

# The Abomination of Desolation

What was the Abomination of Desolation? Was it a statue or some sort of idol? Was it a man calling himself God in the Temple of God? Or was it something else entirely that merely brought desolation? Most scholars simply speculate, saying that the Word of God is not specific about what it actually is. They thus presume that it would have been obvious to the believers at the time and they would have been able to respond accordingly. A careful study of the Scriptures reveals that God did not leave it up to the entire community of believers to figure this out on their own, but made it abundantly clear what He was referring to and that it was going to be obvious to all concerned. The Scriptures speak for **themselves so let's see what we shall see.**

The passages that speak of an Abomination of Desolation are to be found in the Book of Daniel Chapters 8, 9, 11 and 12 and in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. If you have come to this chapter without having read Chapter Eleven of this study, you would do well to read it through before continuing so as to have a proper understanding of the synoptic prophecies of Jesus. That said, we will now look at the Gospel Scriptures first:

## **Matthew 24:15-16**

**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:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:**

## **Mark 13:14**

**But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:**

## **Luke 21:20-21**

**And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea 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.**

If we were to accept that it was some sort of idol erected in the Temple, we have got all sorts of problems reconciling that scenario with the instructions of Jesus. How were the people in the country who were told not to enter the city to know that the abomination had been set up in the temple in the city? And how were the Romans able to set up some idol when the Jews had completely taken control over the city? The Roman armies were outside the city walls laying siege, not inside erecting idols.

When the final battle was fought and the fortress at the temple was overtaken, the Romans did not do anything but set the temple on fire that day and slaughter over a million people in a massive massacre. How could any abomination set up in the Temple then become a sign to the disciples for them to flee? **It would be too late. The whole idea simply doesn't fit.**

Clearly, the Abomination of Desolation was not something that required one to be in Jerusalem or near the Temple in order to see it. If you were out in the country when you saw this abomination you were not to enter the city, but to flee to the mountains.

Luke 21:20 lets us know that the Abomination of Desolation was the presence of armies around Jerusalem. With all their idolatrous emblems, that were an abomination to the Jews, they were standing in the Holy Land where they ought not, set up and ready to make the city a desolation. This was the sign for the disciples to FLEE.

You may recall from this study that there are two Abomination of Desolations mentioned in Daniel Chapters 11 and 12. While there are two abominations mentioned, there are actually three desolations of Jerusalem which appear in the Scriptures that we shall now look at and see what God's Word says about desolation.

### **Daniel 9:1-2**

**In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.**

### **Jeremiah 25:11**

**And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**

The destruction of the Temple and the removal of Judah from the city by the Babylonians for seventy years was referred to as a desolation, or desolations. As Daniel continues in his prayer, he again bewails the desolation of Jerusalem.

### **Daniel 9:17-18**

**Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. 18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.**

After Daniel's prayer, we have the Seventy Sevens prophecy wherein we find mention of the Abomination of Desolation.

### **Daniel 9:26b NKJV**

**And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.**

### **Daniel 9:27b NKJV**

**And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.**

The above two quotes are a parallelism which make for a clear understanding. The one who made desolate was the Roman general Titus who led the people of the prince who was to come in a war filled with abominable desolations. There is no mention of idolatry being a factor.

Speaking of this same “prince”, we have another confirmation from Daniel 8.

### Daniel 8:11-12 NKJV

He even exalted *himself* as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices*; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered. 13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, “How long *will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?*”

Instead of calling the desolation an abomination, in this passage it is called the transgression of desolation and the context reveals that it is the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled.

The only possible act of idolatry which could be associated with an abomination of desolation is that which occurred earlier in history during the reign of **Antiochus IV** that we find in this part of Daniel’s prophecy.

### Daniel 11:31 NKJV

**And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.**

As mentioned previously in this study, the Greeks certainly defiled the Sanctuary with their idolatrous practices. They also prohibited the daily sacrifices and set troops to completely exclude Jews from the Temple so that it remained desolate for over three years. However, we would be making a presumption to assume that the abomination was some form of idolatry when the prophecy itself only makes provision for any idolatrous act to be described as defilement rather than the actual Abomination of Desolation. **The verse says, “They shall defile the sanctuary . . .AND place there the abomination of desolation.” Thus alerting us to two different acts.**

When Daniel again mentions an Abomination of Desolation in Chapter 12 verses 8-12, we find that there is no indication of what it is, only a question about the timing.

From all the above I believe it is clear that it is the armies and the desolation they brought which are the abomination and not any erected idol or image and certainly not any person. Not saying there **won’t be some person sitting in a Temple calling himself God sometime in the future, in fact I’m sure** there will be, just saying that that is not what is described as the Abomination of Desolation in Daniel or the Gospels. Hope you found this enlightening.