

What is the Abomination of Desolation?

A commonly misunderstood subject is the identification of the abomination of desolation. The Bible records a very clear explanation of just who or what the abomination of desolation actually was.

The concept of the "**abomination of desolation**" is first discussed by the Prophet Daniel in **Daniel 9:26-27**. Here we can read how Daniel described the abomination of desolation as an act of war and destruction.

Jesus Himself refers back to this prophecy of Daniel as a part of His answer to a very important question that His disciples asked. Let's read about it in **Matthew 24:1-3**.

Mat 24:1 And^{G2532} Jesus^{G2424} went out,^{G1831} and departed^{G4198} from^{G575} the^{G3588} temple:^{G2411} and^{G2532} his^{G846} disciples^{G3101} came^{G4334} to *him* for to shew^{G1925} him^{G846} the^{G3588} buildings^{G3619} of the^{G3588} temple.^{G2411}
Mat 24:2 And^{G1161} Jesus^{G2424} said^{G2036} unto them,^{G846} See^{G991} ye not^{G3756} all^{G3956} these things?^{G5023} verily^{G281} I say^{G3004} unto you,^{G5213} There shall not^{G3364} be left^{G863} here^{G5602} one stone upon another,^{G3037} that^{G3739} shall not^{G3364} be thrown down.^{G2647}
Mat 24:3 And^{G1161} as he^{G846} sat^{G2521} upon^{G1909} the^{G3588} mount^{G3735} of Olives,^{G1636} the^{G3588} disciples^{G3101} came^{G4334} unto him^{G846} privately,^{G2596} saying,^{G3004} Tell^{G2036} us,^{G2254} when^{G4219} shall these things^{G5023} be?^{G2071} and^{G2532} what^{G5101} shall be the^{G3588} sign^{G4592} of thy^{G4674} coming,^{G3952} and^{G2532} of the^{G3588} end^{G4930} of the^{G3588} world?^{G165}

In these verses, the disciples are asking Jesus this all-important question, what would be the sign of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the sign of His coming and the end of the world (**age**)?

Jesus was quick to answer these questions clearly and precisely. He gave them a definite sign to look for which would signify the beginning of a Great Tribulation such had not ever happened before or would ever happen again. (**Matthew 24:15-16,21**)

Notice that Jesus refers to Daniel's prophecy directly linking Daniel's words to the first century generation. This great tribulation was God's judgment against Israel, His covenant people because they had broken His Law and Covenant. (**Isaiah 24:5**) Mark records this exact same event in **Mark 13:1-4,14,19**.

In **Luke 21:20-21**, Jesus said that when you see Jerusalem compassed or surrounded with armies, then know that the desolation is nigh or near.

Luke 21:20-21, 20 And when **ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21** Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Here Jesus is giving us a very clear explanation of what the abomination of desolation actually was.

The abomination that would make desolate was to be something that would be seen by the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem. It was the sign for all Christians to flee into the mountains.

Why were the disciples and all of the Christians told to flee out of Jerusalem before AD 70? So that they could escape this Great Tribulation.

The word "**Abomination**" refers to anything loathsome or detestable which fits the feelings that the people of Jerusalem would have had towards an idol-worshipping Gentile army such as the Roman armies.

History has repeatedly recorded the work of armies which always brings destruction and desolation. Jerusalem has always been referred to throughout Scripture as the Holy City and the Holy Place. (**Joel 3:17, 2 Chronicles 7:16, Matthew 24:15, Matthew 27:53**)

According to prophecy, the Roman Army was to surround Jerusalem and bring it to desolation.

Since Gentile armies were idol-worshippers and always considered abominable, to witness them besieging the Holy City, invading their streets, and destroying their Temple was truly an abomination.

Because of the words of Jesus, when the believers saw the Roman armies surrounding the Holy City, they understood that this was the sign of which Jesus spoke.

They fled into the mountains to avoid this great tribulation that was about to happen. They were able to flee because the Roman armies did retreat back to Rome briefly to handle a threat on another border.

This is when the believers obeyed the voice of Jesus and fled the Holy City. In **Luke 21:24**, Jesus said***"until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled...."*** This happened in AD 70 when Jerusalem, its temple, and its religion were all destroyed. After His coming in AD 70, no longer were there Jews and Gentiles, just believers and unbelievers.

Conclusion

The abomination of desolation was a warning that Jesus gave to that first century generation about events that would precede the destruction of the Holy City and the Temple.

Jesus told that first century generation to flee when they saw the ***"abomination of desolation"*** or armies surrounding their city. By fleeing, they would be able to escape the great tribulation which was coming on their city.

The abomination of desolation ***"standing in the Holy Place"*** was the Roman armies that surrounded the Holy City. These Roman armies were heathen idol-worshipers which made them abominable who came for the purpose of total desolation.

It is an historical fact that in the year AD 70 of the first century, that the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple were all completely destroyed. Thus, **the Roman armies was the abomination of desolation.**

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