

Abomination of Desolation

The “abomination of desolation” is often referred to as a “key” to understanding the last days and its final fulfillment before Jesus returns. Most people, however, don’t understand it, let alone know what it means. Let’s reflect for a moment on the Scriptures to help give us the answers we need.

In Leviticus 26:1-13, God promised to bless the children of Israel. Starting with verse 14, however, he tells them of the problems that will ensue if they don’t honor their covenant with him. He lists four different levels of chastisements that he would bring upon the people. Each one was designed to bring His people to remembrance of their covenant. If after the fourth one they hadn’t repented, He says,

“And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. **And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation**, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. **And I will bring the land into desolation**; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; **and your land shall be desolate**, and your cities waste” (emphasis added, Leviticus 26:27-33).

Second Kings 22 tells us that the Lord spared the people and king because the king repented and remembered His covenant with Him. Verse 19 tells of the desolation that **would** have occurred if he had **not** repented.

In II Chronicles 30 Hezekiah relates that because of Ahaz (the prior king) and the people’s wickedness that God left them for desolation. In verses 7-8 Hezekiah encourages his people to not follow the example of Ahaz.

Ezra speaks of the desolations which occurred when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed around 586 BC. In Ezra chapter 9, he says that God has given them mercy to go back and to repair the “desolations” done unto the sanctuary.

King David indicates that God will perform the desolations upon the earth at the last days (Psalms 46:8). These would come upon the wicked. He also speaks of it in relation to the enemy doing “wickedness” in the sanctuary (Psalms 74:3).

Solomon encourages us not to fear the desolation of the wicked (Proverbs 3:25) because God shall protect the righteous.

Isaiah prophesies of “desolation” that will come from “afar” (Isaiah 10:3), and it can come suddenly (47:11). He also reiterates the simple fact that desolation occurs because we or someone has forgotten their covenant with God (Isaiah 17:9-10). In chapter 24:12 he speaks of the last days and talks of the desolation that will come right before Christ returns. This again is

mentioned in Isaiah 64:10 (key verse to understanding that Jerusalem and Zion are two different places).

Jeremiah prophesied that Jerusalem would be desolate for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:9-12). Daniel verifies this in Daniel 9:1-2 after the fact. Jeremiah also uses the term “abominable” in the context with desolation in chapter 44:1-4. The abomination was the burning of incense to false gods. **Desolation occurred because of this act.** Verse 22 of the same chapter reiterates this.

“So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, **and because of the abominations which ye have committed**; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.”

Ezekiel prophesies that, because of the abominations, Israel’s sanctuary will be defiled and the prince “will be clothed with desolation” (Ezekiel 7:27).

All of these men prophesied before the time of Daniel. It would be with these former scriptures and examples in mind, then, that Daniel details his dream and revelation in chapters 8 and 12.

“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 underfoot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (emphasis added, Daniel 8:13-14).

“And from the time that the **daily sacrifice shall be taken away**, and the **abomination that maketh desolate set up**, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days...” (emphasis added, Daniel 12: 11-12).

Notice in both how he indicates the sanctuary is to be affected. The daily sacrifice was performed there. In chapter 8 he is even plainer, saying that the sanctuary will be trodden under foot for a given period of time.

Daniel MacGregor has done a splendid job of delivering both in sentence and picture the fulfillment of these two timeframes with the coming forth of the Restoration in 1830 (pages 48-50 and 60-65 in *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*).

Jesus referenced Daniel’s prophesy.

“When ye therefore, **shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem**, then ye shall stand in the holy place. (Whoso readeth let him understand.)” (emphasis added, Matthew 24:12, I.V.)

A prophecy had been given to the early Christian church prior to AD 67-8. It counseled the church to move its headquarters from Jerusalem to Pella. Matthew’s comment in the above quote, “Whoso readeth let him understand,” means the “holy place” is now Pella. The people who were reading his text in his lifetime would know this. If the believers moved to Pella, they would be spared the atrocities that occurred in Jerusalem. Josephus records this event and speaks

of the faithful moving to Pella. Because of this we, know that the reference here directly refers to the destruction in AD 70, not anytime else.

The word abomination is used to describe why the desolation is taking place. All through the Old Testament we have seen that God would bring desolation upon the people for their abominations. Generally we have looked at this phrase and thought that the desolation was the important point. This has been an incorrect assumption. The **abomination** is the cause of the desolation and therefore, the important point. Without the abomination, desolation never would have occurred.

Later in his discourse, Jesus tells us when this will be “fulfilled.”

“And again, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked. **And again shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled**” (emphasis added, Matthew 24:32-33, I.V.).

This, then, tells us very plainly, that the abomination spoken of by Daniel the prophet is beginning to be fulfilled. Because of the restoration of the gospel to the Earth, the gospel of the Kingdom is being preached in the entire world now. We have yet to see the destruction of the wicked.

Joseph received more light on this subject in several revelations.

“And verily I say unto you, the rest of my servants, Go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reproving the world in righteousness, of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, **setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days; for with you**, saith the Lord Almighty, **I will rend their kingdoms**” (emphasis added, D&C 83:24a-b).

This indicates plainly there is yet more desolation to occur among the nations. Desolation, when spoken of in regards to the church, has referred to the “temple.” When spoken of the people of the Earth, it means their lands and peoples (Babylonians, Chaldeans, Jaredites, etc.). There is no indication in scripture that the church will be destroyed or go into the wilderness “again”, therefore, we must conclude that it will come upon the nations of the Earth. Most specifically, it will come upon the nations where the “church” or “latter-day Israel” resides, much like it came upon the Chaldeans and Babylonians.

In fact, God further defined this term for us in Section 85:23b by stating, “That their souls may escape **the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination**, which await the wicked, both in this world, and in the world to come” (emphasis added).

This indicates that God’s wrath is another way of saying the “desolation of abomination.” It will come upon all who reject Him, here on this Earth or in the next life. It is a principle of God’s judgment.

Let us return to Jesus’ reference. Luke does not leave us to wonder, however, about the nature of the “desolation.” He describes it in greater detail than does Mark or Matthew. “And when ye

shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh” (Luke 21:19, I.V.).

Here, he gives the description that when armies surround Jerusalem, **then** you will know that the desolation is nigh. When the Romans came to destroy Jerusalem in AD 70, they bypassed all the forts that the Jews had made along the way. They marched straight for the city. This is one reason Jesus said:

“Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them who are in the midst of it, depart out; and let not them who are in the countries, return to enter into the city. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them who are with child, and to them who give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 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 21:20-24).

The Romans destroyed the temple of God, removing each stone in order to find all the precious metals (gold/silver, etc.) that had melted when the Jews set it on fire. Before this occurred, the Jews had been surrounded for roughly three years, and things had become so desperate that the people inside would eat the dead bodies of their own family members. We need to be reminded of the beginning scripture in Leviticus 26. Read what God said he would do unto those that forgot Him.

“Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. **And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.** And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and **bring your sanctuaries unto desolation...**” (emphasis added, Leviticus 26:28-31, I.V.).

This was in response to four other attempts by God to get the people to remember Him and their covenant. This literally was fulfilled during those last years before the Romans entered into the city and destroyed it. They had encircled it for so long that all the food supply had run out, and they ended up eating their sons and daughters.

We can conclude that the “abomination of desolation” is **not** a one-time event but has been repeated over and over again in history. It might yet be repeated once more before Jesus comes. Isaiah seems to indicate this as does David in the Psalms. In 586 BC, Jerusalem was destroyed and again in AD 70. Then in AD 570, the “temple” was defiled and the times of the Gentiles took over once again. For 1260 years the Gentiles tread “under foot” the true Gospel and bride of Christ until 1830 when God restored it again to the earth. At this point the church was the “temple” of God – His dwelling place. At least in these three instances, the “temple” was paramount to the desolation. In other examples, it was the lives of the people and the land they inhabited. (See Isaiah 47, specifically verses 1-5 to see who is being spoken to and then verse 11 to see the result.)

We must remember that if we forget God and our covenant with Him, then He will begin a long process of chastisements. Each one designed to bring about repentance in our lives. If all these

fail, He will make “desolate” our lands, our lives, and all that we have, as one last call to repentance. This is what will occur in the last days when it says the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous preserved. God will bring about conditions which will cause us to marvel and see our dependence on Him. Those who repent, just like Hezekiah, will be spared, and those who do not, will be like Zedekiah, the king of Jerusalem at 586 BC.

For us the words “abomination of desolation” should be a call to remembrance. It is designed to recall us to remember our covenant with Him. God has proven that He has and will go to this extreme to call nations or individuals to repentance. It is both a collective and singular principle which issues forth from the throne of glory with its ultimate manifestation in our repentance and therefore, salvation.

In scripture, “abomination of desolation” is a term of God’s judgment. God will not be mocked or His laws desecrated. Those who reject Him will be brought down low. The Book of Mormon peoples even named a land after this judgment, the land of Desolation (Alma 13:74). This was the land once inhabited by the Jaredites, but later covered with their bones because of their ultimate rejection of the Savior. Ether had preached repentance unto the kings and people for many years. They failed to repent and were destroyed. We must not commit the same crime, or we will suffer the same punishment.

The modern Christians of today, because of their rejection of The Book of Mormon and the Restoration, have been led in paths of darkness concerning the latter days. Because they don’t believe that Daniel’s vision has been fulfilled (in the way we do), they conclude that the Jews must build the temple again in Jerusalem before this “desolation” can occur again. They miss two important points. First, this desolation is **not** limited to the temple, as has been shown by at least three specific examples. Therefore, any desolation which occurs in the end is **not** required to have a physical “temple” involved. It might involve a “spiritual temple” – the church, however.

Second, they miss the revelation that America is latter-day Israel (Ephraim’s land and blessing), and because of this, they constantly look to the actual land of Jerusalem for the fulfillment. If they understood the principle that the Old Testament prophets sometimes spoke of “spiritual” Israel in the latter days, instead of physical Israel, some of the confusion might be eliminated. Until this occurs, they will be led by the blind philosophies of men, relying on their own understanding.

In conclusion, we can say that Matthew 24:12 verse was fulfilled in AD 70. We can also say that there is a coming “desolation” upon the country of America. This desolation is in result of the nation forgetting their God and will be a fulfillment of the prophecies given in The Book of Mormon. This type of punishment has already occurred in history by the Israelites in Babylon and also in Egypt. Both of these countries suffered greatly for subjecting God’s people to bondage. Because they would not repent, God caused marvelous plagues to come upon them and/or destroyed them. We must be the Ezras and Nehemiahs of our day. We must stand up and remember our covenant with Him.

Beautiful examples and promises are made to the saints, however. Proverbs 3:25 states it this way, “Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the **desolation of the wicked**, when it cometh. **For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken**” (emphasis added).

Some of these examples include the deliverance of the Israelites from the plagues of Egypt, Daniel spared during the destruction of Jerusalem, Noah and his family preserved from the flood, and the early saints delivered from Jerusalem because they heeded the call to move to Pella. All these examples, and many, many more, gives us full confidence, that when the Scriptures tell us that in the last days “neighbor” shall take up sword against “neighbor,” or they must flee to Zion for safety, God will provide for us a refuge, a safe haven.

What qualities do we need to be preserved? These are found throughout scripture. Some of the more concise are found in Psalms 15 and D&C 94:2f.

Since the beginning of the Restoration, the call has been to repent (D&C 6:4b, 10:4b). This has not been rescinded. For the last 20 years or more at the Oak Grove Restoration Branch, people have been given the answer to their question(s) and the answer has always been the same: “Today is a day of repentance.” Their questions have revolved around which organization is right or which one should we follow.

God does not desire the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:18). Instead, He desires that the wicked would repent and live. The desolations which come are a result of man’s rejection of God. God, never ceasing to be God, must fulfill His word, even that given so long ago in Leviticus. He will bring about the chastisement necessary to assist us in remembering Him. If we continue to reject Him, we will be destroyed. Let us repent and live.