events could be rightly termed an abomination. This may very well be the fulfillment of Paul’s prophecy in Second Thessalonians chapter two verses three and four.

Others believe this event refers to the Jewish economy as a whole, and not a particular individual. Regardless, the fact remains which clearly tells us this event took place before AD 70, when Jerusalem was laid even with the ground.

Yet has not this been the object of Satan all along? To ascend to the throne of God! This wicked king is one who was alive before the destruction of Jerusalem. And in my estimation the act of claiming to be God is a great sin in the sight of God. This king could lead us to discover who the beast actually was. Yes I did say, ‘**was.**’

Just a thought. The scripture mentions both, an abomination *which makes* desolate, and an abomination *of* desolation. The abomination which maketh desolate could have been the events mentioned by Christ in Matthew chapter twenty three. The abomination of the desolation could have been the events we have just discussed. I will leave this for you to think about.

But wait some say, this verse is future. Well it was when it was written, but not any longer. For the futurist, in order for this verse to see a future fulfillment there has to be a temple. This remains a big problem for futurist. In fact the verse quoted from second Thessalonians causes many to envision a rebuilt temple. But look at the motivation. It would be rebuilt so wickedness and iniquity could abound when this supposed future king, or son of perdition sits in it. If you remember, we earlier discussed the reasons why God will not allow the temple to be rebuilt and for the sacrifices to be re-instituted. Jesus Christ was the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus Christ is the true temple of God. There is no longer a need for the types and shadows of the law. **GOD WILL NOT ALLOW THE TEMPLE TO BE REBUILT.**

Remember, the most important thing about the “**abomination of desolation**” for us today is not ‘*who*’ or ‘*who,*’ but ‘*when.*’ The prophecy of Daniel saw its completion before those who were eye witnesses to Jesus’ ministry would taste death. Remember the abomination of

desolation was part of a sequence of events Jesus said would lead up to the destruction of the temple. And verse thirty four of Matthew chapter twenty-four reads:

"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Matthew 24:34