



The Good News

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The Abomination of Desolation

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One particular prophecy that always captured my interest is the prophecy mentioned by Daniel, and again by Jesus, concerning the abomination of desolation. I found that commentaries and scholars have very few common beliefs about it, all interpreting something different. Yet, when we examine how Jesus uses this prophecy, we realize that one thing is for sure; whatever the abomination of desolation was, it had not yet been made manifest in the time of Jesus.

In **Dan. 12:11**, a man “*clothed in linen*” told Daniel “*from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand and ninety days.*” The “*time of trouble*” in **12:1** describes the siege of Jerusalem. The angel says in **vs.10** that “*none of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand*”.

Now let’s turn our attention to **Matt. 24**. Many believe that this passage is speaking about the second return of Jesus, such as the “*rapture*” text in vs. 36ff. Yet, upon closer study, we will realize to what this entire passage is referring. In **vs.15** we see how that Jesus refers to seeing the “*abomination of desolation*” which is a warning of the great tribulation that will follow. In **vs.34** He says that generation would not pass before “*these things*” took place. Therefore, whatever “*these things*” were, it would happen during, or shortly after, the life of Christ. Upon examination and study of the other Gospels, we find that Jesus is speaking of the judgment that was to come upon Jerusalem. References to “*the end*”, as well as the wise understanding and the wicked not understanding (“*whoever reads, let him understand*” Matt. 24:15) suddenly make sense. We are not talking about the end of the world, but

rather the end of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation as a people. Such passages as **Luke 21:20** explain in more detail, recording Jesus saying, “*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.*”

So what is the “*abomination of desolation*”? In **Luke 21**, Jesus says the armies of Rome would make Jerusalem desolate. The actual term “*abomination of desolation*” means “*that abomination that maketh desolate*” that would “*stand in the holy place*”. The abomination of desolation would seem to be the armies of Caesar, under command of Titus, which would make Jerusalem desolate. When the people saw this, they were to drop everything and go to the mountains.

If this passage is not speaking about the end of time, and only about the destruction of Jerusalem, what application can it hold for us? It enables us to see just how omnipotent our God truly is, that time is an open book to Him. He knew the future of the Jews because He had planned it already. All the evils and sins of the Jews would culminate in an ultimate judgment in which they would be destroyed as a nation. All of this was foretold hundreds of years before by the prophet Daniel. We can take faith in the power of God to tell us there will be a day when the entire world will be judged by Christ, just as Jerusalem was by God through the armies of Rome, with some being wise understanding the warnings contained in the NT and acting accordingly, and others being wicked not understanding and therefore not acting. The difference is that there will be no warning for us, such as armies encompassing Jerusalem. Rather our warning is being trumpeted now through the word of God. Are we listening?